

BUS 354E Business Ethics

Course Description

This course provides an overview to business ethics. It introduces key ethical frameworks and theories that support informed ethical reasoning. Students will explore how different ethical perspectives influence managerial and strategic decision-making. Particular attention is given to understanding the trade-offs involved in applying alternative ethical approaches. The course also emphasizes the practical implications of ethical choices for organizations and stakeholders. Ultimately, students will develop critical skills for making responsible and well-reasoned business decisions. More specifically, the areas covered within the course are:

- Defining Ethics: Meaning and scope
- Ethics in the world of organizations
- Misconceptions about ethics in organizations
- Ethical theories
- Ethics, top Management teams (TMT), and managerial decision-making
- Objectives and values of ethical Organizations
- Strategies and practices for promoting ethics in organizations
- Trust and organizational commitment
- Ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR)
- Stakeholders, ethical responsibility, and organizational sustainability

Course Goals and Methodology

The key objectives of the course are:

- Understand the nature of ethical issues in business and recognize moral dilemmas in organizational decision-making.
- Become familiar with the main ethical theories and frameworks used to evaluate business conduct and managerial choices.
- Critically assess the ethical implications and trade-offs of different courses of action in business contexts.
- Analyze the role of managers and organizations in promoting ethical behavior, integrity, and social responsibility

These objectives will be achieved through a combination of general theory sessions and theory-into-practice sessions. During the general theory sessions, students will be introduced to conceptual frameworks and analytical tools that support ethical reasoning and responsible decision-making in business settings.

The theory-into-practice sessions provide an opportunity for students to apply ethical concepts to real-life business scenarios. In these sessions, students will analyze and discuss ethical case studies, examine examples of organizational behavior, reflect on managerial decision-making, and actively participate in debates and discussions to develop well-reasoned ethical judgments.

Learning Objectives

Through this course, students will:

- Explain and critically evaluate the meaning, scope, and role of ethics in organizations, including common misconceptions and ethical challenges in business contexts.
- Compare and apply major ethical theories and frameworks to managerial and strategic decision-making, particularly in the context of top management teams.
- Analyze ethical trade-offs and stakeholder impacts in complex business situations, including issues related to trust, organizational commitment, and sustainability.
- Assess the objectives, values, and practices of ethical organizations, including strategies for promoting ethical behavior and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- Develop well-reasoned, ethically justified business decisions and recommendations that reflect responsible leadership and long-term organizational accountability.

Course Material

The materials for the theory classes will be facilitated to the students in the form of PowerPoint slides. The slides will be made available to the students on Blackboard. Class slides and professor explanations will mostly follow one core subject manual:

- Hartman, Laura P., Joseph R. DesJardins, and Chris MacDonald. *Business Ethics: Decision-Making for Personal Integrity & Social Responsibility*, 6th edition, McGraw-Hill, 2024. ISBN: 9781265322724.

However, there are other books and manuals the professor will refer to during the sessions.

General Course Policies

Students need to keep their cell phones turned off during class. Laptops should be used during the sessions for class related use only (taking notes, practice sessions, etc).

Course Requirements and Grading

Assessment will include a mid-term and a final exam at the end of the term in which the students will be evaluated on all the materials covered during the course sessions. Students will also be required to complete assignments which will be carried out in class.

- Mid-term Exam 20%
- Final Exam 20%
- Final project (business plan) 40%
- Student engagement 20%

Both the mid-term and the final exam will consist of a multiple-choice test and/or a short question exam. The final project will consist of a business plan that will need to be carried out in groups. The student engagement grade will be based on students' active participation in class discussions, contributing with examples of companies they know, situations they have experienced, news they have read in relation with the topic being discussed in class or assigned readings. Please refer to the Engagement Rubric for more details on the components of the engagement grade. Exam dates will not be changed under any circumstances.

General Course Policies

Each student is expected to be familiar with the course syllabus. Students are expected to focus their full attention on the class, arrive on time, and stay until class ends. Leaving the classroom on repeated occasions is disturbing to both your professor and your classmates and may adversely affect your participation grade. Please make use of the 10-minute breaks in between classes to fill up your water bottle, use the restroom, etc.

Students are expected to listen and respect other points of view. Phone calls, social media, email, or Internet browsing at any time during class are not acceptable during class except for specific class-related activity expressly approved by your instructor. You are responsible for any and all course material covered in class, announcements, and/or handouts if you are not present for any reason. Students will be held responsible to be up to date by attending to class regularly and checking both email and the Blackboard site of the course frequently (monitor your email and Blackboard announcements at least once every 24 hours).

Communicating with instructor: Please allow at least 48 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails. The weekend is not included in this timeframe. If you have an urgent request or question for your professor, be sure to send it during the week.

Student engagement policy

Student's engagement will account for at least 20% of the final grade for every course, thus highlighting its significance for high-impact learning.

Students will receive two engagement grades: a mid-term grade (at least 10%) and an end-of-semester grade (at least 10%).

An engagement rubric is provided to ensure transparent and consistent grading.

Absences and lack of engagement

Absences during the add/drop period do not count against students' engagement grade, but may impact their performance in the course.

