

# Business Ethics

## Course Text

- Hartman, Laura P. and Joseph R. DesJardins. Business Ethics: Decision-Making for Personal Integrity & Social Responsibility, 1st edition, McGraw-Hill, 2008. ISBN: 9780073136868 [This text is available as an etextbook at purchase or students may find used, new, or rental copies at [this link](#)]

## Course Description

This course provides an introduction to business ethics. Part philosophy and part business, the course covers a wide array of ethical issues arising in contemporary business life. Major theoretical perspectives and concepts are presented, including ethical relativism, utilitarianism, and deontology. The lessons explore employee issues and responsibilities, leadership and decision making, morality, diversity, discrimination, and ethics in marketing and advertising. Corporate social responsibility is also examined, as are the topics of environmental responsibilities, global ethics, and regulation concerns in an era of increasing globalization.

## Course Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Relate the market system to the need for ethics in business and distinguish it from the law and concepts of virtue and morality.
- Explore ethics in the context of relativism, psychological egoism, utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics.
- Examine the ideas of character ethic, female ethic, human rights, and ethical action.
- Illustrate the factors influencing employee issues including the right to work, employment at will, due process and employee participation, health and safety standards, family responsibilities, the right to privacy, and substance abuse testing.
- Examine the professional ethics and responsibilities of intermediaries, managerial responsibility and loyalty, and employee responsibilities to the community.
- Illustrate how the traits of ethical leaders and the influence of the group affect moral responsibility.
- Compare differentiation and discrimination, and examine issues involving diversity and discrimination including the work environment of women, preferential policies, and diversity policies.
- Relate risk analysis in health and safety, responsibilities of the producer, products liability and accountability, and fair pricing to ethics in marketing.
- Explore the ethical considerations that govern sales, advertising, and product placement in the context of regulation of sales and advertising, and target marketing.
- Analyze international economic integration, labor in the global economy, and the regulation of global economic activities by international institutions.

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- Analyze methods of ensuring morality in business including Kohlberg's method of assessing moral decision-making processes and James Weber's modification, ethical corporate structures, and federal sentencing guidelines and the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.
- Analyze the classical model and its limitations, and evaluate modern theories of corporate social responsibility including the moral minimum framework and the stakeholder theory.
- Define environmental pragmatism and relate it to environmental regulation and sustainable economics.
- Relate eastern business philosophies, and Islamic and Jewish traditions to the intricacies of conducting ethical overseas business ventures.

## Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites to take Business Ethics.

## Important Terms

In this course, different terms are used to designate tasks:

- Proctoring: all final exams require proctoring which can be completed conveniently from your home. A webcam is required.
- Tutoring: memberships include online tutoring for students to access with any content/subject related questions in the place of faculty. If your tutor is not able to answer your questions please contact a student advisor.
- Review Activities: A non-graded assignment to assist you in practicing the skills discussed in a topic.
- Homework: non-graded quizzes that help highlight the content which will be assessed on graded exams.
- Graded Exam: A graded online assessment.

## Course Evaluation Criteria

StraighterLine provides a percentage score and letter grade for each course. See [Academic Questions](#) section in FAQ for further details on percentage scores and grading scale. A passing percentage is **70%** or higher.

If you have chosen a Partner College to award credit for this course, your final grade will be based upon that college's grading scale. Only passing scores will be considered by Partner Colleges for an award of credit.

There are a total of 1000 points in the course:

Topic	Assessment	Points Available
4	Graded Exam 1	175
9	Graded Exam 2	175
11	Graded Exam 3	175

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14	Graded Exam 4	175
15	Final Exam	300
Total		1000

## Course Topics and Objectives

Topic	Topic	Subtopics	Objectives
1	Introduction to Business Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining Business Ethics</li> <li>Law and Ethics</li> <li>Interpreting Ethics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Illustrate the need and nature of business ethics.</li> <li>Distinguish ethics and ethos from the law.</li> <li>Analyze the concepts of morality, virtue, social ethics, and managerial ethics.</li> <li>Relate the concepts of the market system, contemporary capitalism, and socialist democracies to managing in market economies.</li> </ul>
2	Leaders and Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethical Leadership</li> <li>Ethical Decision Making</li> <li>Impact of Groupthink</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine the traits of ethical leaders.</li> <li>Assess the impact of groupthink in the abdication of individual ethical responsibility.</li> <li>Examine the psychology of ethical decision making</li> </ul>
3	Theoretical Perspectives 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reasoning in Ethics</li> <li>Utilitarian Ethics</li> <li>Deontological Ethics</li> <li>Virtue Ethics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze the impact of relativism and psychological egoism on ethics.</li> <li>Explain how utilitarian ethics has been used to shape business policy and examine its challenges.</li> <li>Examine the principle of categorical imperative.</li> <li>Analyze virtue ethics and its role in business practice.</li> </ul>
4	Theoretical Perspectives 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Character Ethic</li> <li>Female Ethic</li> <li>Ethics and Human Rights</li> <li>Ethical Action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the principles that govern and shape character.</li> <li>Examine the proposition of a feminine ethic and the caring perspective.</li> <li>Relate human rights to economic rights of production and consumption.</li> <li>Examine the concept of moral</li> </ul>

