

So You Are Selling Asbestos: The Ethics of Threatened Industries

BROWN BAG SERIES

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Hoffman Center
for Business Ethics

Friday, April 12th, 12:30 P.M. – 1:45 P.M.

Online: [Register](#) for zoom

Business ethics typically concerns how industries or firms could be reformed (rather than shrunk or destroyed) to avoid bad effects or bad behavior within an industry. Sometimes, however, a significant proportion of non-commercial actors (e.g. civil society and government organizations) aim to phase down or even phase out whole industries for ethical reasons. Central examples include the tobacco industry, the asbestos industry, and the fossil fuel industry. I call these “threatened industries”. I will argue that the ethics of threatened industries form an important special topic in normative business ethics, both in terms its of impact and nuance. I first argue that there is an open question about the permissibility of some defensive activities of firms in threatened industries. Then, using the distinction between reluctant and recalcitrant firms, as well as the distinction between good faith and bad faith firms, I sketch some possible duties that each kind of firm might have when they find themselves in a threatened industry.



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