

Business Ethics

MGT 326 Section 03, Spring 2025
Tu Th 1:30 - 2:45pm Bell Tower 2414

Instructor: Brendan Cline, Ph.D.

Office: MVS Hall 2106

Office Hours: Mondays 10:00am - 12:00pm, Tuesdays 11:50am – 12:50pm, and by appointment

You don't need an appointment to stop by office hours. This time is set aside to address any concerns or questions you might have, or to just discuss course material more deeply outside of class time. If you have a conflict that prevents you from attending office hours, just let me know and we can schedule another time to meet.

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Course Description

Examines business organizations through the lens of ethical theory. This course applies general ethical principles to explore the moral obligations that businesses have to their customers, and to society at large. It also looks at ethical dimensions of the employer-employee relationship.

Prerequisite(s): Junior Standing and successful completion of Golden Four GE Areas (A1, A2, A3, B4)

Course Readings

We will be using a variety of no-cost materials for this course.

- Weeks 1-3 will consist of readings that I've created and posted to CI Learn.
- Later weeks will generally use chapters from an open-access textbook: Stephen M. Byars & Kurt Stanberry (2018). "Business Ethics," published by OpenStax.
 - Here is a link where you can read the text for free online, and download a free PDF file of the book: <https://openstax.org/details/books/business-ethics>
 - **The e-book is free.** However, if you would like a physical copy to read through, they do offer cheap printed versions. [The black and white paperback copy is available for a little over \\$20.00 on Amazon.com.](#) But just to be clear: **you do not need to purchase a physical copy of the book. The free PDF file is perfectly fine for this course.**
- A few times later in the semester, I have assigned readings from other textbooks, articles, or websites. Links and/or photocopies will be posted on CI Learn.

The OpenStax text is published under a CC BY 4.0 license, and you may share it with third parties as long as you follow the attribution requirements of that license. However, please do not share any of the other content that I post to CI Learn without my permission.

Course Requirements

Every student enrolled in this course has the ability to succeed. If you invest your time and effort into learning, that will be reflected in your grade. Below, you will find information about how you will be evaluated in this course, and what you will need to accomplish in order to succeed. If you have any questions about these assignments, or if you need any help along the way, don't hesitate to reach out to me—I am here to help you do your best work and gain the most that you can from this course.

Attendance and Preparation

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend between 3-6 hours per week in preparation for class (e.g., readings, assignments, preparation for exams). Regular attendance and active participation are required. We need your input for this class to succeed, and attendance and active participation are vital to developing a critical

understanding of the course material. Active participation also helps cultivate your ability to speak thoughtfully in public and constructively engage with the ideas of others.

Students will be allowed three unexcused absences. After this, each additional unexcused absence will result in a final grade deduction of 0.25%. But if you are feeling sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, please stay home. Absences due to sickness are excused. If you believe an absence due to other reasons should be excused, please email me and I will consider the circumstances.

It is also important to arrive on time in order to fully engage with the class session and minimize disruptions to other students. To incentivize punctuality, late arrivals will be recorded, and three late arrivals will be counted as one unexcused absence. If you arrive late, please let me know at the end of class so that I can credit you for attendance that day.

News Analyses: 32% (2x 16% each)

To help you gain experience putting course material into practice, you will be required to submit two short News Analysis Assignments throughout the semester. Each assignment will count for 16% of your final grade. These should be **650-1,000-word (1-inch margins, double spaced, 12pt standard font)** critical discussions of current events. For each submission, you will need to first find a news article related to ethical issues in professional life and business organizations. Then, you'll apply material from the course to analyze, criticize, or reflect on the article. More detailed instructions will be available on CI Learn. To help you succeed in these assignments, I recommend reading a quality news source throughout the semester. **Note:** I will be grading these assignments anonymously through CI Learn. You may place your Dolphin ID number at the top of your submissions, but please *do not include your name, email, or any other identifying information on your submission*. Including your name in the assignment undermines the anonymity of the process, and will result in a 5% penalty for that assignment.

- The first submission is due on the **Sunday of Week 7 (3/9)**
- The second submission is due on the **Sunday of Week 12 (4/13)**

Assignments must be submitted via CI Learn under "Assignments" by 11:59pm on the dates above. *Late submissions will be penalized at the rate of 5% per day late.* However, every student will receive **one** "amnesty pass" for late submissions of one of their News Analysis Assignments. If you aren't able to complete one of the assignments by the deadline, simply let me know that you would like to use your pass, and you will receive a free one-week extension on that assignment. But choose wisely—each student only gets one pass per semester. **Late submissions will receive a maximum penalty of 50%, and will be accepted until 11:59pm on Friday, May 9th.** After that, any missing submissions will receive a '0'—regardless of whether an "amnesty pass" has been used for that submission. See CI Learn for more details.

