



**Business Ethics and Decision Making**  
WPMBA BUSMHR 7610 – Sp1 2017

**Instructor Information:**

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**Course Information:**

Mondays  
6:15-9:30 pm  
Gerlach Hall 265

**Office Hours:**

Fisher Hall 336  
Mon 4:30-5:30 pm or pre-  
scheduled – *both by apt.*

**Course Overview and Objectives:**

Consideration and attention to business ethics continues unabated – Wells Fargo’s CEO’s failure (under oath) to recognize the unethical culture it incentivized; VW, GM, and Takata’s failure to notice and prioritize, then cover up, vehicle had defects that have led to illegal environmental degradation, dozens of deaths and serious injuries; Uber and Airbnb’s disruptive innovation, often knowingly targeted at challenging rules, some of which have ethical public policy goals; Amazon’s incredible success in surpassing Wal-Mart, while allegedly using employee practices to identify and cull all but the highest performers; past failures in fundamental ethical decision making in leadership across enterprises, including among others, Penn State, the Air Force Academy, and innumerable banks and hedge funds. Though standing in positive contrast are corporate leaders like Fisher’s namesake, Max Fisher; enterprises such as Toms or Flor, touted for their corporate social responsibility (CSR) while maintaining shareholder value; Patagonia or Jeni’s, who have chosen B-Corp certification as a corporate form to do so; and, assessment surveys of employees and customers alike who want to work or do business with companies having higher perceived integrity, value-laden corporate cultures, or active sustainability practices – Regardless of specific examples, the challenges and opportunities in enterprise ethics continue.

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 influences that accompany making ethical business decisions and that reflect upon leadership integrity.

Course objectives using readings, cases, group presentations, and speakers are:

- 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 incentives, corporate culture, workplace technology, privacy, and transparency issues in the operation of a sustainable business enterprise.
- Explore duties to the enterprise, as well as obligations and potential conflicts of interest to corporate stakeholders, that may be confronted in ethical dilemmas.
- Engage discussion and critical examination of case histories to understand varying ethical perspectives, and explore best practices of ethical decision-making and leadership outcomes to maintain support high integrity in business conduct while maintaining long-term shareholder value.

I am available and happy to meet at a *prescheduled*, mutually convenient time to discuss *any* issue related to the course, its objectives, content or grading. *Don't hesitate to reach out to me – even if you just want to talk.*

**Course Resources:** *Unless otherwise noticed in the syllabus or in the preceding class, all content for this class is posted on Carmen.*

**Format:**

*All classes require advance preparation. Students are expected to have read all assigned material before class and be fully prepared to actively and informatively contribute to discussions of the materials and Q&A of speakers. Final team presentations require students to prepare outside of class as a group.*

We incorporate cases, articles/readings, and presentations, including three guest speakers in the course (speaker dates may change due to their last-minute schedules; I will advise accordingly as soon as I am aware of changes.) The course will be graded upon submitted written assignments and speaker analyses, the quality of and attention to the discussion of cases and articles, and written team projects and presentations.

**Attendance:**

*Because classroom discussion and interaction in examining cases, readings and speaker presentations, is critically important to our subject matter, 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 (particularly with only six class sessions this term). 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. *Grading is weighted toward analytically and critically utilizing principles and takeaways from class materials, discussion, professor, and speakers within written papers and projects.*

**Contribution / Professionalism [20% (20 points) of the grade]:** 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. *Meaningful contribution and participation 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 and professionalism of your contributions and insights.\** Quality input builds upon or draws contrasts to previous discussion to move forward. *(\*If for any reason you cannot contribute or otherwise are having challenges within class, you need to set up a time to discuss this with me. That's why I'm here.)*

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. Use of cell phones, computers, or other electronic devices during class distracts others, does not respect your peers, speakers, or your professor, has been demonstrated to reduce the impact and retention of content, and is prohibited, resulting in Contribution point reduction (unless for emergency use or directly related to classroom materials and/or responsive note taking.)*

Up to **5 points of the 20 total Contribution points** will be awarded for the quality of analysis and submission of a **current, newsworthy article** (so-called “(Ethics) News of the Day”) on subjects covered in course materials.

