

Business Ethics
BUSMHR 7610 – F1 2016

Instructor Information:

David E. Freel
Freel.8@fisher.osu.edu
Cell 614-256-4580

Course Information:

M/W
2:30- 4:15 pm
Location: Gerlach 355

Office Hours:

M/W 10-11:45 am
& by apt.
Fisher Hall 336

Course Overview and Objectives:

Consideration and attention to business ethics continues unabated – VW, GM, and Takata’s failure to notice and prioritize, then cover up, vehicle defects that have reportedly led to illegal environmental degradation, dozens of deaths and serious injuries; Uber’s disruptive innovation, yet alleged privacy invasions and targeted practices towards those choosing to criticize their business policies or compete against them; Amazon’s incredible success in surpassing Wal-Mart, while allegedly utilizing employee practices to identify and cull those who through illness or circumstance cannot compete with the highest performers; past failures in fundamental ethical decision making in leadership across enterprises, including Flint, Michigan, Penn State, the Air Force Academy. Standing in positive contrast are corporate leaders or businesses like Toms or Flor touted for their corporate social responsibility (CSR) while maintaining shareholder value. Others, like Patagonia or Jeni’s have chosen B-Corp certification as a corporate form. The views of employees and customers in multiple surveys who want to work for or do business with companies having higher perceived integrity, value-laden corporate cultures, or active sustainability practices. – Regardless, for enterprises, challenges to and opportunities for business ethics flourish.

This course will explore fundamental concepts and false assumptions in ethical issues facing corporate actors and business decision-making. It will also explore the factors, steps, and pressures that accompany making ethical business decisions and that reflect leadership integrity.

Course objectives that will be met using readings, cases, group and speaker presentations are to:

- Provide a basic understanding of the application of ethical concepts to corporate, not-for-profit, and entrepreneurial practices and decision-making.
- Appreciate ethical challenges presented by corporate culture, workplace technology, privacy, and transparency issues in the operation of a sustainable business enterprise.
- Explore duties to the enterprise and obligations and potential conflicts of interest to corporate stakeholders that may be confronted in ethical dilemmas.
- Engage discussion and examination of case histories involving ethical challenges, to understand varying perspectives and views, and examine best practices of ethical decision-making and leadership to maintain support high integrity in business conduct while maintaining long-term shareholder value.

The course will be graded upon submitted written case, article, and speaker analyses, class participation, and group projects and presentations.

Course Resources: **Required** course material will be on Carmen. We will use a series of cases, readings, and presentations, including three guest speakers. (Dates listed for speakers may change due to their schedules; I will advise accordingly.)

Format:

All classes require preparation in advance, although the final presentations will require students to prepare outside of class as a team. *Students are expected to have read all assigned material before class and be fully prepared prior to class to actively and informatively participate in discussions of the materials and Q and A of speakers. Grading will rely heavily upon incorporating class materials and discussion into participation, papers and projects.*

Attendance:

Because class discussion and interaction in examining cases, readings and speaker presentations, are critically important, students are expected to attend all classes. If you are unable to do so, unless an emergency situation arises, email notification to me *is required one day in advance* of class. Missed class sections will result in appropriate grade reduction. On-time attendance is appreciated for all class sections; repeated, unexcused, lateness/absences will result in a grade reduction. All efforts will be made to start and end on time.

Course Grading:

The course is graded on a 100 pt scale.

Contribution / Professionalism: [20% (20 points) of the grade]. *Preparation and meaningful contribution to class is a required and important part of the joint learning process in this course. You will be graded on both your class attendance and the quality of your contributions and insights.* Quality input builds upon or draws contrasts to previous discussion to move forward. Because this is a class on ethics in the business environment, there is a high expectation that classmates will act professionally toward one another, will avoid inappropriate or personally-directed response, and will treat others as one would best appreciate being treated, including ***not using cell phones or other electronic devices during class and the classmate participation, unless*** use is directly related to class discussions or materials.

