



BUSI4601B

Ethics and Business

2026 / Fall

Professor: Dr. Rodney Nelson **Email:** rodney.nelson@carleton.ca
Office: NI 7017
Office Hours: By request online
Course meets: Tuesdays, 2:35 pm -5:25 pm
Modality: In person

1. Course Calendar Description:

Use of ethical reasoning to analyze business decisions. The ethical content of these decisions. The role of ethics in business situations. Practice in ethical reasoning. Major ethical systems.

2. Course Descriptive

The overall performance of an organization depends to a significant extent on the behaviour of its management with respect to ethical issues: failure to attend to such issues can produce very undesirable and even disastrous consequences. As a result, business ethics and corporate social responsibility have become very salient topics to business practitioners and the general public. We have all heard about many instances of unethical behaviour by businesspeople and the negative implications of such behaviours for the firms where they work: ethically questionable activities of managers at a wide variety of organizations have had profound effects on companies, employees, shareholders, and a wide variety of other stakeholders. The vast majority of ethical issues in organizations, however, do not get discussed in the media. All of us, in our working lives, face ethical issues on a regular basis, whether or not we notice them. This course is designed to facilitate the recognition of ethical issues, decision-making about ethical issues, and promotion of ethical behaviour within organizations

3. COURSE PREREQUISITES Precludes additional credit for BUSI 4705.

The School of Business enforces all prerequisites. It is your responsibility to ensure that you meet the prerequisite requirements for this course. Lack of prerequisite knowledge may lead to failure in the course. Only the Undergraduate Program Advisor can waive prerequisite requirements. Precludes additional credit for BUSI 4601.

Prerequisite(s): fourth-year standing in B.Acc. or B.Com. Note that B.Com. concentration in International Business students require BUSI 4705.

4. COURSE OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the course are to:

- Explore your own values and ethics
- Enhance your understanding of the importance of ethics in business
- Enhance your understanding of the relationship between a firm's ethical/social performance and its financial performance
- Enhance your ability to recognize and identify ethical issues
- Enhance your ability to use ethical principles to reason toward satisfactory solutions to ethical dilemmas
- Enhance your ability to “manage for ethics” in organizations

What to expect: This course prepares students for ethical decision-making and effective communication in business organizations. It emphasizes core ethical theories, corporate responsibility, governance, compliance, and the practical application of ethics in everyday business operations. Students will learn to identify ethical issues, analyze dilemmas using established frameworks, and design policies and practices that promote integrity, accountability, and a strong corporate culture.

Course topics include: ethical theories and decision-making models; stakeholder theory; corporate governance and accountability; codes of conduct and compliance programs; conflicts of interest; whistleblowing and reporting mechanisms; ethical leadership and tone at the top; fairness in hiring, promotion, and compensation; supply chain responsibility; customer and employee privacy; marketing, advertising, and truthful communication; sustainability and corporate social responsibility; risk management and crisis ethics.

Learning approach: The course combines lectures, interactive discussions, case-based problem solving, and real-world scenarios. Students will analyze business case studies to understand conflicts of interest and how conflicting values give rise to ethical dilemmas and, of course, humour!

Outcomes: By the end of the course, students will better understand their own values and ethics, be able to apply ethical frameworks to business decisions, evaluate and recommend corporate policies that reduce ethical risk, communicate ethical concerns effectively, and contribute to building and sustaining an ethical organizational culture.

Learning Goals Matrix

Program Learning Goal	Competencies Introduced (only)	Competencies Taught but Not Assessed	Competencies Taught and Assessed
BC1 Knowledge Graduates will be skilled in applying foundational business knowledge to appropriate business contexts			
BC2 Collaboration Graduates will be collaborative and effective contributors in team environments that respect the experience, expertise and interest of all members.			
BC3 Critical Thinking Graduates will be discerning critical thinkers, able to discuss different viewpoints, challenge biases and assumptions, and draw conclusions based on analysis and evaluation.			
BC4 Communication Graduates will be effective and Persuasive in their communications			

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).

Group work

The Sprott School of Business encourages group assignments in the school for several reasons. They provide you with opportunities to develop and enhance interpersonal communication, leadership, followership, and other group skills. Group assignments are also good for learning integrative skills for putting together a complex task. Your professor may assign one or more group tasks/assignments/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. It is also your responsibility to reach out to your group members right away to set times and expectations of work to be completed.

