

**Business Communications and Business  
Ethics  
Course Number: 22:373:628  
Course Title: Business, Ethics, & Society**

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this course is to explore ethical issues in a rational, pragmatic and responsible manner to prepare you to resolve these issues when faced with them in your professional and personal lives.

This course seeks to bridge the gap between personal moral choices and the business challenges presented by organizational activity in the marketplace. Our work in this course will raise your awareness surrounding these ethical, legal, and moral challenges in business to: create a sensitivity to the implications of business decisions so you can make the most effective decision possible; equip you with tools and strategies for managing ethical behavior; and encourage you to evaluate critically the decisions of other business leaders. Along the way, you might even see your own decisions or capacity for decision-making in a new context. The goal of our class discussions will not always be to reach a comfortable consensus but, also, to examine difficult and complex problems and familiarize ourselves with the dynamics of ethical business practices.

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## **COURSE MATERIALS**

There is one **recommended textbook** for this course, but you are also responsible for **required reading/viewing/listening** of/to any additional documents (articles, assignments, etc.) that are posted to the course's **Canvas** site.

**Textbook:** *Business Ethics: Decision Making for Personal Integrity & Social Responsibility*, **4th Edition**, by Laura Hartman, Joseph DesJardins and Chris MacDonald.  
ISBN: 1259417859; ISBN: 9781259417856.

The textbook is available online. In order to save money, you may purchase used or electronic versions of the textbook, or even consider a rental. However, you must ensure that any method used to procure the textbook is lawful.

Additional assignments will be posted on Canvas. Therefore, you are expected to check Canvas regularly for assignments and updates.

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## **LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

***Ethical judgment learning goal.*** Rutgers Business School students must demonstrate reasoned and ethical judgment when analyzing problems and making decisions. Through case analyses, course debates,

written assignments and a final presentation, students in this class will develop their ability to: (1) critically evaluate unstructured business decision-making scenarios and develop innovative and ethical solutions, and (2) recognize ethical dilemmas in unstructured business decision-making scenarios.

***Global perspective learning goal.*** Many of the business cases analyzed in this class address the current global economic, legal, political, and social structures. Through analysis of these cases, students develop an understanding of the impact of cultural and demographic diversity on business interactions.

***Effective communication learning goal.*** Through in-class debates, written assignments and a final presentation, students in this course develop their ability to construct and deliver clear, concise, and convincing oral and written communication.

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## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

*I do NOT tolerate cheating.* Students are responsible for understanding the RU Academic Integrity Policy (<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>).

I will strongly enforce this Policy and pursue *all* violations. On all examinations and assignments, students must sign the RU Honor Pledge, which states, “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination or assignment.” I will screen all written assignments through *SafeAssign* or *Turnitin*, plagiarism detection services that compare the work against a large database of past work. Don’t let cheating destroy your hard-earned opportunity to learn. See [business.rutgers.edu/ai](http://business.rutgers.edu/ai) for more details.

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## CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE & YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

We will use a variety of methodologies such as class discussions, readings, lectures, videos, written assignments, and even role-playing. I am here to teach and guide you, as well as help you communicate and learn from each other in class. However, I can’t do that without your preparation and participation.

**This is an interactive course**, so you must be **well-prepared for each class**. This includes completing the required readings/assignments and doing your own critical thinking about the required readings *before* class. I expect you to analyze and address issues from multiple sides, to evaluate the best arguments of each side, and to arrive at a conclusion based upon a systematic analysis of these arguments. The goal of our class discussion will be to examine difficult and complex problems and familiarize ourselves with the dynamics of ethical business practices.

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## GRADING

Grades are based on: (a) Discussion Board contributions; (b) an analytical final paper; (c) a group presentation; and (d) class attendance and participation. The grading breakdowns and a detailed description of each item are given below.

