ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING IN BUSINESS (BA 300) – HYBRID
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY
Dan Eaton

Office Hours: SSE 3368, Saturday 8/31, 9/7, and 9/28 10:00 a.m. – noon and by appointment
eaton@scmv.com/ 619-685-3052

SYLLABUS

Course Description
This class will explore ethical theories and principles and their practical application in a variety of business situations. About 50% of the instructional time will consist of your reviewing pre-recorded video segments and completing assignments online. You can access the video segments, presented by Dr. Lori Ryan and me, from the course Blackboard page. The remaining approximately 50% of instruction time will consist of two extended in-class sessions designed to build upon and expand the basic course material presented online. Answers to frequently asked questions about the course appear at the back of this syllabus. I am happy to respond to any questions you may have that are not answered in that document, but please look there first.

BSBA Program Goals
BSBA students will graduate being:

• Effective Communicators
• Critical Thinkers
• Able to Analyze Ethical Problems
• Global in their perspective
• Knowledgeable about the essentials of business

BA 300 contributes to these goals through its student learning objectives:

Learning Objectives
Upon completing this course, you should be able to:

• Explain the various ethical dimensions of business decision making.
• Explain the role of various affected parties in business decision making.
• Assess the ethics of decision alternatives using different ethical decision rules.
• Apply ethical decision-making rules and concepts.

A. Required Text
Linda K. Treviño and Katherine A. Nelson, Managing Business Ethics: Straight Talk About How To Do It Right (Fifth Edition). You are only required to read the assigned pages, not the whole chapter in which they are found. Note: You can SAVE MONEY by buying a three-hole punched binder-ready version of the text either
from the Aztec Bookstore or from the publisher at [http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-406392.html](http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-406392.html). If you purchase the binder-ready version and intend to sell it back to the bookstore as used, please take special care to keep it intact.

B. **The Video Segments and Accompanying Reading**

The online videos are divided into two sessions. Each session has two blocks of material. Before attending each of the two in-class sessions, you will need to have completed all of the preceding session’s material, both the video segments and the accompanying reading. You also should download and print out the slides posted on Blackboard that accompany the video segments. The packet of slides is posted in the order in which the slides appear online.

*It is critical that you do not attempt to review all of the video segments in one or two sittings.* That is a sure way to confuse the concepts that are addressed and to develop an incomplete understanding of the material. Instead, you are encouraged to review on any given day up to two segments, and certainly no more than three. You also should do the accompanying reading before reviewing a video segment. You are, of course, free to re-watch video segments to reinforce or clarify your understanding of the material, just as you are free to re-read the accompanying pages of text and further review the Blackboard slides. **Transcripts of the lectures for my video segments are posted under the Lectures section on Blackboard.**

The practice tests at the end of each block, posted on Blackboard along with an answer guide, will test your understanding of the material. **The practice test(s) are not required and will play no role in your course grade.** If you don’t work through these tests, however, you will be at a disadvantage when you take the 30-minute exam that will be given at the beginning of the two in-class sessions.

C. **In-Class Sessions**

Each of the two-block video sessions is followed by a 3-hour and 40-minute in-class session with me. The first session is **September 14** and the second session is **October 5.** The final exam will be on **October 19.** Please mark your calendars now. Each of the in-class sessions will begin with a 30-minute, 20-question multiple-choice exam. You will need to bring a **100-question Scantron Form 882-E** and two No. 2 pencils with you to each class. Each of the exams will cover all of the material, but only the material, in the preceding two-block session of readings and video segments. **In other words, the quiz for the second session covers only the material in blocks 3 and 4.** Only the final exam is cumulative.

**Please note:** You must attend all of both in-class sessions. There will be NO make-up exams or other make-up opportunities given except in extraordinary circumstances when scheduled in advance.

After each exam, we will work through a series of three highly interactive exercises designed to build upon and go beyond the videos and the readings on which you will have been tested. **Please print out the three “skits” we will be doing in the first in class session.** They are posted as a single entry under Blackboard Course Documents.

A student will earn three (3) class participation points for contributing to the discussion in each of the last two segments of the first class and each of the three segments of the second class. That means there will be a total of six (6) class participation points available in the first class and nine (9) class participation points available in the second class. Those who prefer may respond to me by e-mail to a prompt for each of those segments. Credit will be given only for thoughtful responses. I must receive the response to the prompt for segments 2 and 3 no later than **Tuesday, September 17 at 5:00 p.m.** I must receive the response to the prompts for segments 4-6 no later than **Tuesday, October 8 at 5:00 p.m.**

Attendance may be taken at any point during class, including after either of the two breaks we will have each class. **Any student not present for any reason (including work) when attendance is taken, however, will receive an automatic 5-point deduction from their class participation points.**
D. **Application Essay**

Between the first and second classes, you must prepare an essay of no more than 350 words, applying some of the concepts you have learned to an issue raised in a selected news item. Instructions on the application essay will be posted on Blackboard shortly after the first in-class session. You may, but are not required to, email me a draft of the essay for me to review and offer general guidance by **Monday, September 23 at 5:00 p.m.** The final essay must be **received** by me via e-mail at eaton@scmv.com no later than 5:00 p.m. on **Thursday, September 26.** Please **mark this date** on your calendar as well. **No late essays will be accepted and no extensions will be granted for any reason.** The graded essay will be returned following completion of the test at the beginning of the second class.

