



## Business Ethics

The University of Toledo

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

PHIL 3120-921 Business Ethics - CRN: 39957

---

**Instructor:** Nythamar "Nita" de Oliveira      **URL:** <http://www.nythamar.com/business.html>  
**Email:** Nita.De\_Oliveira@utoledo.edu      **Class Location:** <https://blackboard.utdl.edu/>  
**Offered:** Summer 2021  
**Credit Hours:** 3.0

### CATALOG/COURSE DESCRIPTION

[3 credit hours]

An examination of the ethical dimensions of the relationships between a business and employees, consumers, other businesses, society, government, the law and the environment.

Term Offered: Summer

Core Arts & Humanities, Trans Mod Arts and Humanities

### COURSE OVERVIEW

In this course we will be exploring modern and contemporary conceptions and questions of business ethics, so as to integrate them with broader concern around corporate citizenship and sustainability. The course will be divided into six parts, dealing with ethical questions in business overall and how they relate to corporate responsibility, stakeholders, and citizenship.

### STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will be able to describe the major ethical arguments and key concepts of business ethics. Students will be able to critically discuss and consider ethical problems and conceptions in business ethics, while reflecting on these concepts analytically and personally.

### TEACHING METHODOLOGY

This fully online course is designed to stimulate student learning through the web-based delivery of readings, video, and audio, as well as collaborative activities involving asynchronous discussion and group projects. No on-campus meetings will be required.

### WORKWEEK

Grades are based on point accumulation throughout the Summer term (from **June 28** through **Aug 6, 2021**), divided into three units. There are 3 Quizzes (or Homeworks) worth 20 points each (total up to 60 points). Participation is worth 40 points (by sharing your views, insights, comments, and criticisms with classmates on the Discussion Board on-line, at least one posting per week). Students can earn up to 100 points in this course.

### PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES

None.

### TEXTS AND ANCILLARY MATERIALS

Andrew Crane and Dirk Matten, *Business Ethics: Managing Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability in the Age of Globalization*. Oxford University Press, 2019. Fifth Edition: ISBN-10: 0198810075; ISBN-13: 978-0198810070. Fourth Edition. ISBN-10: 0199697310; ISBN-13: 9780199697311. Third Edition. ISBN: 9780199564330. (Students can use either edition)



### **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS, SKILLS, AND PRIVACY POLICIES**

Please view the [technology considerations](#) for this course, including technical skills needed, general technology requirements, and technology privacy policies.

### **ACCESSIBILITY OF COURSE TECHNOLOGIES**

Please view [Accessibility of Course Technologies](#) for information regarding the accessibility of Blackboard and other technologies used in this course.

### **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

All students at the University of Toledo are expected to read, understand, and follow the academic policies that govern their attendance at the University. These policies include, but are not limited to, academic dishonesty, academic forgiveness, adding and dropping a course, grades and grading, and the missed class policy. Please use the following URL to read a comprehensive list of academic policies that pertain to you in this class and throughout your academic journey: [Undergraduate Academic Policies](#). If you have any questions after reading through the policies, please let me know.

Neither plagiarism (i.e., presenting the written work of another as one's own) nor cheating (i.e., providing answers to exam questions or receiving exam answers from another) will be tolerated. Any academic dishonesty will be disciplined according to the guidelines in the University of Toledo student handbook.

### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

Late assignments and make-up tests will not be permitted unless arrangements are discussed and approved well before the required due date.

Prepare all the readings before the date given. The reading assignments are usually short and hopefully pleasant. Every week students will have the opportunity to post their comments (at least one posting per week on the Discussion Board, in order to get full credit for Participation), ask questions and do self-assessment by taking the practice quiz online or writing a couple of paragraphs to address some of the suggested study questions. The quizzes and homework tabs are made available during the whole week and the following week, so that at any time during these 2 weeks students can take the quiz online or use the Homework tab to turn in their essays (a couple of paragraphs, about 200 words, addressing one or two questions from the assigned chapter). Make sure you understand the key concepts or key terms for each week (see Glossary, available in PDF at the course website and at the end of the textbook) and by regularly visiting the Oxford University Press link to the Student Resources:

<https://learninglink.oup.com/access/cranebe5e-student-resources>

### **COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES**

Students can contact the instructor at any time via email.

### **OVERVIEW OF COURSE GRADE ASSIGNMENT**

Grades are based on point accumulation throughout the semester (from **June 28** through **Aug 6, 2021**), divided into three units. There are 3 Quizzes (or Homework) worth 20 points each (total up to 60 points). Participation is worth 40 points (by sharing your views, insights, comments, and criticisms with classmates on the Discussion Board on-line, at least one posting per week). Students can earn up to 100 points in this course.