**Grading Criteria:** Unless an assignment says otherwise, all assignments, including class participation, will be evaluated on the basis of your demonstrated comprehension of the course materials and your ability to articulate and support an informed and critical analysis of the issues presented. For any oral or written assignment:

- Take a position in a way that makes sense.
- Answer all questions in your own words (do not repeat items verbatim from the textbook or question prompt or, worse, copy something off the Internet).
- Do not needlessly repeat yourself.
- Fully consider the implications of your position, decisions and conclusions.
- Take the opportunity to rise to a challenge - don't be afraid to tackle tough issues.
- Ask questions if you do not understand something, or you need more information. Sometimes being aware of what you do not know is as important as being aware of what you do know.

**Additional Criteria for Written Assignments:** Your written work for this class should be of high quality. Thus, written assignment evaluations will also consider:

- Did you use appropriate frameworks from the class that are relevant to the problem?
- Are all sources cited appropriately? (See notes below regarding academic integrity, and note that I take a zero tolerance approach regarding plagiarism).
- Is the writing should be clear and concise, with supporting exhibits (tables, graphics, etc.) included as necessary?
- Whether they have been proofread for proper their grammar, clarity spelling, and punctuation. If writing in English is not your best skill, please consult the additional resources available at Rutgers (including online or on-campus resources) for help.

The following is a rubric (guideline) for how I will assess your written work (*i.e.*, homework, quizzes, tests, and papers).

<b>Category</b>	<b>EXCEPTIONAL 100-90</b>	<b>VERY GOOD/ TYPICAL 89-80</b>	<b>FAIR BUT MUCH MISSING 79-70</b>	<b>BELOW EXPECTATIONS 69-0</b>
<b>Comprehensiveness</b>	Follows all directions; hits all issues thoroughly;  Exceeds measures	Follows directions; hits major issues.	Follows some directions; addresses some issues.	Follows some or no directions; addresses few or no issues.
<b>Analysis and Recommendations</b>	All arguments and recommendations are clear, original, and compelling; provides great rationale for all.	Most of the arguments and recommendations are strong; gives rationale for most aspects.	Some of the arguments and recommendations are good; gives rationale for some aspects.	Few or none of the arguments and recommendations are good; simply re-states the obvious.

<b>Organization</b>	Paper has a logical structure & good paragraph breaks; has informative subheadings.	Paper has evident structure & paragraph breaks; has subheadings.	Paper has ambiguous structure; subheadings could be better.	Paper structure is not apparent; thoughts are in a disorganized sequence.
<b>Support</b>	All arguments supported by strong facts, sources, and citations.	Most arguments supported by facts, sources, and citations.	Some arguments supported by facts, sources, and citations.	Few or no arguments supported by facts, sources, and citations.
<b>Grammar/Spelling</b>	Zero grammar, typographical, spelling, usage errors, or 'widows'.	Few grammar, typographical, spelling or usage errors.	Some grammar, typographical, spelling or usage errors.	Many grammar, typographical, spelling or usage errors.

Your final course grade will consist of the following:

**(a) Discussion Board contributions: 15% of your grade**

We will use the Canvas Discussion Board to consider and analyze various scenarios and questions. For each week that there is a Discussion Board scenario and/or question, you will be required to offer at least one original post and one comment in response to another student's post

**(b) Analytical paper: 50% of your course grade**

For your final paper, you will write a final paper on a topic related to the course content; more details will be provided in the first class. Your grade will be based on your knowledge of the subject, the thoughtfulness and rigor of your analysis, and quality of your writing. The paper should be 750-1000 words, plus appropriate references. If you do not want the references to count toward your word count, you may submit them as a separate document. Quotes should not make up a significant percentage, *e.g.*, more than 10%, of your paper. The paper will be due on the date noted below in the Class Schedule. You must follow Rutgers University academic guidelines for citing other authors and sources. Final papers submitted after the deadline will receive no better than a grade of 80/100. I will not accept final papers after () .

**(c) Group presentation: 25% of your course grade**

You will be assigned to a group. The details will be explained in the final paper assignment. Both the fact of your participation, and the quality of your contribution, will be graded, along with your ability to work as a team. Your failure to participate fully in the group discussions, development of presentation, and presentation itself (as judged by the professor and your group) will significantly affect this portion of the grade.