News Analysis Peer Review Assignment: 6%

Before submitting your first News Analysis Assignment, you will work through a multi-stage peer-review process. This will require that you submit **a rough draft (300 words or more) of your first assignment via CI Learn by 11:59pm on Sunday, February 23rd.** Then, using CI Learn, you will have one week to complete a review on three of your classmates' drafts. This will require you to score their submissions on CI Learn using the grading rubric that I will use for the assignments. **All peer reviews must be completed by 11:59pm on Sunday, March 2nd.** This will provide you with helpful feedback to use in revising your first News Analysis submission, it will expose you to the work of your peers, and it will better familiarize you with the evaluation criteria for these assignments.

Each of the components of this assignment are pass/fail. If you submit your draft on time, you will earn a full score of 3%. And if you submit all three reviews on time, you will earn the remaining 3% (1% per review submitted). Because others are impacted by your submissions, **late submissions for the Peer Review Assignment will not be accepted.** The scores your peers give you will not directly impact your grade on this assignment.

Ethical Theory Exam: 15%

During the first three weeks of class, we will be covering fundamental ethical concepts and theories, and we will be applying that material throughout the rest of the semester. To help ensure that students have a firm grasp of the basics, there will be an exam in Week 4, administered in class on **Thursday, February 13th.** The format of the exam will be a combination of multiple choice and true/false questions. There will be an in-class review session for the final exam on **Tuesday, February 11th.**

If you miss the exam for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact me via email within 24 hours to schedule a makeup.

Final Exam: 15%

To help ensure that students develop mastery of the central concepts from the second part of the course, there will be a final exam held in Week 13 that covers material from Week 5-Week 13. The exam will be administered in class on **Tuesday, April 29th**. The format of the exam will be a combination of multiple choice and true/false questions. There will be an in-class review session for the final exam on **Thursday, April 24th**.

If you miss the exam for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact me via email within 24 hours to schedule a makeup.

Group Case Studies: 15% (10x 1.5% each)

Throughout the semester, we will be devoting significant portions of class time to detailed group analyses of concrete case studies. After discussing a case in small groups, we will follow up with class-wide discussions. At the end of each session, groups will submit written answers to a set of accompanying discussion questions. Evaluation will be based on written submissions and active participation in class-wide discussion. The default score will be a “check” (85%), with stronger work earning a “check plus” (100%), and weaker work earning a “check minus” (70%).

During the first few weeks, groups will be randomly assigned each meeting. Later in the semester, students will be randomly assigned to a group that they will work with for the remainder of the course, both in these activities and for the Group Presentation (see below).

Participation in these Group Case Studies is required, and missing a session will result in a score of ‘0’ for that meeting. Arriving late to a Group Case Study meeting will result in a deduction of 0.75%/1.5%. The case study meetings are bolded in the schedule below.

To build in flexibility, each student will have one “Asynchronous Pass.” If unforeseen obstacles prevent you from attending a meeting, you can email me to use your pass. This will allow you to complete the case study that you missed on your own time. **All “Asynchronous Pass” Group Case Studies must be submitted via email, and the deadline for submission is 11:59pm on Monday, May 5th.** After missing one Group Case Study session, students will receive a 0 for each additional session missed. However, if you are experiencing personal hardships that warrant an exception to this policy, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can work together to find a reasonable solution for your situation. And if you are feeling sick, please stay home and just let me know – you will be excused for that meeting and won’t be charged a pass.

Group Presentation: 14%

The Group Case Study assignments will serve as useful practice for a final Group Presentation that will be delivered at the end of the semester. This will involve a collaborative, detailed assessment of a particular business ethics case study. There will be four components to these projects: 1) General Background, 2) Ethical Analysis, 3) Practical Recommendation, and 4) Legal Recommendation/Analysis. Each student will be responsible for one of these components for their particular group.

On Tuesday, May 2nd there will be an in-class meeting dedicated to workshopping Group Presentations. Attendance for this session is required.