Your submission *must be emailed simultaneously to me and your team members* by an assigned date, **in a formatted single ppt deck slide**. The slide will: 1) generally identify the news story/article events and ethical issue(s); 2) embed an electronic link to the source for any needed follow-up and verification; and, 3) list 2-3 succinct bullet points drawn from the article that directly pertain to business or enterprise ethics and/or leadership that you wish to use to inform your classmates why you viewed the article as important to our subject matter. *I’ll further outline the required format and due dates for the article/ slide contribution in the first class.* (While you should be prepared to *briefly* discuss the article you choose and the relevant points you’ve drawn attention towards in class (5 min max), due to class size, *your team will choose which two from among the entire group’s articles submitted* will be discussed in class.)

### **Three individual papers will be due:**

*All three individual papers are to be 3-4 pgs, double-spaced; in unrestricted Word format; due by the beginning of class and required in both an emailed copy to me and a physical copy brought to class. (All assignment and due dates for papers are in the syllabus.) All papers are subject to OSU’s TurnItIn and/or other authenticity for originality accountability.*

**1) Case paper [15% (15 pts) of grade]:** One case analysis will be due during the course. 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 questions posed in class related to the matter, ***if any;*** and,
4. The insight shown, depth of analysis presented, and quality of reflective thinking, and assessed in comparison to that of your peers.

**2) Speaker Analysis and Reaction [15% (15 pts) of grade]:** **\*\*One speaker paper responding to your choice of *only one* of the three classroom speakers’ presentations.**

Grading will be based upon answer the Q’s below and describing your reaction (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) Your Personal Ethical Challenge [10% (10 points) of grade]:** A response paper to the prompts in an ethical exercise titled: A Tale of Two Stories on Carmen and at: [http://store.darden.virginia.edu/Syllabus%20Copy/A-Tale-of-Two-Stories\\_S.pdf](http://store.darden.virginia.edu/Syllabus%20Copy/A-Tale-of-Two-Stories_S.pdf) (***choosing one of the two alternatives within the Exercise.***) First developed at Yale/Aspen, and researched at Babson, now at Darden at the Univ of Virginia, Prof Gentile innovated and I have used this Exercise as a portion of our respective business ethics curricula.

The Exercise will be graded on the quality of response to the Exercise prompts, not which of the two alternatives is chosen. *[For any of those who may have done this Exercise before, I will substitute another.]*

*To help share and illustrate peer assessment and solutions to ethical challenges, generic responses that do not specifically identify individuals, enterprises, or unique circumstances may be selected from papers and used informatively during discussion. (Requested confidentiality in responses will be honored.)*

**Team Project and Presentation [40% (40 points) of grade]:** You will be asked to choose a team of 5 classmates for a group project and presentation. Consider class scheduling and commitments to attend team 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.

*Any concerns regarding the failure of a team member to fairly and equally participate in the team project should be immediately addressed, and if necessary to resolve, be brought to my attention. A peer assessment will be solicited individually of all team members and the results of those assessments may be factored into individual scoring.\*\**

The team will choose from a prepared list and write a detailed group report/description of the topic/case, as well as 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. Attendance at and content Q's of other team projects are required of all class members.

Project guidelines include:

1. Each team will be assigned a topic/case. (You will have a choice from a list provided, or can propose one from your group for my pre-approval.)
2. Each team will prepare a team paper of 10-12 pgs, double-spaced, *paginated, paper-clipped for copying, and emailed to me in Word format; both due on the date of the assigned presentation.*
3. The paper will include a title page, followed by a one-page Executive Summary. (You will distribute copies of the Executive Summary 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 presented in a business board or responsive committee meeting.)
4. The *paper and presentation* must contain and will be scored equally upon\*:
  - a. ***Integration of information from readings and class discussions in project analysis;***
  - b. Statement of *key* facts in the case;
  - c. Identification of *significant* ethical issues faced;
  - d. Identification of *key* stakeholders; and what ethical duties, rights, best practice, and/or core values apply to them;
  - e. Discussion of available alternatives;
  - f. Recommended action(s) to be taken, and differences between those recommended and the actions taken in the case, if any, and why;
  - g. Overall project excellence as against other projects from your peers; and
  - h. Paper must include appropriate citation to reference and research materials within the body of the paper, with an attached bibliography giving full credit to research sources; and,
    - i. ***Electronic copies of the paper and PPT emailed to me before last class.***
5. *The class presentation* should summarize the elements described above. It is limited to 10-12 (max) mins. (I will provide 2 and 1 min. warnings before the 12 min marks. And based upon prior class feedback, to assure fairness, the 12 min mark will end the presentation.) You should be prepared for 5 mins of Q's.
6. While the manner in which the team delivers the presentation, *and whether or not all members present, is a decision of the team, all team members are expected to contribute an equal share of production of the paper and preparation for the class presentation. Again, any concerns about the failure of a team member to participate fairly and equally should be identified as early as possible, and if necessary to resolve the concern, be immediately brought to my attention. \*\*A peer assessment will be solicited individually of all team members and I may factor the results of those assessments into individual scoring.*

**Disability Services:**

[http://ods.osu.edu/faculty\\_syllabus.asp](http://ods.osu.edu/faculty_syllabus.asp)

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall.

