

Zacharias
MGT 365
Spring 2006

Business and Its Environment – Tentative Course Outline

The focus of this course is to understand in general the ways in which social issues are resolved in the United States (“policies”) and more specifically the roles businesses play in the shaping of those policies.

There are some conventional tools of analysis that I will expect you to develop by the end of the course as well as some knowledge about how the “system” works. The analytical tools reflect the following approaches: ethical, economic, legal, and political. In order to grasp these tools, we will consider a series of cases involving business and social issues – e.g., poverty, healthcare, environment, race and gender discrimination -- and you will be expected to apply the tools systematically to the cases.

Throughout the semester you will be working largely in groups of 2 or 3. On occasion I will ask you to appraise (and perhaps grade) one another’s work, both inter-group and intra-group. The idea behind this is to help each other learn to master the tools of analysis. Frankly, mastering these skills is very valuable, but will require effort on your part that goes beyond simply doing the minimum required.

The assignments will consist of ongoing case analyses and one large project due near the end of the semester. The large project will address the question, “why hasn’t the U.S. developed a national energy policy since 1975 to reduce dependence on foreign oil?” The specific requirements for this assignment will be elaborated in the coming weeks.

There will be one assigned text that you have to purchase: Thomas L. Friedman’s *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the 21st Century*. This book is currently available only in hardcover and may be purchased at Amherst Books, (8 Main Street in downtown Amherst on the Common – phone number, 256-1547). Other assigned texts will either be handed out in class or posted on the class website (I will notify you when the class website is ready).

Grades will be based on class discussion and class attendance (i.e., your “contributions to the class”), on the ongoing group assignments and on the final group project. I will also give you occasional quizzes if I feel the class as a whole is not keeping up with the readings. Generally speaking, since my aim is to get you to master the analytical tools I mentioned above and to learn about the system, I will give the highest grades to those of you who demonstrate that you’ve “gotten it.” If you don’t believe you have gotten it, then it means you should be working harder at it.

My email is LSZ@som.umass.edu; my office phone is 545-5683 (you can leave a message). I will have office hours on M-W from 10.30-11.30; you can also speak with me (or set up an appointment) after class.