



# Comm. 332 Business & Professional Ethics

for a full description of the School of Business at UNBC can be found at: <http://www.unbc.ca/commerce>

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm and by appointment.

## Course Description

This course focuses on ethical theories and their application to specific ethical issues of relevance to work organisations and to the demands of multiple stakeholders. We will explore the changing legal, ethical and regulatory environments of business, focusing on the values, policies, technology, and legal approaches between the modern organisation and its broader public.

This course adopts a case-based approach to learning. This is discussed in depth during the first class. Students are ***strongly encouraged*** to approach the instructor with any questions on this topic.

## Course Objectives

The purposes of this course are to have students consider ethics as foundational to success in their business and professional lives; to grapple with ethical issues in a variety of contexts; and to work effectively in teams on the material that is presented for their consideration.

Specifically, the objectives of the course are to:

- Equip students and business professionals with basic skills to identify ethical issues they may face in their careers and any business environments;
- Assist students in thinking about issues from legal, ethical and regulatory perspectives, as a means of further developing their preparation as responsible professionals in today's society;
- Consider what appropriate ethical business decisions would be in a variety of contexts;
- Provide necessary and basic criteria when conducting stakeholders' analyses; and
- Develop critical thinking skills when faced with an ethical dilemma.

## Required Text

Sexty, Robert W. (2014), "Canadian Business and Society: Ethics, Responsibilities & Sustainability," McGraw Hill, 3rd ed.

Link to Harvard Business Publishing Coursepack: <http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/52605667>

## Course Assignments and Grade Weighting

Assignment	Due Date	Grade Weight
Case assignments – 3 @ 10% each	Sept 30, Oct 28, Nov 25	30%
Paper – Company Men or student-selected	Dec 2	15%
Midterm Exam	Oct 7	25%
Final Exam	As scheduled	30%

### Assignment Descriptions:

Students will be form teams of 3-4 to solve cases and respond to articles. Cases are listed in the schedule in this syllabus, and contained in the course reading package.

- *Cases: Barclay's, Pepsico and Chiquita*

Each team will analyse and solve a case, and submit a written assessment of their work. This will include the identification of issues, analysis of effects and underlying causes, alternative courses of action, a recommended path, and steps to mitigate downsides.

- *Readings.*

Assignments are given in class for review. These will be covered on the midterm and the final exam, so declining to read them will prove a costly choice.

- *Paper.*

Each team will submit a paper on an ethical topic. While students are encouraged to find an area of tension that is of personal interest, a default option is the movie "The Company Men" starring Ben Affleck ([http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1172991/?ref=mv\\_sr\\_1](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1172991/?ref=mv_sr_1)). This will be discussed in class.

### Due Dates / Late Assignments:

All assignments are due at the beginning of class. As each case is discussed in depth during that class, no late assignments are received.

### Grading System:

<b>Excellent</b>	A+	90%-100%	<b>Satisfactory</b>	C+	67%-69.9%	<b>Failure</b>	F	0%-49.9%
	A	85%-85.9%		C	63%-66.9%			
	A-	80%-84.9%	<b>Marginal</b>	C-	60%-62.9%			
<b>Good</b>	B+	77%-79.9%		D+	57%-59.9%			
	B	73%-76.9%		D	53%-56.9%			
	B-	70%-72.9%		D-	50%-52.9%			

### Paper Format:

Adherence to all academic standards and forms is expected. Of particular note are the use of the third person in all assignments; the proper citation of sources; inclusion of bibliographies; and the use of proper spelling and grammar.

### Missing Exam:

Advance notice must be given when a student is unable to appear for an examination. Only duly authenticated bereavement and illness are admissible justifications for absence from a scheduled examination. For students with an admissible justification on the midterm will write a cumulative final examination covering all of the material in the course.

## Course Schedule

Date	Material Covered	Ch	Case / Reading
Sept 9	Course introduction, review of case method Relationship between business and society	1	
Sept 16	Ethics and Capitalism	2	Articles 1
Sept 23	Identifying Stakeholders and Issues. Stakeholder relations and analysis	3 4	Articles 2, 3
Sept 30	The Ethics of Business: Theory (ch 5); Management and Leadership (ch 6)	5 6	<b>Case: Barclay's and LIBOR</b> Article 4
Oct 7	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	1-6	<b>Midterm exam</b>
<b>Oct 14</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility: Concept	7	Articles 5, 6
Oct 21	Corporate Social Responsibility: Practice (ch 8); Measuring, reporting (ch 9)	8,9	Articles 6,7
Oct 28	Responsibilities in the workplace, market	12	<b>Case: Pepsico, Profits and Food</b> Articles 8, 9 (Video: The Persuaders)
Nov 4	Class cancelled		
<b>Nov 11</b>	Remembrance Day – UNBC closed		
Nov 18	Regulating business Ownership and governance	10 11	Article 10
Nov 25	Globalisation and Business Responsibilities	15	<b>Case: Chiquita – Blood bananas</b>
<b>Dec 2</b>	Civil Society stakeholders Environment and business responsibilities	13,14	<b>Paper due</b>

Students are expected to review the following reading assignments *prior to* the class noted:

#	Date	Reading
1	Sept 16	Worldview – What makes people vote Republican? Posted on blackboard
2	Sept 23	Stakeholders v Shareholders – a new idolatry ECONOMIST 2010 04 22
3	Sept 23	Eisenhart, K.M., “Agency Theory – An Assessment and Review,” The Academy of Management Review, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Jan., 1989), pp. 57-74
4	Sept 30	Carr, Albert Z., “Is Business Bluffing Ethical?” Harvard Bus. Review, 1968 Jan-Feb
5	Oct 14	Friedman, Milton, “The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits”, New York Times 1971 09 13
6	Oct 14	Mintzberg, H, R Simons, K Basu, “Beyond Selfishness”, MITSloan Management Review, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Fall 2002), pp. 67-74.
7	Oct 21	Bazerman, M H, A Tenbrunsel, “Ethical Breakdowns”, Harvard Bus. Review, April 2011
8	Oct 28	Articles: Jian Gomeshi and the CBC, posted on Blackboard.
9	Oct 28	The Persuaders, PBS, 2004, <a href="http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/persuaders/">www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/persuaders/</a>
10	Nov 18	Articles: Uber v Taxis, posted on Blackboard.

For those interested in a more detailed examination of topics, the following are provided for further consideration. Please note that these will not be used in the course.

- 1) Global context: Macro trends of primary focus to the U.S. government. National Intelligence Council, “Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds”, [www.dni.gov/files/documents/GlobalTrends\\_2030.pdf](http://www.dni.gov/files/documents/GlobalTrends_2030.pdf).

Readers are referred to the section on technology impacts, particularly the civilian technologies. The Internet of Things is of principal importance.

- 2) Socio-economic development: Niall Ferguson's TED Talk, "The 6 killer apps of prosperity": [www.ted.com/talks/niall\\_ferguson\\_the\\_6\\_killer\\_apps\\_of\\_prosperity?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/niall_ferguson_the_6_killer_apps_of_prosperity?language=en)
- 3) Market fragmentation impact on media: The growth of "Infotainment". The MSNBC documentary on Jon Stewart and the Daily Show: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1D2PAGaKioM>. Note:
  - a) The core value proposition of the show (4:25-4:43 and 13:34-15:22);
  - b) How the "product" changes over time (5:50-7:10);
  - c) How it adapts to market context (7:24-10:10); and
  - d) The Jon Stewart "Brand" and the market segments it reaches (15:22-16:51).
- 4) Strategy in the initial stage of computers. Bill Gates and Steve Jobs full interview at D5 in 2007 ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWaX1g\\_2SSQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWaX1g_2SSQ)). The link provides all Jobs' interactions at the global "All Things Digital" (or "D", for short). The 2007 interview with Jobs and Gates starts at the 6:45 marks. Pay particular attention to the discussions around the business model and "the high order bid" (starts at 8:35).<sup>1</sup>
- 5) Finance at the societal level: Niall Ferguson, "Fiscal Crises and Imperial Collapses: Historical Perspective on Current Predicaments": [www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCR5YEadels](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCR5YEadels). Prof. Ferguson's lecture starts at the 8:00 mark of the video.
- 6) Reflections on observer bias, pervasive self-interest, and the limits of human objectivity to which academia is not immune. Dr. Thomas Sowell notes ways in which highly educated people completely misunderstand major events and trends. The Hoover Institution's interview with Dr. Sowell on "Intellectuals and Society" is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wln6INTxVpY>.

## Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct:

It is the student's responsibility to be aware of UNBC's Academic regulations, policies and procedures as described in the University calendar.

A definition of academic misconduct includes:

Cheating (using unauthorized material, information, or study aids in academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement, assisting others in any act, submission of the same work for grades in two courses without permission of the instructor or attempts to engage in such acts.

The regulations on plagiarism apply to all material submitted for a grade: essays, exams, assignments, cases, presentations, quizzes, and practice sets. Any case of suspected academic misconduct will be reported to the campus registrar. If the student is found guilty of academic misconduct there are both grade penalties and disciplinary penalties. Before there is any intention (on your part) or suspicion (on the part of your instructor or your peers) of wrongdoing, please see the instructor to discuss any problems of this nature. If your paper closely resembles a paper from this class or any other class (either written by

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<sup>1</sup> If Gates seems to have an edge at the start of the interview, it is because Jobs had delivered one of his famously nasty insults about Microsoft's offering in a software segment barely an hour earlier. Gates arrived shortly before the interview began to be informed of this, and had to be coaxed to go on stage to proceed with the segment. Jobs' conciliatory approach at the onset reflects a realisation that he had once again failed to restrain his aggressive streak, resulting in yet another a mistake.

you or another student, in this semester or any other), this will be considered an infraction of the academic misconduct code.

## **Ethical Standards**

The following behaviors are considered unethical:

1. Telling the instructor that you "need" a certain grade.
2. Asking for extra assignments for the purpose of raising a grade.
3. Asking that the grade be raised because it is very close to the next higher grade.
4. Asking that the grade be raised because you did very well on one part of the course/grading scheme.
5. Asking for a higher grade because you don't like the grading scheme.
6. Asking to be allowed to turn in an assignment late - even a few minutes late - because of computer or printer problems or any other reason.
7. Asking to be treated better than other students by making an exception to the rules.
8. Asking for any other unfair advantage in grading.

## **Disability Services**

Any student in this course who, because of a disability, may need special academic accommodation are invited and encouraged to discuss this with me, or contact Disability Services.