

LGST 100: Ethics and Social Responsibility

Wharton School of Business
Summer 2020

Instructor: Dr. Chelsea Schein

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Live Class Time: Monday/Wednesday 6:45 – 10pm EST

Office Hours: Tuesdays 8-10 pm, and by appointment; sign-up through Calendly

Course Overview

Business managers routinely face difficult ethical issues. Do companies have an obligation to pay employees unable to work during a pandemic? Is it moral to buy thousands of bottles of hand-sanitizer only to resell them at a higher price? How should manufacturers distribute essential supplies? Moral dilemmas often emerge as a result of a tensions between economic-interests and the greater good: maximizing profits can conflict with interests of employees, customers or the larger community. During times of global market uncertainty, these conflicts can be particularly prevalent.

This course is a multi-disciplinary exploration of business ethics. In the first part of the class, we will adopt a philosophical lens to business ethics. The goal is to build a framework to identify and analyze a wide range of ethical issues that arise in business. This class will not *tell you* what is right or what is good. Rather, we will consider a range of perspectives, and develop skills to consider them critically.

The second part of the class will adopt a psychological approach to business ethics. We will examine scientifically-grounded ways of navigating the cognitive biases and blind spots that stand in the way of ethical behavior. We will explore strategies for how to act more in line with our own values, and more generally, live a happier, more fulfilled life.

The class will be interactive. We will use readings, cases, videos, guest speakers, debates, and lively discussions to examine real issues confronting managers of organizations, and to practice analyzing and solving the issues.

Objective

Overall course objectives are:

- To increase awareness of the ethical dimension of business conduct;
- To contribute insight into your leadership and professional responsibilities in your future careers;
- To develop analytical skills for identifying and resolving ethical issues in business; and
- To practice decision-making about ethical issues.

Grading Policy

Grading will be at my discretion and in accordance with Wharton policies. With the exception of clerical errors, no change of grades will be issued after final grade sheets are delivered to the University Registrar. Late assignments are accepted with a half grade penalty per day late (e.g. an A on an assignment goes to an A-).

Grading

Discussion Forum	10% (Individual)
Participation	5% (Individual)
Legacy Assignment	5% (Individual)
Ethics in the News	25% (Individual)
Debate	15% (Group)
Ethical Audit	20% (Group or Individual)
Future References Memo	15% (Individual)
Classroom Assignments	5% (Individual)

Assignments

Discussion Forum (10%): Our discussions continue beyond the synchronous class through a vibrant online discussion forum. You will be required to contribute to discussion forums at least 5 times over the course of the semester. The forums provide an opportunity to extend discussion and debate beyond what we'll have time for in class. Each course topic will have a forum, which will be opened shortly before the first reading on the topic is due. This portion of your grade will be determined primarily by the quality of your contributions.

Participation (5%). Grades for participation will be based on both the frequency and the quality of active participation, with an emphasis on quality. Comments in class do not have to be true or deep to be helpful. Any effort to help the class think through the material is potentially valuable, including mistakes, tentative suggestions, devil's advocacy, and requests for clarification. That said, it will probably not help your participation grade to bullshit, i.e., to speak with the aim of sounding good without caring whether you are saying something true. It also will not help your grade to pretend to have read the day's readings when you haven't or to be hyper-aggressive. To ensure that all students get opportunities to speak, I will not always call on the first students to raise their hands. Regular attendance is required. A large number of unexcused absences (more than two) may result in a lower grade in the course.

Legacy Assignment (5%): At its core, the study of ethics is the study of the good life. To start the semester, I will ask each of you to seriously reflect on your conception of the good life. Students will be required to submit a short note up to two pages in length (12-point type, doubled spaced, 1 - 2 pages) on *My Legacy*: When you look back at your life (both personal and professional) what will you consider to be your main achievement – your legacy? Please try and make this meaningful for you. I am not grading your choice in legacy. This task will be graded on completion (e.g. did you do the assignment fully).

Ethics in the News (25%): Ethical issues emerge daily. The goal of this assignment is to start training you to view the world around you through an ethical lens. For this assignment, find an article/social media post/ YouTube video/ billboard/ commercial that raises an ethical issue. In a 2-page write-up (12-point type, doubled spaced): 1) describe the ethical question it brings up; 2) act as an ethical consultant using the ethical framework handout. Two submission required. Note: you can submit one additional assignment to replace a low grade.

Future Reference Memo (15%). To protect against the risk of memory loss, you are to write yourself a survival memo (no more than 1,000 words). Your memo will communicate the most helpful lessons, models and concepts you've learned about ethics in business *for your personal reference*. You will be graded based on the seriousness of your engagement with the course materials, as well as the reflection and insight you demonstrate. **Note:** Do not leave this assignment to the end. After each class I'd suggest writing key concepts you learned, and how they relate to your views of ethical leadership.

