BUSI 5802 B
Business Ethics
Winter 2025

Instructor: Gloria Karina Sánchez-Cuevas, MA, MBA, Ph.D. (Candidate)
Email: gloria.sanchez@carleton.ca
Phone: N/A
Office: N/A
Office Hours: By appointment only[1]

Class Meeting: Wed, 14:35 - 17:25,

Course Calendar Description: Impact of corporate decisions on society. Models and standards of business ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Methods of measuring and reporting. The rise of corporate power, stakeholder analysis, corporate governance, sustainability, national and international pressures on CSR.

Course Description:

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape and complex geopolitical landscape, ethical decision-making is no longer a secondary concern—it is a strategic imperative. Businesses are expected not only to generate economic value but also to operate responsibly, balancing financial performance with social and environmental impact. After all, ethical consequences arise from all choices—whether acknowledged or ignored—and even the decision to overlook them is itself an ethical choice. This course critically examines the ethical dimensions of business, equipping students with the analytical tools and frameworks necessary to navigate complex moral challenges in corporate environments.

Students will engage in rigorous ethical analysis, strategic decision-making, and applied problem-solving, addressing issues such as corporate responsibility, environmental sustainability, ethics of technology, decolonization, equity, diversity, and inclusion (DEDI) and labour practices. The course blends theoretical foundations with practical applications, emphasizing how ethical principles intersect with leadership, business strategy and stakeholder engagement.

Through case studies, interactive discussions, and team-based projects, students will refine their ability to recognize ethical dilemmas, critically assess competing interests, and develop practical, well-reasoned solutions that align with both business objectives and societal values. Special emphasis will be placed on social entrepreneurship and innovation, challenging students to design ethical business models that create sustainable, long-term impact.

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[1] I am available to meet with you in person or online for office hours. However, I do not have a fixed schedule for these meetings. If you need to ask me anything or want to book a consultation, please send me an email. I will try to get back to you within 24-48 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends. Please be aware that I usually use Brightspace to make class announcements, so make sure that you regularly check your Carleton email or the Brightspace portal to keep up with any updates. The office hours are intended to help you understand concepts and answer any questions that cannot be answered easily by consulting the course outline or by sending an email. Please do not use your personal email and only use your Carleton email account.

By the end of the course, students will be prepared to lead with integrity, anticipate ethical risks, and implement responsible business strategies that contribute to organizational success, stakeholder trust, and broader societal well-being.

Course Learning Objectives:

1. Develop a general understanding of ethical theories—including deontological, consequentialist, and virtue ethics approaches— and theories of justice to apply them to complex business scenarios.
2. Identify and critically evaluate ethical challenges in contemporary business, with a focus on environmental sustainability, technological advancements, decolonization, equity, diversity, inclusion (DEDI), and labour practices.
3. Assess the factors influencing ethical and unethical business decisions, integrating structured reasoning, risk assessment, and ethical leadership principles into strategic business choices.
4. Construct compelling, evidence-based arguments that justify ethical decisions while balancing organizational objectives, regulatory considerations, and stakeholder expectations
5. Design, analyze, and present alternative business models for social enterprises, demonstrating how ethical frameworks can be operationalized to drive meaningful impact within organizations and communities.
6. Synthesize course knowledge into actionable recommendations by applying ethical frameworks to real-world case studies, strategic business planning, and social entrepreneurship initiatives.

Course Prerequisites: N/A

Required Materials:
- Readings: All required and supplemental readings will be posted on Brightspace. Additional case studies and other materials will be added to Brightspace.
- The coursepack from Harvard Business Publishing includes the cases required for the course. The link to purchase the coursepack will be posted on Brightspace. You need your own coursepack material, and you cannot borrow/share access to the cases with other students. Note that the link will be provided in Week 1.

Final Exam Date: There is no final exam.

Drop Course Policy: The deadline for academic withdrawal is the last day of classes (each term).

Grading Scheme:

Individual Assessments	
Contribution to Class Discussion	20%
Ethics Toolkit Take-Home Exam	10%
Ethical Analysis	20%
Paper (15%)	
Presentation (5%)	
Team-Based Assessments	
Analysis of Emerging Ethical Issues in Business	20%
DEDI/Sustainability (10%)	
Ethical Tech/Labour Practices (10%)	
Social Innovation/Entrepreneurship Project	30%
Strategic Analysis (5%)	

Presentation (10%)	
Report (15%)	
TOTAL	100%

Each component of your grade will be assigned a percentage score. Your final course grade will be a weighted average of each of these components.

