**Course Description**

This course examines the philosophical foundations and basic principles of ethics as they apply to businesses and the environments in which they operate. Real-world case studies are used to provide students with insight into how businesses and organizations manage – and in some cases fail to manage – challenging ethical and moral dilemmas. Students also consider the particular responsibilities of business leaders in fostering ethical awareness and practices within the corporate context.

**Learning Objectives**

By completing this course, students will:

- Understand and articulate (orally and in writing) the “business case” for ethical decision making, i.e. how one shows that ethical practices make for good business practices.
- Assess and apply core ethical concepts in the context of business decisions through the analysis of case studies, film scenes and/or improvisation theatre plays.
- Critically assess and evaluate in real-time (on the surface or latent) moral issues in a variety of business scenarios and role plays being acted out, e.g. in negotiation, communication and leadership situations.
- Apply sensitivity and awareness tactics and strategies of how business ethics may vary relative to a culture’s ideas of ethical and moral conduct, and to the corresponding business practices.
- Execute and model the behaviors of successful leaders managing toward an ethical business culture in further business practices.

**Course Prerequisites**

Students are highly recommended to have completed a level 2000 course in philosophy, critical theory, or business administration before completing this course.

**Methods of Instruction**

Through lectures and discussion, students will engage in core philosophical and moral concepts from our shared Western tradition and practice identifying and articulating them in business settings. Readings are assigned to help students gain familiarity with key ideas and terms, which they will then be expected to integrate into their oral and written work (including term paper and a final exam). Clips from films and TV that model intersections between ethical concepts and business will be used in class to provoke discussion and debate.

**Assessment and Final Grade**

1. Case Study Response Papers 25%
2. Essay 20%
3. Group Presentations 25%
4. Final Essay 10%
5. Class Participation 20%
TOTAL 100%
Course Requirements

Case Study Response Papers

Students will write five reflective response papers to case studies from weeks two through to six. Each response paper is to be 450 words exactly (2250 words total). Work will be graded on the students’ ability to identify, examine and critically reflect on most significant aspects in various cases studies, drawing on the readings and lecture content.

Essay

Students are expected to write a critical essay that evaluates the benefits and drawbacks of a rigorous culture of business ethics within a multi-national organization. The paper should reference readings from the course. The word count is 750 words.

Group Presentations

Students will form small groups and conduct presentations on 15-minutes in length on topics to be determined by the instructor. Student groups can choose one of two prompts to either examine and evaluate examples of good and bad leadership; or to evaluate business ethics in a global economy using examples.

Final Essay

Students will respond to essay-based essay, answering one of three questions of equal value. Their chosen response will be completed as an ‘Open Book’ response, requiring students to demonstrate the highest levels of familiarity of case studies and readings from over the course. Students will be expected to write a 1000-word response to their selected question. This assessment will be conducted through Canvas. All students must ensure their equipment is fully functional.

Participation

Participation is defined as meaningful contribution in the digital classroom, using the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to prepare in advance of each recorded session and regularly engage with the resources, discussions, reflective assignments, and all other online learning activities. Students are required to demonstrate engagement with course materials, for example, through insightful, constructive comments and by using subject-appropriate terminology in: online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after viewing the presentations of others), interaction with guest speakers, where available, and submissions related to other outside-of-class activities. Students should ensure that submitted commentary balances opinions, general impressions, and specific and thoughtful criticisms or contributions. Grades are based on the content, depth, and quality of the aforementioned types of meaningful contributions as measured per the Participation grading rubric in Canvas.

Students are also expected to use the Canvas inbox for communicating any clarifying questions they may want to ask about assessments or other course requirements.

Technology Requirements

Participation requires access to a computer with microphone (a headset and microphone are preferred over built-in sound devices) and webcam; a stable and strong internet connection; and a quiet and well-lit environment.

Attendance

 expectations: In an asynchronous online learning format, attendance takes the form of active student engagement:

- in instructional activities, course content, course tools
- with the course instructor, other students, and
- by timely completion of all assessments.

“Attendance” is more than just logging into the course on Canvas. Students must establish a record of participation in academically related activities in order to comply with this requirement.

Academically related activities include, but are not limited to:
submitting an academic assignment;

taking an exam or quiz;

attending a study group that is assigned by the instructor;

participating in an online discussion about academic matters, designed by the instructor; or

initiating contact in Canvas with the instructor to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.

Academically related activities do NOT include activities where a student may be present, but not academically engaged, such as:

- logging into an online class without active participation
- contributing to or engaging in the CIEE Orientation or Community Course(s)

**First Week of Class:** Online courses officially commence on the first day of the term. Students must demonstrate engagement in class by no later than day 5 of the term, or risk being administratively dropped from the course with no opportunity to re-enroll. Students administratively dropped from the course for failure to engage will be considered withdrawn from the program and subject to CIEE financial withdrawal policies and fees.

**Duration of Course:** Continued, regular class engagement is required throughout the scheduled duration of the course, and disengagement will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for completing courses online, consistent failure to engage in the course on a weekly basis (defined as failing to engage for two or more weeks of online learning) will result in a formal written warning from the CIEE Center Director.

CIEE instructors / staff will monitor student engagement on a weekly basis.