At the end of the semester, each group will deliver a class presentation on their chosen case (12-20 minutes, 4 sections at 3-5 minutes each). Students will be evaluated in terms of their group’s overall performance as well as their individual contributions. Further details will be made available on CI Learn. **Group Presentations will take place at our regular meetings during the final week of classes, and also during the final examination period. Groups will need to submit an Accompanying Document and any Visual Aids via CI Learn at least one hour before their scheduled presentation.**

Group Peer Assessment: 3%

At the end of the semester, each student will be required to submit a peer review form evaluating the contributions of each group member to the success of the group. This will help incentivize a fair distribution of labor throughout the semester and a cooperative approach to group work. **In order to receive credit for the Peer Assessment, you must submit your Peer Assessment form no later than 11:59pm on Friday, May 16th.**

I expect that all students will treat each other with respect and will contribute fairly to the group assignments throughout the semester. But if there are any concerns that arise with a group member's conduct that you would like to bring to my attention, please reach out to me via email so that we can address the issue.

Extra Credit: +3%

Students will have an opportunity to submit an additional (third) News Analysis for extra credit that can improve their final grades by up to 3% (e.g., from 90% > 93%; 72% > 75%). Low-quality submission will not earn the full 3%, and plagiarized work will not receive any credit. **Due no later than 11:59pm on Friday, May 16th** (late extra credit submissions will not be accepted). More details are available on the CI Learn page.

Academic Integrity

By enrolling at CSU Channel Islands, students are responsible for upholding the University's policies and the Student Conduct Code. Academic integrity and scholarship are values of the institution that ensure respect for the academic reputation of the University, students, faculty, and staff. Cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration with another student, knowingly furnishing false information to the University, buying, selling or stealing any material for an examination, or substituting for another person may be considered violations of the Student Conduct Code (located at <http://www.csuci.edu/campuslife/student-conduct/academic-dishonesty.htm>).

All written work may be submitted to the Turnitin plagiarism detection tool via CI Learn.

****Submitting text that was written by a generative Artificial Intelligence system (such as ChatGPT) constitutes plagiarism, and will receive a failing grade for the assignment.****

If a student is found responsible for committing an act of academic dishonesty in this course, the student may receive academic penalties including a failing grade on an assignment or in the course, and a disciplinary referral will be made and submitted to the Dean of Students office. For additional information, please see the faculty [Academic Senate Policy on Academic Dishonesty](#), also in the CI Catalog. See the “Academic Integrity” page on the course CI Learn site home page for tips and resources on avoiding academic integrity issues. Please ask me if you have any questions relating to academic integrity.

Laptop/Electronics Policy

Electronic devices can provide transformative educational benefits. At the same time, they can serve as powerful distractions that diminish engagement during class sessions, both for students who use devices for other purposes, and for those nearby. Thus, with few exceptions (detailed below), **laptops and other electronic devices (i.e., cell phones, tablets) will not be permitted during class meetings**. The *first violation* of this policy will result in a warning, the *second violation* will result in a deduction of 1% from the final grade for the course, and *each additional violation* will result in *an additional* 1% final grade reduction. **Exceptions:** (1) Students who need to use electronic devices due to disability will be allowed to do so, and should contact me to make arrangements. (2) Students who strongly believe an exception to this policy should be made for them may meet with me outside of class to discuss their case, and *may* obtain permission to use devices in selected settings. (3) Some in-class activities will permit the usage of electronic devices. I will make it clear when devices are permitted.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to...	Method of assessment...
Describe the major elements of ethical theory	Ethical Theory Exam/Group Case Studies/Group Presentation/News Analysis Assignments/Class Participation
Analyze and present results of complex ethics cases	News Analysis Assignments/Group Case Studies/Group Presentation
Prepare collaborative oral presentations about ethical issues in business	Group Case Studies/Group Presentation

Perform research and write from an informed and reasoned perspective on an aspect of ethics	News Analysis Assignments/Group Presentation
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Additional Course Information and Campus Resources

Email

I am usually pretty good about responding to email within 24 hours on weekdays. When sending email, please include your course and section number in the title (e.g., MGT 326 01). Also, please include salutations at the beginning and end of your emails (i.e., “Dear Brendan,” “Hello Professor Cline,” “Best,” “Sincerely,”). This is an important part of professional correspondence, because it impacts how your communications will be perceived by your reader. Even if you don't intend to be rude, a question or request without a greeting might be seen as impolite by your audience. So, it is good to get into the habit of defaulting to including some minor salutations.