E. **Grade Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Two 20-question multiple-choice in-class exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Class participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Assignment essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>CUMULATIVE 60-question multiple-choice final exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td><strong>No extra credit of any kind will be offered.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How your grade will be determined**

The grade you earn will be set according to a curve. The median grade is set by the Department at C+/B-, or roughly 2.5. That means as many students will earn C+ and above as will earn C+ and below, and there will be more C+’s (around 18 in a class of 65) than any other single grade. The final grade you earn will be determined by adding the points you earn during the semester and then assigning a grade based on where you fall in relation to the rest of the students in the section. Any student who earns at least 70 points will earn at least a C.
### Reading and Video Segments to be Completed before Session 1 (Times are approximate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment Length</th>
<th>Segment Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Block 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 min.</td>
<td>Course introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Moral decision making—General (Text, pp. <strong>17-30</strong> (start with “Defining Ethics” at the bottom of p. 17), <strong>52-61, 71-75</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 min.</td>
<td>Moral decision making—Organizational influences – Part 1 Ethics and organizational culture (Text, pp. <strong>82, 260-269, 272-284</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 min.</td>
<td>Moral decision making—organizational influences – Part 2 Ethics and the law (Text, pp. <strong>20-21, 177-178</strong> (“Structures to Support Reporting of Problems”), <strong>208-210, 252-253</strong> (You are responsible for knowing the factors in the sentencing guidelines, and how the guidelines generally work, but you are not responsible for knowing the numbers), <strong>295-296</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Moral decision making—Cognitive biases (Text, pp. <strong>88-97</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 min.</td>
<td>Moral decision making—Individual differences (Text, pp. <strong>75-87</strong>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Individual differences questionnaire (Posted on Blackboard under “Survey Part 1”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 min.</td>
<td>Questionnaire debrief</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Section summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>On-line practice quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Block 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td>Moral judgment—Introduction (Text, pp. <strong>38-51</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Utilitarianism (Text, pp. <strong>40-42</strong>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 min.</td>
<td>Robert Nozick’s Rights Theory (Text, pp. <strong>355-356</strong> “Managing Stakeholders”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 min.</td>
<td>John Rawls’ Theory of Justice (Text, pp. <strong>44-45</strong>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 min.</td>
<td>Section summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>On-line practice quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td>Session 1 wrap-up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In-Class Session 1: Saturday, September 14, 2013, 1:00 p.m. – 4:40 p.m.

In-class exam

Introduction
What does it mean to make an “ethical” decision?
The true parable of the would-be jaywalker

The Ethics of Hiring
Skit: “A Piercing Dilemma”
Overview of Common Ethical Problems, Stakeholder versus Shareholder Orientation

The Ethics of Corporate Secrets
Skit: “Hang Ten”
Building on ethical theory

The Ethics of Making Your Numbers
Skit: “To Make a Deal”
Building on Understanding Ethics and Reward Systems, Nozick’s Rights Theory, the Federal Organizational Sentencing Guidelines
# Reading and Video Segments to be Completed before In-Class Session 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Segment Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Block 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 min.</td>
<td>Session introduction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8 min.</td>
<td>Objectivism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11 min.</td>
<td>Integrative social contracts theory (Text, pp. 411-417)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Ethic of care (Text, pp. 77-82, esp. 81-82 (“Are Women and Men Different?”))</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Justice/care scale (Posted on Blackboard under “Survey Part 2”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>Justice/care scale debrief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 min.</td>
<td>Section summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>On-line practice quiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Block 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 min.</td>
<td>Section introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 min.</td>
<td>Virtue ethics (Text, pp. 9-12, 46-51)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 min.</td>
<td>Conflicts of interest (Text, pp. 122-127)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 min.</td>
<td>Whistleblowing (Text, pp. 137-145, 341-342 (Only paragraph beginning on p. 341 “The 1990s financial scandals . . .”))</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Employee discipline and termination (text, pp. 299-304, 378-381)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Corporate social responsibility (Text, pp. 322-340, 343-348)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 min.</td>
<td>Global Ethics (Text, pp. 401-411)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>On-line practice quiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 min.</td>
<td>Session and course conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In-Class Session 2: Saturday, October 5, 2013, 1:00 p.m. – 4:40 p.m.

