



CSUN – Fall 2026

PHI 305 section 14065 – Ethics & Policy

Campus Online class

Prof. Valerie Giovanini

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Zoom link:

<https://csun.zoom.us/j/84472180267>

Office hours:

Wednesday 11:00-12:00 am

(or by appointment)

Catalog Description

Application of the insights and methods of moral philosophy to a practical examination of contemporary moral problems and normative issues of public policy concerning the conduct and responsibilities of individuals and business firms, as well as the role of business and economic institutions in society.

This is a Campus Online class (OC/COA/COS) in which most class sessions are presented in an online environment. We will have 3 face-to-face meetings for activities such as orientation, a special in-class presentation, and group work.

Save the Dates for our in-class meetings (5 points deducted for non-attendance):

Dates: Sept 18, November 8, December 11

Day & Time: Friday, 10:00AM - 11:15AM

Location: Goodman Hall 325

Role in the General Education Program

This course satisfies the Arts and Humanities section of General Education, which has the following goal: Students will understand the rich history and diversity of human knowledge, discourse, and achievements of their own and other cultures as they are expressed in the arts, literature, religions and philosophy.

Course Description

This class will help students think about complicated ethical decisions and help integrate ethical considerations into business decisions. The class offers a set of ethical approaches that philosophers have formulated over many centuries of reflection. Taken together, these approaches will provide insight into making difficult

decisions. The ability to competently apply moral concepts to specific, ethically problematic, cases is a high-level intellectual task. Becoming competent at applying ethical concepts to business decisions requires not just passively listening to a lecture and reading a textbook, but also active engagement with both theory and case studies. Students will learn in this class how to apply theory to ethically problematic situations. Active engagement with both theory and practice will increase students' competence at ethical reasoning and decision-making. This increased ethical competence, together with other important skills required for business management, will lead to excellent managers and administrators in their respective fields.

This course presents central positions and debates within Western Philosophy. It is not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive of all the material in the field.

Required Text

Mandatory Textbook: Business Ethics: An Interactive Introduction, (2015) by Andrew Kernohan, Broadview Press. ISBN: 978-1554811502

After you purchase the book, follow easy steps in the 'My Materials' tab for it to load in Canvas.

Student Resources on Companion Site: <https://sites.broadviewpress.com/businessethics/>
Canvas – Homework and handouts will be provided on <https://canvas.csun.edu>.

Ethical use of AI for class assignments

Using an AI-content generator such as ChatGPT to complete assignments without proper attribution violates academic integrity. By submitting assignments in this class, you pledge to affirm that they are your own work, and you attribute use of any tools and sources. See the full policy in my Canvas shell.

3 warnings of generic responses will earn your recommendation to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. See [Academic Dishonesty](#) for details.

Learning to use AI responsibly and ethically is an important skill today. Be aware of the limits of conversational, generative AI tools such as ChatGPT.

- **Fact-check** all the AI outputs. Assume it is wrong unless you cross-check the claims with reliable sources. The current AI models will confidently reassert factual errors. You will be responsible for any errors or omissions.
- **Full disclosure:** Like any other tool, the use of AI should be acknowledged. At the end of your assignment, write a short paragraph to explain which AI tool and how you used it, if applicable. Include the prompts you used to get the results. Failure to do so violates academic integrity policies. If you merely use the instructional AI embedded within Packback, no disclosure is needed. That is a pre-authorized tool.

Here are approved uses of AI in this course. You can take advantage of a generative AI to:

- Brainstorm and fine tune your ideas; use AI to draft an outline to clarify your thoughts
- Check grammar, rigor, and style; help you find an expression

Cheating is a violation of academic integrity and Board Rule 9803.12. Penalties for cheating may include a grade of zero or "F" on an exam or paper, or even suspension from the College.

Diverse Needs

Please let me know at the beginning of the course if I can provide any physical or learning accommodations. If

you haven't already done so, be sure to contact CSUN's Center for additional student assistance (Bayramian Hall 110, (818) 677-2684). Make-up exams will be administered only in the event of emergencies or religious observance. *If* you would like a grade you received to be re-evaluated or clarified, *then* please submit your claim in writing. Explain your question, and, if you think your position is correct, document evidence from the text on how you are correct. CSUN's [Learning Resource Center](#) offers tutoring, a writing center & more.

Policy on respect for others and respectful language

While informal discussion is encouraged, I will insist that you always respond to others in the class in a respectful way. Avoid comments and behaviors that disparage individuals. Writing informally but respectfully about sensitive subjects is an important skill, and this class will help you learn it. To reach me, it is best to send a direct message through Canvas. I aim to respond asap, but generally allow 24-48 hours for a response.

Pro-Tips for Success in an Online Course (if you cannot meet these expectations, drop the course asap):

- Online courses require *more effort* than an in-person class. Be prepared to dedicate 9 hours a week to the course for the next 16 weeks.
- Average reading per week: 35 pages
- Assignments are due every Friday and Sunday night. New assignments open every Monday morning.
- Final weeks between November 30 – December 16 requires extreme flexibility and availability for group projects (asynchronously if the group desires).

Course Requirements & Methods of Evaluation

This class is nothing without your engagement! Course grades will be based on weekly class wide discussion posts, a midterm & final group presentation.

Grading

All work will be assigned a grade according to the following 269-point scale. I will not be using a plus/minus system.