## Final Grading

Final grades for the course are based on the following scale:

93-100 pts. = A	77-79 pts. = C+
90-92 pts. = A-	73-76 pts. = C
87-89 pts. = B+	70-72 pts. = C-
83-86 pts. = B	60-69 pts. = D
80-82 pts. = B-	59 and below = F

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

### Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability (ADA)

The University is an equal opportunity educational institution. Please read [The University's Policy Statement on Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability – Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance](#).

### Academic Accommodations

The University of Toledo embraces the inclusion of students with disabilities. We are committed to ensuring equal opportunity and seamless access for full participation in all courses. For students who have an accommodations memo from Student Disability Services, I invite you to correspond with me as soon as possible so that we can communicate confidentially about implementing accommodations in this course. For students who have not established affiliation with Student Disability Services and are experiencing disability access barriers or are interested in a referral to healthcare resources for a potential disability or would like information regarding eligibility for academic accommodations, please contact the [Student Disability Services Office](#) by calling 419.530.4981 or sending an email to [StudentDisability@utoledo.edu](mailto:StudentDisability@utoledo.edu).

### ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Please view the [Learner Support](#) page for links and descriptions of the technical, academic, and student support services available to UT students.

### SAFETY AND HEALTH SERVICES FOR UT STUDENTS

Please use the following link to view a comprehensive list [Campus Health and Safety Services](#) available to you as a student.



## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Unit 1: June 28 – July 11: Chapters 1 & 2**

#### **Week 1: Jun 28 – Jul 4 : Chapter 1. Introducing business ethics**

Ethics on Screen: Film 1. *The Wolf of Wall Street*

*Michael Clayton* (2007, Warner Bros.): a “fixer” for a law firm has to protect his firm and its clients from a partner undergoing a breakdown. Examines issues of individual conscience, organizational culture, professional responsibilities, and how we insulate ourselves from the effects of our unethical decisions.

*The Social Network* (2010, Columbia): a drama that explores the early days of what came to be Facebook. Explores issues of intellectual property, individual ethics, loyalty, and trust.

*Steve Jobs* (2015, Universal Pictures): biographical drama following some of the key events in the life of Steve Jobs, founder of Apple. Deals with issues of work/life balance, treatment of employees, loyalty, trust, and the role of leaders in role-modelling behaviour.

(NB: Please keep in mind that these films and series are meant only as audiovisual examples, so you may as well just choose one of them to watch and/or talk about in the Discussion Board. The films suggested and discussed in the textbook vary from one edition to the other. Just pick one from the edition you’re using.)

(Optional Further Reading: Chapter 7. Employees and business ethics)

Topics for Discussion: Introducing business ethics

#### **Week 2: Jul 4 – 11 : Chapter 2 (Quiz/Hwk #1 on Ch. 1)**

Ch. 2. Framing business ethics: corporate responsibility, stakeholders, and citizenship

Ethics on Screen: Film 2. *Promised Land*

*Erin Brockovich* (2000, Universal): lightly fictionalized telling of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company case, where chemicals entered the water supply and harmed local residents. Covers issues of environmental degradation, corporate irresponsibility, stakeholders, sustainable business, and the difficulty of pursuing court cases against large firms.

*The Corporation* (2003, Zeitgeist): an impassioned and controversial documentary film that indicts large corporations as aggressive organizations that exhibit elements of psychopathy. Covers issues of corporate social responsibility, stakeholders, business and human rights, corporate personhood, and the role of states in effective regulation.

*Iron Man* (2008, Marvel Studios): a light-hearted entertainment film where the kidnapping and release of Tony Stark, CEO of an armaments firm, prompts self-reflection on the morality of the arms industry. Touches upon issues of morality in the arms industry, businesses facilitating warfare, shareholder versus stakeholder salience, and individual versus organisational moral accountability.

(Optional Further Reading: Chapter 8. Consumers and business ethics)

Topics for Discussion: Corporate responsibility, stakeholders, and citizenship

#### **July 4-11: HOMEWORK / QUIZ # 1 (on Ch. 1)**

### **Unit 2: July 11-25: Chapters 3 & 4**

### **Week 3: Jul 11 – 18 : Chapter 3: Evaluating business ethics: normative ethical theories**

Ethics on Screen: Film 3. *Margin Call*

*A Civil Action* (1998, Touchstone): a fictionalized account of the real life Anderson v. Cryovac case, where environmental lawyers struggled to hold large firms to account for alleged dumping of industrial solvents. Covers issues of environmental degradation, how environmental abuse can harm human health, sustainable business, and the ethical commitments of professionals to their clients.

