Meetings: Weds. 7-9:40 pm  
Course: MGT 444  
Location: GMCS 324  
Prerequisite: MGT 350

BUSINESS ETHICS - FALL 2014  
SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY  
Dan Eaton, Esq.

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SYLLABUS

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

Readings  
The only book you are required to purchase for this class is “Business Adventures: Twelve Classic Tales from the World of Wall Street” by John Brooks. Additional important core readings are available electronically: There are links to some readings in the syllabus. Readings marked (R) will be available on Blackboard. Additional electronic readings may be assigned during the semester.

Student Learning Outcomes  
At the end of this course, students should be able to:

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.

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 and historical 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 discuss those insights in class.

Course Format  
The first half of each class session typically will consist of a discussion of ethical theory, including practical application with current examples of the theory under review. The second half of each class session typically will consist of working through a case study (note: not a skit). Many of the examples and case studies will come from the book “Business Adventures.” To participate meaningfully in class discussion and follow along in the class, it is critical that you do the assigned reading and, where applicable, review the assigned video clips before each class.
Grading

**26 points Class participation** (2 points each for classes 3-15, with 1 point given for each half of the class session). Those who do not participate during a class segment will have the opportunity to send me an email giving their analysis of a point made in class by another student in the segment in which credit is sought. I must receive any such email no later than 5:00 p.m. by the Friday after the class session for which credit is sought. This email option is a substitute for speaking in class, not a substitute for being in class.)

**24 points Three in-class quizzes [Scantron 815E]**

**20 points Reflection Paper**

**30 points Final exam [Bluebook]**

The grade you earn will be set according to a curve. The median grade is set by the Department at B-/B, or 2.9. That means as many students will earn B-/B and above as will earn B-/B and below, and there will be more C+/s/B-’s than any other single grade. The final grade you earn will be determined by adding all of the points you have earned during the semester and then assigning a grade based on where you fall in relation to the rest of the students in the class.

Tests

There will be three eight-question, 10-minute non-cumulative in-class, multiple-choice quizzes based on the reading, including the reading assigned for the day of the quiz. The cumulative final exam will be essay. Makeup quizzes for pre-excused absences will be variations of those given in class; makeups may be possible for unexcused absences only in extraordinary circumstances, at the discretion of the instructor.

Class Participation

You will earn class participation points only for a meaningful contribution to the class dialogue, or thoughtful emailed commentary on some aspect of the class dialogue, for each of the two class segments. A student will earn no class participation points for any day in which the student is absent without being excused in advance or in which the student leaves class early. To be clear, that means if you are absent from class without excuse or you leave class early, you will be unable to submit emailed class participation to make up any class participation points you missed or forfeited. I may award 5 extra points at the end of the term to any student who demonstrates through his or her class participation that he or she consistently has done the class reading carefully. To the extent that any student earns such points, it will affect the curve. This is the only form of extra credit that will be offered. Here are the College of Business Administration’s expectations for graded oral work: [http://cbaweb.sdsu.edu/assets/files/assessment/rubrics/OralCommunicationSkills.pdf](http://cbaweb.sdsu.edu/assets/files/assessment/rubrics/OralCommunicationSkills.pdf).

Reflection Paper

The reflection paper will be 4-5, single-spaced pages. The paper will consist of an ethical analysis, using one or more of the theories discussed in this class, of an important decision made since January 2014 by one of the companies that are the focus of the case studies. The analysis should be from the perspective of at least two actual decision-makers within the company. Outside research is expected. Please note the deadline. No late work will be accepted. Here are the College of Business Administration’s expectations for written work: [http://cbaweb.sdsu.edu/assets/files/assessment/rubrics/WrittenCommunicationSkills.pdf](http://cbaweb.sdsu.edu/assets/files/assessment/rubrics/WrittenCommunicationSkills.pdf).

Students with disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Cheating

This is an ethics class. You should never cheat. Especially in this class.
Course Outline

The readings have been selected carefully and should be done with corresponding care, especially the sometimes brief but also sometimes dense readings on ethical theory.

Class 1  (These readings and the video clip are very short, but please do review them before the first class.)

Overview of the Course; Stakeholder theory v. Shareholder theory    August 27


Case Study 1 Executive Suite (1954) Video Clip: http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=executive+suite+boardroom+scene&FORM=VIRE1#view=detail&mid=7D4638EAF421515ADA277D4638EAF421515ADA27

Class 2

Utilitarianism    September 3


Class 3

Justice Theory    September 10

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

Case Study 3 “Making the Customer Whole:  The Death of a President,” Business Adventures, pp. 201-226.

Class 4

Rights Theory    September 17

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). (R)


Case Study 4 One Free Bite:  A Man, His Knowledge, and His Job,” Business Adventures, pp. 338-356
QUIZ 1 DURING FIRST 10 MINUTES OF CLASS (At least two question come from today’s reading)

Objectivist Theory


The Ethic of Care

O Magazine

Case Study 6: TBA

Integrative Social Contracts Theory

Case Study 7: “William of Arabia” (Based on actual California court case.) (R)

Virtue Ethics
J. Desjardins 2014 Malden Mills discussion and “Virtue Ethics” from An Introduction to Business Ethics, pp. 9-10, 41-44 (R)


The Ethics of Insider Trading
“Should Insider Trading Be Legal?” J. Breslow (January 7, 2014)

Case Study 9 “A Reasonable Amount of Time: Insiders at Texas Gulf Sulphur,” pp. 136-165
QUIZ 2 DURING FIRST 10 MINUTES OF CLASS (At least two question come from today’s reading)

The Ethics of Corporate Social Responsibility
TBA

Case Study 10: “Xerox Xerox Xerox Xerox” from Business Adventures, pp. 166-200

The Ethics of Advertising and Marketing


Case Study 11 TBA

Reflection Paper due

Anatomy of a Whistleblower


http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2014-06-18/gm-recalls-whistle-blower-was-ignored-mary-barra-faces-congress

Corporate Governance Part 1: The Board, CEO, and Stockholders

“Stockholder Season: Annual Meetings and Corporate Power,” Business Adventures, pp. 315-337

“Median CEO Pay Crosses $10 Million in 2013” (May 27, 2014 AP Story)

https://archive.harvardbusiness.org/claweb/pl/product.seam?c=32094&i=32096&cs=80fc8a8da53da1a3cdd0ea8f86f1eed

NO CLASS NOVEMBER 26: HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
Week 14  December 3

Corporate Governance Part 2: Global Models
M. Epstein, “Challenges of Governing Globally” (Strategic Finance, July, 2012)
http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Challenges+of+governing+globally%3a+a+strong+understanding+of+the+three...

Case Study 14  TBA

Class 15  December 10

Putting It All Together

J. O’Hara “The Hardware Man,” from Minding the Store: Great Writing about Business
from Tolstoy to Now, pp. 12-26 (R)

Case Study 15  “The Case of the Edsel: A Cautionary Tale,” Business Adventures, pp. 30-87

Week 16  December 17

FINAL EXAM  7:00-9:00 pm