Business, Society & Ethics

Spring 2019

The Corporation as Community & Citizen

Instructions

When doing the reading for this class, there are the two basic kinds of information you need to understand:

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 position on an issue, rather than another.

Reading

Solomon, R. C. (1999). *A Better Way to Think About Business*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Questions

As you read, keep these questions in mind:

1. What are the various reasons that Robert Solomon gives to justify his claim that business is a "great civilizing influence" (p. 35)?
2. Solomon claims that there is an "either/or paradigm" (p. 43) that dominates business. What is this? (Hint: it should seem familiar from our previous discussions of ethical egoism and shareholder theory.) What exactly should replace this paradigm?
3. In what ways is a business both a community and a citizen? What role does (individual and shareholder) profit play in this "better way" of understanding business?
4. Solomon concludes that "it is the virtue of ... ethics ... to be rather an intrinsic part and the driving force of a successful life well lived" (p. 67).

    Why does Solomon believe this is important? Does his view of a business as both a community and a citizen succeed in making business ethics an intrinsic part of business?

To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages.

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.