5. COURSE MATERIAL

Required Text. All reading materials will be posted on Brightspace.

Supplemental Reading and Links. Extra reading material links will be posted on Brightspace.

Recommended Readings List (access through your library or directly online)

The following are non-mandatory readings but are recommended for students who wish to enhance their understanding of business ethics and are encouraged to read the following:

Business Ethics Reading List

Core Textbooks

- Boatright, J. R. (2019). *Ethics and the Conduct of Business* (8th ed.). Pearson.
- Crane, A., & Matten, D. (2020). *Business Ethics: Managing Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability in the Age of Globalization* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, Craig E. (2018). *Organizational Ethics: A Practical Approach* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Kernohan, Andrew. (2015). *Business Ethics: An Interactive Introduction*. Broadview
- Treviño, L. K., & Nelson, K. A. (2017). *Managing Business Ethics: Straight Talk About How to Do It Right* (7th ed.). Wiley.
- Koehn, D. (2026). *The Future of Business Ethics: The Corporate Form, Virtue Ethics, and Emerging Issues*. Springer (Issues in Business Ethics, Vol. 57).
- OpenStax. (2026). *Business Ethics*. Free open-access textbook.
openstax.org/details/books/business-ethics

General Reference

- Werhane, P. H. (Ed.). (2021). *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Management: Business Ethics*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Corporate Governance, Leadership & Decision-Making

- Brink, A. (2011). *Corporate Governance and Business Ethics* (1st ed.). Springer.
doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-1588-2
- Flynn, G. (2008). *Leadership and Business Ethics* (1st ed.). Springer.
doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-8429-4
- Brunsson, N. (2007). *The Consequences of Decision-Making*. Oxford University Press.

Values & the Psychology of Ethical Behaviour

- Arieli, S., Sagiv, L., & Roccas, S. (2020). Values at work: The impact of personal values in organisations. *Applied Psychology*, 69(2), 230–275.
- Ros, M., Schwartz, S. H., & Surkiss, S. (1999). Basic individual values, work values, and the meaning of work. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 48(1), 49–71.
- Schwartz, S. H. (2012). An overview of the Schwartz theory of basic values. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1), Article 11. doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1116

Cross-Cultural Business Ethics

- Ermasova, N. (2021). Cross-cultural issues in business ethics: A review and research agenda. *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 21(1), 95–121.
- Eng, P. H., Liu, R. L., Reheman, A., & Ling, J. (2026). The roots of responsibility: How individuals' ethics shape corporate culture. In R. El Khoury (Ed.), *Business Models of the Future* (Studies in Systems, Decision and Control, Vol. 238, pp. 467–476). Springer. doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-85398-2_41

Codes of Conduct & Ethics Programs

- Somers, M. J. (2001). Ethical codes of conduct and organizational context: A study of the relationship between codes of conduct, employee behavior and organizational values. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 30(2), 185–195. doi.org/10.1023/A:1006457810654
- Kaptein, M. (2015). The effectiveness of ethics programs: The role of scope, composition, and sequence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 132(2), 415–431. doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2296-3

Accountability, Compliance & Whistleblowing

- Weaver, G. R., & Treviño, L. K. (1999). Compliance and values oriented ethics programs: Influences on employees' attitudes and behavior. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 9(2), 315–335. doi.org/10.2307/3857477
- Kaptein, M. (2022). How much you see is how you respond: The curvilinear relationship between the frequency of observed unethical behavior and the whistleblowing intention. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 175(4).
- Edirisinghe, C. L., Vleugels, W., Flatau-Harrison, H. et al. (2025). What happens after whistleblowing? A systematic literature review of the post-whistleblowing phase. *Journal of Business Ethics*.

Technology & AI Ethics

- Sison, A., Ferrero, I., García Ruiz, P., & Kim, T. W. (2023). Editorial: Artificial intelligence (AI) ethics in business. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14:1258721. Open access. doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1258721
- Chen, Z. (2023). Ethics and discrimination in artificial intelligence-enabled recruitment practices. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10, Article 567. Open access. doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02079-x
- Eng, P. H., Manohar, S. K., & Liu, R. L. (2025). An exploratory study on the dark sides of artificial intelligence adoption: Ethical concerns of ChatGPT. In B. Alareeni & I. Elgedawy (Eds.), *Opportunities and Risks in AI for Business Development* (Studies in Systems, Decision and Control, Vol. 546). Springer. doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-65207-3_25