**(d) Class attendance: 10% of your course grade**

Your attendance and participation are expected and required. Since there are only 4 classes, it is imperative that you attend each class. Many of the benefits of the class will be obtained in the discussions that take place in class. Your participation in each class helps to ensure that you understand the concepts and material, and that I know you understand them. In class discussions, as in the business world, you will need to both communicate ideas *and* respond constructively to the ideas of others. Your absence not only affects you, it deprives others of the benefits of your knowledge and thoughts.

Only documented illnesses, emergencies, religious holidays or university engagements will be recognized as “excused” absences. Job interviews, work responsibilities, or attending a job fair are not considered excused absences. If possible, please contact me before class in case of an excused absence. Unexcused absences will result in deductions from your class attendance/participation grade.

Attendance will be counted by your presence in the Canvas Collaborate sessions each week. Any absences from these sessions will be excused only if you notify me via email, providing a reason for your absence that is allowed by Rutgers policy (this may include an inability to access the Collaborate room due to technical difficulties. We will also engage in discussion on the relevant topics via the Canvas Discussion Board. Your participation in the Discussion Board each week will count toward your overall attendance and participation grade.

**Summary of Graded Elements**

50% Final Paper  
25% Group Presentation  
15% Discussion Board  
10% Attendance

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100% FINAL GRADE

Each component will be graded based on points (*e.g.*, 0-100). Your final grade for the course will be the weighted average of the components with the weights noted above. This weighted average will then be translated into a letter grade using the conversion below.

This is not an “easy A” class; do not expect to pass if you only give minimal effort. I do not give extra credit assignments. You may inquire about why you have received a particular grade, share feedback, and even formally challenge your grade via the proper channels as prescribed by Rutgers. Of course, if I have made an error in calculating your grade, please alert me and I will correct it. However, to the extent that your evaluation of your performance in this class differs from mine, this will not affect how I grade your work.

The breakdown of grades is as follows (and there is no curving up):

**Point-based letter grades:**

A = 93-100 (insightful, creative, balanced, practical, in-depth, independent thought)  
A- = 90-92.99  
B+ = 87-89.99  
B = 84-86.99 (contains good thought and analysis)  
B- = 80.0-83.99  
C+ = 77-79.99  
C = 74-76.99 (adequate but not fully developed)

C = 70-73.99  
D = 67-69.99 (minimal effort, perfunctory)  
F = <66.99

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## CLASS POLICIES

**Academic and personal integrity:** Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students are responsible for understanding the RU Academic Integrity Policy, and University policies on academic integrity will be strictly followed. Academic dishonesty will be reported to the university and is subject to disciplinary action. For all projects and assignments, you must cite all external sources of information (including Internet sources), fully and completely. Under no circumstances should you reuse or recycle materials from another class or from students who took this class in the past. I will use the Turn-It-In and/or SafeAssign features in Canvas to verify that assignments are not plagiarized. I may also ask you for information in support of your analysis, should I have concerns about academic integrity. The following link has other details about academic integrity; please review it carefully.

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

**Professor Availability/Office Hours:** Generally, my Rutgers email is the best way to get in touch with me outside of scheduled office hours. I also will make myself available by appointment for phone/videoconference/internet calls. I will answer questions and I will give feedback in response to (for instance) final paper ideas, but I will *not* read paragraphs or drafts of your papers.

**Canvas:** All relevant material, notices, and announcements will be posted to the course Canvas site on an ongoing basis, so you need to check it regularly. I will also post additional resources for you for the discussion of class materials, detailed project information, or current topics.

**Cancellations/Delays:** We will follow the Rutgers New Brunswick schedule for any cancellations or delays. If I have to cancel class for any other reason, I will notify you (and the department chair) via Canvas and via email as far in advance as possible.

**Respect for all:** Your comments in class must reflect respect for the diversity of the academic community. There shall be no comments made (orally or in your assignments) that a reasonable person would consider to be offensive based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected status. At the same time, please note that in an ethics class, we will discuss topics that may be sensitive to some. We will do so with respect and good intentions. We also expect your full attention in each class. Please, respect the classroom and do not distract others or disrupt the class in any way.

