Readings: No book is required for this class. All readings are available electronically. Readings marked (B) on the syllabus are posted on the course Blackboard page under "Course Documents." Readings marked (A) are available from ABI/Inform on the infodome.sdsu.edu article database page. Others are available on web pages. Links to most of these documents are available in the "Electronic Links" document posted on the "Course Documents" page. If you prefer to buy a reader, a “BA 702B” reader is available from Montezuma Publishing for well over $100; it includes most of the readings for this course. To order a copy, please talk with Dr. Ryan, then e-mail orders@montezumapublishing.com. If you choose not to buy a reader, you need to create your own by printing out and bringing paper copies of the day’s articles to each class. You will be asked to refer to the readings in class, alone and in groups—not bringing your readings could jeopardize your group’s performance and your own ability to maximize your grade. Additional readings may be assigned during the semester.

BSBA Goals: BSBA students will graduate being Effective Communicators, Critical Thinkers, Able to Analyze Ethical Problems, Global in their perspective, and Knowledgeable about the essentials of business. This class contributes to those goals through its course activities, assignments, and student learning outcomes.

Student Learning Outcomes:
1. Explain the philosophical arguments for and criticisms of 4-6 ethical theories.
2. Apply 4-6 ethical theories to current business situations.
3. Discern ethical content in current business news.
4. Describe the corporate governance triad that controls the modern corporation.

Course Objectives: (1) To encourage you to think systematically and rigorously about ethical issues, particularly those that occur in a business context, and (2) to help you to clarify and examine the ethical system you now hold. To accomplish these objectives, we will investigate several formal ethical theories closely tied to business ethics and apply those theories to current business-ethics issues. In addition, you will be asked to read assignments thoroughly and thoughtfully, to develop personal observations and insights about the material, and to write about and discuss those insights in class, on exams, and in a short presentation.

Course Format: A “business ethics” course lies at the intersection of business and the liberal arts, so it isn’t a typical business class. Three to five times during the semester, at the beginning of class, I’ll ask you to either write a thoughtful response to a question about that day’s assigned readings or respond to multiple choice questions. Six of our classes will consist of lectures about and discussions of an ethical theory based on (particularly important *) readings. During the rest of our sessions, we will primarily discuss topical readings and cases. Five of our classes will consist of presentations and discussions of current ethical issues led by three teams of students. Extra readings may be assigned as we go along.

Grading:

25% Brief essays and presentation-day attendance
40% Midterm exams (20% each)
10% Presentation and writeup of current business-ethics issue
25% Final exam
Grading (cont.):  

**Brief essay scoring:**  
5-10-minute in-class, thoughtful, written responses to the question(s) of the day based on assigned readings, at beginning of class on any given day (in ink on 8-1/2” x 11” paper; no spiral edges please; no credit if leave class early)  
6 pts. = answered correctly; obviously read the assignment and added personal insight  
5 pts. = answered the question, but made an error or didn’t add personal insight  
4 pts. = didn’t answer the question, but demonstrated that read the assignment  
2 pts. = turned in a piece of paper; didn’t read or unclear if read the assignment  
0 pt. = didn’t attend class  

**Class attendance (presentation days only; must arrive before first team begins, no credit if you leave class early):**  
2 pts. = present and alert (see below)  
0 pt. = not present  

**Presentation:** Three-person teams will be responsible for presenting a current, business-ethics related news item (not analysis or commentary) to the class that is not related to a topic covered in the syllabus. The article should have appeared in a reputable journalistic news outlet within three weeks of the presentation date and must include ethically questionable behavior by for-profit businesses. It should discuss moral issues facing businesspeople; do not use legal or government issues (e.g., lawsuits or university activities), those facing specific professions that have their own specialized ethics fields (e.g., journalism and medicine), or those whose issues are idiosyncratic (e.g., professional sports or utilities). *The Wall Street Journal and Fortune* are good places to start looking.  

Your team’s best shot at an article that meets all of the above requirements (and one backup) must be submitted by e-mail no later than 8:00 a.m. 7 days before presentation day, or as shown on the signup sheet. All team members must be copied on all e-mails about your project, so that “reply all” goes to everyone. At least one member of each team must attend a group meeting at my office at 11:30 (the very beginning of office hours) 7 days before their presentation day (or as shown on the signup sheet) for a briefing on the project (teams will sign in). Seven carefully written and screened questions in the correct format (as discussed at the meeting) must be submitted by e-mail no later than 2:00 3 days before the presentation for feedback and approval. Then, one class session before the presentation, the team is responsible for giving a copy of the article to each student in the class. (Bring 50 copies of the article, on a single sheet if possible.)  

