

Sauder School of Business MBA Program
BUSINESS ETHICS
BAHR 502 – Period 2 2008

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Class time: Tuesdays 6pm – 9:30pm, starting 26 February 2008
Classroom: SWING 306

- Course package available from Duplication Service Centre
- WebCT used for submission of assignments and reflections, for discussion, and for distribution of any electronic documents during the course

Introduction

This course is intended to stimulate thinking and discussion about the ethical responsibilities of managers in business. Participants in this course will learn to anticipate issues that they will likely encounter in their business career and to increase their confidence in responding to them. Class activities will include a review of frameworks and strategies used to analyze and to resolve ethical dilemmas; role plays of real ethical dilemmas; discussion of formal business cases; and development of ethical best practices in an industry relevant to the participant.

Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this course, students will be able:

- to describe some of the concepts, frameworks and approaches to business ethics
- to identify and analyze ethical conflicts and dilemmas
- to demonstrate and critique critical thinking about ethical issues
- to communicate their position, reasoning and action plan to others in a compelling and persuasive way
- to be more open to understanding others' positions and reasoning

Course Evaluation

Method	Weight	Due:
Creation of case study for role play exercise	15%	Bring printout to class 2
Role play exercise (performance and critique)	15%	Completed during class 3
Project	30%	Bring printouts to class 5
Take-home final exam	15%	Submit via WebCT date tbd
Participation/reflective journal/responses	25%	Submit via WebCT each week

Role play exercise (class 2 and 3; 30% of final grade)

Students will prepare a brief (1-page MAXIMUM) mini “case study” of an ethical dilemma. This should be a situation of personal interest that you think fellow participants would also find interesting and relevant. The dilemma may be real or imagined, but it should be realistic. The dilemma should be of an individual nature (rather than about corporate policy) and should be simple enough to fully explain in one page, but complex enough that there are multiple possible actions and outcomes. Your case may be copied and distributed to the rest of the class, so DO NOT write anything confidential or that you would not want shared with other Sauder students. Please change the industry, company, names, etc. as needed in order to bring a rich example to class.

The case study should include the following:

- Title:** choose a title that reflects the type of dilemma, the industry and/or the main actor. Please do not call it “Ethical Dilemma” as we won’t be able to distinguish it from all the others!
- Background:** Just give us the background that is relevant to the situation – this might be about the people involved, the industry, company, organizational structure, project, etc. This may be the hardest section to write – you need to edit it down to the essentials
- Situation:** A description of the incident or incidents that raise an ethical issue for the main actor. Briefly describe who is involved and how the situation came about. Do NOT include the resolution or action taken, you can report on that verbally in class
- Issues:** Include a short list of the key issues and/or questions that this situation raises for the main actor (3 points is good). This should be a situation that is complex and challenging, with more than one viable choice. Remember that this is not a course in law, so your dilemma should be more moral than legal

Your case (15% of final grade) will be evaluated by your instructor on the following criteria:

- Relevance** to the course and to the students
- Complexity** of the situation (should be challenging, but not impossible to resolve)
- Degree of **insight** reflected in the description of the situation and the issues identified
- Clarity** of writing and presentation

Your case must be submitted two ways to be considered on time: bring a printout of your case study to class 2, and post it on the discussion board in WebCT. Because we will be using this material in the class that it is due, NO EXTENSIONS are possible on this assignment, and late assignments will NOT BE ACCEPTED.

The class will then choose some of these situations for students to “role play” in small groups during class 3. Students will role-play the situation and then describe their approach to analyzing the situation. Observers will record feedback on the role plays. We will then debrief the case, and the case writer will share with the class their positions and how the situation was resolved (if appropriate). Those performing the role-play will be evaluated on criteria to be agreed in class (15% of final grade). Students MUST be present in class 3 to participate in the role play and to earn the marks.

Project (class 5; 30% of final grade)

Students will prepare and present material related to an important ethical theme. We will discuss and agree the themes early in the course. There are two graded components to the project, one individual and one group.

1. Written report (group grade, 20% of final mark): The written portion will be no longer than **ten double-spaced pages**, excluding appendices, and should include an executive summary and a bibliography giving full credit to any research sources. Please hand in a complete hard copy at the beginning of class 5.
2. Oral presentation (individual grade, 10% of final mark): The oral portion will be **20-30 minutes long** (depending on number of groups), and should include both information and a facilitated discussion of some of the key elements of the issue. The presentation will be delivered individually to a small group simultaneously, so every person working on the theme needs to be prepared to present the ENTIRE project. Please hand in a complete hard copy of the presentation materials at the END of your presentation. Presentation materials may be prepared individually or by the group and may be in whatever format is most effective – powerpoint, word documents, worksheets, scripts of one-man role plays, lists of discussion questions, cue cards, etc. Evaluation will be based on the presentation materials submitted, instructor observations during the presentation, and “audience” feedback. This is a presentation format designed to stimulate discussion and interaction.