Of 20 points, up to 15 points will be awarded for class attendance and the quality of your contribution and discussion of materials with classmates, speakers, and me. ***Up to 5 points of the 20 total*** will be awarded for the quality of analysis and submission of a ***current, newsworthy article*** (“*Ethics News of the Day*”), on subjects covered in course materials, ***emailed and linked into*** one related formatted deck slide to me preceding your assigned class. In your email and supporting ppt slide, it is expected that you identify 2-3 succinct points drawn from the article that pertain directly to business or enterprise ethics and/or leadership and that you wish to use to inform your classmates why you selected the article. ***I’ll further outline required format and due dates for the article/ slide contribution in the first class.*** (While you should be prepared to discuss the article you chose and the relevant points you’ve drawn attention towards and all articles will be included in the class ppt deck, due to time and class size, *your group will choose one from among the group’s articles submitted the article that we will discuss in class.*)

Three papers will be due:

1) Case/Article Review: [15% (15 points) of the grade]. **One** case/article analysis/response (3-4 pgs., double-spaced, **printed out and brought to class as well as emailed to me in Word format** before the deadline date.) will be due during the course. (Due dates in syllabus.) The analysis will identify:

1. What were the key factual circumstances or assumptions, underlying the ethical issue(s) or discussion presented?
2. What was/were the ethical issue(s) posed? Was/were those dilemma(s) personal or unique business challenges? Why or why not?
3. Who are the stakeholders; what duties, rights, best practice, and/or core values apply to them?
4. What ethical standard or code(s) applied, if any, to the challenge presented? Do you agree with that application?
5. What was the ethical choice(s) selected in the facts presented? If an ethical choice was not selected, what action would you take to resolve the dilemma? Why?

Grading will be based upon (highest 15 – lowest 0):

1. ***Integration of appropriate references to readings/class discussions in your analysis;***
2. Your answer to the questions listed above in a clear and cohesive manner;
3. Your answer to the case/article questions posed in class related to the matter, *if any*; and,
4. The insight shown, depth of analysis presented, and quality of reflective thinking.

2) *Speaker Analysis and Reaction: [15% (15 points) of the grade.] **One** paper responding to your **choice of one** of the classroom speakers' presentations (3-4 pgs., double-spaced, **printed out and brought to class as well as emailed to me in Word format** before the deadline date.) You will analyze the presentation answering the Q's below and describing your reaction. *(The paper is due at the beginning of the class following the speaker's presentation that you choose).

Grading will be based upon (within the same point scale as above):

1. ***Integration of appropriate references to readings/class discussions in your analysis;***
2. Your summary, in a clear and cohesive manner, of the major thesis of the speaker's presentation;
3. What ethical solutions, processes, or experiences were suggested or advocated;
4. What strengths and weaknesses for individuals and organizations do you believe exist in those solutions, processes, or experiences, and if chosen, how you would address them in a different manner should you choose to do so;
5. What value did you or did you not find in the presentation (in a professional manner), and why?

3) Reasons and Rationalizations: [10% (10 points) of the grade]. One 3-4 page paper responding to the prompts and *integration of appropriate references to readings/class discussions in your analysis in a case ethical exercise titled found on Carmen*. (Originally developed at Yale, Prof Gentile has used this Exercise as one portion of the curriculum at Yale/Aspen, Babson College, and now Darden) The Exercise will be graded on the quality of response to the Exercise prompts. *[For those who may have done this Exercise before, I will substitute another.]*

Group Project and Presentation: [40% (40 points) of your grade.] You will be asked to form a team of classmates for a group project and presentation. Consider class scheduling and commitments to attend group meetings to discuss the project as a part of your group formation. Members are encouraged to be open, to hold differing views and honest conversations, and to respect one another's participation in addressing the project.

The team will choose from a list of cases presented to prepare a detailed report on the case, and deliver an in-class presentation on its report and group findings. The project will be based upon the collective paper produced (60% - 24 points) and upon the presentation (40% - 16 points), with grading of each divided equally across the content below, expanded for project excellence as against other projects.