Course Requirements:

Introduction Post (1)	5 points (5 pts.)
Discussion Forum Posts & Responses (12)	144 points (12 pts. each)
Exams (2)	120 points (60 pts. each)
TOTAL	269 points

A = 269-242 points B = 241-215 C = 214-188 D = 187-161 F = 160 and below

Organization of the Course

Each week of our semester is divided into three parts: Read, Review, and Complete. Reading pages are assigned in our Kernohan textbook, lecture slides and tutorials are available to review, and completed assignments (e.g., original discussion posts and responses) are due twice a week. Each week on Monday, the complete list of "to do" items will become available on Canvas as a new Module page. There will be reflections on case studies and discussion posts due for the midterm, as well as a final group project.

Weekly Discussion Posts – 144 points (12 submissions for 12 point each) – In addition to an introduction post (5 points), each week you will be asked to discuss philosophical passages in a group setting. Original forum posts are due every **Friday** and a reply post is due by **Sunday** at 11:55pm. Detailed instructions for each forum post are provided on the discussion board, along with the prompt. Each late post will be deducted 2 points. Your job consists of two parts:

Friday Original Forum Post: (a) Answer in 75-100 words your choice of 3 *Study Questions* at the end of our assigned chapter from the textbook. (b) Answer in 75-100 words the question/s at the end of the chapter's Case Study *using important concepts from the chapter*. You may use the Decision Questions as prompts to help describe your overall impression of and response to the case study. (c) Post an original question you have about the chapter. (7 points)

Sunday Response Forum Post: Respond to a classmate's question from their original post. (5 points)

PRO-TIP: Make time in your daily-life for the assigned reading, rather than cram-reading before the due date or exam.

Midterm and Final Projects – 120 points (2 total for 60 points each) – The midterm consists of answering short essay questions and creating a discussion post that relates popular culture to some of the moral issues we've covered. Our final evaluation consists of a group PowerPoint presentation created based on students' interest in Kernohan's Chapter 10, 11, or 12. Look at these chapters in advance to decide your interest.

Weekly Schedule of Required Readings (*This calendar is subject to change and revisions based on our progress in class*).

Class Schedule

Readings & homework are listed on the day they're due!

SECTION ONE: Ethical Decisions in Business & The Nature of Ethical Reasoning

August 24 – 30

(Kernohan 1-18) Chapter 1: Ethical Decisions in Business

Original Discussion Post due by *Friday (Aug 28)* and response *Sunday (Aug 30)* at 11:55 pm

Introduction Discussion Post due *Friday* and response due *Sunday* at 11:55 pm

August 31 – September 6

(Kernohan 19-35) Chapter 2: The Nature of Ethical Reasoning

Original Discussion Post due by *Friday (Sept 4)* and response *Sunday (Sept 6)* at 11:55 pm

September 7 – 13

(Kernohan 37-52) Chapter 3: Self-Interest and the Dilemmas of Cooperation

Original Discussion Post due by *Friday (Sept 11)* and response *Sunday (Sept 13)* at 11:55 pm

*September 14 – 20

Friday, Sept 18: Mandatory In-class Meeting

(Kernohan 53-71) Chapter 4: Calculating Consequences and Utilitarian Reasoning

Original Discussion Post due by Friday (Sept 18), response Sunday (Sept 20) at 11:55 pm

September 21 – 27

(Kernohan 73-87) Chapter 5: Motivations, Duties, and Rights

Original Discussion Post due by Friday (Sept 25), response Sunday (Sept 27) at 11:55 pm

September 28 – October 4

(Kernohan 89-107) Chapter 6: Fairness and Distributive Justice

Original Discussion Post due by Friday (Oct 2) and response Sunday (Oct 4) at 11:55

October 5 – 11 MIDTERM

October 12 – 18

(Kernohan 109-127) Chapter 7: Virtue Ethics and Community Membership

Original Discussion Post due by Friday (Oct 16) and response Sunday (Oct 18) at 11:55

October 19 - 25

(Kernohan 129-136) Chapter 8: Feminism, Equality, and Care Ethics, pt. 1

Original Discussion Post due by Friday (Oct 23) and response Sunday (Oct 25) at 11:55

October 26 – November 1

(Kernohan 136-145) Chapter 8: Care Ethics, pt. 2

Original Discussion Post due by Friday (Oct 30) and response Sunday (Nov 1) at 11:55

***November 2 – 8**

Friday, November 6: Mandatory In-class Meeting

(Kernohan 147-161) Chapter 9: Moral Accountability

Original Discussion Post due by Friday (Nov 6) and response Sunday (Nov 8) at 11:55 pm

SECTION TWO: Case Studies

November 9 – 15: The Conduct of Business

(Canvas pdf) “Decency Means More Than ‘Always Low Prices’: A Comparison of Costco to Walmart’s Sam’s Club,” Wayne F. Cascio

Original Discussion Post due by Friday (Nov 13), response Sunday (Nov 15) at 11:55 pm

November 16 – 22: Business, The Individual, and Society

(Canvas pdf) “Business and Environmental Ethics,” W. Michael Hoffman

Original Discussion Post due by Friday (Nov 20), response Sunday (Nov 22) at 11:55 pm

SECTION THREE: Group Presentations & Final Exam

November 23 – 29 – Thanksgiving Break!

Individual Preparations for Group Presentations

Original Discussion Post due by Friday (Dec 4), response Sunday (Dec 6) at 11:55 pm

November 30 – December 6

Individual Preparations for Group Presentations

Original Discussion Post due by Friday (Dec 4), response Sunday (Dec 6) at 11:55 pm

***December 7 – 13**

Friday, December 11: Mandatory In-class Meeting

Merged into Group Work

See the Instruction Sheet in Canvas for assignments and due dates.

December 14 – 18

Final Group Version

Final Project due by Wednesday (Dec 16) and response post Friday (Dec 18) at 11:55 pm

Submit Group Assessment Form (Due by Dec 16 at 12pm)

Submit Reflection on One Group's Presentation (Due by Dec 18 at 12pm)