On the day of the discussion, the presenters will explain the article briefly, then lead a rousing discussion of the various business-ethics issues that it raises based on their approved questions (20-25 minutes). Grades will be based on 1) the appropriateness of the article (one “try” to get approval will lead to the highest grade, two to a slightly lower grade, etc.—the whole team should screen your submissions carefully before submission), 2) the quality of the submitted and final questions (one “try,” etc.), and 3) the quality of the classroom discussion, with identical grades going to all team members. The signup sheet will be available the second full week of class; changes will be through voluntary trades only. **Complete teams must be formed before signing up.**  

**Exams:** Combination of definition, short-answer, and essay questions; questions on the final will require knowledge of midterm concepts. (You will need an 8-1/2” x 11” blue book for each exam—consider buying three or four at the beginning of the semester.) Potential Midterm and Final questions will be distributed in class one week before each exam, and the review sessions will consist of student-driven discussions of the answers. Out of fairness to other students, no one will be allowed “in and out” privileges during exams (i.e., no leaving the room and returning to continue working on the exam). The final exam will include one long essay question that will require you to write a persuasive essay that explains thoroughly (based only on lecture, discussion, and assigned readings) your favorite of the six ethical theories listed in the syllabus. Makeup exams for preexcused absences will be variations of those given in class; makeup exams may be possible for unexcused absences only in extraordinary circumstances, at the discretion of the professor.
Student Classroom Conduct: 1) Plan for “business meeting” conduct during our class sessions by coming prepared to stay for 75 minutes. Students who interrupt the class to leave the room should take their belongings with them and not interrupt the class again by returning (any student who has a medical concern with this policy should talk with me). 2) According to SDSU policy, students have “the right to learn in an academic environment that is free of inappropriate interruption, due to the use of electronic communication devices during class, or other activities that might be considered distracting to others.” To encourage active discussion, and to avoid having to deal with abuses, we have moved into the “post-electronics” era—students are no longer allowed to use electronics of any kind in the classroom. If any student is seen using an electronic device, I may ask them to leave for the remainder of the session, and/or they may forfeit any points earned that day. 3) On student discussion days, if I observe any student doing anything but focusing on the classroom conversation, I may deduct attendance credit for that student without notice.

Cheating: This is an ethics class. You should never cheat. Especially in this class. If you do, you will fail the course and be reported to Student Rights and Responsibilities for investigation. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating (including plagiarism), see the undergraduate bulletin and ask me for clarification if needed.

Course Outline

*Starred readings will be particularly important to the class and on the exams; read them very carefully

Week 1

Course Overview  January 23

Week 2

No Class—Pre-empted by Corporate Governance Institute Event  January 28

Justice Theory  January 30

*John Rawls. 1971. “Justice as Fairness.” From A Theory of Justice, pp. 3-17 (you can safely skip pp. 8-10 and 16-17). (B)

Week 3

Issue 1: Pharmaceuticals and Justice  February 4


In-class exercise (no advance reading required)

Rights Theory  February 6

*Robert Nozick. 1974. “Distributive Justice.” From Anarchy, State and Utopia, pp. 149-174 (you can safely skip “Sen’s Argument” (pp. 164-166); p. 166 onward examines applications and complexities). (B)

Week 4

Issue 2: Employee Rights vs. Employee Benefits  February 11


**Utilitarian Theory**  

**Issue 3: The Pinto Case and Johnson & Johnson**  
Lisa Newton and David Schmidt. 2004. “How Shall We Know if Our Products are Safe?” *Wake-up Calls*, pp. 111-127 (you can safely skip the introduction). (B)  
“Johnson & Johnson’s Tylenol Scare.” Available online at:  
http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/Spring01/Hogue/tylenol.html  

(Midterm study suggestions distributed)

**Week 5**  
Midterm Review  
**MIDTERM EXAM**

**Week 6**  
**Current Business-ethics Issues**

**Week 7**  
**Objectivist Theory**  

**Issue 4: Price Gouging**  

**Week 8**  
**Social Contract Theory**  
MGT 444, page 5

Issue 5: Sweatshops


Week 9

The Ethic of Care


Issue 6: Gender and Work-life Balance Issues


(Midterm study suggestions distributed)

Week 10

Midterm Review

Midterm Exam

Week 11

SPRING BREAK

Week 12

Current Business-ethics Issues

Current Business-ethics Issues

Week 13

Stakeholder Theory

MGT 444, page 6

**Issue 7: Stakeholder Management**

**Issue 8: Corporate Social Responsibility**
Hawthorne, F. 2012. *Ethical Chic*. Boston: Beacon Press. (pp. ix-xxvi) (B)

**Week 14**

**Corporate Governance I: Structure and History**

**Corporate Governance II** (or guest speaker or Current Business Ethics Issues)

**Week 15**

**Current Business-ethics Issues**

**Closing Case**

(Final study suggestions distributed)

**Week 16**

**Issue 9: Whistleblowing**

**Theory Application Exercise (bring your theory notes)**

**Final Review**

**FINAL EXAM**
1:00 am-3:00 pm
Tuesday, May 13

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary, but exam dates are firm. Additional material may be assigned during the course of the semester.