Ethical Audit (20%): In the final project, you will take the concepts we learned about in class to provide an "ethical audit" of an organization. As part of this assignment, you will be required to describe basic details of the organization, identify likely points of ethical risk in the organization based on course content, describe how the organization currently handles these ethical risks, and describe design solutions that could minimize these risks. Your goal will be to design as "good" an organization as you can. I will distribute further details and grading rubrics for this assignment midway through the semester. Your write-up should be between 1200–1700 words.

Debate (15%). Teams will have the responsibility for developing and advocating a position supporting or opposing a debate proposition. Each team will be asked to prepare a Power Point presentation of the arguments supporting your team's position. A copy is due the day of the debate. An electronic copy of the Power Points containing your opening statement must be posted to the Discussion Board on Canvas no later than 24 hours prior to the start of the class in which the debate takes place. Your final set of slides including your rebuttal slide (should you choose to have one or more) and your concluding statement should be uploaded to Canvas for grading purposes the day of your debate. You should designate one member of your team responsible for posting the Power Points. Each team will present in class a constructive argument of the team's proposition and a rebuttal of the opposing team's position, and manage questions from the opposing team and classmates. You will be tasked with presenting your side of the debate in an uncompromising manner, in other words, you must maintain your stance without conceding points to your opposition. Debate topics TBD. Previous topics include "Social media has a positive impact;" and "Corporations should avoid taking political stances."

Classroom Assignments (5%): From time to time, you will be asked to complete an assignment for class (e.g. an online survey; submitting questions to guest speakers). Pass/Fail grade.

Honor Code

Do not cheat. Seriously. This is an ethics class. That would be sad. I have a zero-tolerance policy for cheating, and all violations will result in substantial penalties. I intentionally have a lenient late policy (only a 5-point deduction per day late), to

discourage cheating. Stressed and tempted to cheat? I guarantee you that a 5-point deduction is much better than failing the course.

Course Material

The latest course syllabus, readings, announcements, and all relevant course information can be accessed on Canvas: <https://canvas.upenn.edu/>

About the Instructor

Dr. Chelsea Schein is a Lecturer in Legal Studies and Business Ethics at Wharton. She received her PhD in Social Psychology from UNC, Chapel Hill. Dr. Schein has over 20 publications in top-tier academic journals as well as the New York Times. In her research, she examines how people form moral judgments and how understanding our moral psychology can increase well-being and create a more tolerant society. Her most recent work examines how organizations can best navigate political polarization. In addition to her academic work, Dr. Schein has consulted for Fortune 500 companies on best strategies for running virtual programming during the COVID-19 pandemic and early career talent acquisition.

Course Outline

Date	Topic	Reading & Assignment
Introduction: Individual Values and Purpose		
Unit 1	Course Overview	Christensen, How Will You Measure Your Life? (HBR)
	The Business Case for Ethics	Smith, Why I am Leaving Goldman Sachs
	Personal & Professional Values	Brooks, The Moral Bucket List
Philosophical Approaches: What OUGHT we do?		
Unit 2	Philosophical Approaches to Business Ethics (Normative Business Ethics)	“Introduction to Ethical Reasoning,” in Thomas Donaldson and Patricia Werhane, eds., <i>Ethical Issues in Business: A Philosophical Approach</i> , 8th edition (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2008). James Rachels, “The Challenge of Cultural Relativism” Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality”
Unit 3	What Money Can’t Buy	Sandel Intro & chapter 1 Brenan & Jaworski. “Part 1: Should Everything be for Sale?”
Corporate Values		

Unit 4	Social Responsibility of Business	Bower & Paine, The Error at the Heart of Corporate Leadership Porter & Kramer Creating Shared Value
Psychological Approaches: Why do we Fail to Live up to our Moral Values?		
Unit 5	Myths About Morality	Blind Spots: We're Not as Ethical as We Think Pinker, The Moral Instinct Epley & Tannenbaum, Treating Ethics as a Design Problem
Unit 6	Conflict of Interest	Carlat, Dr. Drug Rep Bazerman et al., Why Good Accountants Do Bad Audits (HBR)
Unit 7	Moral Courage & Whistleblowing	Dungan, Waytz, & Young, The psychology of whistleblowing Mayer, Why Are Some Whistleblowers Vilified and Others Celebrated? (HBR)
Personal Values in the Workplace		
Unit 8	Ethical Leadership	David Mayer, Why Leading by example isn't always enough. Schweitzer et al., The Organizational Apology (HBR)
Unit 9	Ethics in Higher Education	Operation Varsity Blues
Unit 10	Ethical Issues in a Diverse Workplace	Slaughter, "Competition and Care" Dobbin & Kalev, Why Diversity Programs Fail. How to think about implicit bias: https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-think-about-implicit-bias/ (Links to an external site.)
Unit 11	Global Business Ethics	Fadiman, A Traveler's Guide to Gifts and Bribes (HBR) Ludden, Your Guide to the World Cup's Corruption Scandals