Syllabus: GB 441 Online - BUSINESS IN SOCIETY: ETHICS, RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

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If there are any questions on the following, please raise them as soon as possible either by email to the instructor or by a post on the “Ask the Class” discussion Forum.

TEXT and READINGS
Required:
2. The Wall Street Journal [Student subscriptions: Acquire package at Bronco Bookstore or go to WSJ.com/quarter and list the instructor of this class as your professor.] You can also access individual articles online through the Albertson’s Library after logging in.
3. Assigned readings on Blackboard.

Recommended: New York Times, Idaho Statesman and/or a weekly business newsmagazine, such as The Economist or Business Week.

You are also welcome to sign up for Chandler’s Strategic CSR Newsletter which weekly discusses an interesting current event connected to specific issues presented in the text. See the relevance of this course in events of the day with his analysis. To sign-up to receive the CSR Newsletters regularly during the fall and spring academic semesters, e-mail author David Chandler at david.chandler@ucdenver.edu (and mention you are in my class).

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Failure to recognize when ethical dilemmas confront us is perhaps the greatest initial problem with acting in a manner perceived to be ethical by society. As current events regularly indicate, the potential for ethical failures within the business environment is substantial. An ethical dilemma can be defined as any situation where there is a conflict of interests or values. Such conflicts will only be perceived when we are aware of the competing interests or values themselves. One overriding purpose of this course (in large part embodied in the stakeholder approach) is to expose students to and help students learn how to identify and understand the existence of a variety of other interests and values that may be involved in any personal or business decision-making situation. This then facilitates the recognition of situations that involve ethical dimensions as well as the learning of tools to avoid or resolve those conflicts in ways that recognize socially accepted standards of conduct, whether those standards are ensconced in law or not. Addressing ethical issues is best done in an intentional, specific and cohesive way.

The secondary purpose of this course is to understand that corporate management, and specifically senior management, must understand and be the drivers behind creating and sustaining an ethical culture in the workplace, also in an intentional, specific and cohesive way if business is to respond adequately to changing expectations in the social environment.
A third purpose of this course is to understand that business as a whole and individual businesses or industries in particular must be continually aware of precursors to change and changes in the social context within which business operates and is expected to establish and preserve its legitimacy and ultimately survival, often referred to as “sustainability.” Businesses are also beginning to recognize the competitive advantages of taking a multiple, or “triple bottom-line” stakeholder perspective that addresses social and environmental factors as well as financial objectives. Business must understand its changing social responsibilities and be in a position to both influence the definition and recognition of those responsibilities as well as respond to them. Implicit in this is the need to recognize the interests of various internal and external stakeholders and address their legitimate needs and expectations in an ethical fashion. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is about understanding society’s changing expectations and managing their implications for the business environment in order to operate a sustainable enterprise, one which continues to enjoy a competitive advantage in obtaining and retaining the cooperation of its critical stakeholders. In relation to ethical behavior, strategic CSR is about how a firm decides to and does “the right thing” for itself, its stakeholders and society when faced with conflicting interests, values and business choices.

Within this context, this course explores the relationships between business, government, and society in domestic and, critically, global contexts. Business is the dominant social institution in the U.S. and throughout much of the world, and government regulates business for the general welfare through law, regulation, and administrative agencies. Society with its various influences and interest groups has a significant voice in how and to what extent business is regulated.

One of the objectives of this course will be to examine the limits of the law's ability to regulate a society, as well as conversely the limits of self-regulation and reliance upon expectations of ethical conduct. We will discuss the concepts of business, government and stakeholders and examine how their overlapping but often competing interests create difficult economic, legal and ethical challenges for managers and policy-makers in a variety of areas. Extensive use will be made of current events and topics.