In-class exam

The Ethics of Corporate Social Responsibility
Skit: “Mission Impossible?”
Corporate Social Responsibility, Objectivism, and Virtue Ethics

The Ethics of Family Business
Skit: “Son’s Spot”
The Ethic of Care; Do Men and Women Resolve Ethical Questions in Business Differently?

The Ethics of Multinational Business Operations
Skit: “Root Cause”
More on Integrative Social Contracts Theory and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act

FINAL EXAM: 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. October 19, 2013 Location: AL 201

POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

All of your work in this course must be your own. Don’t cheat in any way, shape, or form. If you do, I will report it to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities for further action. The consequences for cheating are always serious and may result in your expulsion. The only thing worse than failing an ethics class is failing an ethics class because you cheated. Think about it.

The SDSU definition of plagiarism is as follows:

“Plagiarism shall be defined as the act of incorporating ideas, words, or specific substance of another, whether purchased, borrowed, or otherwise obtained, and submitting same to the university as one’s own work to fulfill academic requirements without giving credit to the appropriate source. Plagiarism shall include but not be limited to (a) submitting work, either in part or in whole, completed by another; (b) omitting footnotes for ideas, statements, facts, or conclusions that belong to another; (c) omitting quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, sentence, or part thereof; (d) close and lengthy paraphrasing of the writings of another; (e) submitting another person’s artistic works, such as musical compositions, photographs, paintings, drawings, or sculptures; and (f) submitting as one’s own work papers purchased from research companies.”
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: BA 300

The answers to many of these questions may be found elsewhere in the syllabus. You are certainly free to contact me by e-mail with any questions about the course not addressed here, but before doing so please review this document and the rest of the syllabus to see if your question is answered.

About me

Where did you get your Ph.D.?

I don’t have a doctorate; I have a law degree. I am not a doctor; I’m a lawyer.

Text

May I use an earlier edition of the text than the one you have assigned?

No. The content is somewhat different and the pagination is completely different. Please obtain the assigned edition of the text.

I purchased the three-hole punched, binder-ready version of the text. The pages do not seem to match the material on those pages that the syllabus says should be addressed. Why?

The page numbers on the top right-hand side of the pages correspond to the page numbers for the reading assignments in the syllabus. Please disregard the page numbers at the bottom of the pages.

Will I be tested on material in the text that is not addressed in the video segments?

Yes. Anything in the assigned pages of the text – as well as the video and other material found on Blackboard -- may be tested.

Before the first in-class session

Do the practice tests count toward the grade I earn in the class?

No. The syllabus makes this clear. The practice tests are there for your use and taking them is strongly recommended, but not required.

If the scores on the practice tests do not count toward my grade, why do they appear on Blackboard?

I have made repeated attempts over the years to remove the columns for the practice tests from the Grade Center without success. Blackboard support also has been unable
to solve the problem. Take my word: Your scores on the practice tests do not count toward your final grade.

**First in-class session**

*What should I bring to the first in-class session?*

The “Skits and Handouts for Class 1, the text, a **crisp** (not mangled) Scantron form 882-E, and number 2 pencils.

*Why do we begin each of the two in-class sessions with a 20-question, multiple-choice test? Why don’t you lecture first and then give us the test?*

Because it would sharply reduce your incentive to read the assigned pages of the text and review the video segments. Through the video segments, you in effect *are* receiving a series of lectures before being tested. The in-class tests are designed to test whether you have reviewed the assigned material in the reading and in the videos closely. The in-class interactive sessions are designed to deepen your understanding of certain parts of the material covered in the online segments of the class.

*How do I earn participation points?*

Each segment of the in-class sessions begins with a skit. That is followed by discussion of the issues raised in the skit. In the first in-class session, 3 participation points are awarded for participating in each of the second and third segments. You earn 3 participation points either by appearing in the skit for which points are available or by making a meaningful contribution to the class discussion of the issues raised by the skit. In the second in-class session, points are awarded for participation in all three of the skits and discussion. Simply using the voting card at the end of each segment (this will be explained at the first class) will not earn class participation credit.

*Why don’t you award participation points for participation in the first skit and discussion in the first in-class session?*

I use the discussion during the first segment, as well as the discussion during the review of the first in-class test, to learn as many of your names as possible. That makes it easier to have direct dialogue with class members and to record who earned points for participating in the second and third segments of the first in-class session. To make sure I have given credit to all who earned it, I run down the class roll at the beginning of the second break and at the end of class to confirm that each student did or did not participate in the segments for which points were awarded.
I participated in both the second and third segments of the first in-class session, and yet my Blackboard grade shows that I only earned 6 of 15 class participation points. What’s up with that?

