

**A
GOOD
WORK**

4

GOOD

**FUNDAMENTAL
QUESTIONS
ON
PROFESSIONAL
ETHICS**

Learning Goals

The course is planned to achieve the following learning outcomes:

1. Students will be capable of understanding that personal work is a source of fulfilment according to Virtue Ethics, New Natural Law, and Catholic Social Thought (CST henceforth).
2. Students will have the capacity to assess their own personal work and the importance of acting with professionalism in light of valuing better standards of human dignity, personal thriving, vocation, virtues, and common good.
3. Students will be able to assess personal work (their own or as a third person) according to the qualitative standards learned in each lesson.

Methodology

The course will be created under a methodology of work aimed at integrating virtues and human dignity in day-to-day contexts of living. In particular, the core purpose of the program is to provide the conditions for students to reformulate their appreciation of current and future personal work and, additionally, being able to apply a virtue -based appreciation of work into regular professional decision-making. In this vein, the process of creating the course will address particularly the virtues of justice and practical wisdom (*prudentia*) as the conceptual framework needed to develop *ad hoc* self-reflection resources that students will apply in the context of professional work (see Gallardo, 2020)

Program

- LESSON 1 **Why and for whom should I work?**
The natural integration of personal and common good.
- LESSON 2 **What does it mean to be efficient at work?**
Assets, cooperation, and good living.
- LESSON 3 **What is good work? (1)**
From productivity to deliberation.
- LESSON 4 **What is good work? (2)**
From collaboration to fellowship.
- LESSON 5 **Is vocation just wishful thinking?**
A real prisoner's dilemma.
- LESSON 6 **How can we make work a dignifying activity?**
Care, service, and working conditions.
- LESSON 7 **How are we free at work, not just free to work?**
The quest for autonomy and deliberation.
- LESSON 8 **How is working experience a source of thriving?**
Virtues and capabilities at work.
- LESSON 9 **Are work and labor the same activity?**
The many forms of working according to ethics.
- LESSON 10 **Being professional, what does it mean?**
- LESSON 11 **What makes work illicit and corrupt?**
The problem of social and self-instrumentalization.
- LESSON 12 **In which sense do we gain something when we work?**
The cure of poverty
- LESSON 13 **What do we mean by a poverty salary?**
Compensations, justice, and labor markets
- LESSON 14 **What are we willing to leave behind with our working life?**
Donation and transcendence of Work

Disciplinary approach

Among other philosophical approaches to business and professional ethics theory, virtue-based business ethics theory has introduced an original conceptual framework. This development is grounded in both neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics (Sison & Ferrero, 2015) and New Natural Law theory, which is a legacy of Thomistic and Scholastic economic thought with especial particular emphasis on the common good theory (Melé, 2013; Elegido, 2009; Pinto-Garay et al., 2021, Arjoon, 2008; 2010)

These two philosophical traditions on virtue and common good—both traditions deeply related with the principles of CST has allowed contemporary philosophers to develop a more concrete conceptual foundation of economic and work ethics theory needed to understand business practices and modern corporations. Dierksmeier & Celano, 2012; Melé, 2009; Cremers, 2017; Alford & Naughton, 2001, Sison et al. 2016; Naughton & Cornwall, 2006). In this vein, both Alasdair MacIntyre and John Finnis, in a coherent manner with CST, have provided a strong ground for a reformulation of modern problems of society associated with markets, economy, justice, and, particularly, human work as excellence (MacIntyre, 2016, Finnis, 2011).

However, CST, even though is strongly associated with Virtue Ethics and a New Natural Law, is not simply a repetition of its ideas with a biblical language. On the contrary, CST brings a whole host of original wisdom to business and work ethics from a conceptual novelty based on the concept of human dignity. Pope John XXIII, in fact, referred to human dignity as the “one basic principle” of CST. This means that CST has an important value as a source for understanding in an original manner how work in its relationship with society, markets, modern corporations, and economic institutions must remain consonant with the principles of subsidiarity, solidarity, common good, participation, and, in particular, the personal value of each worker. Human dignity, indeed, is the seminal component of what CST has to offer in the realm of work ethics and the correct way to organize human labour in firms and markets.

The course should reflect the most significant ideas coming out of relevant research on flourishing from the relevant disciplines. The instructor should have a plan for integrating their research, teaching, and public engagement, and the course should reflect both breadth and depth of engagement in its design.

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