- <u>Contribution to Class Discussion</u> (individual, 20%): Students will be graded on their participation in class discussions. The grade will be based on both the quantity and quality of their contributions. Every time a student makes a quality contribution, they will earn one or more *participation tokens*. In week 6, students will exchange these tokens for their final participation grade. Please note that you will be fully responsible for your tokens once you receive them. If any tokens are lost, they will not be replaced. The class participation threshold for the maximum grade (15%) will be determined by the mean and standard deviation of tokens earned by the class.
- <u>Ethics Toolkit Take-Home Exam</u> (individual, 10%): This test will consist of two short essay questions where students apply ethical concepts and frameworks to case studies. Students must read carefully and answer the prompts using a combination of their personal judgment and the concepts discussed in class. Additional research materials (academic or professional resources) can be included. Four exam questions will be released on Brightspace on Week 1 (March 5, 2025) for students to choose any two of them. Each response must be 500-600 words, single-spaced, APA style. The exam will be submitted via Brightspace by Wednesday, March 12, 11:59 pm EST.
- <u>Ethical Analysis</u> (individual, 20%): Students will develop a comprehensive assessment of a specific emerging ethical issue facing today's organizations, whether for-profit or non-profit (4,000-5,000 words, single-spaced, APA style, due Sunday, March 30th). Potential topics may include environmental sustainability, decolonization, equity, diversity and inclusion (DEDI), technology, and labour. Students have the option to explore subjects that are not explicitly covered or only briefly addressed in the course material. Examples of such topics include public health, bioethics, and corporate political engagement. Regardless of the topic chosen, students must consult with the instructor to formulate and refine their specific subject of choice. The Ethical Analysis will (i) describe the ethical issue being analyzed and provide a preliminary discussion of the ethical questions it raises, (ii) present an analysis and assessment of the identified ethical questions, and (iii) focus on developing a practical solution for the ethical issues examined in the paper. More detailed instructions for each section will be provided in Week 2. In Week 4 (March 26th), students will present/pitch their analysis to their peers for feedback and discussion.
- <u>Analysis of Emerging Ethical Issues in Business</u> (team, 20%): In this team-based assessment, students will engage in critical analysis of contemporary ethical issues in business. Each team, assigned by the instructor, will examine a case study and systematically address three key components: (i) identifying the ethical issue and articulating the ethical questions it raises, (ii) analyzing and assessing the ethical dilemmas involved using the appropriate ethical frameworks, and (iii) developing a well-reasoned, practical solution to the ethical challenges presented. The assessment consists of two graded analyses, each worth 10%. In the second part of the class, teams will synthesize their findings into a short 1,500- 2,000-word in-class report and create a concise presentation deck to effectively communicate their insights and recommendations. The first analysis will take place in Week 2, followed by the second in Week 3.
- <u>Social Enterprise Project</u> (team, 30%): Students will form their own teams and complete the project in three phases:
    - *Strategic Analysis* (5%) – In Week 5, teams will select a social enterprise and conduct a strategic analysis of its current operations, assessing its business model, social impact,

and key challenges.

- *Business Model Mapping & Preliminary Pitch* (10%) – In Week 6, teams will use the Social Business Model Canvas to map the enterprise's business model, gather lean data, and propose alternative business models to increase impact. Teams will then present their initial findings in class for discussion, feedback, and brainstorming, enabling them to refine their approach based on input from peers and the instructor.
- *Final Report* (15%) – Due on April 11 at 11:59 PM EST, this 5,000–7,000-word report (APA style) will expand on the initial analysis, incorporate additional data, provide a detailed proposal for alternative business models that could amplify the enterprise's social impact, and reflect on the challenges faced by social enterprises. The report will be evaluated on the data collected, clarity of analysis, and feasibility of proposed innovations.

Late Assignments:

To ensure fairness for all students, penalties will be applied to late assignments without medical certificates: Failure to submit an assignment on time will result in an initial penalty of five (5) percentage points, followed by an additional (5) percentage points per day thereafter. For example, an assignment that would normally merit a grade of 20% would receive a grade of 15% if submitted after the deadline on the due date, 10% if submitted the following day, and so on.

Preparation and Participation:

