

GBDA 306: COMPARATIVE ETHICS in a GLOBALIZED WORLD BUSINESS
University of Waterloo – Stratford Campus
Global Business and Digital Arts (GBDA)
Thursdays 9:00am – 11:50am; room 2024
Winter Term 2016

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Description:

This is an introductory course to a variety of contemporary ethical systems including those associated with philosophical systems, political ideologies, and economic beliefs. Students will also examine several contemporary efforts to arrive at common ethical frames of reference. This course will especially focus on current ethical issues associated with global development and business.

Course Aims/Objectives

In this course we will examine ethical problems and challenges faced by individuals and organizations. The principal objectives of this course are to:

1. Consider a number of ethical issues that individuals must face in the course of doing business;
2. Provide a greater understanding of the strategic impact of the social/ethical context for business;
3. Clarify personal values and attitudes associated with the social/ethical context for business;
4. Become better informed about current debates related to the social/ethical context for business;
5. Analyze strategies available for responding to the changing social/ethical context for business. Strategies to be included include, issue management, stakeholder strategies and social/ethical/environmental leadership;
6. Develop an understanding of what ethical issues are, as distinct from practical, legal, religious or moral issues.

Students will develop a systematic way of expressing ethical opinions, and enhance their ability to make and articulate ethical decisions. The course is not about teaching right and wrong, nor aim to take positions on what the “right answers” might be in morally ambiguous situations. Instead students will become competent in dealing with ethical dilemma by interacting with and understanding the viewpoints of others, by discussion, arguing for, and defending their own views, by expanding their perspectives and learning to think about ethical dilemma in principled and logical ways.

Required Reading: Ethics and the Conduct of Business, Boatright, John R., Seventh Ed., Pearson, 2012

Additional documents, articles & information will be available on LEARN.

Evaluation:

Requirement	Nature of Work	Percent of Final Grade
Class Participation	Individual/Team	30
Assignment #1	Individual	10
Assignment #2	Individual	10
Team Paper	Team	35
Paper Presentation	Team	15
TOTAL		100

Method of Instruction, materials etc.:

It is expected that all students will actively participate in classroom discussions. In addition, students are expected to have prepared the text and other readings, and have read/analyzed the case, if assigned for that class. The class session will be interactive, driven by student discussion, debate, critique and exchange of ideas. Each class will be partly devoted to theoretical/conceptual readings assigned for that day, and partly to a discussion of the cases in the applicable chapter, in addition to the major case that is assigned in several of the sessions. Students should be prepared to state their reasoned opinions about the cases and to debate differences of opinion with their colleagues.

Deliverables:

1. Class Participation (30% of Final Grade).

Each student is expected to read the course material and to be able to discuss topic questions. Regular attendance in class is required, as is participation in class discussions. Marks will be based on overall day-to-day preparedness in class discussions. Consistent, meaningful class contributions are required to achieve a top grade; this will require students to be prepared for each class and to participate in the discussion. Contributions generally fall into three broad categories: description/clarification, analysis/conclusions, or integration/synthesis.

2. Case Analysis - Assignments #1 and #2 (2 x 10% or 20% of Final Grade).

Case assignments are due at the start of class for Class #6 (case “What Martha Stewart did Wrong?” <http://coveringbusiness.com/2012/05/15/what-martha-stewart-did-wrong/>) and Class #8 (choice of one of the cases in “Four Case Studies on Corporate Social Responsibility: Do Conflicts Affect a Company’s Corporate Social Responsibility Policy?,” Authors: Cristina A. Cedillo Torres, Mercedes Garcia-French, Rosemarie Hordijk, Kim Nguyen, Lana Olup: DOI: <http://doi.org/10.18352/ulr.205>). The case assignments should be in the form of memos and based on each student’s case choice. These are individual, NOT group/team assignments. The content of the memo should have two parts: first, an assessment of the situation using ethical theories and frameworks covered to that point in the course, and second, a sound recommendation for the decision-maker. If it is not clear who the decision-maker is, or if there are multiple possibilities, make an assumption and state it.

Memos will be evaluated on:

- a) Your ability to apply theoretical concepts to the real world
- b) The clarity of your reasoning

- c) The degree to which your recommendation is consistent with your analysis
- d) The persuasiveness of your overall position.

Memo formatting requirements:

Memos are limited to one 8 ½ by 11 page, 12 point font. One page of exhibits may be added in support of, or to clarify points made in the text.