Finally, through the Group Project, students will explore current businesses and business practices as they relate to the various core areas of CSR.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE**

**Core Assumptions:** The environment of business has changed dramatically in the last few decades and proactive businesses will adapt accordingly to become or stay competitive, negotiating risks and capturing opportunities. Stakeholder management is a key to this process. The expectations of a firm’s stakeholders determine the opportunities and constraints in the firm’s value creation strategy. Identifying and responding to these expectations also constitute the ethical environment for the firm and thus raise the need to understand the contexts of individual and organizational ethical decision-making and their relationship to achieving the goals of the firm and ensuring business continuity.

**Specific Goals and Learning Outcomes:** Students should be able to

A. More clearly recognize when they are faced with a decision or choice that has ethical dimensions (ethical can imply “moral” considerations, e.g. “right vs. wrong” situations or, more broadly, where there is a conflict of legitimate interests, a “right vs. right” situation)

B. Identify the stakeholders and interests involved in ethical conflicts and apply relevant standards (legal, societal, ethical/moral), including ethical principles, theories or tests, to resolve them.
C. Create and explore possible alternative courses of action and evaluate potential impacts/consequences for stakeholders.
D. Take action, having the courage and ability to clearly communicate and carry out the course of action.
E. Explain the concept of strategic corporate social responsibility (CSR).
F. Understand and apply the concept of stakeholders and their relationship to business and impacts on managerial decision-making.
G. Apply concepts of strategic CSR in business value creation both for risk management purposes and to obtain a sustainable competitive advantage.
H. Explore business conduct, social responsibility, the role of government and the interaction of business and society in affecting government regulation of business.
I. Examine current issues (domestic and international) in business, government and society by applying a stakeholder analysis.
J. Apply course content to actual business operations and explore how CSR can be applied in a strategic manner to enhance business opportunities and long term sustainability.
K. Use their knowledge of strategic CSR as applied to particular business issues in order to create competitive advantage in job interviews and determine whether the business is an appropriate fit for their values and aspirations.

Students in this class will learn or practice the following COBE core curriculum concepts, methods, and skills:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Understand and apply analytical and disciplinary concepts and methods related to business and economics:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☑ 1.2. Business Policy and Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 1.6. International environment of business</td>
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<td>☑ 1.7. Legal environment of business</td>
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<td>☑ 1.8. Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 2.1. Communicate effectively: Write messages and documents that are clear, concise, and compelling</td>
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<tr>
<td>☑ 2.2. Communicate effectively: Give oral presentations that use effective content, organization, and delivery</td>
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<td>☑ 3. Solve problems, including unstructured problems, related to business and economics</td>
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<td>☑ 4. Use effective teamwork and collaboration skills</td>
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<td>☑ 5. Resolve ethical issues related to business and economics</td>
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**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

To gain the maximum benefit from this course, it is recommended that you:

- Devote sufficient time to understand the readings, raise questions on the material and seek to master its application to real world challenges and opportunities.
- Approach the material with an open and challenging attitude being able to question assumptions and think critically about your own and others positions.
- Strive to understand and expand your own ethical foundations and learn from the diversity present in the class.
- Approach each opportunity of discussion with an aim to exercise mutual respect and to learn and to contribute to the learning of others.
- Realize that the personal and business knowledge and skills presented in this course can be utilized for personal and business success.
Design an effective time management strategy to fulfill course assignments in a timely manner and maximize your online learning.

Seek answers from the syllabus, textbook and other students regarding coursework before contacting the professor by using the “Ask the Class” discussion forum or by email, as appropriate. If raised by email, the instructor will respond within 24 hours, except on weekends and breaks.

All students are expected to adhere to the Student Code of Conduct which includes information on academic dishonesty and which can be found at http://deanofstudents.boisestate.edu/scp-codeofconduct/. Sanctions for academic dishonesty range from no credit given for the assignment, a grade of failure in or dismissal from the course to expulsion from the university.

