



BUSI 4601 (Section E): Business Ethics

Winter 2015

Southam Hall 317

Tuesdays, 8:35am – 11:25am

Instructor: **Cameron Sabadoz**

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Office Hours: Tuesday 11:30pm – 1:00 pm (by appointment).

Electronic office hours: Available (by appointment) via Skype or Big Blue Button.

Prerequisite: fourth-year standing in B.Com.

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.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The overall performance of an organization depends in part on the behaviour of its management with respect to ethical issues: both in the short- and the long-run, failure to attend to such issues can produce very undesirable, even disastrous results. Business ethics and corporate social responsibility have become very salient and familiar topics to business practitioners and the general public. We have all read or heard about many instances of unethical behaviour by corporate executives and the negative implications they have for the firms for which those executives work. Dubious activities of managers at a wide variety of businesses have had profound effects on companies, their employees and other stakeholders, and investor confidence. Most ethical issues in organizations, however, do not end up on the front page of the Wall Street Journal. All of us, in our working lives, face ethical dilemmas on a regular basis, whether or not we notice them. This course is designed to facilitate the recognition of ethical issues, making decisions about ethical issues, and modifying organizations

to promote ethical behaviour.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The overarching goal of this course is to introduce the concept of ethical responsibilities of business, and to combine theory, exercises, and cases to elaborate on key approaches to making decisions in situations that are laden with ethical content. We will also assess management approaches for facilitating ethical behaviour among employees and the creation and maintenance of an ethical organizational culture.

The main objectives of the course are to:

- Enhance the student's understanding of the importance of ethics in business.
- Enhance the student's understanding of social/ethical performance and its role in maintaining good financial performance.
- Enhance the student's ability to recognize and identify ethical issues.
- Enhance the student's ability to use ethical principles to reason towards satisfactory solutions to ethical dilemmas.
- Enhance the student's ability to "manage for ethics" in organizations

REQUIRED READINGS

The textbook for this course is:

Linda K. Trevino and Katherine A. Nelson. 2013. *Managing Business Ethics: Straight Talk about How to Do It Right*. 6th Edition. Wiley.

The textbook is available at the bookstore. Amazon and other online sources also have an ebook version available, which should be more affordable. Please contact the instructor prior to adopting an earlier edition, as they may not have all of the content required for this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation 10%

Personal Incident Report Assignment: 10%

Mid-term Exam: 25%

Group Position Paper (including Peer Evaluation): 20%

Group Presentation of Position Paper: 10%

Final Exam 25%

Total 100%

- You must complete ALL course requirements in order to pass the course!

- The requirement for satisfactory in-term performance is 50%.

*** In ALL cases of Academic integrity violations, the instructor's recommendation to the Associate Dean will be for an 'F' grade for the course. So, just do the work. If you try to use someone else's work, our course integrity software will probably figure it out, and you will probably fail the course. ***

COMMUNICATION:

The easiest way to contact me is by email at cameron.sabadoz@carleton.ca. If you write to me but do not get a response within a day or two, please send your message again and remind me. You may also call me on my cell phone if you require immediate communication; however, please do not call outside of the hours of 9 am and 5pm. If I do not pick up the phone, leave a message, and I'll call you back. I will sometimes contact the entire class by email through CULearn, so be sure to check that system frequently. I am less available on weekends, so if possible contact me during the work week.

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE:

Given that classes will involve considerable discussion of concepts, cases, and personal experience, student participation is an extremely important component of your grade. Your input is important to the learning environment, as other students can learn from your knowledge, opinions, insights, and experience. Your participation grade will be based to a large extent on the quality of your contributions to class discussions. It is therefore critical that you read any assigned material before class, be prepared to relate it to course concepts, and be prepared to share your opinions and listen (and perhaps respond) to the views of others in the class. If I seldom hear your voice during the term, you should expect a very low participation grade (i.e., zero to one percent). Of course, you cannot participate if you do not attend class, so attendance is requisite for receipt of a high grade in the course. All of you should aspire to get the full 10% for participation. There is no alternative way of fulfilling this course requirement.

Furthermore, as professionalism is one of the core learning goals of the Sprott School of Business, your participation grade will also depend on the degree to which you are able to interact respectfully with the instructor and fellow students. Hence, unprofessional behavior (e.g., chronic lateness, disrespectful or aggressive behaviour in person, email, or other communications, in-class phone calls, texting, disruptive talking) will all have a negative impact on your participation grade.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS

***** Further instructions concerning all the assignments and exams will be provided during class or through CULearn, so DO NOT use the following as your only guide when completing**

the assignments.***

ASSIGNMENT COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION:

All assignments except those clearly designated as group work are individual assignments, meaning you are not allowed to consult or work with other students on them, and doing so represents a violation of the university's Academic Integrity Guidelines. You may, however, have someone who is not in the course proofread your work in order to help you correct any problems with your written English, if necessary. All maximum lengths for assignments assume double-spacing, one-inch (minimum) margins, and 11-point (or larger) font. There are never any minimum page lengths in this course.