3. Team/Group Paper (35% of Final Grade).

In Class #2, self-select teams/groups of 4 or 5. All teams will prepare a major paper that analyzes and comments on a current or recent ethical issue faced by a firm, organization, government or industry. Examples recently in the news might be; privacy concerns on the internet, government or regulatory officials that may be in ethically ambiguous situations (too many examples to list), advertising etc. Teams should write a brief (1/2 page maximum) proposal and email it to me before Class #3. I will follow up and make suggestions as required.

The paper should present an even-handed analysis of the situation chosen, based on ethical frameworks and models discussed in this course (or others). “Even-handed” does not mean that you should avoid expressing an opinion. On the contrary the paper will probably be much strengthened if you have a point to make. However, the point, or opinion, needs to be expressed in the context of an intellectually honest consideration of all sides of the situation, in a way that acknowledges competing viewpoints even though you may disagree with them. Any sources or ideas employed which are not your own must be adequately referenced. All the papers are due by Class #10, regardless of your teams scheduled presentation date.

In Class #4 topics will be assigned for the team project and report. The report will be a maximum of 8 pages (excluding cover page, executive summary, table of contents and list of references/bibliography) plus a maximum of 4 pages of exhibits. Teams are expected to research the assigned topic and a minimum of ten sources (e.g. blog, book, peer reviewed paper, case study etc.) are to be cited (excluding the text). The report is due at the beginning of Class #10 and must be submitted both electronically and in hard copy (marking will occur on the hard copy). In addition self and peer evaluations are to be submitted in hard copy with the report. Peer evaluation material will be provided in LEARN

Peer Evaluations. Teams are expected to meet during the following week to create and sign a Team Charter and then submit that contract at the beginning of the Class #5. The charter/contract sets out the mutual expectations of team members. The team is expected to manage all of its organizational and work assignment tasks with fairness and respect. The instructor will mediate issues (when necessary) as long as assistance is requested in a timely manner. When the Team Assignment is submitted each student will submit a self and peer evaluation of the other members of the team based on their compliance with the Team Charter. **Please note that an individual’s mark for the Group Assignment, Class Participation and Team Presentation may be adjusted below the team mark based on the peer evaluations.**

4. Team Paper Presentation (15% of Final Grade).

Using the paper as a point of departure, teams are expected to lead a discussion about the ethical dimensions of the topic they have chosen. Each team is expected to make a maximum 30 minute presentation (20 minutes presentation/discussion plus 10 minutes for questions from the class) on the subject/ethical dimensions they have chosen. Presentations will be delivered in Classes #11 and #12.

The presentations should have the following components:

- 1) A 20 minute formal summary of the facts, issues the group's analysis to provide others with the information needed for a discussion
- 2) A 10 minute Q&A and debate allocated to questions by the class and answers by the group

The professor will evaluate each presentation on the basis of content, relevance and class engagement.

Course Schedule

The following is a draft outline of the course for the coming term with assignments. At the end of each class additional assignments and/or content changes may be provided.

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
Class #1	Introduction, Ethics and the world of business – Is ethical behaviour possible in business?	Reading - Boatright Chapter 1 Course overview/introductions
Class #2	Ethical decision making Class discussion: Does Being Ethical Result in Better Business Performance?	Reading - Boatright Chapter 2 Teams (self-selected) to be established
Class #3	Applying ethical theories to real organizations	Reading - Boatright Chapter 3 Group paper proposals due.
Class #4	Loyalty and Whistle Blowing Class discussion: Does it pay to be a whistle blower?	Reading - Boatright Chapter 4 Group paper assignments approved.
Class #5	Trade Secrets and Conflict of Interest	Reading - Boatright Chapter 5 Team Charters due.
Class #6	Privacy and Employee Rights	Reading - Boatright Chapters 6 and 8 Case Assignment #1 due
Class #7	Discrimination and Affirmative Action	Boatright Chapter 7
Class #8	Marketing, Advertising and Product Safety	Reading - Boatright Chapter 10 Case Assignment #2 due
Class #9	Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility	Reading - Boatright Chapter 12 "Social Responsibility that Rubs Right Off" David Gelles; The New York Times, Oct, 17 th 2015
Class #10	International Business Ethics	Reading - Boatright Chapter 14 Group Assignments due
Class # 11/12	Team Presentations	

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Academic integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) (other than a petition) or Policy 71 (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm.

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.