Campus Tutoring Services

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) offers free one-on-one peer tutoring for all MVS School undergraduate courses. The LRC tutors will help students with study skills, fundamental concepts, comprehension, homework, test preparation, and much more. The Peer Tutor Schedule is available via the [LRC webpage](#).

Writing & Multiliteracy Center

The Writing & Multiliteracy Center (WMC) provides all CSUCI students with free support services and programs that help them address the 21st Century challenges of creatively thinking about and composing in written, oral, visual, and digital forms of communication. Peer consultants help students at any stage of the composition process via one-to-one or group consultations, online consultations, and workshops. Students can make an appointment to work with a consultant or learn more by visiting the [WMC webpage](#).

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

CAPS is pleased to provide a wide range of services to assist students in achieving their academic and personal goals. Services include confidential short-term counseling, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and 24/7 phone and text support. CAPS is located in Bell Tower East, 1867, and can be reached at 805-437-2088 (select option 2 on voicemail for 24/7 crisis support); students can also email CAPS at caps@csuci.edu or visit the CAPS [website](#).

Emergency Intervention and Basic Needs

If you or someone you know is experiencing unforeseen or catastrophic financial issues, skipping meals, or experiencing homelessness/housing insecurity (e.g., sleeping in a car, couch surfing, staying with friends), please know that you are not alone. There are resources on campus that may assist you during this time. The Dolphin Pantry is currently located in Arroyo Hall and offers free food, toiletries and basic necessities for current CI students. For additional assistance, please contact the Dean of Students Office at (805) 437-8512 or visit Bell Tower 2565. Please visit the website for the most up to date information on the [Basic Needs Program](#).

Title IX and Inclusion

Title IX & Inclusion manages the University's equal opportunity compliance, including the areas of affirmative action and Title IX. Title IX & Inclusion also oversees the campus' response to the University's nondiscrimination policies. CSUCI prohibits discrimination and harassment of any kind on the basis of a protected status (i.e., age, disability, gender, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, medical condition, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion or religious creed, sexual orientation, and Veteran or Military Status). This prohibition on harassment includes sexual harassment, as well as sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, and stalking. For more information regarding CSUCI's commitment to diversity and inclusion or to report a potential violation, please contact Title IX & Inclusion at 805.437.2077 or visit the [Title IX webpage](#).

Drop Deadline

The last day of the Add/Drop period is February 7th by 12:00pm (noon). After that, drops and withdrawals can only be made for serious and compelling reasons, and result in a “W” grade. The last day to drop an individual class for serious and compelling reasons is April 18th.

Accessibility

If you are a student with a disability requesting reasonable accommodations in this course, please visit Disability Accommodations and Support Services (DASS) located on the second floor of Arroyo Hall, or call 805-437-3331. All requests for reasonable accommodations require registration with DASS in advance of needed services. You can [apply for DASS services here](https://www.csuci.edu/dass/students/apply-for-services.htm) [https://www.csuci.edu/dass/students/apply-for-services.htm]. Faculty, students and DASS will work together regarding classroom accommodations. You are encouraged to discuss approved accommodations with your faculty.

Final Grade Assignments

Final grades will be determined on the basis of the assignments outlined above. Letter grade assignments will be determined as follows: 93%+=A, 90-92.99=A-, 87-89.99=B+, 83-86.99=B, 80-82.99=B-, 77-79.99=C+, 73-76.99=C, 70-72.99=C-, 67-69.99=D+, 60-66.99=D, 0-59.99=F. There will be no rounding of final grades.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

*All readings can be found either in the OpenStax textbook, or on the course CI Learn page. You should make sure to complete the readings *before* the class session that they are listed for.

*If any changes need to be made to this schedule, I will update the course syllabus on CI Learn, and I will clearly communicate any changes to you via a CI Learn announcement.

Week 1, 1/20 – 1/24 *Introduction to Ethical Theory (Part 1)*

Tue Welcome/Syllabus Overview

Thu Module 1 on CI Learn (Readings required, videos and activities optional)

Week 2, 1/27 – 1/31 *Introduction to Ethical Theory (Part 2)*

Tue Module 2 on CI Learn (Readings required, videos and activities optional)

Thu Module 2 (continued)

Group Case Study

Week 3, 2/3 – 2/7 *Introduction to Ethical Theory (Part 3)*

Tue Module 3 on CI Learn (Readings required, videos and activities optional)

Thu Module 3 (continued)