NETIQUETTE EXPECTATIONS

Please review the Netiquette Guide for Online Courses for the online behavior and interaction expected in this course.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING SYSTEM

Each class module builds on the assigned readings and videos. I strongly encourage students to raise questions related to any difficulties in understanding the material in the text and other assigned readings. In this respect, students can set the initial agenda for each module by raising such questions and issues for discussion in the weekly discussion forums. I expect and encourage honest and intelligent engagement. Participation is an extremely important part of the learning process in this class. It is not my role or purpose to indoctrinate you into any particular values or ways of thinking. It is my role to challenge you to think for yourself and to willingly address critical issues that pertain to course content.

GRADING

It is anticipated that grades in this course will be assigned according to the following scale (with +/- grades also incorporated):

- A = 90% to 100%
- B = 80% to 89%
- C = 70% to 79%
- D = 60% to 69%
- F = 0% to 59%

Owing to the fact that this is a new online format for the course, it is possible that the intended grading scheme will not result in appropriate distributions of final grades. In that event, the above scheme may be modified by a class curve based on the following: the final class mean plus 1% of total points will determine the division point between C+ and B-. Ranges for other grades (A, C, D, F, +/-) will be determined by appropriate standard deviations from that point.

Grades will be based on the following:

- Approximately 16-20 timed open materials tests/quizzes (The “syllabus” quiz, Chapters 1-15 of the text, 3-4 quizzes on the ethics materials) = 25% of total grade
- 1 comprehensive final = 20% of total grade
- Active engagement in group discussion forums of weekly (chapter) modules = 15% of your total grade (includes weekly individual posts, responses and final syntheses)
- Active engagement in group discussion of weekly ethics material = 15% of your total grade.
- Your post and responses in the “Ethics in Reality” forum = 5% of total grade.
• One to two 1½ page double-spaced reflection papers = 5% of your total grade,
• Group Presentation of a Case Study - 10%
• Self-Assessments - 5% (Reading Preview Quizzes and Module self-assessments)
• Additional subjective assessment of overall participation, quality of responses, active engagement in weekly discussions and weekly self-evaluations = possible movement of grade by one measure (e.g. B to B+, C+ to B-).

No additional work will be allowed other than the above. Take advantage of the points made available there.

Note that individual assessments will have a certain amount of points associated with them. These points will then be translated by a weighted grade system into an amount out of the related % value above. Perhaps the best way to keep track of your progress is by looking at your “weighted grade” percentage both as an absolute value and in comparison with the class mean provided in the column statistics.

The My Grades menu in Blackboard is used to view grading rubrics, confirm an assignment has been submitted, track your progress, and view feedback on submitted tests and assignments (View My Grades). For assignments, I will respond with grades and feedback within 7 days unless otherwise noted.

**Policy on late assignments**

One of the many advantages to taking courses online is that it affords you a degree of flexibility in when and how you complete your assignments that might be more challenging to achieve in a face-to-face classroom setting.

However, in order for us to move through the material as a group, it's important that each of you complete your assignments on time. Late assignments will not be graded. You are welcome to submit your work ahead of schedule once each module is made available (usually one week in advance).

Should a student find that they are having difficulty with the course material or have personal issues that may prevent them from keeping up with the class, the student should contact the professor to discuss a possible solution.

Students should refer to the grading rubrics in My Grades for specifics on each assignment.

**Discussion Forums and Grading (for both Chapter and Ethics discussion forums)**

Each group discussion thread (both your initial post and responses) is worth a possible 10 points based on the criteria set forth in the grading rubrics associated with each discussion. However, not all of the discussions will be closely reviewed by the professor. This grading process as somewhat analogous to random “audit checks” and the “stealth reviews” governmental authorities use to monitor business compliance with the law. Specifically, I will either closely review or conduct only a cursory review of the discussion posts depending on a random rotation through groups. Each week, initial individual posts for both forums will be due on Thursdays. Response posts (at least 2 per forum) will be due on Sunday. In the Chapter Questions forum, a final synthesis of your individual post will be due the following Tuesday. This synthesis restates your original post but takes into consideration the responses of other group members to arrive at the best answer possible to the chapter question. Failure to post a synthesis automatically reduces your score for that discussion thread by 2 points. No synthesis is required in Ethics forums unless specifically noted.
Close Review of the Discussion for Students receiving below 60% on the Chapter Quiz:
Discussions are intended to facilitate high-level critical thinking through an informed discussion. Students who failed to achieve at least a 70% on the Quiz for the chapter may not have closely read, viewed, and thought about the material presented in the chapter at the level necessary to engage in the well-informed discussions expected for all discussions. Accordingly, the professor may closely review the discussion posts of any student obtaining a score of less than 70% on the Quiz for the associated chapter. Students scoring less than 70% on a Quiz in a given chapter can still achieve full-credit on the discussion, but the discussion may be closely reviewed.