**Timeliness:** If you join after the beginning of the class period, you will be considered “late.” If you leave before the scheduled time that class ends without being excused by me, you will be considered to have “left early.” Two instances of either will equal one absence.

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

**The assignments and schedule are subject to change.** Generally, for each week you will need to read selected articles, watch selected videos, and/or engage in certain online exercises. You also should read

the relevant chapters from the text. The selected readings and assignments are listed below. Adjustments will be noted on the Canvas website, so please check it frequently.

**\*Assignments/Readings for the relevant week should be completed before the beginning of the first class of that week, unless noted or changed in class.**

Week	Topic	Assignments/Readings
1	Introduction and Course Overview  Ethics in Business  Ethical Decision-Making  Philosophical Ethics	<p><b>Recommended:</b>            Read Chapters 1-3 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 1 (all, including Enbridge and Ethical Oil Decision Points) and readings 1-2, 1-3, and 1-4</li> <li>• Chapter 2 (pp. 39-55) and readings 2-1 and 2-2</li> <li>• Chapter 3 (pp. 65-91, including Reality Checks at p.77 and 81, and EDM model pp. 90-91)</li> </ul> <p><b>Required:</b>            Review syllabus and expectations</p> <p>Listen: Freakonomics Podcast: <i>Who Gets the Ventilator?</i> Episode 413 dated 15 April 2020. Available at <a href="#">Who Gets the Ventilator?</a></p> <p><b>Discussion Board Assignment: Ethical Decision-Making and Ethics Philosophies (Original post due ()); secondary post due ( ))</b></p>
2	Corporate Culture  Governance and Fraud  Conflicts of Interest	<p><b>Recommended:</b>            Read: Chapters 4 and 10 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 4 (pp. 109-143)</li> <li>• Chapter 10 (pp. 497-523, including Decision Points)</li> </ul> <p><b>Required:</b>            Read: U.S. Dept. of Justice Press Release, 14 November 2012, Available at <a href="#">Dixon Illinois Fraud</a></p> <p>Watch: <i>All the Queen's Horses</i>, available at <a href="https://youtu.be/dpr2A3S3CNk">https://youtu.be/dpr2A3S3CNk</a></p> <p>Read: Investopedia: “Enron Scandal: The Fall of a Wall Street Darling.” Available at <a href="https://www.investopedia.com/updates/enron-scandal-summary/">https://www.investopedia.com/updates/enron-scandal-summary/</a></p> <p>Watch: Thomas, Friedman and Roberts: “What Went Wrong at Enron?” Available at <a href="https://youtu.be/HSyk1kiI4Fc">https://youtu.be/HSyk1kiI4Fc</a></p> <p><b>Discussion Board Assignment: Crundwell/Enron (Original comment due ()); secondary comment due ( ))</b></p>

3	<p>Corporate Social Responsibility</p> <p>Marketing</p> <p>Ethical Decision-Making: Employee Rights, Technology &amp; Privacy</p>	<p><b>Recommended:</b> Read: Chapters 5, 7, and 8 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 5 (pp. 174-197)</li> <li>• Chapter 8 (pp. 390-404)</li> <li>• Chapter 7 (pp. 319-335)</li> </ul> <p><b>Required:</b> Read: Friedman, Milton. <i>The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits</i> (NYT 1970), available at <a href="#">Friedman CSR NYT Article 1970</a></p> <p>Watch: McDonald's Calvin commercials, available at <a href="#">Calvin's Got A Job at McDonald's</a></p> <p>Listen: Marketplace: <i>The Complicated History of McDonald's and Black America</i>, available at <a href="#">Marketplace Podcast 7-6-2020</a></p> <p>Read: Wall Street Journal: <i>McDonalds Fires CEO Steve Easterbrook Over Relationship with Employee</i>, 3 November 2019. Available at <a href="#">WSJ Article McDonalds Fires CEO</a> (related articles available via the link).</p> <p><b>Discussion Board Assignment: US Open 2020 (Original post due (); secondary post due ())</b></p>
4	<p>Group Presentations</p> <p>Behavioral Ethics</p> <p>Course Conclusion</p>	<p><b>Required:</b> Listen: NPR Hidden Brain Podcast: <i>Playing Favorites</i> Episodes dated 1 and 8 June 2020. Available at <a href="#">Playing Favorites Part 1</a> &amp; <a href="#">Playing Favorites Part 2</a></p> <p><b>Final papers due ()</b></p> <p><b>Group presentations due () (written); oral presentations due in class on ()</b></p>

