

# BUSINESS, SOCIETY & ETHICS

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## Business Beyond Borders

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the reading:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

### Reading

- Thomas Donaldson, "Values In Tension: Ethics Away From Home".
- *Optional*: Katherine Zoepf, "Letter from Riyadh: Shopgirls".

### Questions

1. A royal decree in 2011 allowed women in Saudi Arabia to work in retail stores. The Hai'a (the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice) regularly prevents implementation of this decree because they believe it encourages immoral intermingling of men and women. (For more details, see the optional reading by Zoepf.) What does this reveal about the standards of Saudi culture when it comes to women working outside the home?
2. According to Cultural Relativism, right and wrong is solely a matter of social/cultural acceptance. What reasons does Donaldson give for rejecting the application of this theory to business ethics?
3. According to Ethical Imperialism, right and wrong is objective, universal, unchanging, and exhaustive across all societies and cultures. What reasons does Donaldson give for rejecting the application of this theory to business ethics?
4. What does Donaldson propose for businesses to ethically operate across multiple cultures? Does this approach provide a compelling alternative that avoids the problems of both Cultural Relativism and Ethical Imperialism?