

COURSE SYLLABUS**Course: BUSINESS ETHICS (MGMT 368W), Spring 2018**

Section 03 TTh 09:25 am -10:40 am, Room 501 Rockwell Hall

Section 02 TTh 10:50 am -12:05 pm, Room 501 Rockwell Hall

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Note: This document contains **clickable links** in the table of contents and in the body of the document. To follow the links, press the CTRL button while clicking the text.

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It is the student's responsibility to read and understand the syllabus and to be aware of any changes to the syllabus. Any changes to the syllabus will be updated on blackboard and students will be notified via a blackboard announcement.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The focus of this course is to help students improve their ethical decision-making skills and develop the ability to influence others through their writing. In particular, the course explores ethical decision-making tools that can be used to assess and resolve various ethical dilemmas commonly found in the students' lives and in many business organizations. It emphasizes the individual as the decision-maker and focuses upon ethical issues and dilemmas facing managers in most business organizations. Attention is allocated toward evaluating processes

organizations go through to act in a socially responsible manner, and balance the needs of multiple stakeholders. The course examines social and ethical problems existing in global societies where businesses operate.

MGMT 368W is a writing intensive (W) designated course.

No course pre-requisites.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, a student should be able to:

Learning Goal #1: Recognize ethical issues and dilemmas in business contexts and in the student's personal lives.

Learning Objective #1: Identify common rationales in response to the question: "Why be ethical at work?"

Learning Objective #2: Provide examples of common workplace practices that contain ethical dimensions or create an ethical dilemma.

Learning Objective #3: Know and explain the various elements of the "five universally accepted ethical principles."

Learning Goal #2: Design an ethically defensible resolution to an ethical dilemma.

Learning Objective #4: Summarize the major ethics theories and apply them to common workplace ethical dilemmas.

Learning Objective #5: Summarize the stages of cognitive moral development and apply them to common workplace ethical dilemmas.

Learning Objective #6: Construct a hierarchy of ethically defensible ethics theories and stages of cognitive moral development, and use them to analyze and resolve ethical dilemmas found at work.

Learning Goal #3: Understand the aspects of organizational design that influence a decision-maker in building an ethically defensible resolution to an ethical dilemma.

Learning Objective #7: Evaluate an organization's culture and ethical work climate and assess its influence on ethical decision making and behavior at work.

Learning Objective #8: Recognize and assess the impact of ethical leadership on individuals within an organization.

Learning Objective #9: Critique how various organizational influences (e.g., compensation schemas, informal versus formal systems, etc.) enable or impede the ethically defensible resolution to an ethical dilemma.

Learning Objective #10: Identify the current best practices of organizational ethics and compliance programs and global corporate citizenship practices.

Learning Goal #4: Analyze the influence various organizational stakeholders have on an individual's ethical decision making in a business context.

Learning Objective #11: Detect and evaluate the influential power of primary stakeholders (customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, board of directors) on the business decision-maker.

Learning Objective #12: Detect and evaluate the influential power of secondary stakeholders (governments, communities, competitors, the environment, media, trade associations, special interest groups) on the business decision-maker.

Learning Goal #5: Explain the interdependent nature of the business and society relationship.

Learning Objective #13: Define the notion of corporate social responsibility and apply it to business practices.

Learning Objective #14: Construct a socially responsible corporate citizenship strategy that benefits the firm and its stakeholders in the long term.

Learning Objective #15: Discover the benefits of global corporate citizenship (the integration of economic, social and environment responsibilities) to both the organization and its stakeholders.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Instructional activities will include reading assignments, in-class participation, writing assignments, presentations and exams. Each of these activities is covered in more detail below.

Reading assignments

For most lectures, one or more readings will be assigned from the textbook (details below) and sometimes from other sources made available on the course's Blackboard website. The deliverable for these readings will be a graded quiz to be completed on blackboard **by 9am on the due date**.