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## SUPPORT SERVICES

If you need accommodation for a *disability*, obtain a Letter of Accommodation from the Office of Disability Services. The Office of Disability Services at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, provides student-centered and student-inclusive programming in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1998, and the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination. More information can be found at [ods.rutgers.edu](https://ods.rutgers.edu).

[Rutgers University-New Brunswick ODS phone (848)445-6800 or email [dsoffice@echo.rutgers.edu](mailto:dsoffice@echo.rutgers.edu)]



[Rutgers University-Newark ODS phone (973)353-5375 or email [ods@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:ods@newark.rutgers.edu)]

If you are *pregnant*, the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy.

[Rutgers University-New Brunswick Title IX Coordinator phone (848)932-8200 or email [jackie.moran@rutgers.edu](mailto:jackie.moran@rutgers.edu)]

[Rutgers University-Newark Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance phone (973)353-1906 or email [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu)]

If you seek *religious accommodations*, the Office of the Dean of Students is available to verify absences for religious observance, as needed.

[Rutgers University-New Brunswick Dean of Students phone (848)932-2300 or email [deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu)]

[Rutgers University-Newark Dean of Students phone (973)353-5063 or email [DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu)]

If you have experienced any form of *gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment*, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides help and support. More information can be found at <http://vpva.rutgers.edu/>.

[Rutgers University-New Brunswick incident report link: <http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/concern/>. You may contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance at (848)932-1181]

[Rutgers University-Newark incident report link: [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?RutgersUniv&layout\\_id=7](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?RutgersUniv&layout_id=7) . You may also contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973)353-1906 or email at [TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu). If you wish to speak with a staff member who is confidential and does **not** have a reporting responsibility, you may contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance at (973)353-1918 or email [run.vpva@rutgers.edu](mailto:run.vpva@rutgers.edu)]

If students who have experienced a temporary condition or injury that is adversely affecting their ability to fully participate, you should submit a request via <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu> .

If you are a military **veteran** or are on active military duty, you can obtain support through the Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services. <http://veterans.rutgers.edu/>

If you are in need of **mental health** services, please use our readily available services.

[Rutgers University-Newark Counseling Center: <http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/>]

[Rutgers Counseling and Psychological Services–New Brunswick: <http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu/>]

If you are in need of **physical health** services, please use our readily available services.

[Rutgers Health Services – Newark: <http://health.newark.rutgers.edu/>]

[Rutgers Health Services – New Brunswick: <http://health.rutgers.edu/>]

If you are in need of **legal** services, please use our readily available services: <http://rusls.rutgers.edu/>

Students experiencing difficulty in courses due to **English as a second language (ESL)** should contact the Program in American Language Studies for supports.

[Rutgers–Newark: [PALS@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:PALS@newark.rutgers.edu)]

[Rutgers–New Brunswick: [eslpals@english.rutgers.edu](mailto:eslpals@english.rutgers.edu)]

If you are in need of additional **academic assistance**, please use our readily available services.

[Rutgers University-Newark Learning Center: <http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/rlc>]

[Rutgers University-Newark Writing Center: <http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter>]

[Rutgers University-New Brunswick Learning Center: <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/>]

[Optional items that many faculty include:

- Students must sign, date, and return a statement declaring that they understand the RU Academic Integrity Policy.

- Students must sign, date, and return a statement declaring that they understand this syllabus.]