

SYLLABUS

COURSE: BUSINESS ETHICS AND SOCIAL PERFORMANCE
BSEO 2401
SUMMER TERM 2011-12
THURSDAY EVENING, 6:15 – 9:15PM
209 Mervis Hall

Professor: Rev. John C. Welch

Phone: (412) 924-1401

Email: jwelch@pitt.edu

Office: 335 Mervis Hall

Office Hours: Thursdays, 5pm
and by appointment

Course Description: In both professional and non-professional contexts people are faced with the difficulties of making ethical decisions whether they know it or not. In a season where the news is saturated with stories of corporate corruption or business practices that have led to negative social impact, it is easy for many to believe this is normative in corporate culture. The goal of this course is to provide a systematic overview of major topics in the field of business ethics that will help provide guidance in ethical decision-making with personal and corporate impact.

Course Objective: In this course the student should be able to develop a framework for making the best decision possible when facing ethical dilemmas by learning principles discussed in the readings, applying these principles to case studies, reflecting on ethical dilemmas in their own work environment. The course will:

1. Allow diverse sets of individual values to be explored within a classroom setting.
2. Sensitize the student to the nature and kind of ethical issues faced in business.
3. Provide some basic tools for ethical analysis.
4. Increase understanding of what is involved in creating an ethical work environment.
5. Explore business ethics across cultural and legal boundaries.
6. Identify the benefits of ethical and the costs of unethical decision-making.
7. Increase understanding of the importance of including corporate social responsibility in decision-making.

Katz Graduate School of Business
University of Pittsburgh
Business Ethics & Social Performance

Textbook: *Managing Business Ethics: Straight Talk About How to Do It Right*, 5th Edition, Linda K. Trevino and Katherine A. Nelson, 2011, New York, NY: John Wiley

Course Expectations: The student will be tested on the comprehension of materials in the assigned textbook through a mid-term and final exam. The remainder of the student’s evaluation will be through class participation, wiki dialogues on supplemental reading materials with fellow group members, and a journal of personal reflections examining ethical situations in their personal and/or work environments. The weighted breakdown is as follows:

Journal	10%
Wiki	20%
Participation	10%
Mid-term Exam	20%
Final Exam	40%

Course Schedule:

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
June 21	Introduction Straight Talk About Managing Business Ethics and Deciding What’s Right: A Prescriptive Approach Case videos:	Chapters 1, 2, 3 (Trevino)
June 28	Deciding What’s Right: A Psychological Approach, Addressing Individuals’ Common Ethical Problems and Managing Ethics and Legal Compliance	Chapters 4, 5, 6 Begin Wikis & Journals
July 5	Managing for Ethical Conduct and Ethical Problems for Managers	Chapters 7, 8
July 12	Midterm Exam Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethical Problems for Organizations	Chapters 9, 10
July 19	Documentary: “Inside Job” Managing for Ethics and Social Responsibility	Chapters 11 Economic Collapse Articles
July 26	Final Exam	

Journals: These journals are strictly a reflection on personal experiences both in and out of the workplace where the student may have encountered directly or indirectly an ethical dilemma. The student should identify the personal values in

tension if it is an experience outside of the workplace or the combination of personal and institutional values if it is a matter within the workplace. The student should choose and identify which prescriptive ethical approach you are applying in her/his analysis of the situation, e.g. consequentialist, deontological, or virtue. The journal will be confidential and graded on the following criteria: identification of the dilemma, thoroughness and clarity in the thought process. The purpose is to provide practice in identification and analysis of ethical situations and decision-making. The **deadline** for journals will be **July 26th**.

Wikis: Students will be divided into groups. Each group will select articles from one topic folder in CourseWebs. All articles are to come from the same folder. Each group member is to pick an article to read from the folder but everyone in the group is responsible for reading all of the selected articles of the group and commenting via the group wiki. The **deadline** for completing the article discussions will be **July 23rd**. Students will be graded on articulation of the main points of the article, identifying ethical issues, values, and a clear analysis from a prescriptive ethical approach.

Academic Integrity: Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscations of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy.

Disabilities: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412.648.7889/412-383.7355 (TTY), as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Articles for Wikis

1. WorldCom

- a. M. M. Scharff: "Understanding WorldCom's Accounting Fraud: Did Groupthink Play a Role?" *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies* 2005; 11(3): 109-118
- b. Kay E. Zekany et. al.: "Behind Closed Doors at WorldCom: 2001". *Issues in Accounting Education* 2004; 19(1): 101-117
- c. Kamala Gollakota et al.; "WorldCom Inc: Survival at Stake". *Journal of the International Academy of Case Studies* May/June 2004: 49-64

2. Enron

- a. Marianne M. Jennings; "The Critical Role of Ethics". *Internal Auditor* December 2003; 47-51
- b. David K. Millon; "Who Caused the Enron Debacle?". *Washington and Lee Law Review* 2003; 60(1): 308-330
- c. Paul M. Healy et al.; "The Fall of Enron". *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 2003; 17(2): 3-26
- d. William W. Bratton; "Enron and the Dark Side of Shareholder Value". *Tulane Law Review* 2002; 76: 1275-1361
- e. C. William Thomas; "The Rise and Fall of Enron". *The Journal of Accountancy* April 2002; 41-48

3. Economic Collapse

- a. Mark Levinson; "The Economic Collapse". *Dissent* 2009; 56(1): 61-66
- b. David M. Kotz; "The Financial and Economic Crisis of 2008: A Systemic Crisis of Neoliberal Capitalism". December 2008; 1-27
- c. Richard Swedberg; "The structure of confidence and the collapse of Lehman Brothers". *Markets on Trial: The Economic Sociology of the U.S. Financial Crisis: Part A (Research in the Sociology of Organizations, 2010; 30: 71-114*