

Anderson School of Management (ASM)

University of New Mexico

Syllabus 2.0 (which will become version 32.0 with modifications)

MGMT 458
Managerial Ethics
BBA program
Spring 2016 semester

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Course goals

MGMT 458 will focus on ethical issues in business, with a particular focus on the pressures that business managers face—and that you will face one day as well. Because of the small number of students in the class we will be able (based on student interests) to include a broad variety of topics. About half of our time for each class session will be devoted to lecture about the material assigned for that week, and the other half for discussion and class exercises designed to apply ideas from assigned readings.

There has been increasing attention given—in the United States and around the world—to the place of business in society. If it was ever the case that businesses could focus only on profit to the exclusion of any other societal concerns (and it really wasn't ever so), it isn't the case now. Businesses are facing both increasing competition and increasing social expectations. Globalization creates opportunities and challenges for businesses, and many of the challenges are ethical in nature. In short, managers face significant pressures with regard to improving financial and social performance and need a variety of frameworks and tools to respond appropriately. We will therefore take micro and macro perspectives on business ethics: businesses are embedded in broader social systems, but businesses are also made up of individual people who make decisions in the organization's name. All of you, by the choices that you make, will contribute positively or negatively to the ethical climates and behaviors of your chosen organizations during your careers.

Because this is a course in managerial ethics, we'll also be thinking a lot about personal values. All of you come to this course with personal histories that affect your ideologies, which in turn affect how you will manage, lead, and follow. My goal is not to get you to think like me, but rather to get to think about your own beliefs—including beliefs about good management and about ethics.

However, because of our size and the nature of the course, we will structure MGMT 458 as a seminar. Seminars differ from traditional lecture-type courses in at least three ways: First, the degree of participation by all class members is extensive. Active involvement stimulates many interesting and lively discussions. Students also typically take responsibility for some part of the course, and in some sense co-create the course with the instructor. (One way to think about a seminar is through the phrase “you had to be there.”) Secondly, seminars traditionally focus

much more on not-yet-resolved problems and controversies than do lecture-oriented courses, which is especially true for topics related to managerial ethics. Thirdly, assignments are more likely to involve papers and presentations with less emphasis on quizzes and exams. More to the point, seminars are about active engagement in a collaborative fashion rather than one-way interactions between each of you and me.

Based on your feedback, here are the course goals that we will seek to accomplish during the semester:

- Learn to recognize and respond to ethical issues facing you and your (current and future) organization.
- Learn how to respond to pressures to behave unethically.
- Learn how to identify ethical and unethical organizations.
- Learn how to apply different ethical frameworks to ethical issues facing organizations.
- Learn how organizations can prevent ethical misbehavior from occurring and remedy it when it occurs.
- Learn how organizations can communicate ethical standards to various stakeholders, including employees and suppliers.
- Learn how to respond to unethical competitors and competitive environments.
- Analyze different kinds of ethical cultures and learn how organizations can create more ethical cultures.
- Connect ethical organizational behavior to strategy.
- Think about and clarify your personal values.

Course materials

There will be one textbook for the seminar:

Johnson, C. E. 2016. *Organizational Ethics: A Practical Approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Additional readings will be assigned throughout the semester based on student interests and noted in the syllabus. These readings will be listed in the Version 3.0 of the syllabus and posted to UNM Learn.

Course requirements and grading

Based on your feedback and course goals, here is the grading scheme that will be used:

Class participation and engagement	20 percent
Group project, presentation, and paper	25 percent
Ethical leadership certification and reflection paper	25 percent
Short papers (four; 10 percent for each of your best three)	30 percent

Class participation and engagement is important because of the nature of the course and its seminar format. I rely on everyone being prepared and ready to discuss course ideas. I reserve the right to include pop quizzes in this grading component if I sense that you're not doing each week's reading.

In groups of no fewer than three and no more than four, during the last two weeks of the semester we'll have presentations of group projects. A description of the group project is on the last page of the syllabus.