Group Case Study

Week 4, 2/10 – 2/14 *Ethical Theory Exam*

Tue Catch Up/Exam Review

Thu **Ethical Theory Exam**

Week 5, 2/17 – 2/21 *Module 4: Ethics, Profits, and Stakeholders*

Tue OpenStax Ch. 1 – Why Ethics Matter (pp. 7-20)

OpenStax Ch. 3 – Defining and Prioritizing Stakeholders (pp. 67-82)

Thu OpenStax Chs. 1 & 3 (continued)

Group Case Study

****News Analysis Rough Draft due by 11:59pm on Sunday, 2/23**

Week 6, 2/24 – 2/28 *Module 5: Corporate Social Responsibility*

Tue OpenStax Ch. 3 – Defining and Prioritizing Stakeholders (pp. 83-88)

OpenStax Ch. 4 – Three Special Stakeholders: Society, Environment, Government (pp. 93-103, 117-124)

Thu OpenStax Chs. 3 & 4 (continued)

Group Case Study

****Peer Reviews due by 11:59pm on Sunday, 3/2**

Week 7, 3/3 – 3/7 *Module 6: Sustainability in Business*

Tue OpenStax Ch. 4 – Three Special Stakeholders: Society, the Environment, and Government (pp. 103-116)

OpenStax Ch. 8 – Recognizing and Respecting the Rights of All (pp. 252-258)

Thu OpenStax Chs. 4 & 8 (continued)

Group Case Study

****First News Analysis due by 11:59pm on Sunday, 3/9**

Week 8, 3/10 – 3/14 *Module 7: What Employers Owe Employees*

Tue OpenStax Ch. 6 – What Employers Owe Employees (pp. 159-189)

OpenStax Ch. 8 – Recognizing and Respecting the Rights of All (pp. 247-252)

Thu OpenStax Ch. 6 & 8 (continued)

Group Case Study

Week 9, 3/17 – 3/21 *Spring Recess*
*****Spring Recess – No Classes*****

Week 10, 3/24 – 3/28 *Module 8: What Employees Owe Employers*
Tue OpenStax Ch. 7 – What Employees Owe Employers (pp. 195-225)
Thu OpenStax Ch. 7 (continued)
Group Case Study

Week 11, 3/31 – 4/4 *Module 9: Consumers*
Tue William H. Shaw, *Business Ethics* Ch. 6 – Consumers (PDF available on CI Learn) (pp. 197-234)
Thu Shaw, Ch. 6 (continued)
Group Case Study

Week 12, 4/7 – 4/11 *Module 10: Privacy*
Tue Readings (Available on CI Learn [Module 10 Overview Page]):

- Amitai Etzioni, "The Privacy Merchants: What Is to Be Done?"
- Sam Schechner and Mark Secada, "You Give Apps Sensitive Personal Information. Then They Tell Facebook."
- Shoshana Zuboff, "You Are Now Remotely Controlled"

Thu Privacy (continued)
Group Case Study
****Second News Analysis due by 11:59pm on Sunday, 4/13**

Week 13, 4/14 – 4/18 *Module 11: An Inclusive Workplace*
Tue OpenStax Ch. 8 – Recognizing and Respecting the Rights of All (pp. 231-247)
Thu OpenStax Ch. 8 (continued)
Group Case Study

Week 14, 4/21 – 4/25 *Codes of Ethics/Exam Review*
Tue Codes of Ethics
Thu Exam Review

Week 15, 4/28 – 5/2 *Final Exam/Group Presentation Workshop*
Tue **Final Exam**
Thu **Group Presentation Workshop**

Week 16, 5/5 – 5/9 *Group Presentations*
Tue Group Presentations
Thu Group Presentations

Week 17, 5/12 – 5/16 *Final Exam Week (Group Presentations)*

****We will be meeting during the final examination period for the remaining group presentations. This will take place from 10:30am-12:00pm on Tuesday, May 13th**

Attendance at this meeting is required, even if your group has already presented.

Final Deadlines:

- **Group Presentation Accompanying Documents and Visual Aids** must be submitted via CI Learn at least one hour *before* your group's scheduled presentation
- All **"Asynchronous Pass" Group Case Studies** must be received via email by 11:59pm on Monday, May 5th
- All **late News Analysis Assignments** must be received via CI Learn by 11:59pm on Friday, May 9th
- **Group Peer Assessment** must be received via CI Learn by 11:59pm on Friday, May 16th
- **Extra Credit** assignments must be received via CI Learn by 11:59pm on Friday, May 16th