*There Will be Blood* (2007, Paramount): an oil baron pursues a high-stakes claim. Examines issues of ambition, loyalty, business in weak governance contexts, workplace safety and environmental degradation.

*Wolf of Wall Street* (2013, Paramount): biographical dark comedy about a stockbroker, and his firm's, fraud and corruption. Examines issues of financial crime, financial ethics, corporate greed, and work/life balance.

(Optional Further Reading: Chapter 9. Suppliers, competitors, and business ethics)

Topics for Discussion: Normative ethical theories

### **Week 4: Jul 18 – 25 : Chapter 4 (Quiz/Hwk #2 on Ch. 3)**

Ch. 4. Making decisions in business ethics: descriptive ethical theories

Ethics on Screen: Film 4. *House of Cards* (Series)

*On the Waterfront* (1954, Columbia): classic film that examines the seedy underbelly of the labour movement, and thus organizational culture more generally. Examines social justice, the labor movement, and institutional corruption.

*The Devil Wears Prada* (2006, 20th Century Fox): an assistant to a top executive deals with unreasonable expectations and casual abuse. Examines issues of workplace bullying, ambition, loyalty, and work/life balance.

*Fyre 'The Greatest Party That Never Happened'* (2019, Netflix): documentary charting the birth, planning, and subsequent failure of 'Fyre', a festival promised to be unlike any other the world had seen, and its enigmatic creator Billy McFarland. Deals with issues of stakeholder ethics, misrepresentation, social media marketing ethics, financial fraud, and the dark side of entrepreneurship.

(Optional Further Reading: Chapter 10. Civil society and business ethics)

Topics for Discussion: Decision-making and descriptive ethical theories

### **Jul 18 – 25 : HOMEWORK / QUIZ # 2 (on Ch. 3)**

### **Unit 3 : July 25 – Aug 6th: Chapters 5 & 6**

### **Week 5: Jul 25 – Aug 1: Chapter 5: Managing business ethics: tools and techniques of business ethics management**

Ethics on Screen: Film 5. *Pink Ribbons, Inc.*

*The Insider* (1999, Touchstone): dramatized true story of Jeffrey Wigand, a former tobacco industry executive, who blew a whistle on practices in that industry. Covers issues of individual conscience, organizational culture, industry-wide corruption, and whistle-blowing.

*Boiler Room* (2000, New Line Cinema): a fictionalized retelling of the Stratton Oakmont "pump and dump" story, this film focuses on how low-level employees turn a blind eye to the unethical practices of their firm.

Covers issues of fraud, wilful ignorance, corporate culture, and the intersection of individual and institutional corruption.

*The Founder* (2016, The Weinstein Company): biographical drama which tells the story of the founding of McDonald's, specifically the conflict between the McDonald brothers, and Ray Kroc, the man who would eventually buy it and turn it into a global success story. Examines issues of franchisee/franchisor relationships, franchisor control, ethical decision making, trust, and integrity.

(Optional Further Reading: Chapter 11. Government, regulation, and business ethics)

Topics for Discussion: Tools & techniques of business ethics management

### **Week 6: Aug 1-6: Chapter 6 (Quiz/Hwk #3 on Ch. 5)**

#### **Ch. 6: Shareholders and business ethics**

Ethics on Screen: Film 6. *Wall Street* and *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps*

*Barbarians at the Gate* (1993, HBO): a fictionalized take on the famous leveraged buy-out of RJR Nabisco. Examines issues of corporate control, shareholder activism, fiduciary duty, and the principal-agent problem.

*Arbitrage* (2012, Lionsgate): a financier needs to finalize the sale of his investment firm before his financial misrepresentations are exposed. Covers ethical issues of fraud, misrepresentation, and the regulatory challenges posed by the financial industry.

*Money Monster* (2016, TriStar Pictures): television financial expert Lee Gates is held hostage by a man whose entire life savings were wiped out after he took Lee's advice. However, a larger conspiracy turns out to be present. Deals with issues of shareholder risk, the ethics of financial advice, corruption, bribery, and the individual impact of financial fraud.

(Optional Further Reading: Chapter 12. Conclusions and future perspectives)

Topics for Discussion: Shareholders and business ethics

### **Aug 1-6 : HOMEWORK / QUIZ # 3 (on Ch. 5)**

#### **Quiz/Homework Schedule:**

**Quiz/Hwk # 1 on Ch. 1: Jul 4 – 11 (Week 2)**

**Quiz/Hwk # 2 on Ch. 3: Jul 18-25 (Week 4)**

**Quiz/Hwk # 3 on Ch. 5: Aug 1-6 (Week 6)**

**Course Website:** <http://www.nythamar.com/business.html>