- **In-Class Participation**: You will be expected to participate actively in class. In addition to voluntary class participation, I might randomly call on students to answer questions or share their insights. High-quality contributions include insightful questions, thoughtful critiques, relevant examples, and connections to course theories. To get more value from this course, I expect everyone to do the readings and be prepared to engage in class, complete all of the assignments and projects and treat classes as a networking opportunity.
- Expect to work with **case studies**. This course emphasizes the practical application of ethical frameworks to real-world business problems through case studies. Be prepared to read, analyze, and discuss case studies in class. Active participation in case discussions will contribute to your participation grade.
- **Reading**: Students are expected to devote time to reading the material and staying on top of business and economic news for their class participation. The course readings offer an excellent opportunity to learn to read efficiently and take away the most important information in less time.
- **Written Assignments**: Good writing is fundamentally good thinking that builds on a logical path. Writing forces you to organize your thoughts. While AI tools can assist, they cannot replace the critical thinking needed to stand out in today's job market. Strong, original writing shows your skills as a leader, whether it's crafting emails, reports, or social media posts. Use writing to sharpen your ideas and make your voice count—clear, precise, critical, and error-free.
- **Group Project and Assignments**: Teamwork is the foundation of this course. Your contribution to the group project will be assessed through peer evaluations, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and accountability. Be strategic in selecting a team for your Final Group Project. Teamwork is a networking opportunity and a chance to learn to work and adapt to a diverse workforce while working on an assignment. Most managerial and negotiation skills are developed in team assignments.
- **Assignment submission:** Unless otherwise specified, all assignments—individual and team-based—must be submitted via Brightspace by the specified deadlines.
- **Time Management:** Late submissions will incur penalties, so plan your time effectively. Adherence to deadlines reflects professionalism and discipline, qualities expected in the business world.

- **Participation tokens:** Your participation tokens reflect your engagement and contribution to the class. You lose tokens for:
  - Arriving late or leaving early: You'll lose tokens if you're more than 10 minutes late or leave early.
  - Missing key classes: Skipping the last two weeks of class in a row or being absent during your team's presentation will cost you tokens.
  - Non-collegial behaviour: Behaviours like aggressively dominating discussions, interrupting others, displaying hostility, overt rudeness, or showing bored body language (e.g., scrolling aimlessly on your phone) will lead to token loss.
  - Lack of preparation: Presenting ideas clearly showing you have not done the assigned readings or prepared for class will cost you tokens.
  - Disrespecting class time: Using class time to work on other coursework or engage in unrelated activities—including texting or scrolling on your phone—will result in lost tokens.

Being present, prepared, and respectful helps you keep your tokens and get the most out of this course!

Contribution to Program Learning Goals (MBA):

MBA Learning Goal	Not Covered	Introduced	Taught but Not Assessed	Taught and Assessed
MB1 Leadership and Collaboration *Graduates will be equipped for leadership and collaboration.*			✔	
MB2 Communication *Graduates will be effective communicators*				✔
MB3 Critical Thinking and Problem Solving *Graduates will be skilled in critical thinking and problem solving.*				✔
MB4 Functional Knowledge *Graduates will have functional knowledge of all areas of business.*		✔		
MB5 Global Business *Graduates will have an appreciation of the global environment of business.*		✔		
MB6 Ethical Reasoning *Graduates will be skilled in ethical reasoning and decision-making.*				✔

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Course Sharing Websites:

Materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Recommended Calculator for Examinations:

If you are purchasing a calculator, we recommend any one of the following options: Texas Instruments BA II Plus (including Pro Model), Hewlett Packard HP 12C (including Platinum model), Staples Financial Calculator, Sharp EL-738C & Hewlett Packard HP 10bII

Group Work:

The Sprott School of Business encourages group assignments. They provide you with opportunities to develop and enhance interpersonal, communication, leadership, followership and other group skills. Group assignments are also an effective way to learn integrative skills for putting together a complex task. Your professor may assign one or more group tasks, assignments, or projects in this course. Before embarking on a specific problem as a group, it is your responsibility to ensure that the problem is meant to be a group assignment and not an individual one.

> **Peer Evaluation for Group Work**
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> To deter social loafing and ensure fairness in grading, you will be asked to assess the contribution of your fellow group members. This information will be used when assigning the grade for the final project. Peer evaluation will be submitted via ITP. This assessment allows team members to gain insight regarding their teamwork competencies. After the Peer Feedback assessment is completed by all team members, a report is generated. The report rank orders the team member's strongest to developing competencies, along with suggested potential improvement behaviors. ITP ratings below 2.5 will lead to a deduction in the student's final grade.

Letter Grades:

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar (p. 34), the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 57-59	F = Below 50
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56	
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52	

Grades entered by Registrar:
    WDN = Withdrawn from the course
    DEF = Deferred

Academic Regulations:

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university's website, here: http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/

Requests for Academic Accommodation:

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

- **Pregnancy**
  Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

- **Religious Obligations**
  Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

- **Students with Disabilities**
  If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. https://carleton.ca/pmc/

- **Survivors of Sexual Violence**
  As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support/

- **Student Activities**
  Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, to both the individual student and the university, that result from participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit:

https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline/

Academic Integrity:

Violations of academic integrity—presenting another's ideas, arguments, words or images as your own, using unauthorized material, misrepresentation, fabricating or misrepresenting research data, unauthorized co-operation or collaboration or completing work for another student—are a serious academic offence, weaken the quality of the degree, and will not be tolerated. Penalties may include; a grade of Failure on the submitted work and/or course; academic probation; a refusal of permission to continue or to register in a specific degree program; suspension from full-time studies; suspension from all studies at Carleton; expulsion from Carleton, amongst others. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the Carleton University Student Academic Integrity Policy which is available, along with resources for compliance at: https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/