Corporate Scandal Case Studies

- Elson, R. J., & Ingram, P. (2018). Wells Fargo and the unauthorized customer accounts: A case study. *Global Journal of Business Pedagogy (GJBP)*, 2(1).
- O'Hanlon, R., Freilich, J. D., & Chermak, S. (2025). Exploring the role of corporate culture in financial crimes: A case study of FTX. In H. Y. Somé, N. Boubakri, & O. Guedhami (Eds.), *Corporate Governance, Organizational Ethics, and Prevention Strategies Against Financial Crime* (pp. 339–368). Springer.
- Thum, S. (2026). Influencers, ESG, and social media backlash: What SHEIN's public relations strategy teaches about business ethics and accountability. SAGE Publishing.
- Balabanova, E., Palmieri, R., & Liu, Z. (2025). Twitter (X), fast fashion and backlash: Argumentation and ethics on social media. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*.

Applied / Practitioner

- Murry, J. (2019). Conflict of interest: Give me examples. *The Balance of Small Business* (online). thebalancesmb.com/what-is-a-conflict-of-interest-give-me-some-examples-398192
- Management Study Guide. (n.d.). Value and ethics in business (online). managementstudyguide.com/values-ethics.htm
- University Canada West. (2026). What are business ethics and why are they important? (online, blog). ucanwest.ca/blog/business-management/what-are-business-ethics-why-are-they-important

6. METHOD OF INSTRUCTION:

This course uses a mixture of learning styles, including lectures, group work, and presentations. The grade may also include a peer-reviewed component, which will be discussed in class. It is up to you to do the readings and come to class prepared. In-class discussions are encouraged, and bringing your own personal experiences will make the class more relevant.

Note: Carleton requires that correspondence with professors be carried out through your Carleton email account.

I strongly suggest keeping a backup of all your work in case of the loss of your work.

7. EVALUATION:

Reflecting the real world of Ethics and Cross-Cultural Communications, your grade performance will depend upon both individual and group contributions as outlined below:

Grade Breakdown	% of Final Grade
a. Personal Assignments (2)	10%
b. Ethical Case Studies	30%
c. Framework for Ethical Decision-Making Quiz	20%
d. Group Project: (proposal 5%, Report 20%)	25%
e. Group Project: Presentation (group of 4 students)	15%
TOTAL	100%

Individual assignments:

- **Personal Assignments.** Students will complete two personal assessments intended to apply course concepts to their individual situations. Since ample time is provided for assignments, no credit is given for submitting **a late assignment**. A missed assignment, supported by medical documentation, will result in those marks being redistributed to the remaining assignments. Further instructions will be posted on the course Brightspace site.
- **Ethical Case Studies:** This assignment requires you to choose two of the provided case studies (one from each **Part A** and **Part B**). You will conduct an ethical analysis of the issues and provide well-thought-out, well-supported responses, drawing on class material and outside sources to support your arguments.
- **Framework for EDM Quiz:** a quiz based on class lectures and readings.

Group Assignments:

- **Group Learning Project (GLP).** The primary objective of group projects in this course is to provide experiential learning in the skills necessary for developing real business opportunities with high-performance teams. Your team will propose a current business ethics issue. You will present the issues fairly and equitably, considering both sides of the argument through ethical, corporate and public lenses. **Your arguments should be well articulated and supported.** Your team will submit a proposal and present their ethical case study to the class. Let the class material be your guide to understanding the issues that you may address. This project should be conducted in groups of 4. At the completion of the course, the instructor may adjust group assignment marks awarded to individuals based on peer feedback. The peer evaluation forms will be available before the class due dates. A quick proposal will be due to see if you're on the right track.
- **Group Presentation**
Your group will prepare and deliver your ethical case study presentation to the class. You are expected to work together and share the responsibilities of preparing and presenting the information. *Your final mark may be adjusted based on the peer review process.* Presentations are an important part of doing business and can take many forms and use various technologies. I encourage you to be creative and explore how you and your group communicate with others. Further details will be provided in class.