Course textbook

Textbook: Business Ethics by K. Praveen Parboteeah & John B. Cullen

Publisher: Routledge

ISBN-10: 0415893682 | ISBN-13: 978-0415893688 | Edition: 1

Reading quizzes

Reading quizzes will typically be multiple choice and taken on blackboard. There will typically be one reading quiz due by 9am before each class. (Occasionally there may be none or may be more than one.) To accommodate unexpected events and students' busy lives, (out of about 30 of these quizzes,) students' lowest 4 scores (including quizzes not attempted at all) will be dropped. Students may attempt each quiz up to two times if you wish; the final score will be the average of the attempt scores. After each attempt, students will be able to see their score per question but not the correct answers, which you are encouraged to figure out on your own. After the assignment due date, students will be able to see all correct answers and I will often review that quiz answers in class. For this reason, **no late submissions will be accepted**.

In-class participation

Students' voluntary participation in class by asking questions, answering questions or sharing relevant knowledge/experience enhances the learning experience. Specifically, it helps students improve their critical thinking and verbal communication skills; it helps the instructor to gauge which points need more (or less) attention; it triggers other students' own personal reflection, which increases their learning; and it provides an additional basis for assessing students' learning.

For this reason, class participation will be graded as follows:

- a) After each class, I will note down if each student contributed by (i) asking a reasonable question or (ii) effectively responding to a question from a peer or from the professor (iii) freely sharing any idea or experience related to the topic.
- b) Students’ participation grades (which does not include attendance) will be posted to Blackboard monthly with the points distributed evenly over the four months of the semester. Extra credit is available for exceptional participation.

Each month, participation grades will be assigned as follows:

Grade	Explanation / criteria
Zero / 2.5	I have no record or recollection of the student having participated that month
1/2.5	I have a record of the student making a quality contribution at least once during the month
2/2.5	The student made at least two quality contributions during the month
2.5/2.5	The student made three or more quality contributions during the month
3/2.5	The students’ contributions greatly enhanced the quality of the class

In case of any errors in my recall, which happens rarely, students can appeal their participation grades.

Written assignments

There are two writing assignments to be prepared by students individually. More specific guidelines will be provided on blackboard for each. In addition, guidelines covering writing style and format for this course are provided in a separate document on blackboard.

Case analysis paper

The case analysis paper, will be based on a case and will test student’s ability to apply different types of ethical reasoning to a business situation. Feedback on this paper will focus on clarifying the student’s understanding of the approaches and their application. Please see the more specific guidelines for this project on blackboard.

Global Corporate Citizenship (GCC) paper

For this assignment, students will be required to interview one or more employees of a firm and conduct additional research in order to assess the firm’s ethical work climate and citizenship towards stakeholders. **It is the most important assignment in the course, and you should allocate appropriate time and attention to it.** Please see the more specific guidelines for this project on blackboard.

There will be an opportunity to revise the GCC paper based on the professor’s feedback. However, the better your initial submission, the better the feedback that I can give you. Most students’ papers typically will require significant revision, and so you should allocate time to conduct additional research and improve the paper.

Group case presentation (GCP)

The group case presentation is an assignment that will be completed in teams of about 6 students. Each group is assigned a case involving a business choice and is responsible for assessing the pros and cons of various options and proposing a way forward.

Students will be assessed on the quality of the content of the presentation, for which all team members will be held responsible. Additionally, students will be individually assessed on the quality of their individual presentation based primarily on making eye contact with the audience (vs. reading exclusively from notes or the screen) and engaging constructively with the audience and instructor during Q&A. Deliverables for this include (i) the final presentation (ii) a self-assessment (iii) a peer assessment. More specific guidelines will be provided on blackboard.

Exams

Exams will be administered via blackboard and will have a similar format to the reading quizzes. However, whereas reading quizzes only test your ability to read and understand, exams test your ability to integrate and apply what we have learned in the course. Exams will be multiple choice and closed book and students will need to complete them at one sitting. Because exams are typically the hardest part of the course, I encourage students to use other instructional activities to prepare for the exams and also to cushion their final grade.

Course schedule

The course schedule describing the weeks during which topics will be covered, assigned readings, and due dates for assignments, will be provided in a separate document on blackboard.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Course assignments focus on helping students to acquire basic knowledge (e.g., via readings, lectures, research assignments), apply that knowledge to practice (e.g., via case discussions, written assignments and presentations), and contribute their knowledge to the class so that others may benefit (e.g., via in class participation and peer review). This is reinforced in the course design through methods of student-led teaching and repetition, which are discussed below in more detail.