Centre for Student Academic Support:

The Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS) is a centralized collection of learning support services designed to help students achieve their goals and improve their learning both inside and outside the classroom. CSAS offers academic assistance with course content, academic writing and skills development. Visit CSAS on the 4th floor of MacOdrum Library or online at: https://carleton.ca/csas/

Other Important Information:

- Students must always retain a hard copy of all work that is submitted.
- All final grades are subject to the Dean's approval.
- For us to respond to your emails, we need to see your full name, CU ID, and the email must be written from your valid CARLETON address. Therefore, in order to respond to your inquiries, please send all email from your Carleton cmail account. If you do not have or have yet to activate this account, you can do so by visiting https://carleton.ca/its/get-started/new-students-2/

Covid-19 Information:

It is important to remember that COVID is still present in Ottawa. The situation can change at any time and the risks of new variants and outbreaks are very real. There are a number of actions you can take to lower your risk and the risk you pose to those around you including being vaccinated, wearing a mask, staying home when you're sick, washing your hands and maintaining proper respiratory and cough etiquette.

Feeling sick? Remaining vigilant and not attending work or school when sick or with symptoms is critically important. If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms do not come to class or campus. If you feel ill or exhibit symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately. In all situations, you must follow Carleton's symptom reporting protocols.

Masks: Carleton has paused the COVID-19 Mask Policy, but continues to strongly recommend masking when indoors, particularly if physical distancing cannot be maintained. It may become necessary to quickly reinstate the mask requirement if pandemic circumstances were to change.

Vaccines: Further, while proof of vaccination is no longer required as of May 1 to attend campus or in-person activity, it may become necessary for the University to bring back proof of

vaccination requirements on short notice if the situation and public health advice changes. Students are strongly encouraged to get a full course of vaccination, including booster doses as soon as they are eligible, and submit their booster dose information in cuScreen as soon as possible. Please note that Carleton cannot guarantee that it will be able to offer virtual or hybrid learning options for those who are unable to attend the campus.

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow requirements and guidelines regarding health and safety which may change from time to time. For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and health and safety requirements please see the University's COVID-19 website and review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Day	Topic/Agenda	Pre-class Prep
W1	March 5	Ethics Toolkit (Main Ethical Theories and Theories of Justice) ▪ Stakeholder Theory ▪ Main ethical theories: deontology, consequentialism, virtue ethics ▪ Code of Ethics ▪ Conflict of Interest ▪ Theories of Justice ▪ Capability Approach ▪ Care Ethics ▪ Corporate discourse and epistemic justice	N/A
W2	March 12	Emerging ethical issues affecting businesses pt. 1 • Environmental Sustainability: Environmental justice, CSR, SDGs, environmental change processes and sustainability strategies • DEDI: Intersectionality, equity deserving groups in Canada, corporate DEDI strategies, affirmative action, crisis and reputation management	**Reading** ▪ Hoffman, W. M. (2014) 'Business and Environmental Ethics', in Hoffman, W. M. *Business ethics: Readings and cases in corporate morality*. ▪ Zheng, L. (2025) What Comes After DEI ▪ Huseynova & Snover (2023) How can business prioritize justice? Read Assigned Case Study Ethics Toolkit Take-Home Exam (due)
W3	March 19	Emerging ethical issues affecting businesses pt. 2 • Technology: AI and business practices, privacy and surveillance, moral and legal responsibility in robotics, automation and the future of work. • Labour: Hiring and firing, compensation, meaningful work, unionized labour, mental health, labour practices and fair trade.	**Reading** ▪ 'Preface', in Patrick Lin, Keith Abney, and Ryan Jenkins (eds) (2017). Robot Ethics 2.0: From Autonomous Cars to Artificial Intelligence. ▪ Hoffman, W. M. (2014) 'A Kantian Theory of Meaningful Work, in Hoffman, W. M. *Business ethics: Readings and cases in corporate morality*. Read Assigned Case Study
W4	March 26	Individual Ethical Analysis Presentations	N/A Individual Ethical Analysis: presentation in-class; paper due Sunday, March 30th
W5	April 2	Beyond "Good" Corporate Citizenship	**Reading**

		- Revisiting responsible leadership - Intro to critical management - Corporate activism - Social Innovation Social Innovation Analysis	- Friedman, M. (n.d.). The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits. In *Corporate Ethics and Corporate Governance* (pp. 173–178). - Marens, R. Let them Eat Ethics: Hiding behind Corporate Social Responsibility in the Age of Financialization. - Social Business Model Canvas, Stanford University
W6	April 9	Team Presentations-Social Innovation Projects	Review other team's presentation materials