8. CONDUCT

Professional conduct is built upon the idea of mutual respect. Such conduct entails (but is not necessarily limited to):

- ***Attending the class.*** Each class benefits from the attendance and participation of all students. Your grade for participation will be affected by absences. Regular class attendance is important and required. I expect you to attend class and contribute to a quality discussion. Class and team discussion of the materials (e.g., readings, assignments, and cases) are an important part of the learning process. Missing more than 2 classes without a certified reason (e.g., a medical certificate) will lead to failure in this course regardless of the performance on assignments, presentations, and reports.
- ***Arriving on time.*** Late arrivals are disruptive to both lectures and class discussions and show disrespect to those who are on time.
- ***Team-based projects.*** Teams for the group projects are created in class during week one and two of the course. Students arriving after should email the course instructor.
- ***Being prepared for class.*** You should be ready to discuss any assigned readings and answer any assigned questions for each day's class.

9. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Course Sharing Websites

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Recommended Calculator for Examinations

If you are purchasing a calculator, we recommend anyone 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

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Grading

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
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F = Below 50			

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

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances*, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

Pregnancy Accommodation

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, please review the [pregnancy academic accommodation process](#).

Religious obligation

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, please review the [religious academic accommodation process](#).

Academic Accommodations for 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. For more details, visit the [Paul Menton Centre website](#).

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 where 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 the [Equity and Inclusive Communities website](#).

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must 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. For more details, see the [Senate Policy on Accommodation for Student Activities \(PDF, 25 KB\)](#).

Academic Consideration for Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances

Due to medical and other extenuating circumstances, students may occasionally be unable to fulfil the academic requirements of their course(s) in a timely manner. The university supports the academic development of students and aims to provide a fair environment for students to succeed academically. Medical and/or other extenuating circumstances are circumstances that are beyond a student's control, have a significant impact on the student's capacity to meet their academic obligations, and could not have reasonably been prevented. Students may request Academic Consideration for Coursework or Other Academic Deliverable. For further information please review the [Procedure for Academic Consideration](#) and the [FAQ page](#).

Scheduling and Examination Support

Scheduling and Examination Services provides various supports for both in-term and end-of-term tests and exams. Details can be found on the [Exam Support website](#).

Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity are a serious academic offence. 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 – weaken the quality of the degree and will not be tolerated.

Process: If an alleged violation occurs, all relevant documentation will be forwarded to the Dean. If the allegation proves true, the 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. **For a first offence, at a minimum, the penalty assigned will normally be a zero on the submitted work and at least a minimum full grade reduction of the final course grade. For a second offence, at a minimum, the penalty assigned will normally lead to a suspension from studies.**

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/>.

Sprott Student Services

The Sprott Undergraduate Student Services Office offers program advising and overall student success support. Our team is available to discuss your academic goals and your program progression plans. We can also work with you to develop strategies for success, including study skills for Business. If you experience any difficulty this term or if you would like to access support, please contact our team at academicadvising@sprott.carleton.ca.

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: carleton.ca/csas.

Important Information:

- Students must always retain a 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 may wish to do so by visiting <https://carleton.ca/its/get-started/new-students-2/>

10. AI USE

AI use in this course varies by assignment. Some activities will explicitly invite you to use AI tools; others will require independent work. Please read each assignment's instructions carefully for permitted and prohibited uses. When AI is used, be transparent about how you used it and apply critical judgment to verify its accuracy and relevance.



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SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS	ASSIGNMENTS (due dates)	Readings on Brightspace (read before class)
1	Sept 15	Intro – Introductions and First Impressions		Gilmore, Karjalainen;
2	Sept 22	Decision Making: Values and Ethics in action: personal reflections	Reflection writing – Your Values	Jackson, Nelson
3	Sept 29	Let's get our philosophy on! Decision-Making for Business Ethics		
4	Oct 6	Cross-Cultural Dimensions of Decision-Making	Reflection writing - Conflict	Soderberg & Holden; Shaw et al
5	Oct 13	Corporate Governance: Structures, Vision, Mission, and Mandate	Group Project: The Ethical Learning Project proposal due	Caprino;
6	Oct 20	Leadership, Corporate Culture, Values	Ethical Case Study due	Mayer & Bello
Fall Break October 26th to 30th Winter Break				
7	Nov 3	Values and Ethics Codes	Quiz	Codes found online
8	Nov 10	Developing an Effective Ethics Program (Code of conduct/ ethics, HR and conflict of Interest		Thorne and Saunders; Schwartz
9	Nov 17	Corporate Social Responsibility	Group Project: Ethical Learning Project report	Readings on Brightspace
10	Nov 24	Indigeneity and Understanding Ethical Dilemmas	Presentations due	
11	Dec 1	Class (Presentations)		
12	Dec 8	Class (Presentations)		