Professional Responsibility
[Markets, Ethics & Law]

Course Description

There are several of us who teach in the Professional Responsibility program because we think it is an important course for students. However, the last many years of surveys and student ratings indicate that students in general do not agree – they usually give the course low marks no matter who is teaching it.

So, last year I adjusted the course content after asking a student to assemble a panel of colleagues to see what advice the group would have for me on the content of the PR course, and I received a lot of good suggestions.

This course will incorporate several of those suggestions – mainly to make the course more inclusive of current thinking in sociology and psychology about ethical conduct and to try to relate this to the kind of business situations that students can expect to experience personally. As we are neither sociologists nor psychologists we will be exploring the subject matter together entirely as laymen.

The main learning in the course will be to understand better what others think about ethically tight spots to see how your own judgment holds up in comparison. Thinking about ethical conduct is a big improvement over just reacting to it viscerally. If you have a wide view as to what possible alternative actions a situation may present, what the consequences of these actions might be, and a growing sense of what you think your own ethical compass says to you, you are likely to select wiser courses of actions.

So, here’s this year’s offering. You can always take the course taught by someone else. You might prefer that and I encourage you to shop around a little, though I do hope someone will show up to take the course I am teaching.

The course will involve a mixture of short readings and cases which will be the basis for what I hope will be lively class discussion.