Project guidelines include:

1. Each team will be assigned a case study. (The case study will be chosen from a list provided, or one proposed by your group and pre-approved by me.)
2. Each team will prepare a team paper of 10-12 pgs, double-spaced, **paper-clipped for copying, and emailed to me in Word format, due on the date of the assigned presentation.** The paper will include a title page, followed by a one-page Executive Summary. A copy of the Executive Summary will also be distributed to the class at the time of the presentation. The Summary must identify the purpose of the presentation, the key dilemmas presented, and resolutions identified. The Summary should be prepared as if it would be presented in a board or responsive committee meeting.
3. The paper and presentation must contain:
 - a. ***Integration of information from readings and class discussions in analysis;***
 - b. Statement of the key facts in the case;
 - c. Identification of the core ethical issues faced;
 - d. Identification of the key stakeholders; duties, rights, best practice, and/or core values applicable to them;
 - e. Discussion of available alternatives;
 - f. Recommended action(s) to be taken, and differences between those actions recommended and the actions taken in the case, if any, and why;
 - g. The paper must include appropriate citation to reference and research materials, including an attached bibliography giving full credit to research sources; and,
 - h. ***Electronic copies of the paper and PPT emailed to me before presented.***
4. The class presentation is limited up to 10-12 mins. and should summarize the elements described above and in the paper.
5. While the manner in which presentation is given is to be decided by the team, all team members are expected to contribute equally to the production of the paper and preparation for the presentation to the class. Any concerns about the failure of a team member to participate fairly and equally should be immediately brought to my attention.

Disability Services:

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 092L Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.”

Academic Misconduct:

<http://oaa.osu.edu/coam.html>

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University, the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM), and I expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." *Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, duplicating any portion of the work presented in one course for an assignment in this or another course, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination.*

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

Class Syllabus, Assignments and Due Dates:

Week 1

Wednesday, August 24– Introductions; Framing our discussions, defining our terms;
The *Value* of Ethics – What is this "ethics stuff?" ☺

Reading: *Value Shift* – Carmen

Week 2

Monday, August 31 – *Ethics Decision Making* – A Process of Stakeholder Analysis

Discussion: *WorldCom* - Carmen

Readings: *Paine – Ethics: A Basic Framework* - Carmen

Wednesday, September 2 – *Core Values/ Duty, Right, Best Practice/ Consequences*

Discussion: *The Parable of the Sadhu* – Carmen

Assignment (due September 12) - Ethical Hero or Failed Businessman - Malden Mills and Aaron Feuerstein - Carmen

Group Project Topics list distributed

Week 3

Labor Day celebrated – September 5

Wednesday, September 7 - Speaker – Ethics and Leadership in Business

Larry Mead, Worthington Partners, Ltd., Financial Consulting Advisors

Carmen Readings

(Group Project Topics due by September 12)

Week 4

Monday, September 12 – Corporate Culture

Discussion: *Malden Mills and Amazon – Enterprise Contrasts (Carmen)*

Carmen Readings

(Ethical Hero or Failed Businessman paper due)

Case 2 Assignment on Carmen (due on September 21)

Wednesday, September 14 – Conflicts of Interest, “Inappropriate Interest”, and Controls

Discussion: Dell (Carmen)

Carmen Readings

*(Speaker Paper Due)

Week 5

Monday, September 19 – Corporate Duty; Insider-Trading and Whistle Blower Protection

Discussion: Galleon (Carmen)

Sharon Watkins and Enron (Carmen)

Carmen Readings

(Case #2 paper due)

Wednesday, September 21 – Speaker - Ethical Compliance/Oversight Systems

LeRoy Johnston III, Chief Ethics Officer, Nationwide

Carmen Readings

Week 6

Monday, September 26 – Privacy, Transparency and Fairness

Discussion: *Uber and Google and Others (Carmen)*

Carmen Readings

Wednesday, September 28 – CSR, CSV, Sustainability – Best Practices and Commitments

Discussion: Flor (video) and Unilever (Carmen)

Carmen Readings

*(Speaker Paper Due)

Week 7

Monday, October 3 – Speaker – Leadership Integrity and Enterprise CSR and Sustainability

Carmen Readings

Wednesday, October 5 CLASS PROJECTS

(All class projects written papers and PowerPoint's are due on October 5)

Week 8

Monday, October 10 Remaining CLASS PROJECTS AND Course WRAP UP

*(Speaker Paper Due)
