

**Bus497 Business and Professional Ethics (3 credits) Spring 2008**

**Instructor: Dr. Don Dickerson, Ph.D**

**402-770-1149; [DrD1@neb.rr.com](mailto:DrD1@neb.rr.com)**

**Welcome to Bus 497 Business and Professional Ethics!**

**This class begins Wednesday, 19 March 2008 and ends on Wednesday, 07 March 2008. We meet weekly for eight (8) consecutive sessions. Class begins at 6:00 PM sharp and ends not later than 10:30 PM.**

The business world continues to globalize at an every accelerating rate. Technology zooms at breakneck speed. Large business scandals continue to proliferate. How can we make wiser decisions? How do we defend them when we make them? What standards or principles can guide us as we plan, as we problem solve, as we move into the future?

The complexities of our modern world at home and abroad are unmatched in human history. We know so much yet so little. Evolutions and revolutions place high demands on government and the marketplace. Trying to keep afloat in highly competitive industries tests the character of individuals and companies. Advancing technology beckons us to the latest discovery or invention. Scandals in the business world and among leaders challenge our optimism and resolve to hold fast to what we value.

Managers get bombarded with a multitude of decisions on a daily basis. Decisions in business involve many factors. Ethics is only one. Today it occupies a central concern in all corners of the world. Business or organizational decisions are typically made from three points of view: the economic, the legal, and the moral (or "ethical," as some prefer to call it). But ethics always looms large in decision making.

This class tackles a number of tough cases that touch on a variety of issues individuals and managers face locally, nationally, and globally. The focus is clearly on using ethical approaches to arrive at sound decisions. Applying sound critical thinking to all we do as, leaders, managers, and employees, demands very high ethical standards in order to demonstrate social responsibility and to remain on the leading edge in our businesses and professions. The purpose is not to teach you *what* to think, but *how* to think wisely from an ethical point of view.

**"A person who stands for nothing will fall for anything."**

**Malcolm X**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION.** An integration of the student's experience by focusing on the ethical implications of business policies. Students are exposed to business and professional issues ethically troublesome to managers. They will examine and apply ethical standards and principles to practical problems faced daily in the work world, using case studies and readings. Students will use an ethical algorithm [method] to

provide the analytical framework for actual case studies and concrete examples of corporations and executives caught up in ethical dilemmas. They will debate often and use critical thinking skills in this course. The class will focus on real life experience cases, as well as significant readings and discussion of current events and future ethical concerns in the business and professional world.

- *Required for Accounting and Business majors. Fulfills one Liberal Learning requirement for everyone except Business majors.*

## **READINGS AND SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

1. Required text: *Business Ethics (Concepts and Cases)* by Manuel Velasquez, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, 2006. Pearson Prentice Hall. ISBN 0-13-193007-9.
2. Each student will receive a Class Notebook (“CN”) that will include aids to working in this class.
3. Students will need to use the Internet and have an email address for this class. They may use a computer in the Doane computer lab if needed and can get a free email address when using Doane’s computers.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES.** Through critical thinking by way of careful ethical analysis each participant will learn:

1. ethical guidelines (informal and formal) and ethical theories to arrive at defensible ethical decisions; their own ethical orientation and values profile.
2. an ethical algorithm (method) for resolving ethical dilemmas in the business and professional world; how to assess an organization’s ethical effectiveness;
3. ethical ways to select and develop employees;
4. updated discussions of globalization, technology, and current business practices.
5. about some of the ethical dilemmas classmates have experienced in their own professional lives, and how apply ethical theories and principles to these cases.

**LEARNING STRATEGIES.** Students will fulfill course objectives by:

1. reading and reflecting on assigned and contracted topics;
2. examining an ethics effectiveness test that measures the ethical congruence of an organization and strategies for changing the ethical culture of an organization;
3. discussion, debate and case study analysis;
4. in-depth study and team presentation of a major current ethical issue in the business/professional world;
5. assessing their own ethical orientation.

## **METHODS FOR EVALUATING STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

1. Attendance and active participation. See #1 below under “Course Policies.” “Active participation” means that the professor will assess participation based on each student’s active involvement in class discussions, presentations, and activities. This includes demonstrated evidence of class preparation for assignments. Attendance points possible: 350 (320 points for perfect attendance; 30 points for evidential participation).
2. Completion of assignments described in chart below.



## **COURSE POLICIES**

Class attendance is critical to learning in this class. We do a significant amount of discussion, debate, and case study analysis. Topics are varied and stimulate critical thinking and challenging discussions. Each student's presence and contribution enriches the class. Each student's absence is a loss for the class, as well as a loss for the student.

If a student does not initiate and negotiate with professor within three days of a missed class 40 points are lost. All makeup work will be graded. If you know in advance that you will miss a class and wish to gain back some of the lost points, ask for makeup work. A student can make up for 20 of the 40 points of a missed class for two classes only, depending on the quality of the makeup work. An A is possible, but not an A+ if you miss a class.

**If you know you will miss more than two classes, do not sign up for this class.**

Calculate final grade by dividing the number of points earned by 700. Use the follow grading scale to calculate. :

<b>A+ = 98-100</b>	<b>B+ = 89-91</b>	<b>C+ = 80-82</b>	<b>D+ = 71-73</b>	<b>F=64 and below</b>
<b>A = 95-97</b>	<b>B = 86-88</b>	<b>C = 77-79</b>	<b>D = 68-70</b>	
<b>A- = 92-94</b>	<b>B- = 83-85</b>	<b>C- = 74-76</b>	<b>D- = 65-67</b>	

**Join us for an exciting adventure in the world of ethics.**

**Much discussion and debate, with a focus  
on sound critical thinking.**