



Lincoln University

BA 19 – Fundamentals of Ethics

COURSE SYLLABUS Spring 2026

Instructor: Professor Leon Kil
Lecture Schedule: Wednesday, 12:30 PM – 3:15 PM
Credits: 3 units / 45 lecture hours
Level: Introductory (I)
Office Hours: Wednesday, 11:15 AM – 12:20 PM
Faculty Room

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Reference Book: Business Ethics, 4th edition, Crane and Matten (2016)
Oxford University Press: ISBN: 9778-0-19-969731-1 (distributed to
the students free of charge)

Textbook:

Course Reader compiled by the instructor and distributed to the
students free of charge

Prerequisite: *None*

Last Revision: January 19, 2026

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

The course is an introduction to basic ethical theories and value systems. Topics include moral issues, codes of ethics, conflict of interest, social and fiduciary responsibilities, the work ethics, and other situations which arise within business environment.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

What's wrong with giving bribes? What's wrong with asking for bribes? What's wrong with paying money to a lower official if it will speed up bureaucratic regulations? What's wrong with large executive bonuses after company losses? What's wrong with exchanging promotions for sexual favors? What's wrong with giving expensive gifts to get a contract? What's wrong with hiring your less qualified relatives for important positions? What's wrong with using insider knowledge to buy or sell stock in a company? What's wrong with outsourcing jobs if it will increase your company's profits? What's wrong with allowing foreign contractors to hire children to produce your product if it will increase company profits? Should you report on the management of your own company if

you know it is hiding or covering up hazardous chemicals if you risk losing your job? What’s wrong with selling chemicals to other countries (where it is legal to do so) if it is against the law to sell these same chemicals in your own country? What’s wrong with using your company’s economic power to lower process in order to drive competitors out of business? What’s wrong with deregulating government rules? What’s wrong with opposing government oversight? What’s wrong with setting up secret overseas bank accounts? What’s gone wrong with the “free market”?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course will consider ethical behavior in American and international businesses. Topics will include awareness of ethical issues in organizations, stakeholder interests in organizations, the cultural background of business ethics, the ethics of income inequality, bribery and corruption, corporate dishonesty, corporate social responsibility, global ethics, codes of conduct, responsibility for foreign investors, transparency in global business, child labor, human rights in international business, regulating foreign contractors, business ethics in America, Europe, China, Japan and Islamic nations, developing a global code of conduct, socially responsible investment, ethics and the environment, whether multinational corporations can act in a socially responsible manner, and what is the relationship between ethics and capitalism.

COURSE QUESTIONS

1. Ethics in relation to social responsibility.
2. Values, ethics, and ethical leadership in relation to different situations.
3. Comparison of American ethical business values with those found in other international cultures.
4. Application of Corporate Social Responsibility and Socially Responsible Investing.
5. Ethical questions concerning Google, Shell IKEA, Walmart, Exxon, Pepsi, GlaxoSmithKline, Nestle, and Siemens.
6. How endemic are bribery and corruption?
7. Income Inequality - - how acceptable?
8. Capitalism and ethics.
9. Professional prestige and monetary compensation.
10. Economic nationalism and globalized value chains.
11. Regulation, administrative oversight, sanctions, and “dark money”

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES¹

	Course LO	Program LO	Institutional LO	Assessment activities
1	Consider the ethical issues in Capitalism.	PLO 6	ILO 3a	Assess concepts such as profit motive, competition, the “Invisible Hand”, Inequality, alienation, Short-term focus, and work ethic.

¹ Detailed description of learning outcomes and information about the assessment procedure are available at the [Learning Outcomes Assessment](#) section of LU website.

2	Stakeholder or Shareholder Theory as a model for business ethics.	PLO 2	ILO 1a, ILO 2a, ILO 4a	Assess each theory as providing a base for business ethics.
3	What ethical theories are consonant with Capitalism?	PLO 6	ILO 3a	Assess the ethical theories of utilitarianism, ethics of duties, ethics of human rights, and ethics of justice as they apply to international business.
4	Consider the social and ethical responsibilities of corporations.	PLO 2	ILO 1a, ILO 2a, ILO 4a	Assess codes of ethics, corporate governance, fiduciary responsibility, ethics in advertising, insider trading, whistleblowing, and socially responsible investing.
5	Consider Free Market Capitalism and Income Inequality and the “hollowing out” of the middle class.	PLO 2	ILO 1a, ILO 2a, ILO 4a	Assess the positive and negative aspects of income inequality as an engine of economic growth and the effect of regulation, government spending, and progressive taxation.
6	Evaluate the ethical effects of artificial intelligence and robotization.	PLO 1	ILO 1a, ILO 2a	Assess how secure the middle class is in the wake of artificial intelligence and robotization.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

Students are expected to read the assigned chapter and articles and case studies before each class. Case studies and hypothetical problems will comprise a part of each class session. Students will consider the case studies individually and in groups.