ASSIGNMENTS/OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT (some further descriptions) [any references to time of day refer to Mountain Time].

Ethics in Reality Discussion Forum: Ethics in Practice or Encountered Ethical Dilemma. Due anytime during weeks 4-13 of the semester (latest by 11:00 p.m., April 16). Post in the discussion forum “Ethics in Reality” either an “Ethics in Practice” or an “Ethical Dilemma”. 350-500 words (roughly 1-1½ pages), double spaced. Use the word count wisely (be concise).

Examples of “Ethics in Practice” cases are provided on Blackboard (Course Documents: “Ethics in Practice: Cases”) and some may be used in the Ethics discussion forums. Create an Ethics in Practice of your own, based either upon your own experience or a credible scenario created by them. They should be written in either the first or third person with fictitious names and places to preserve anonymity. The format required is the same as those examples including the presentation of a factual scenario. In addition, create 3-5 pertinent questions at the end of your factual scenario that would guide an ethical analysis. These questions should go beyond simply leading one to identifying the issue(s) and be structured in order to guide resolution of the issue(s), in other words, the ethical analysis of the issues. Make sure that the factual information you give is sufficient to begin to answer the questions and for ethical analysis. Grading will be based on the usefulness of the scenario and questions in an actual class discussion as well as how well it is presented (writing style, grammar, etc.). Realistic scenarios that raise important ethical (as opposed to legal) questions and would spark serious response will receive higher marks.

Alternatively, you can submit an actual ethical situation that you encounter during the course of the semester. For this post, include 1) a description of the factual situation, 2) your analysis of it (perhaps similar to the ethical analysis we will have used), 3) your actual decision(s) and action(s), 4) your reasons/justification for doing so, and 5) your level of satisfaction with the outcome. As you are providing these answers, you do not need to include the questions that you would have posed if you were setting up the scenario as in the prior exercise.

In both cases, these situations will be open for responses from other students so be thoughtful what you post. You will also be expected to post at least two responses to other students’ initial post by the end of Week/Module 14 (last post by April 23, 11:00 p.m.).

“The Corporation” Reflection
[Begin watching chapters in Module 3, paper due in Module 8, by 11:00 p.m. 3/5] View “The Corporation” video on your own time and hand in a writing assignment fulfilling requirements which will be provided separately on Blackboard in Course Documents. 350-500 words (roughly 1-1½ pages), double spaced. Use the word count wisely (be concise). The video (with captions) may be accessed through the Albertsons Library at https://boisestate.worldcat.org/title/end-of-education/oclc/856022430?referer=&ht=edition (or click HERE and click on the Find a copy online link. You will need to log in with your Broncoweb ID and password). You can also access the
video (without captions) on youtube at
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pin8fbdGV9Y&list=PLCDF6B02DFD948794 (divided unto
chapters), or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4ou9rOssPg (full film).

Module Discussion Forums, Threads and Responses (this applies to the discussion threads
beginning in Module 2)

Each of you will be placed in a group of about 5 students. Each weekly module will have two
separate discussion venues. One for the assigned text chapter readings and a separate one for
assigned Ethics material.

A list of further expectations as to standards and “attitudes” in participation in discussion threads
will follow. Note that spelling and grammar also matter and will be considered in grading.