Student-led teaching

Having the class be somewhat student led means that the instructor's role is primarily to facilitate by:

- a) Pointing students to material available on business ethics and citizenship that efficiently brings them up to speed on essential topics in this area
- b) Providing clarification on material covered by students. This is accomplished by addressing student's questions; providing guiding questions to stimulate deeper understanding of the material than might occur through surface reading; and providing opportunities for students to internalize the learning through application.
- c) Providing the opportunity (and associated guidance) for students to conduct their own research on relevant topics and to learn from real-life examples
- d) Providing feedback on student's level of learning through graded assignments

The student's role is to:

- a) Attempt the assignments
- b) Provide feedback on what is more or less useful in the assigned work and/or what can be improved
- c) Ask for clarification (of content or grading) and assistance where needed
- d) Indicate what further information s/he is interested in learning on the topic (e.g., by asking questions or proposing additional individual work as desired)

There are two major benefits to this approach. First, students learn more by doing and leading than by listening (Doyle, 2012). Secondly, by not spending time on activities that students can do themselves (e.g., reading available material), we make better use of the university's resources and your school fees.

Consistent with the approach of student-led teaching, reading and quizzes are assigned *before* class because learning is increased when students are given the opportunity to first attempt material and then address subsequent questions that arise while attempting the material (Braun & Drew Sellers, 2012; Brown, Roediger, & McDaniel, 2014; Enfield, 2013; Tune, Sturek, & Basile, 2013). The reading assignments also provide an opportunity for students to practice efficient reading and comprehension skills that are both valued in the workplace and necessary to become an independent learner (which is one of the goals of undergraduate education).

Having to complete reading assignments *before* class is naturally more challenging for students. I take several steps to help with this. First, to make them easier without having to dumb-down the questions, I give extra credit on the reading assignments. Second, **I am happy to answer by email, phone or in-person any questions that come up for students before or while they are completing the reading quizzes.** (Sometimes I respond to email questions within minutes.) With these adjustments, typically 10-20% of the class has achieved a score greater than 100% on the reading quizzes and the vast majority of students do better on the reading quizzes than the other assessments.

Repetition

Repetition is used in class to allow each student to reinforce and deepen learning at their own pace. Specifically, the material in assigned readings will be revisited again during class discussion; again on written assignments, in the group presentations and on the exams; and also in my feedback and reviews of each of these assignments. This means that students will have multiple opportunities (as many as seven different occasions) to grasp the material.

GRADING

All assignments will be administered via blackboard and graded on blackboard. For written assignments and presentations, I will typically share the grading rubric in advance.

Grades for multiple choice exams will typically be available within 2 business days after the exam. The same is true of final course grades. I will aim to grade written assignments within two weeks of the due date.

Focus of grading

The overarching learning goal of the course is for students to understand the consequences of ethics-related workplace decisions, be familiar with different approaches to ethical decision-making, recognize organization characteristics that influence ethical behavior at work, and understand how those organization characteristics are shaped by managerial choices and action. These learning goals will be the focus of course grading. Assignments will *not* assess the student's or professor's personal views on what is good, bad, right, wrong, acceptable or unacceptable. Rather the student is expected to demonstrate an understanding of effective approaches to minimizing unnecessary harm caused by organizational activity so that their personal assessment of what constitutes ethical behavior in business is an informed one.

Summary of grade allocation by instructional activity

Graded activities and their point allocations are summarized below. For due dates, see the course schedule.

Activity	Possible points
Preparation and participation	
Reading quizzes*	10
Contribution to class*	10
Written assignments	
Case analysis paper*	10
GCC paper*	25
Group assignments	
Group case presentation*	15
Exams	
Mid-term exam	15
Final exam	15
Total	100
Instructor's discretion**	1

* Extra credit possible

** At the end of the semester, I may adjust any individual student's grade by up to 1 point based on my personal assessment of the student's performance. This obviously will only affect students whose grades are borderline.

Final grades

I do not “curve” the final grade: Students’ individual academic performance is judged in relation to the material to be learned, not against the performance of others in the class. I use the full grading spectrum in which a grade of “A” represents “superior” work, B+ “very good”, B “good”, C “satisfactory” and a D is the “lowest passing grade” according to the [Duquesne explanation of grades](#). While I sometimes relax cut-offs for final grades to ensure that they are representative of meaningful differences among students, students may take the grade cut-offs below as guaranteed i.e. cut-offs will not be *higher*.

