

## **Business Ethics**

BUS4070

**Marshall Goldsmith School of Management**

**Alliant International University**

Thursday 5:30-10 PM Room M-7

David A. Bainbridge, Associate Professor

All notes are on Blackboard web. Keep your email updated on Blackboard so you receive announcements and emails. Reading assignments are posted on Blackboard—keep up!

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### **I. Rationale:**

Ethics involves the relations between people, between people and community, people and animals, and people and the world. In this course we will explore the evolution of business ethics. The notion of “business ethics” has suffered considerable damage in recent years as leaders have looted companies, cheated stockholders, abused stakeholders, and transferred costs to the public. The global “race to the bottom” has also encouraged ethical lapses as companies search for the lowest price – at any cost. These abuses have led to a renewed consideration of business ethics and several companies have emerged with strong ethical standards for treating customers, employees, shareholders, stakeholders, and the environment. These companies have generally done well, supporting the argument that ethical behavior is rewarded.

### **II. Course Description, Purpose, Student Learning Outcome and Assessment:**

#### **A. Course description:**

In this course we look at the history of business ethics, beginning with the abolition of slavery (in most parts of the world), the rise in equality between race, class, and gender; the rise of organizations devoted to the ethical treatment of animals; the discussion of a land or earth centered consciousness, and the evolution of thought and practice on sustainable management of resources. These combine to help define ethical considerations for business in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This course will rely heavily on student discussion and participation. The answers to these questions are still being worked out. This course will examine these issues from a variety of perspectives, from philosophy to sociology, psychology to accounting and finance. It will also review differences between cultures and levels of development and explore lessons from the past that may help guide us to a better future.

#### **B. Purpose of the course:**

Students will demonstrate a global outlook and understanding of the meaning of business ethics.

Students will develop increased respect and understanding of "others" and the skill, intelligence, persistence and hard work needed to prosper in difficult and changing environments.

Students will explore their ethical outlook and expand their ethical awareness.

Students will be aware of ethical implications of technology.

Students will apply critical analysis skills to interpreting current business ethics problems and case studies.

#### **C. Specific learning outcomes:**

At the completion of the course students will:

1. Understand the application of business ethics to management issues.
2. Understand the various processes involved in the developing ethical frameworks for company operations and individual behavior.
3. Appreciate how business ethics impact the success of enterprises.
4. Recognize the internal and external forces [the regulatory and competitive environment] that define the context in which managers are expected to make ethical decisions.
5. Know the personal attributes and behaviors common to ethical managers.

6. Understand the competitive environment of the world today and how ethical behavior can improve competitiveness.
7. Understand the advantages and challenges of ethical behavior in the business world.

D. Instructional strategies:

Class activities include lecture and discussion, individual and group projects, research, video, on-line assignments, role playing and simulations of meetings involving complex management problems. Skill development in research, analysis, and communication are key elements of this course.

E. Description of course requirements:

Course requirements and grading

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Percent of grade</u>
Dates are subject to change.		
#1 In class assignments (typ. 5 pts each case studies, memos, problems) any day		25%
#2 Paper (1200 words ± 50 words)	4/20	20%
#3 Midterm	4/27	20%
#4 PRESENTATION on a key question of business ethics	5/18	5%
class participation	every day	10%
#5 FINAL	5/18	20%

*Last day to withdraw in good standing*

**III. Course readings and Materials:**

Required text: **Let My People Go Surfing**. 2005. Y. Chouinard. Penguin Press, NY.

Class notes are posted on the AIU Blackboard web site. Make sure you can get in to the Blackboard site. Keep your email updated. Watch for notices.

Key Journals:

Academy of Management Journal, Harvard Business Review, Business Ethics, Fast Company, Business Week, Fortune, In Business, Sustainable Industries Journal. HR Magazine, Organizational Dynamics, Management Accounting, Journal of Cleaner Production, Journal of Industrial Ecology.

WEB

Ethics Resource Center	<a href="http://www.ethics.org">www.ethics.org</a>
International Society for Industrial Ecology	<a href="http://www.yale.edu/is4ie/">www.yale.edu/is4ie/</a>
US Society for Ecological Economics	<a href="http://www.ussee.org/">www.ussee.org/</a>
Net Impact	<a href="http://www.net-impact.org/">www.net-impact.org/</a>
Factor 10	<a href="http://www.factor10-institute.org/">www.factor10-institute.org/</a>
ICC Sust. Dev.	<a href="http://www.iccwbo.org/index_sdcharter.asp">www.iccwbo.org/index_sdcharter.asp</a>
Business and sustainable development	<a href="http://iisd.ca/">http://iisd.ca/</a>
WBCSD, 2000	<a href="http://www.wbcd.ch/">www.wbcd.ch/</a>
Global Reporting Initiative	<a href="http://www.globalreporting.org">www.globalreporting.org</a>

#### **IV. Policies and Procedures:**

Policies Related To Class Attendance, Lateness, Missed Exams or Assignments

#### **V. Course Schedule and Outline**

A short history of ethics, **rules to live by** **Intro and History**

Odysseus – people as property, What is a slave?

Slave rebellions and the abolition of slavery in America, slavery today

Sharecropping and indentured servitude (slavery without the shame),

forced labor camps, sweatshops, sex trade slaves, prison labor

The relation between races and sexes. The suffrage movement

Racism, apartheid, caste systems, religious persecution.