			excellence and implement a checklist in decision making.
5	Morality in Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kohlberg and Moral Reasoning</li> <li>• Ethical Corporate Structures</li> <li>• Federal Guidelines and the Sarbanes-Oxley Act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare Kohlberg's method of assessing managers' moral decision-making processes and James Weber's modification.</li> <li>• Evaluate the benefits and limitations of corporate credos, ethics programs, and codes of ethics in promoting proactive ethical behavior.</li> <li>• Analyze the impact of federal sentencing guidelines and the Sarbanes-Oxley Act on proactive ethics in businesses.</li> </ul>
6	Corporate Social Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Classical Model</li> <li>• The Moral Minimum</li> <li>• The Stakeholder Theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the classical model of corporate social responsibility.</li> <li>• Evaluate the moral minimum framework.</li> <li>• Demonstrate the limitations of the utilitarian and private property defenses of the classical model.</li> <li>• Analyze the theory that managerial decisions should balance the interests of all stakeholders.</li> </ul>
7	Diversity and Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination Versus Differentiation</li> <li>• Woman in the Workforce</li> <li>• Preferential Policies</li> <li>• Promoting Diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze differentiation and discrimination and relate it to equal opportunity and affirmative action.</li> <li>• Evaluate how overt discrimination, sexual harassment, and the glass ceiling create a negative work environment for women.</li> <li>• Review the impact of preferential treatment policies as a means of securing equality in the workplace.</li> <li>• Assess the effectiveness of implementing diversity policies.</li> </ul>
8	Globalization and Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Economic Integration</li> <li>• Labor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze the purpose of international economic integration and relate it to living standards.</li> <li>• Examine the working conditions of labor in emerging industry to international institutions and the</li> </ul>

			policies regulating global economic activities.
9	Global Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-Cultural Ethical Values: Eastern Business Philosophy</li> <li>• Cross-Cultural Ethical Values: Jewish and Islamic Business Ethics</li> <li>• Cross-Cultural Ethical Values: Overseas Business Ventures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine the business philosophy of kyosei, Confucius, and Tetsuro Watsuji.</li> <li>• Review economic and commercial activities to Islamic teachings and Jewish traditions.</li> <li>• Examine the intricacies of conducting ethical overseas business ventures and relate it to the FCPA.</li> </ul>
10	Employee Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moral Rights and Legal Doctrine</li> <li>• Health and Safety</li> <li>• Privacy and Substance Abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine the right to work and relate it to the doctrine of employment at will.</li> <li>• Analyze the principle of due process and employee participation.</li> <li>• Assess the ethical considerations governing health and safety standards in the workplace.</li> <li>• Review the concepts of personal zone, control of personal information, and substance abuse testing.</li> </ul>
11	Ethics in Marketing—Product Safety and Pricing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Analysis in Health and Safety</li> <li>• Responsibilities of the Producer</li> <li>• Products Liability</li> <li>• Fair Pricing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review how risk analysts estimate the costs of saving lives in the context of health and safety.</li> <li>• Examine the ethical concerns associated with market exchanges.</li> <li>• Analyze products liability and relate it to the assigning of accountability.</li> <li>• Illustrate how price gouging, monopolistic pricing, price-fixing, and predatory pricing affect fair market pricing.</li> </ul>
12	Ethics in Marketing—Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales, Advertising, and Product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore the ethical considerations that govern the promotion and placement of products.</li> </ul>

	and Target Marketing	<p>Placement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulating Sales and Advertising</li> <li>Target Marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine the role of the U.S. Federal Trade Commission in regulating marketing practices and relate it to consumer autonomy.</li> <li>Analyze the ethics of the strategies used in target marketing.</li> </ul>
13	Environmental Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental Pragmatism</li> <li>Environmental Regulation</li> <li>Sustainable Economics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the range of environmental responsibilities applicable to businesses and relate it to environmental pragmatism.</li> <li>Examine environmental regulation policies in the context of a market system.</li> <li>Analyze the proposition that the economy is a subsystem within the Earth's biosphere and requires sustainable development.</li> </ul>
14	Employee Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agent-Principal and the Gatekeeper Function</li> <li>Managerial Responsibility and Loyalty</li> <li>Responsibilities to the Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine the professional ethics and responsibilities of employees and agents in their role as intermediaries.</li> <li>Explore loyalty and the responsibility of managers to acquire and act on negative information.</li> <li>Analyze employee responsibilities to the community in the context of honesty, whistleblowing, and insider trading.</li> </ul>
15	Review Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review</li> </ul>