Letter grade	Cut-off
A	93%
A-	90%
B+	87%
B	83%
B-	80%
C+	77%
C	70%
D	60%
F	Below 60 %

Regarding pre-grading

I do not “pre-grade” assignments in writing as this reduces students’ ownership of the work and also amounts to grading the assignment twice. However, I am happy to discuss specific questions that students may have (in person or via phone).

Grade adjustments

I entertain challenges to my grading (typically these occur when a student interprets a question differently than intended) and am happy to review any grade you do not understand or believe to be erroneous or unfair.

- I *will* regrade questions if provided valid explanations that demonstrate a correct understanding / application of the material.
- I *will* adjust grades to correct my errors and, in considering final letter grade cut-offs, I will consider *any* evidence of proficiency that students provide.
- I *will not* adjust grades for any reason other than demonstrated proficiency. These include hurt pride, lost scholarships / tuition reimbursement / job opportunities, and risks to academic standing. In my view, adjusting grades for any reason other than demonstrated proficiency undermines the university grading system and is ultimately not good for students, universities, or recruiters.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Attendance and missed classes

I do not grade attendance *per se* but I learn the names of all students and grade participation. While I understand that students may legitimately miss class due to scheduling conflicts or unexpected events, I encourage students to aim to attend class regularly. Missing a significant number of classes will likely affect your participation grade and performance on other assignments.

Students are responsible for any missed classes. The material that is discussed in class will generally be new, and will be on the exams. If you do miss a class, I suggest you review the slides that will be posted after class and you may come to me with specific questions. (I will not repeat the lecture.) However, you should note that the slides are like an outline of the topics we visited during the class. They will not include the details of what we discussed on each topic. Also, if there are logistical points covered in class, I will typically send an announcement after class summarizing these for the benefit of those who were absent.

If I am to be absent, I will send a notice via email and Blackboard as far in advance as possible. In line with the Duquesne University [class attendance](#) and [excused absence](#) policies, if you are to be absent for a legitimate reason, notify me in advance via email of the good reason why you cannot attend class, including in the email documented evidence of the good reason. Good reasons include but are not limited to ill health or hospitalization, family emergencies, and attendance at events that advance your professional development (such as job interviews, academic cases and competitions etc.). I will treat such absences differently from unexplained absences.

Campus closings due to weather or other emergencies will be communicated via [DU alert](#). In the event of inclement weather, I will follow the campus policy: If the campus is closed, there will be NO class; if the campus is open, class will be held.

Respect in the classroom

In the classroom setting, the overarching principle is to behave respectfully towards all other participants. That includes arriving on time, listening when classmates are speaking, and addressing them in a respectful manner if you have questions. Being respectful to other audience and to me also means using laptops and other technology

in class only for class-related activity or emergencies. Cell phones should be silent during class. Step outside if you must use one. Please hold me to the same standards.

Conversational etiquette

In order to learn about Business Ethics, we must give each other room to be honest, to be unsure, to expose our own ignorance if needed so that we can learn. Additionally, we may sometimes discuss sensitive issues. To accommodate this, we will have a few ground rules:

1. All honest viewpoints are welcome and will be respected by the instructor and all participants regardless of whether we agree
2. Agreement with the instructor or any other student is never required
3. All viewpoints (including the instructor's) can be respectfully challenged

At times, I may play devil's advocate, be provocative, and challenge students to make a stronger argument. This is part of the teaching method. If at any time you are uncomfortable with the discussion, please let me know and I will consider your concerns.

Confidentiality

Any personal or professional experience shared during the course is to be considered confidential and should not be repeated or used outside of this class.

Collaboration

- Because any means to improve the student's comprehension of the assigned reading material is helpful, students are encouraged to collaborate on reading quizzes.
- Students may discuss individual written papers with each other. However, the final written paper must reflect the student's own individual work.
- Collaboration is *required* for the Group Case Presentation.
- Students should ***not*** collaborate on or discuss exams as these are intended to assess the student's independent grasp of the material at the time of the exam.

Response policy

Email is the means through which I prefer to be contacted, but for urgent issues please feel free to call me. I will typically respond to emails within 24 hours and aim to return graded work within 1 week.