In order to explore ideas related to ethical leadership, each of you will be registered for and expected to complete the Ethical Leadership Certification Program created by the NASBA Center for the Public Trust (details to follow). In addition to completing the certification by April 27, I'd like each of you to write a four-page (12-point type, double-spaced, one-inch margins on all sides) review of the program and how it could be improved. Assuming that you write an adequate paper, this will be graded on a pass-fail basis, with a pass receiving full credit.

You'll write four short papers (1200-1500 words each). Topics for each paper will be given at least two weeks before the due date. The best three paper grades will be factored into your course grade.

At my sole discretion, one or more A+ grades may be offered for superior performance.

Policies and procedures

Attendance and participation in class discussions are essential to the content and quality of the course/seminar because teaching methods will emphasize active involvement by the students, rather than a one-way monologue from me. Each of you has interesting and valuable insights to offer in discussion. I encourage you to contribute. ***Please help me learn your names by using the name cards at each class session.***

If you are a qualified person with disabilities who might need appropriate accommodations in this class, *please communicate with me as soon as possible*. It is often the case that we will need to coordinate accommodating activities with other campus offices.

Class attendance is a critical element of learning. Equally important is active *class engagement*. I will assume that you have read the assigned materials before class, so we'll be able to use our time together discussing, evaluating, and applying them to real business situations.

Please turn off cell phone ringers during class!

Ethical lapses such as plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course.

Please let me know how I can be helpful to you as we proceed through the semester.

Readings

Unit 1: Foundations for personal ethics in organizations (January 27-February 10)

January 27: Ethical perspectives

Read Chapter 1 of Johnson and listen to the following two BBC World Service documentaries entitled “Would You Kill the Big Guy?” (by the BBC World Service)

Part 1:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00c1sw2>

Part 2:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00c5x0q>

February 3: Personal ethical development and ethical decision making

Read Chapters 2 and 3 of Johnson

February 10: Ethical interpersonal communication and exercising ethical influence

Read Chapter 4 and 5 of Johnson

Unit 2: Foundations for managerial and organizational ethics (February 17-March 2)

February 17: Ethical conflict management; improving group ethical performance

Read Chapters 6 and 7 of Johnson

February 24: Ethical leadership and followership

Read Chapter 8 and 9 of Johnson

March 2: Building an ethical organization

Read Chapter 10 of Johnson and *The 2013 National Business Ethics Survey of the U.S. Workforce* (2014, Ethics Resource Center: Washington, D.C.; posted to UNM learn)

Unit 3: Specific topics (March 2-April 27)

Scheduling and readings to be provided in Version 3.0 of the syllabus.

Unit 4: Group projects; wrap-up (May 4-May 11)

Brief guidelines for the group project

In the last two weeks of the semester (the last formal week of class and the final exam period), there will be group presentations in which the focus will be helping a specific organization respond to some sort of ethical challenge facing it. The presentation will be 20 minutes long, with an additional 10 minutes for questions. On the day that the presentation is due, you'll hand in a copy of your slides and an eight- to ten-page (double spaced, one-inch margins on all sides) narrative that (a) identifies the issue, (b) offers an ethical analysis of that issue connected to a stakeholder analysis, and (c) discusses what the organization and its leadership team should do in response to that issue.

Here are the guidelines:

1. Groups should have either three or four members.
2. You can choose a local organization or a national organization, an organization that you have worked for or some other organization, a profit, non-profit, or government agency.
3. While I don't want to be prescriptive, I think the project should contain at a minimum the following elements:
 - a. Description of the organization.
 - b. Description of the ethical challenge.
 - c. Analysis of the ethical challenge, focusing on ethical obligations.
 - d. Recommendations for responding to the ethical challenge.
 - e. An analysis of what organizational leaders and managers should do to respond to the ethical challenge.

And here are the deadlines:

- February 17: Memo listing group members, name of organization, and ethical challenge
- April 6: Rough draft due (meetings with me the following week)
- May 4: Written portion of the project due
- May 4 and May 11: Project presentations

Let me know if you have any questions.

