**Philosophy 121
Ethics in the Workplace - Online**

Fall 2025
James Brusseau

Class Meetings	Online
Communication	Pace Email
Office	41 Park Row/Zoom online
Email	**jbrusseau@pace.edu**
Hours	By appointment

Course Description
  This course offers a survey of key issues that face the whole range of corporate stakeholders, from shareholders to the general public. We begin with a study of principal ethical theories. We continue with ethical issues involving individuals and the relationship between the employee and the company, such as selecting a career path, the ethics of applying for work and hiring, conflict of interest, whistle-blowing and management decisions. Finally, general issues of the relationship between the corporation and society are considered. They include: AI and big data, issues involving the consumer and employee protection, corporate social responsibility and the economic star system.

Required Texts
  The Business Ethics Workshop. Brusseau, James. Flat World Knowledge.
    The textbook is an ebook, though a hard copy is available and easy to get from the publisher directly. The book can be purchased at the bookstore or, perhaps more conveniently, at: https://students.flatworldknowledge.com/engage/courses/2613996

Class Schedule
  The course week runs from Thursdays to the next Wednesday, with reading and discussion board work generally set for the Thursday to Monday stretch (you will have complete flexibility to complete the work at any day/time within this window), and then some lighter work in the Monday to Wednesday stretch. Details below.

  Note: Typically we do not change our schedule for brief holidays.

Also, every semester has its own dynamic and interests. As a result, we may change the course plan slightly on the fly. Obviously, decisions about syllabus tweaking will be clearly noted for all participants. If there are any doubts, email the professor.

Part I
Ethical theories and application
    Week 1 September 4 → 10
- Welcome
- Overview of syllabus, book, course
- Chapter 1, What is Business Ethics
- Case Studies

    Week 2 September 11 → 17
- Chapter 2: Theories of Duties and Rights
- Duties
- Case studies

    Week 3 September 18 → 24
- Chapter 2: Theories of Duties and Rights
- Fairness & Kant
- Case studies

    Week 4 September 25 → October 1
- Chapter 2: Theories of Duties and Rights
- Rights
- Case studies

    Week 5 October 2→ 8
- Chapter 3: Theories of consequence ethics
- Utilitarianism
- Case studies

    Week 6 October 9 → 15
- Chapter 3: Theories of consequence ethics
- Utilitarianism & Altruism
- Case studies

    Weeks 7 October 16 → 22
- Chapter 3: Theories of consequence ethics
- Egoism
- Review Theories

Part II
The ethics of the workplace: employees and managers

    Week 8 October 23 → 29
- Chapter 5: Employee's Ethics: What's the Right Job for Me?

- Chapter 6: Employee's Ethics: Getting a Job, Getting a Promotion, Leaving
- Chapter 7: Employee's Ethics: Making the Best of the Job You Have as You Get from 9 to 5
- Chapter 8: Manager's Ethics: Getting, Promoting, and Firing Workers

Week 9 October 30 → November 5
- Review
- **First Exam**

Part III
The ethics of business in society

Week 10 November 6 → 12
- Chapter 4: Theories responding to cultural relativism
- Case studies

Week 11 November13 → 19
- Chapter 12: The Selling Office: Advertising and Consumer Protection
- Chapter 13: The Data Office: Privacy and Identity in Big Data Reality
- Case studies

Week 12 November 20 → December 3 (Includes Thanksgiving)
- Chapter 14: The Responsible Office: Corporations and Social Responsibility
- Case studies

Week 13 December 4 → 10
- Chapter 16: The Domination Office: The Star System and Labor Unions
- Case studies

Week 14 May December 11 → End of Semester
- Review for Final Exam
- Final Exam

Grading Policy
There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. These exams will account for 67% of the final grade.

A detailed preview of the exam format will be provided in a video. It will be available on the class site throughout the semester.

Briefly, you will have from the morning of one day, to the evening of the next, to do the exams. The exams will have 6 short answer questions and 3 essays. Students will choose 4 of the short answers and respond for 5 points each. Students will choose 2 of the essays and respond for 40 points each. The short answers will typically be questions asking you to provide definitions or quick summaries of class fundamentals. The essays will be similar to the ethical dilemmas discussed throughout the semester. You will receive a

dilemma (for example: *Should I embellish my resume with some technically true but misleading information?*). Then you will respond with the ethical tools developed in class.

Participation in the discussions hosted online on Classes will account for 1/3 of the final grade. The midterm and the final exams will each count as 1/3 of the final course grade.

There is no credit for late work on the discussion board.

Learning Outcomes
Learn how to clearly reason through and debate ethical dilemmas. Specifically:

Analysis
- Students will be able to locate core ethical issues at the root of dilemmas connected with our working lives
- Students will be able to compare possible decisions as structured by the principal theories of philosophical and business ethics
- Students will be able to justify decisions made by reference ethical theory
- Students will be able to elaborate decisions with clear reasoning

Communication
- From course texts as well as online discussion, students will improve ability to join in debates
- From clear analysis – cognitive and verbal – students' analytical writing will improve

Social Interaction
- Students will improve the ability to think collaboratively with others

National and International Perspectives
- Students will encounter some business issues that cross national borders

Valuing
- Students will become familiar with the facts/values distinction
- Students will begin to understand mainstream ethical philosophies and theories
- Students will become more effective practical reasoners

To be successful in this course...
- Because the exam questions will closely resemble those discussed in class, focus in the online seminars, and robust discussion board participation are the best ways to prepare.

Pace University Academic Integrity Code
Students in this course are required to adhere to Pace University's Academic Integrity Code. The Academic Integrity Code supports honesty and ethical conduct in the educational process. It educates students about what constitutes academic misconduct, helps to deter cheating and plagiarism, and provides a procedure for handling cases of

academic misconduct. Students are expected to be familiar with the Code, which can be found under "University Policies" in the Student Handbook. Individual schools and programs may have additional standards of academic integrity. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the policies of the schools, programs, and courses in which they are enrolled. Academic dishonesty will result in zero credit for the assignment/exam.

Pace University Statement of Internet Etiquette Code

When you are communicating in an online environment you are subject to the same rules of courtesy and conduct that you would find in any face-to-face environment. Treat your fellow students with respect. If you disagree with someone's post, you should aim to acknowledge your disagreement in a mature and respectful way, without belittling the writer, and ending the response with a question to open up further discussion. Be clear with your words. It's easy for someone to misinterpret your meaning. They can't see your expressions or hear the tone of your voice. Be careful when using sarcasm and humour. Without face to face communications your comments may be misinterpreted.

Procedures for Students with Disabilities Who Wish to Obtain Accommodations

The University's commitment to equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities includes providing reasonable accommodations for the needs of students with disabilities. To request an accommodation for a qualifying disability, a student must self-identify and register with the Coordinator of Disability Services for his or her campus. No one, including faculty, is authorized to evaluate the need for or grant a request for an accommodation except the Coordinator of Disability Services. Moreover, no one, including faculty, is authorized to contact the Coordinator of Disability Services on behalf of a student. For further information, please see "Information for Students with Disabilities" on the University's website.