Historical controls on community behavior, taboo, shame, guilt and religion.

Current controls on community behavior – law/peer pressure –the problem of TV

Specieism – the relations between people and animals **Philosophies: product/production**

The movement toward animal rights and animal liberation

The rise of ecoterrorism – ELF, ALF

The relations between people and the environment **Philosophies: distribution/image**

Tribal, historical, George Perkins Marsh, Thoreau, Aldo Leopold

Arne Naess and the deep ecology movement

Ethics among people, equity and justice **Philosophies: financial/HR**

Full cost accounting

Equity

A living wage

Environmental justice in the U.S

Business responsibility and ethics **Philosophies: Management/environmental**

Legal, ethical, moral, just

To employees

To shareholders

To stakeholders

To the environment

Corporate social responsibility **1% for the planet**

Facilities, operations, products, services, supply chain, stakeholders

The CSR screens

The 1% group (and 10%)

Ethics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century **Summary**

Responsibility to current and future generations

Responsibility to employees, shareholders and stakeholders

Responsibility to biodiversity and Gaia

Review

Presentations

Final Exam

#### **Assignments due dates and descriptions.**

Please let me know if assignments will be late for valid reasons.

**Task 1. In class assignments** – any class. Typically 5 points each.

ANY DAY

These may include case studies, team work, mini-quizzes, or problems -- like crafting an email related to a complex ethical challenge within a company or between companies. Be prepared by reading the book, course materials, and suggested reading on the web.

**Task 2. Paper – Business Ethics**

April 20

Put a word count under the title or heading. Your paper will discuss an issue related to ethical business management. This represents 20% of your grade. Make it count. This should be a personal paper discussing your understanding or belief about an issue of business ethics. References and citations are required. Textbooks, encyclopedias, newspaper articles, and magazine articles can be useful to get started, but **use professional journals, scholarly books, and original source material** as primary reference (**minimum 4 non-internet citations**). Use Academic and Business search engines at the AIU library – set them for full text and peer reviewed.

When you use an investigator's data, state his/her ideas, paraphrase his/her conclusions, or quote him/her directly, you must cite the reference source (MLA, APA or CSE reference format may be used). Typically this is done with (author last name, year) in the text with full reference at the back of the paper. For help google to: OWL Purdue references writing.

I learn from these papers and may look up the original papers. **TALK TO ME ABOUT YOUR TOPIC AND SOURCES.** (I can suggest topics and help with references in some cases). You might begin with a computer data base search on Google, but search results from the **Business Source Premier data base** should be attached to your paper.

**PROPER CITATION AVOIDS THE POSSIBLE CHARGE OF PLAGIARISM – WHICH IS USING MATERIAL THAT IS NOT YOUR OWN AS IF IT WERE. THIS IS THEFT, AND THE CONSEQUENCES ARE SEVERE! I CHECK THE INTERNET FOR SUSPICIOUS PAPERS!**

The papers are due early so they can be graded, returned to you and improved. The first correction is peer review. Then my review. You then get to correct and resubmit as many times as the schedule allows.

GRADING CRITERIA for PAPERS

1) Innovation and thoughtfulness	10
2) Analysis/understanding	20
3) Structure and order, focus	10
4) Grammar	10
5) Style-is it engaging, readable	20
6) Citations correctly used	10
7) Quality of citations and searches	20
Total score possible	100 points

Deductions for spelling errors or wrong words	-5 points for each word
No word count	-10
No quick search summary attached (Google, ASP, etc)	-10
No page numbers	-20
Deductions for incorrect margins	-5
Inappropriate topic (doesn't answer question asked)	up to -30
Plagiarism (inappropriate copying of web page or other paper - no points for paper, no rewrite)	

**Yes-it is possible to get a negative score on your paper – edit carefully and follow instructions.**

Don't panic. You get to rewrite and resubmit.

**Task 3. Midterm - multiple choice and essay questions.**

April 27

**Task 4. Presentations**

May 18

Presenting ideas is critical in business and community life. Your short talk can cover any important business ethics topic or a business ethics case study. Choose something of interest for your classmates. Expect to talk for 7 minutes exactly. Turn in your ppt (printed 6 slides per page, typically 12 pages max). Master power point!

Your time as presenter is valuable - make sure it counts. We only remember about 10 percent of what we read, 20 percent of what we hear, 30 percent of what we see, but 50 percent of what we hear and see. And more if we get to touch!

Guidelines for a typical talk

- Outline (often not included on a very short presentation like this)
- Introduction,
- Key points
- Conclusion

Graphs and tables (simplify for easy readability), remove data that isn't important, use color to highlight differences. The challenges with maps include picking the appropriate scale and presenting the needed information in a user friendly way.

General guidelines:

6-7 lines per page (10 lines max)

Only 6 to 7 words per line

Typically about one slide for every 1-2 minutes.

#### **Task 5. Final exam**

May 18

Covering the entire class, readings, discussions and role playing activities in class. Multiple choice and essay/problems. The final week will be busy. Be prepared. You will be given point totals in advance if possible so you can decide which assignments to rewrite and how hard to study for the final exam. All corrected assignments are due the final week. Please contact me as soon as possible if you will miss a test or presentation so we can make arrangements to make it up.