Because the maximum number of class participation points you may earn in the first in-class session is 6. The other 9 points are available in the second in-class session for each of the skits and discussion of each of the three segments in that class. This is the question that has bugged me the most over the years, since it is specifically addressed in the syllabus and I make a point of repeating it in class.

If I don’t speak in class, is there any way to earn class participation points?

Yes. Shortly after each in-class session, I will post class participation prompts in my e-mailed update to the class to which you may respond to earn class participation points. If you provide a meaningful response to the prompt by the deadline stated on the syllabus, you will earn points as if you spoke in class for the segment for which you are seeking credit.

If I earned class participation points for speaking in class, may I earn additional class participation points by responding to the prompts?

No. You earn class participation points either by speaking in class or responding to the online prompt. If you earn class participation points for a segment because you spoke in class, you will not earn additional points for responding to the prompt.

Will there be breaks during the in-class sessions?

Yes. Each class session will have two breaks of at least 5 minutes each.

The essay

Do I have to identify the ethical theory I am applying by name in the body of the essay?

No, but it has to be reasonably clear to the informed reader which theory you are applying.

What format should I use in writing the essay?

There is no one right format for the essay, but those essays that have earned the highest score in the past generally have fallen into one of three formats: (1) a narrative with dialogue among participants in the decision-making process; (2) a skit; (3) an interior monologue where the decision-maker in effect carries on a conversation with himself or herself about the ethical implications of a decision facing him or her. Each of these formats lends itself to getting inside the head of the decision-maker as the decision-making process is unfolding and that is what I really want.
Are you willing to review a draft of my essay to see if I am on the right track?

Yes. The deadline for submitting the draft to me by email is **Monday, September 23** at 5:00 p.m. My comments on the draft will offer only general guidance.

My essay is longer than 350 words. Will that lower my score?

Overlong essays will be penalized only if the additional words were not really necessary or if the essay substantially exceeds the 350-word limit. Generally, if you keep the essay within 450 words, there will be no reduction in the score because of length. I did not submit the essay to you by the due date and time. May I submit the essay late for partial credit?

No. Essays that are late — even essays I receive after the 5:00 deadline on the due date — will earn a 0. You have over a week to prepare an essay of less than a page and you are free to submit it early. I therefore do not make allowances for last-minute issues of any kind that keep you from submitting the work on time.

**Before the second in-class session**

Where can I find the Care/Justice scale referred to in the syllabus?

It is found on Blackboard under “Survey 2” and is called “Ethical Orientation Questionnaire.”

Does the second in-class test cover only material covered in Blocks 3 and 4 or does it also test material covered in Blocks 1 and 2 and the first in-class session?

The second in-class test covers only the material in the text, the additional reading (especially the reading on advertising), and videos for Blocks 3 and 4. It is *not* cumulative. Only the final exam is cumulative.

**The second in-class session**

What should I bring to the second in-class session?

The “Skits and Handouts for Class 2,” the text, the completed ethical orientation questionnaire (including writing the number of “C” answers you gave to the question), a Scantron form 882-E, and number 2 pencils. You will turn in the questionnaire at the beginning of the second break.

**The final and the grade**

How many questions are on the final? Does it cover all of the material in the course?
There are 60 multiple choice questions on the final. Yes, the final covers all of the material in the course.

*Why are the questions on the final so much longer and complex than those in the in-class tests?*

The questions on the in-class tests primarily are designed to evaluate whether you can recognize the concepts addressed in the reading and the video. The questions on the final are designed to evaluate whether you can apply those concepts by engaging in critical thinking. Many of the questions come from the business press (such as the Wall Street Journal) so that you can see how these concepts appear in the real world of business.

*Do you provide samples of past final exam questions?*

Yes, there are several mini-finals on Blackboard that are available immediately after the second in-class session. Taking those practice finals is optional, but doing so will better prepare you for the final. I also strongly suggest that you review the tips about how to prepare for and take the final that were prepared by two former students who did exceptionally well on the final.

*What has been the historical average score on the final exam?*

The historical average score on the final has been about 44/60, worth 22 points since each question is worth ½ point.

*How many points do I need to earn to earn an “A” in the class?*

There is no way to say in advance. The grade you earn will be determined by how the total number of points you earn compares to the total number of points your classmates earn. In the past, students have earned an “A” in this class with as few as 88 points and as many as 97.5 points, but there is no way to know how any given class will perform.

*I didn’t do well in the course up until the final. Is there any way to earn extra credit?*

No. Any opportunity for extra credit would have to be offered to the entire class. Since the class grade is curved, that would probably eliminate any effect on any given student’s course grade.