Office Hours

Students planning to attend my formal office hours should notify me so that I ensure I am in my office at that time. I am also available outside of my formal office hours by appointment. Simply contact me in advance and I will make myself available in-person or via phone at a time that is convenient for both of us.

Late work

Exceptions to deadlines are granted only with prior approval. Late assignments may be assessed a penalty. Please see me if you cannot meet the assignment deadlines, so we can make other arrangements.

Note that late reading quizzes will receive a grade of zero. This is because the quiz answers are revealed after the due date, and so students submitting late quizzes would have an unfair advantage. This also helps ensure that students are keeping up with the material, so that they can keep up with the discussion.

Academic integrity

Students are responsible for understanding and following the [Duquesne University Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures](#) against cheating and plagiarism and for following the [student code of conduct](#). Evidence of cheating or intentional plagiarism will result in a zero grade for the assignment, and evidence of unintentional plagiarism will result in loss of credit for plagiarized material and an additional written assignment. I will screen written assignments through *SafeAssign* or *Turnitin*, plagiarism detection services that compare the work against a large database of past work. Don't let cheating or plagiarism cast doubt on your hard work and integrity.

Plagiarism and citing

To avoid accidental plagiarism, please be sure to cite your sources. The purpose of citing is twofold: First, to make it clear which new ideas *students* are presenting, and which ideas of others students are building on. And second, to allow the reader to independently verify the student's sources for claims based on material that is not in the paper. While I am not picky about citation format, the underlying principle is that it should be possible for me to find, based on your citations, any material that you reference. At a minimum, if the information cited is proprietary (such as a confidential company document), I should know the nature of the proprietary source on which your claims are based. Students can find here some guidance on how best to cite material:

<http://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/apa-format/>.

HOW TO DO WELL IN THE COURSE

Review the reading quizzes before reading the assigned material

Because reading with purpose leads to better comprehension than reading casually, I suggest students first review the reading quiz questions and learning objectives, and then read the assigned material with those questions/objectives in mind. Taking this approach can have many benefits including (i) avoiding having to re-read material to answer a question and (ii) you may find that the reading assignment does not require you to read all the material. (We will sometimes skip parts of chapters and papers.)

Get the easy participation points

Participation is 10% of the total course grade. A student who never participates could get zero out of 10 possible points for participation. On the other hand, a student whose participation is exceptional can get 12 out of 10 possible points for participation. This difference in **participation can change your course grade by a full letter grade**. Don't leave the points on the table.

Your notes are the most efficient way to prepare for exams

The course exams are challenging by design: they are supposed to help differentiate among students' varying levels of understanding.

The best way to prepare for these exams is to **take notes of what was new for you during each instructional activity**. What was new for you in the reading (and associated quiz)? What was new for you in the class discussion? What was new for you in the feedback on your paper? What was new for you in the mid-term exam? What was new for you in the group case presentations? Etc. Because we all come to the class with different knowledge and experience, what is new is different for each student. But, when studying for the exams, what was new for you provides the best return on time spent.

Why you should not rely on the textbook

By the time of the exam, the textbook will be old news. We will have gone beyond it and, in some case, disagreed with it. Imagine the course is a building: Assigned readings are the foundation. In-class lectures and discussions build the first level. Written assignments and presentations build the second level. The exams are the roof. During the exams, studying the textbook will mean you are still studying the foundation and missing

the overall picture. Also, much of what is in the textbook will be repeating things you already know. What would be much more efficient use of your precious time would be to have a record of what you didn't know at each stage of building the building, which you can review. Only your personal notes can provide that.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Academic support

If you require academic support, [student services](#) provide many free services to help you meet academic goals including a writing center, tutoring and mentoring services, and a learning skills center.

Students with disabilities

Duquesne University supports the efforts of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who require accommodations in fulfilling the course requirements should notify the instructor during the first week of class, and provide the instructor with a copy of their certifying letter. If you do not have such a letter, you can get one from the Office of Disabled Student Services (ext. 6658). Students can find here additional information about [Services for Students with Disabilities](#).

Military veterans

If you are a military *veteran* or are on active military duty, you can obtain [Support Services for Military and Veterans](#).

Mental health

School and life can be stressful. If you are in need of *mental health* services, the Duquesne [University Counseling and Wellbeing Center](#) offers free confidential personal psychotherapy and crisis support to all currently enrolled Duquesne students.

REFERENCES

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