The weekly schedule below outlines due dates for asynchronous learning activities for this course.

*N.B. Please note the class schedule is subject to change if opportunities arise to enhance the curriculum.*

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**

**Class: 1.0 Introduction to Business Ethics**

In this introductory lesson, students will explore questions relating to the importance of business ethics (the “business case” argument), realms where ethics and business intersect (stakeholder relationships, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and corporate governance), and discuss the idea of the “Nature” of Capitalism. In-class film clips from Inside Job and The Corporation.

**Reading**


**Week 2**

**Class: 2.0 Moral Philosophy and Business I**

Students will examine Western concepts of ethics and morality, and their place in modern business practices. Additionally, ethics and the “nature” of morality, relativism and absolutism / normative, and justice and wealth (of nations) will be discussed.

**Readings**


Class: 3.0 Ethical Decision Making and Ethical Leadership

Students will differentiate between consequence-based and duty-based principles of ethics. They will enumerate and discuss principles of personal ethical decision making and ethical tests for screening ethical decisions. They will identify the factors affecting an organization’s moral climate and provide examples of these factors at work. By looking at case studies, they will describe and explain actions, strategies, or “best practices” that management may take to improve an organization’s ethical climate.

Reading:
Institutionalization of Business Ethics into Practices

In this class, students will review the Affleck example of a Code of Conduct. In addition, students will examine the role of the Ethics and Compliance Officer Association, and the Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics, and understand the different levels at which business ethics may be addressed. In-class film clips from ‘Margin Call; Let’s Make Money’ and ‘Yella’ will be viewed and discussed.

**Reading:**


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**Week 3**

**Class: 5.0 Moral Philosophy and Business II**

Moral philosophy, corporate social responsibility, and their applications in complex workplaces are discussed.

**Reading:**


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**Class: 6.0 Developing an Effective Ethics Program**

In this class, students will examine individual factors (such as moral philosophies and values) and organizational factors (such as the role of ethical culture and relationships). In-class TV clips from 'The Office (BBC & NBC), Stromberg (German version of The Office) will be viewed as stimulus for discussions and references to the concepts in the readings.

**Reading:**


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**Class: 7.0 Site Visit to a Company**

**Reading:**

https://www.autodesk.com/redshift/doing-their-part-3-excellent-examples-of-corporate-social-responsibility/

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**Week 4**

**Class: 8.0 Ethics and Business of the (Internet) Society**

The course continues with an examination of the concepts discussed so far in light of the “digital workplace.” Changes in ethical practices with the shift from traditional to Internet workplaces and tech business models will be debated and the impact for businesses in this contemporary landscape are discussed.

**Reading:**

Class: 9.0 Linked Consumers and the Electronic Environment

Students will identify the role that technology plays in contemporary and current business lives. They will gain an understanding of the technological environment and the characteristics of technology that influence business ethics and stakeholders. As they explore various case studies and dilemmas, they will identify the benefits and side effects of technology in business in order to develop their understanding and appreciation of society’s intoxication with technology and the consequences of this intoxication.

Reading:

Class: 10.0 Leaders and Followers in the Age of Social Media and Big Data

In-class film clips from The Social Network and The Net are used as stimulus for discussion. The contemporary issues around Facebook’s use and sharing of big data is also discussed.

Readings:

Due Date for Submission of Week Four Case Study Response

Week 5
Class: 11.0 Leadership Module One

This class focuses on leadership skills as they pertain to creating an ethical environment and implementing change needed to achieve a cultural and ethical business that is context sensitive. Students will engage in an introduction to leadership skills and what makes a successful leader in business.

Reading:

Class: 12.0 Application of Knowledge

Group Presentations

Due Date for Submission of Group Presentation Assessment

Class: 13.0 Site Visit to a Technical Based Company

During this site visit, students will examine definitions of a creative economy in practice within the context of a digital economy.

Reading: The Conversation (2018).
https://theconversation.com/vital-signs-online-retailing-is-changing-our-lives-whether-we-use-it-or-not-102338

Due Date for Submission of Week Five Case Study Response

Week 6
Class: 14.0 Leadership Module Two

The course concludes with a discussion of leadership in corporate ethical culture, placing special
emphasis on the challenges of contemporary business environments. In this class, students will discuss leadership concepts such as whistleblowing, accountability, trust-building, confidence, reliability and genuineness.

Readings:


Class: 15.0 Site Visit to a Sustainability Company

Students will investigate a local successful startup where ethical and sustainable leadership are supported in its core mission.

Reading:


Due Date for Submission of Week Six Case Study Response

Course Materials

Readings

List all course readings using complete citations following an appropriate style guide for the subject area (e.g., APA, MLA, etc.). Refer to SOP and Academic Manual for instruction to populate this field.


Online Resources


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajjDvahFG-o

Digital Ethics


Facebook and Big Data- The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
https://www.simplilearn.com/how-facebook-is-using-big-data-article


Retailing businesses online
https://theconversation.com/vital-signs-online-retailing-is-changing-our-lives-whether-we-use-it-or-not-102338

Ethical Businesses with a global view


Sustainability-based businesses
https://www.themartec.com/insidelook/50-top-startups-sydney

Not-for-profit businesses
https://www.waysidechapel.org.au/