As a consistent lack of academic engagement may raise concerns about a student's overall academic performance, the following steps will be taken in order to support students' success:

Initial outreach – after missing 3 classes*

E-mail from professor reiterating engagement policy and consequences for additional absences.

Second outreach – after missing 4 classes*

E-mail from professor and notification of academic staff at the International office.

Academic probation – after missing 6 classes*

Student is called in for a meeting with academic staff at the International office. Automatic notification of home institution and further academic consequences.

Any additional absences will result in a failing grade.

ENGAGEMENT RUBRIC

Criteria	Exemplary (9-10)	Proficient (7-8)	Passing (5-6)	Poor (0-4)
Attendance	Arrives on time and stays for the entire duration of class. No absences, or if absent once, demonstrates knowledge of course material missed.	Misses no more than two sessions or is occasionally late. Demonstrates knowledge of course material missed.	Misses 3 or 4 sessions or frequently arrives late/leaves early; exhibits little knowledge/interest regarding course material missed.	Misses 5 or more sessions and does not demonstrate knowledge of course material missed.
Preparation	Consistently well-prepared; demonstrates deep understanding of readings and completes assignments.	Usually prepared; completes readings with some understanding and usually completes assignments.	Occasionally prepared. Demonstrates limited understanding of materials and occasionally completes assignments.	Rarely prepared; minimal effort to engage with course materials.

Participation	Actively participates in discussions with thoughtful comments/questions; demonstrates knowledge of the material and critical thinking skills.	Participates often demonstrating knowledge of material and critical thinking skills.	Participates once in a while or contributions lack depth or relevance.	Does not participate or is disruptive during discussions.
Attentiveness & Respect	Fully engaged and attentive during all sessions; respectful to professor and fellow students. Use of laptop/tablet for notetaking only; no cellphone use.	Generally attentive, with very infrequent lapses in focus and use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes. Respectful to professor and fellow students.	Occasionally inattentive or disengaged. Use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes thus showing disrespect towards professor and fellow students.	Rarely attentive, focused or responsive. Repeated use of electronic devices for non-class related purposes thus showing disrespect towards professor and fellow students.
Collaboration & Feedback	Effectively collaborates with peers in group or in-class activities following professor's instructions. Incorporates feedback to improve learning & performance.	Collaborates frequently with peers or in in-class activities. Incorporates feedback and makes moderate efforts to improve learning & performance.	Occasionally works well with peers but does not contribute substantially to in-class or group assignments. Responds to feedback inconsistently with minimal improvement.	Does not collaborate with peers, does not complete in-class or group assignments. Ignores feedback.

Arriving late to class and leaving the classroom while class is in session is disruptive to both your professor and your classmates and may adversely affect your engagement grade.

Exams missed due to an excused absence must be made up within a week of returning to classes. Talk to your professor immediately after your return.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is a guiding principle for all academic activity at Pablo de Olavide University. Cheating on exams and plagiarism (which includes copying from the Internet) are clear violations of academic honesty. A student is guilty of plagiarism when he or she presents another person's intellectual property as his or her own. The penalty for plagiarism and cheating is a failing grade for the assignment/exam and a failing grade for the course. The International Center may also report this to your home university. Avoid plagiarism by citing sources properly, using footnotes and a

bibliography, and not cutting and pasting information from various websites when writing assignments.

About using Artificial Intelligence (AI)

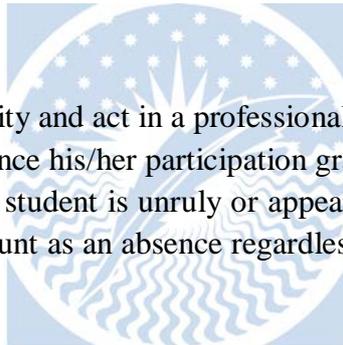
The use of AI tools such as grammar checkers, ChatGPT, etc. and automatic translation tools is prohibited unless expressly permitted by the instructor to enhance the students' learning experience. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unacknowledged use of these tools to create content submitted as one's own. If the use of any of these tools is suspected, the instructor may request notes and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students must retain these materials until final grades are posted. Failure to produce these materials when requested may negatively impact the student's grades.

Learning Accommodations

If you require special accommodations or have any other medical condition you deem may affect your class performance, you must stop by the International Center to speak to Marta Carrillo to either turn in your documentation or to confirm that our office has received it. Marta will explain the options available to you.

Behavior Policy

Students are expected to show integrity and act in a professional and respectful manner at all times. A student's attitude in class may influence his/her participation grade. The professor has a right to ask a student to leave the classroom if the student is unruly or appears intoxicated. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, that day will count as an absence regardless of how long the student has been in class.



Course contents

UNIT 1: Ethics and Business

UNIT 2: Ethical Decision Making: Personal and Professional Context

UNIT 3: Philosophical Ethics and Business

UNIT 4: The Corporate Culture—Impact and Implications

UNIT 5: Corporate Social Responsibility

UNIT 6: Ethical Decision Making: Employer Responsibilities and Employee Rights

UNIT 7: Business and Environmental Sustainability

UNIT 8: Ethics in Corporate Governance