### **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. **(Again, this is an Ethics course and I have the highest expectations that the highest standards of academic integrity will be maintained. If you have any Q's, ask before you act.)** Thus, The Ohio State University, the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM), and I expect that all students 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. *(Please understand that I may use Carmen's Turnitin or another authenticity check to assess the originality, proper citation, and quotation of any reference sources in any written submitted coursework.)*

***If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct, 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.

**Course Syllabus:** *Unless otherwise noticed in the syllabus or in the preceding class, content is posted for the week of class on Carmen.*

### **Class Dates and Assignments:**

*Please have thoroughly read the Syllabus and Class 1 Carmen readings below for January 9<sup>th</sup>. (Both your classmates and I will appreciate doing so ☺)*

#### **Class 1 – Monday – January 9**

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##### **Part #1 – Business Ethics**

Introductions; **Syllabus** expectations and realities; Framing discussion & Defining terms

Readings: Syllabus (*Carmen*)

##### **Part #2 – Ethical Decision Making, the Law, and Enterprise Leadership**

Readings: Defining the Problem - WorldCom and Wells Fargo (*Carmen*)  
Deploying Paine's Ethical Decision Making Framework (*Carmen*)

*Assignments due 1/23: - Paper - Ethical Hero or Failed Businessman - Malden Mills (Carmen)*  
*- Project Groups emailed to Prof*  
*- Readings*  
*- Speaker Q's*

## **Martin Luther King Holiday - January 16 - (No Class)**

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### **Class 2 - Monday - January 23**

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#### **Part #1 - Compliance**

***Building a Culture of Ethics and Compliance - Speaker - LeRoy Johnston III,  
Nationwide Chief Ethics Officer***

Readings: *Bio and related Readings (Carmen)*  
*Q's to Ask - Compliance Best Practice - (Carmen links)*

#### **Part #2 - Corporate Culture / Ethical Core Values**

Readings: *Amazon (Carmen) vs Aaron Feuerstein - Cultural contrasts*  
*McKinsey (Carmen)*  
*(Article due dates will also be assigned by Group)*

*Assignments due 1/30: - Readings*

*- Speaker Q's*

*- \*\* (Johnston Speaker Paper)*

*- Projects list will be distributed; team topic selection begins*

### **Class 3 - Monday - January 30**

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#### **Part #1 - Enterprise Culture Warning Signs**

***Employing Ethics and Integrity in Business - Speaker - Larry Mead, Worthington  
Partners, Ltd., Financial Consulting Advisors***

Readings: *Bio and related Readings (Carmen)*

#### **Part #2 - Conflicts of Interest and "Inappropriate Interest"**

Readings: *Dell (Carmen)*  
*Conflict of Interest (Carmen)*

*Assignments due 2/6: - Paper - Personal Ethics Challenge (Carmen)*

*- Readings*

*- Speaker Q's*

*- Team Topic/Case selection due*

*- \*\* (Mead Speaker Paper)*

### **Class 4 - Monday - February 6**

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#### **Part #1 - Leadership Integrity**

***Speaker - Allery W. Webb, National Account Manager, Pitt Ohio***

Readings: *Bio and related Readings (Carmen)*

#### **Part #2 - Conflicting Duties - Whistle-Blowers and Insider Trading**

Readings: *Sharon Watkins and Enron (Carmen)*  
*Galleon (Carmen links)*

*Assignments due 2/13: - Readings*

*- \*\* (Webb Speaker Paper Due)*

**Class 5 – Monday – February 13**

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Part #2 – ***Disruption – Unforeseen or Intentional Disregard of Ethical Issues?***

*Readings:* Uber and Airbnb (Carmen)

Part #2 – ***Transparency/ Privacy – Remedies or not?***

*Discussion:* Big Data and Privacy

*Readings:* Ethics in Technology (Carmen)

*Assignments due 2/20:* - **Projects** ☺

**Class 6 – Monday – February 20**

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**GROUP PROJECTS**

**COURSE WRAP UP**