There will be class discussions and group presentations by students on the case studies and articles.

Assignments and projects require students to actively use resources of the library. Detailed guide to business *resources of the library* as well as the description of Lincoln University approach to *information literacy* are available at the [LU Library](http://lincolnuca.libguides.com) website (lincolnuca.libguides.com).

PROJECT PRESENTATION

There will be a final presentation on a topic to be decided by the students and the professor. The projects will be presented by individual students on the penultimate day of class. The presentation paper will be submitted before the end of the semester. The presentation will comprise approximately 20 per cent of the final grade.

Students’ work is expected to be original.

TESTING

There will be one mid-term examination and one final examination. Both will be essay examinations. Homework assignments will be turned in. Questions on ethical case studies will be given and discussed in class.

GRADING

Grading will be based on the following criteria:

- Mid-term : 30 per cent
- Final Examination : 40 per cent
- Class Attendance and Homework : 10 per cent
- Presentation : 20 per cent

Grading Standard:

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
Points	95-100	90-94	87-89	84-86	80-83	77-79	74-76	70-72	67-69	60-66	0-59

Classroom Protocol:

Courtesy is expected. This includes no cell phone usage.

COURSE CALENDAR AND ASSIGNMENTS

The assigned material for each date should be read **before** the class with the exception of the first class. Class participation in discussing the material and case studies and hypothetical questions is expected.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Lecture 1 (January 28):	Ethics, Interests, and Economic Behavior Max Weber, <u>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</u> (Routledge, 2001), chapters 4 and 5.
Lecture 2 (February 4):	“Manufactured” Needs and Consumerism Fredrik Albritton Jonsson and Carl Wennerlind, <u>Scarcity: a History from the Origins of Capitalism to the Climate Change</u> (Harvard UP, 2023), chapters 5, 6, 8.
Lecture 3 (February 11):	Radical Individualism and America as the Entrepreneurial Nation

Ayn Rand, Capitalism: the Unknown Ideal (Signet Books, 1966), chapters 1 and 3.

Lecture 4 (February 18): Corporate Power and the Legal System in the US and Beyond

Adam Winkler, We the Corporations: How American Businesses Won Their Civil Rights (W.W. Norton, 2018), chapter 9.

Lecture 5 (February 25): Prestige, Employment, and the ‘Virtual’ Economy

David Graeber, Bullshit Jobs (Simon & Schuster, 2018), chapters 1, 2, 5, 7.

Lecture 6 (March 4): Environmental Regulation and International Inequality

Anatol Lieven, Climate Change and the Nation State: the Case for Nationalism in a Warming World (Oxford UP, 2020), chapter 5.

Attention: Midterm Exam Questions Distributed in Class

**Lecture 7 (March 11): *INSIDE JOB* (a documentary film by Charles Ferguson)
In-Class Watching and Discussion**

Attention: Midterm Exam Essays Due in Class

Lecture 8 (March 25): Privatization and Decentralization of Force

P.W. Singer, Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry (Cornell UP, 2007), chapters 10-15.

Lecture 9 (April 1): Neoliberal Globalization and Control over Cross-Border Capital Flows

Finn Brunton, Digital Cash: the Unknown History of the Anarchists, Utopians, and Technologists Who Created Cryptocurrency (Princeton UP, 2019), chapters 10-12.

Lecture 10 (April 8): Economic Nationalism and “Corporate Betrayal of America”

Peter Navarro and Greg Autry, Death by China: Confronting the Dragon – a Call to Action for the Western World (Prentice Hall, 2011), chapters 4-7.

Lecture 11 (April 15): Technological Sovereignty, International Political and Financial Inequalities

Edward Fishman, Chokepoints: American Power in the Age of Economic Warfare (Elliott and Thompson, 2025), Part 6.

Lecture 12 (April 22): “Dark Money,” Corruption, and Money Laundering

Gabriel Zucman, The Hidden Wealth of Nations: the Scourge of Tax Havens (University of Chicago Press, 2015), entire.

Lecture 13 (April 29): International Law and International Organized Crime

Katharina Pistor, The Code of Capital: How the Law Creates Wealth and Inequality (Princeton UP, 2020), chapters 1 and 9.

Lecture 14 (May 6): Individual Project Presentations

Lecture 15 (May 13): Final Examination