Text Discussion Threads (Group-based): Each chapter of the text concludes with 5 “Questions for
Discussion and Review”. Each group should arrange for the assignment of each question to a
member of the group on a rotating basis (for example, Student A does #1 one week, #2 the
following week…). By 11:00 p.m. Thursday, each individual should post their answer to that
week’s Discussion Forum (one thread for each question). By 11:00 p.m. Sunday, each group
member will post at least two responses to the original posts of other members of your group.
Finally, by 11:00 p.m. Tuesday, the person responsible for the original posting on each question will
bring together in a synthesis the results of the discussion, posted as the final entry in their discussion
thread.

Ethics Discussion Threads (Group-based, starting with Module 2 and continuing until objectives are
completed). Separate readings on Ethics are provided for each module (but may not include every
module). Specific discussion prompts will be provided by the instructor and will usually be based
on additional ethics reading assignments. Each student will create an initial post to the group form
by 11:00 p.m. Thursday of each week. Then by 11:00 p.m. Sunday each student will post two
responses either to an original post or another student’s response.

Quizzes and Exam(s)

The purpose of quizzes and the final exam is to examine comprehension of materials presented in
the text, readings, videos and class discussion. Quizzes for each chapter (starting in Module 2) will
be taken on Blackboard (and submitted) by 11:00 p.m., Tuesday of each module and are sourced
from the textbook test bank. You will be allowed to take each Chapter Quiz twice with the better
score counting.

It is possible that a few quizzes on the ethics material will be created. Students will be notified in
advance.

A comprehensive final exam will cover the Ethics portion of the course and text material and will
be True/False and Multiple Choice, possibly with one or two short essay questions. A Study List
for the final exam is provided in the Course Information folder. The Final Exam will be
administered in the testing center at BSU on a day to be determined during the week of May
1-5.

Note that most assessments other than the quizzes and final exam tend to be subjectively graded and
therefore result in a higher percentage of points available. The final exam is expected to have a
greater degree of difficulty and a, perhaps significantly, lower class mean. Therefore, you should
expect your weighted total after the final to be lower (assuming a score consistent with your performance in the class) than what it was prior. A statement as to policy on the final exam will be provided separately.

**Group Presentations**

Each group will be responsible for one of the Case Studies that are found in the textbook. Your group will be the same as that for weekly discussion boards. More information and a rubric for the presentation will be made available early in the course as well as suggestions for scheduled benchmarks during the semester.

**Contact with Instructor:** Students are strongly encouraged to raise questions on course material in class for everyone’s benefit. Students needing further assistance on course material or other matters are strongly encouraged to communicate with the instructor either personally or by email and earlier rather than later. All student difficulties affecting class performance should be raised with the instructor as soon as they become apparent to the student. Careful consideration and confidentiality can be expected. Students are also welcome to stop in anytime for any purpose whatsoever.

**The following is important Boise State University boilerplate information**

**TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES/REQUIREMENTS**

**eCampus Resources**
The eCampus Center provides a number of services and resources to help online students succeed. If you would like to receive assistance from any of the offices or services, please make contact with them as soon as possible. It is much better to start receiving these services at the beginning of the semester, rather than waiting several weeks before you initiate contact. Select the following link to learn more about the services and resources available to you through the eCampus Center.

[Boise State eCampus Center Student Support](#)

While exploring this site, you may want to take special note of the following:
- Links to academic resources such as the Writing Center, Disability Resource Center, and Albertsons Library
- A Quick Start Guide with strategies for being successful in an online course
- Information about online tutoring services
- Computer and Technology Resources
- Tabs for Boise State Tutorials, Tutorials on the Web, Reporting Resources, and Tips for Success

**Blackboard Resources**
For students new to Blackboard, please follow this link and confirm that you know where to locate resources to get started in Blackboard and complete your work in the course: [Student Blackboard Help at Boise State](#).

In the unlikely event that Blackboard service is interrupted, contact the Boise State Help Desk (208.426.4357 (HELP)) and then let me know. I may need to adjust the schedule accordingly.