Because we will be using this material in the class that it is due, NO EXTENSIONS are possible on this assignment, and late assignments will NOT BE ACCEPTED. Students MUST be present for the presentation to earn the marks.

Participation and reflective journal (Due each week via WebCT; 25% of final grade, 5% per week)

Active participation in this course is extremely important. Students are expected to have read and carefully considered all cases and readings prior to class, and will need to have developed a starting “point of view” in order for our discussion to be rich and interactive. Some activities will also require students to actively participate “in the moment” as ethical dilemmas and case studies are put in front of them with no time for advance research and preparation.

Students must be prepared to frankly and honestly share their opinions, and to respect the differing experiences and opinions of other students. You may be called on to offer your opinion, if you have not already stated it. This class should be a “safe” environment, where we can explore the many different beliefs and approaches to business ethics, and take the time to understand each other’s opinions and experiences. There is a lot of room in this process to change your mind or at least expand your thinking.

This course also includes a significant reflection component after each class. Each week, in addition to preparing for the next class, you will also need to spend some time reflecting on the previous class. You are asked to document your reflections on your participation in the course in a brief reflective journal submitted each week in WebCT. Because of the nature of this material, your learning will deepen if you take the time to reflect back on where you started,

what you experienced in the process, and where your thinking is as you leave this experience. This journal can be very informal in nature, but please use proper spelling and grammar to make it readable.

After each class, you will have three days to submit a minimum 150 word reflection in the form of a discussion posting on WebCT. At the end of each class, we will discuss the topics or themes that might be interesting to consider in your reflection, and you will have some time to think about it and make your posting. Postings of any length are welcomed, but if you have significantly over in length, please include the word LONG in your subject line.

You will also be required to respond to the posting of at least one other student each week, with a minimum of 100 words, to be completed before the following class. Your response may describe a different or similar point of view as the original posting, might offer. There is a maximum of three responses per original posting, so the earlier you post the more choice you have about who you will respond to.

Because of the nature of reflection, it is inappropriate to write the journal during class discussion time. The use of laptops is strongly discouraged, so that we can all focus on what is going on in the moment. Because this is a weekly assignment, it is important to keep up with the deadlines. Late assignments are accepted, with a penalty of 25% per day or part of day.

If students are unable to attend class, they should contact their instructor before class for an alternate assignment, as an absence does impact this grade. Alternate assignments will be substantial, to reflect the learning and time that has been missed.

Final exam (date tbd via WebCT; 15% of final grade)

The final exam question will be discussed and distributed in the first class, and is due through WebCT on the date tbd by the MBA office. It will be a direct application of the course materials, class discussions, and reflective journal submissions and discussion and will not require additional research. This is your final opportunity to take your thinking about ethical issues one level deeper! Students are welcome to discuss the individual project generally with each other, but **each student is expected to deliver an individual answer**. Late assignments are accepted, with a penalty of 25% per day or part of day.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Tools for ethical decision making

Readings: Lynn Sharp Paine, “Ethics: A Basic Framework” (HBS 9-307-059)

Howard Gardner, “The Ethical Mind” from Harvard Business Review March 2007

Note: this article is available to you for free through the UBC library database therefore is not included in your case package, but is required reading

Note: Please also review the reading from your first Core class on ethics: Marianne Jennings, 2006, Foundations of Ethics: Virtue and Values (unit 1), ppix-36.

Week 2: More tools for ethical decision making

Readings: Lynn Sharp Paine, “A Compass for Decision Making”

Case: “Martha McCaskey” (HBS 9-403-114)

Note: One page case study due at beginning of class – one copy on paper and also submitted as a word attachment to the relevant discussion area in WebCT BEFORE class.

Week 3: Ethics and real-life dilemmas

Cases/Readings: None

Note: Class will be used to prepare, perform and debrief role plays

Week 4: Ethics and management

Readings: Laura Nash, “Personal Morality and Business Ethics” and “Setting a Leadership Standard” chapters 2 and 3 from *Good Intentions Aside*;

Lynn Sharpe Paine “Up to Code” from Harvard Business Review December 2005

Note: the HBR article is available to you for free through the UBC library database therefore is not included in your case package, but is required reading

Case: “Benton Dickenson: Ethics and Business Practices (A)” (HBS 9-399-055)

Week 5:

Note: Team presentations (group written report and presentation materials (group or individual) must be ready at BEGINNING of class)

Week 6: Final Exam due using WebCT, date/time tbd

Notes: While every attempt will be made to keep to this schedule, the instructor reserves the right at all times to make changes in the material to be covered including, but not limited to, the cases and the reading material. The MBA Office reserves the right to change the location and time of the module. Advance notice of changes will be provided on WebCT.

The reading package contains most of the readings that will be required for the course; some are available through the UBC library database. Additional required readings may be provided in class or through WebCT. Handouts of the powerpoint slides and other materials will be provided. It is the student’s responsibility to follow up with the instructor or classmates to receive any materials from a missed class.