ASSIGNMENT ASSESSMENT:

All written assignments will be graded based on your appropriate application of course content and the coherence and logic of your arguments, but also in part on organization, grammar, spelling, and formatting. Every five spelling, grammar, or formatting errors may, at my discretion, result in a penalty of 0.25 to 1 percent, depending on the assignment. Proofreading is essential, and you should consult with colleagues (who are not in the course) or university writing advisors if necessary. You can find more information about help with your writing at the Student Academic Success Centre:

<http://www1.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/>

All assignments and exercises are due at the beginning of class on the due date, unless otherwise specified. They must be uploaded to CULearn (with the exception of the Values Assignment). Assignments and exercises received after the due date are immediately penalized 30%, and may not be graded until the end of the course. In addition to the above penalty, late assignments will be penalized 10% per day based on the date they are uploaded to CULearn. **You are responsible for maintaining copies of all your assignments until you have received your final grade.**

PERSONAL INCIDENT REPORT ASSIGNMENT:

For this assignment, you are required to identify an ethically questionable behaviour or decision that you have encountered in your work or school life, and describe briefly the ethical issues and ethical principles associated with that behaviour or decision.

GROUP POSITION PAPER AND DEBATE:

- Students will be placed in groups of 4-5.
- Groups will be tasked with demonstrating complete familiarity with an ethical issue in business, such that they can take, and defend, a position on a topic of ethical and strategic controversy. They will do this by developing a position paper and then

debating another group on an assigned topic. Further details will be provided in class.

- The group debate project will have two major elements:
 - A) Group Position Paper. Groups will submit, in class, a position paper of significant depth, where they will demonstrate their command of the assigned issue, from a previously chosen perspective. The position paper will argue, as precisely as possible, exactly why we should take their assigned position. These position papers will take care to compare and contrast various theoretical perspectives, as well as various real-world considerations. Moreover, these position papers must reconstruct their understanding of the “other side”, and then thoughtfully argue why this “other side” should not be adopted. This element, and its specific requirements, will be discussed in class.
 - B) Debate. Groups will then later debate the issue with their assigned counterparts. Each group will be given 10 minutes (very firm time limit) to make their case. After each group has made their case, they will be given 5 minutes to make rebuttals. We will then open the floor to questions.

PEER EVALUATIONS:

In an effort to promote fairness and discourage free-riders, when your group work is concluded you are required to submit a peer evaluation form on which you will evaluate the contributions to the project made by each of the other members of your group. Group members who receive unsatisfactory peer evaluations from others in their group will have their grades on the group work lowered accordingly. If you are having problems of any kind in your group, please get in touch with me sooner rather than later, as I am often able to bring about changes in the behaviour of underperforming group members by discussing the situation with them. Group members who consistently underperform may be “fired”, but all firings require my approval. All peer evaluation forms should be uploaded to CULearn, but only after all group work is complete.

MID-TERM AND FINAL EXAMS:

The mid-term and final exams will be based on materials from the text, other assigned readings, lectures, discussions, and other in-class work. Exams will include multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions. The final exam is comprehensive.

DEFERRED EXAMS:

If I grant you a deferral for the mid-term exam I will designate one possible date and time for you to write a make-up exam. I may or may not be able to consider your schedule in scheduling the make-up exam. If the Registrar grants you a deferral for the final exam, that exam can only take place during the Registrar’s official deferred exam period – please note that in some cases

this may delay your graduation. Deferred exams may be in a substantially different format than regular exams (e.g., predominantly essay).

MEDICAL AND OTHER EXCUSES:

Medical excuses require a note from a medical doctor.

Research indicates that reports of grandmothers and other family members dying escalate dramatically during exam periods. While this could indicate that students' family members very often worry themselves to death over the academic well-being of their loved ones, another possible interpretation is that – though it seems impossible – some students may lie in order to get out of taking an exam. So, morbid though it may seem, you may be required to present corroborating evidence in the event that you report a family death that inhibits your ability to complete any course requirements on time.

COURSE SCHEDULE

A course schedule, with weekly readings as well as the dates for assignments and the midterm exam, will be distributed in the first week of class and posted to CULearn.

GRADING CONCERNS

If you have concerns about a grade on an assignment or exam, please follow these procedures:

- Write an explanation of your concern(s) on the assignment or exam itself.
- Date and sign the document at the bottom of your explanation.
- Give the assignment or exam directly to me.

In most circumstances the assignment or exam question will be reviewed by me personally, though in some cases it may be reviewed by a course TA. Please note that any request to re-grade an assignment or exam will result in the entire assignment or exam being re-graded. That is, you cannot request a review of a specific question or part of an assignment. Keep in mind that any request to have work re-graded can result in a lower grade, if appropriate.

If the concern is more general (e.g., How can I improve my grade on the next exam or assignment?), you should make an appointment with me to discuss the issue (or you may stop by during office hours or any other time I'm in my office). If you have any questions about course content, assignments, or material taught in the class, please get in touch subject to the guidelines mentioned above.

IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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. Penalties may include expulsion; suspension from all studies at Carleton; suspension from fulltime studies; a refusal of permission to continue or to register in a specific degree program; academic probation; and a grade of Failure in the course, 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 <http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/advisingcentre/academic-integrity/>.

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, follower-ship 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.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that I receive your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by the deadlines published on the PMC website.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious observance should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of

satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. The instructor will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance.

PREGNANCY

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.