**Computer and Internet Skill Requirements**
You must also have a number of computer skills and resources to take this class.
● Please review the list of basic computer and Internet skills and minimum technology links on the eCampus Center website (particularly the first and last links).
● For technical assistance, please refer to the help resources listed under the TECHNICAL link within the left menu at my.boisestate.edu, or other resources found listed in Module 00: Getting Started of this course.

**Computer Requirements**
To be successful in an online course, you must ensure that you and your computer are ready. If you have questions about the system requirements for your computer, select the link below to access a list of the minimum computer hardware and software requirements, including information about your Internet connection and web browsers.

[System Requirements](#)
[Technology Services for Students Website](#)

**Email Requirements**
University policy ([2280](#)) establishes email as one of the official modes of communicating with students. The University officially discourages students from forwarding u.boisestate.edu email to another account.

**Faculty Initiated Withdrawal for Nonattendance**
Boise State University values course participation enough that nonattendance can lead to a faculty-initiated drop, defined as failure to attend the first class session of a class that meets once weekly. In an online course, the first week’s attendance is verified by other means that show a student has at least logged in to the course.

**INSTITUTIONAL ACADEMIC POLICIES**

**Academic Integrity**
Students are expected to perform according to the standards of academic honesty and integrity as outlined in the Boise State University policies. As stated in the Student Handbook, “Plagiarism in written works whether in hard copy, print or in electronic communications, will not be tolerated and may be cause for failure in the course and/or University dismissal. Academic dishonesty in any form may result in failure in the course or dismissal from the Program and/or the University.” You must abide by the Boise State University Student Code of Conduct regarding Academic Dishonesty. You may not give or receive help on any test from any other student. You may not discuss the content of any tests with other students until all students have taken the test. This includes students who may have missed the scheduled test time due to illness or emergency. Please read carefully the [Boise State University Student Code of Conduct](#) and specifically the definition of Academic Dishonesty found in Section 4D. You will be held to these standards in all areas of academic performance.

**Student Online Privacy**
Information in electronic form is easily reproduced and easily distributed. For this reason, it is important that you review the guidelines and limitations regarding the use of email and other technologies for your course in Boise State’s [Student Online Privacy Notice](#).

**Privacy Information for technologies used in this course**
[Blackboard Learn Privacy Policy](#)
[Google Privacy Policy; My Account Settings](#)
[Microsoft Privacy Statement, Office 365 Privacy](#)
Disabilities Statement
I do my best to make this course accessible. However, students with disabilities needing accommodations to fully participate in this class should contact the Educational Access Center (EAC). All accommodations must be approved through the DRC prior to being implemented. To learn more about the accommodation process, visit their website.

Accessibility Information for technologies used in this course
Blackboard Learn: Bb accessibility link
Google Documents and YouTube: Google Accessibility.
Microsoft Office: Accessibility in Microsoft Office 2013, Accessibility in Office 365.

Copyright Compliance
Some of the materials in this course may be copyrighted. They are intended for use only by students registered and enrolled in this course and only for instructional activities associated with and for the duration of the course. They may not be retained in another medium or disseminated further. They are provided in compliance with the provisions of the TEACH Act. For more information, visit the eCampus Center’s page about copyright.

Statement of Shared Values
In addition to the policies governing academic integrity, Boise State University has adopted a Statement of Shared Values. In a culture of intellectual inquiry and debate, where the search for knowledge and discovery flourish, campus community members are expected to demonstrate civility, abide by norms of decorum, and adhere to the principles of civil discourse. Civility is expressed in the Statement of Shared Values which includes Academic Excellence, Caring, Citizenship, Fairness, Respect, Responsibility, and Trustworthiness. I encourage you to read these statements carefully and consider them when interacting with faculty, fellow students, and members of the community.

Downloading Course Content
Course materials may be saved or printed for use in this course only. For use beyond this class, permission must be obtained from the professor.

All Boise State standards, rules, policies, and requirements are hereby incorporated into this syllabus by reference and can be reviewed at my.boisestate.edu.