

PHI 3013, SECTION 201

# BUSINESS ETHICS

*Fall 2018, Division of Arts & Sciences*

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OFFICE: 071 College Park, Meridian  
OFFICE HOURS: Wednesday &  
Thursday, 4:00 - 6:00 pm

Do not leave a message at either of the phone numbers—I won't get it if you do. Email is the best way to reach me, and I will usually respond within 24 hours. If you would like a more immediate response, then you can try calling or sending a text message to 267-416-0292.

With suitable notice, the instructor may make changes to the syllabus, readings, assignments, and schedule at any time during the semester.

## READINGS

All of the reading will be posted on Blackboard. Print out the readings, read them, and bring them to class (as they are assigned). You must have the readings with you in class, and you cannot use a laptop or tablet in the

classroom to look at them.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines several business-related moral issues. Virtually all people will, at some point in their lives, face some of the issues studied in this course, either as an employee, an employer, or as an interested citizen. There are no prerequisites for this course, and students do not need to be engaged in a business-related course of study to take it.

The course will begin with an overview of ethical theories. Then we will consider the purpose of the corporation and to whom corporations should be accountable. After that we will look at the appropriate treatment of employees—in particular, the rules for firing employees, pay, whistleblowing, and sexual harassment.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

During the semester, we will discuss other goals besides simply learning the material (although, of course, learning the material is one goal). It is worth knowing right from the outset, however, that a primary focus of the course will be on reading comprehension, writing, and careful thinking about the readings.

If you are having trouble with any part of this course, please email me or see me during my office hours.

## COURSEWORK AND GRADING

Letter grades will be assigned using the following scale.

A, 90 – 100 percent	D, 60 – 69 percent
B, 80 – 89 percent	F, below 60 percent
C, 70 – 79 percent	

The grades for the course will be based on this coursework and these percentages:

quizzes and homework	25 percent
three tests	50 percent
paper	25 percent

There will be 8 to 12 quizzes, some of which will be open-book and notes and taken in groups. Quizzes and other weekly assignments cannot be made up or submitted late, but each students' two lowest quiz or assignment grades will be dropped—although some assignments may be weighted more heavily than others and may not be eligible for dropping.

A five to six page paper is due on Monday, December 10. A paragraph explaining your topic is due by Monday, November 5. A rough draft of part of the paper, at least 2 pages in length, is due by Monday, November 26. (All three will be graded.)

There will not be any extra credit at the end of the course. Therefore, you should do as well as you can throughout the semester.

## STUDENT HONOR CODE & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

First, read this: <http://www.honorcode.msstate.edu/pdf/commonMyths.pdf>

Mississippi State has an approved Honor Code that applies to all students. The code is as follows:

As a Mississippi State University student, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.

Upon accepting admission to Mississippi State University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor Code. Student will be required to state their commitment on examinations,

research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the MSU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor Code. For additional information, please visit: <http://honorcode.msstate.edu/policy>

To be clear, students who cheat in any way will be penalized. Cheating includes giving as well as receiving help when such help is not explicitly allowed. Plagiarism is also a form of cheating. If you have any further questions about what constitutes cheating, either ask me or see the University's policy on academic dishonesty. (I am, actually, happy to answer to any questions about cheating. But ask me before you do it.)

Also, the Office of Student Conduct: <http://students.msstate.edu/studentconduct/>

## SOME OTHER RULES

(1) Cell phone use, including texting, is not allowed in class.

(2) You may not use a laptop or tablet (e.g., iPad) in class.

You may, at the very beginning of class, put upcoming assignments into your phone. But besides that exception, **I should never see a cell phone or an open laptop during class.**

These rules are designed to benefit you. Although you (sitting in class) may not perceive texting as rude or distracting, the person who is addressing you will usually interpret it negatively. This applies, not only to professors, but to the people you will work with and work for once you graduate. Learning to control when you text is a good habit to develop now.

Laptop use can also, in some situations, be perceived as rude (often it is obvious that the laptop user is not just taking notes). But more importantly, using a laptop creates an enormous barrier to paying attention. Every student who uses a laptop in the classroom spends time on things that are not related to class (email, Facebook, games, etc.). Consequently, these students get little or no benefit from being in the classroom, and the students' grades indicate as much.

(And don't think that you're good at "multi-tasking." You're not. The human brain doesn't work that way.)

## READING SCHEDULE

See the calendar on Blackboard for the exact schedule. This is an outline.

Weeks 1 & 2: An introduction to ethics

Weeks 2 – 6: The purpose of the corporation

Weeks 7: **test 1** (Wednesday, September 26)

Week 8: The hiring and firing of employees

Week 9 & 10: Paying employees

Week 11: Whistle-blowing

Weeks 12: **test 2** (Wednesday, October 31)

Week 13: Bureaucracy and moral responsibility

Weeks 14: Sexual harassment

Week 15: tba

Exam week: **test 3** (Wednesday, December 12)

## EMAIL & USING THE INTERNET

It is assumed that all students are familiar with the internet. Nonetheless, if you have any questions, please ask.

For this class (and probably for all of your classes), you have to check your Mississippi State email frequently. If you don't want to bother with another email account, then forward your Mississippi State email to your personal email account. Instructions for how to do that are here:

<https://www.its.msstate.edu/files/BullyMailForward1.pdf>

Occasionally students have trouble connecting to Blackboard or getting it to

work properly. If this happens, it is often useful to try a different web browser (this is more worthwhile than trying a different computer). If you are using a PC, you probably already have Internet Explorer; and if you are using a Mac, you probably already have Safari. These are the best alternatives to Internet Explorer and Safari:

Firefox, <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/>

Google Chrome, <http://www.google.com/chrome/>

Opera, <http://www.opera.com/>

Try using one of them if Blackboard is giving you trouble (use the link to download if you don't already have the browser installed on your computer).

That being said, you are responsible for making sure that you have access to Blackboard. If you wait until the last moment to complete an assignment and then run into computer or internet problems, you simply won't be able to do that assignment—no exceptions will be made for you.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

It is the policy of Mississippi State University to accommodate students with special needs and learning disabilities as per the MSU Student Support Services policy. Students seeking accommodations on the basis of a disability or special need must contact the Office of Student Support Services (<http://www.sss.msstate.edu/>) to verify eligibility. Additional guidelines may be obtained from the Office of Student Support Services.

Academic accommodations and services are based on an individual's needs. All documentation is confidential.

## TITLE IX

MSU is committed to complying with Title IX, a federal law that prohibits discrimination, including violence and harassment, based on sex. This means that MSU's educational programs and activities must be free from sex

discrimination, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know has experienced sex discrimination, sexual violence, or harassment by any member of the University community, you are encouraged to report the conduct to MSU's Director of Title IX/EEO Programs at 662-325-8124 or by e-mail to [titleix@msstate.edu](mailto:titleix@msstate.edu)

Additional resources are available here:

<http://students.msstate.edu/sexualmisconduct/>

<http://www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/PDF/91118.pdf>

<http://www.msstate.edu/web/security>