IB 343s BUSINESS ETHICS IN AN INTERCULTURAL FRAMEWORK
IES Abroad Milan - Summer Business

DESCRIPTION: Business ethics deals with the application of moral standards to business decisions. The majority of moral standards relate to personal behavior which not necessarily is based on laws and varies along with cultures. A common belief is that the primary purpose of a business is to earn a profit. We will consider how setting goals that also take into account other targets in terms of justice, equity, honesty, and other values can lead to higher overall achievements.

In this course we will address issues of ethics at the individual, corporate, and systemic level. We will investigate ethical questions affecting individual decisions, behaviors, and values. We will analyze ethical concerns related to corporations and their policies, decisions, and actions. We will also use a more systemic view and consider ethical questions posed by the social, political, legal, and economic systems within which companies and individuals operate. An intercultural analytical framework will inspire our analyses and debates.

CREDITS: 4 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 24 hours of in-class instruction, plus at least 15 hours of practicum hours

PREREQUISITES: One prior business-related course

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
- Lectures – Students are presented with content, motivated, and challenged to reflect on issues.
- Class or group discussions – Analysis of readings, videos, case studies exchange of ideas and cultural perspectives.
- Team debates – After analysis of a given topic in a team, different teams must debate their positions.
- Readings – Selection of materials in different areas of business ethics.
- Role plays – Class/group members must play a specific role in a simulation created by the instructor.
- Exercises – students will be requested to follow instructions to achieve a target specified by the instructor.
- Movies – Documentaries and movies related to business ethics in the perspectives outlined above.
- Real-world business project – Supervised practical application of course concepts to a brief developed by a local company.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
Class engagement – 10%
Assignments – 10%
Exam 1 – 20%
Exam 2 – 20%
Business project practicum – 40%

Class engagement:
Students will be expected to demonstrate thoughtful engagement in class by making relevant, evidence-supported, and original contributions that reflect knowledge gained through their reading and analysis. Active participation in discussions is expected, with students contributing meaningfully to the conversation and engaging with their peers. Students will also be expected to complete all assigned readings and any preparatory activities before each class.

Assignments:
The instructor will ask students to work on exercises related to topics covered in class. The exercises will be launched in class but will need to be completed and submitted afterwards. Students will receive clear instructions about both the structure and evaluation criteria for these activities. The final assignment will be a reflection on their practicum experience that asks students to connect their learning in the classroom to their project-based work.

Exam 1:
This exam will cover material from the first half of the course, including topics such as individual responsibility in business ethics, ethical decision-making frameworks, and the integration of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into corporate strategies. The exam will be a combination of short-answer and case study analysis questions.

Exam 2:
This exam will assess students' comprehensive understanding of the course material, focusing on ethical decision-making in global business contexts, corporate governance, sustainability, and emerging ethical challenges like the circular economy and social media. The exam will include a mix of case studies, essay questions, and applied scenarios where students must evaluate corporate actions through an ethical lens.

Business Project Practicum
The group-based business project practicum will evaluate students' abilities to address real-world ethical challenges and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, while also allowing them to gain practical business experience. This practicum will be launched at the end of week 2 in collaboration with a local company that is committed to improving its ethical business practices or expanding its CSR initiatives. Students will be grouped into teams of 4-5 and tasked with analyzing a specific ethical or CSR-related challenge proposed by the company. Students will be expected to evaluate the current strategies employed by the

company, identify areas for improvement, and propose actionable solutions based on course concepts. They will provide the company with a detailed, feasible plan that demonstrates how ethical principles can be integrated into business operations and decision-making.

Students will dedicate approximately 15 hours outside of class to completing this practicum. The project will be structured as follows:

- *Initial Meeting*: Students will meet with representatives from the company to understand the problem, collect data, and ask questions. There will be a company presentation that includes key information regarding the company culture and strategic aims, as well as a question-and-answer session.
- *Research and Analysis*: Groups will analyze the ethical or CSR issue, drawing on theoretical frameworks from the course. Based on their findings, students will create a strategic proposal outlining ethical solutions or CSR improvements.
- *Deliverable*: At the end of the project, each group will present their findings and recommendations to both the company and the instructor.
- *Evaluation*: The project will be evaluated on two levels: the company will assess the feasibility, creativity, and practicality of the proposed solutions, while the instructor will evaluate the application of course concepts, the quality of analysis, teamwork, and presentation skills. This dual evaluation ensures students receive both academic feedback and real-world insight into how their work is perceived in a professional context. Both the company and the instructor will assess the projects using rubrics available to students on Moodle in advance. Students will have the opportunity to participate in a peer review for this project work.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Identify and state issues concerning business ethics and relate them to basic ethical theories
- Describe the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility and the stakeholder's approach and assess the role of CSR and sustainability in global business
- Outline and critically analyze the main issues arising in managing business ethics in a global context
- Apply the framework of ethical decision-making to complex business issues
- Examine the influence of leadership and corporate culture on business ethics
- Formulate, analyze, and defend decisions in ethical terms when confronted with ethical issues and problems in business

- Develop ethical solutions to global business issues and actionable steps for into integrating them into business operations and decision-making

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Class attendance is compulsory. Unexcused absences will be subject to a 5% (5 points) reduction in final grade per missed class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:
Students are expected to abide by the IES Abroad Code of Academic Integrity. All work submitted by a student for academic credit should constitute the student's own original work. Any work submitted for academic credit may be subject to review by a textual similarity detection service for the detection of plagiarism and AI usage.

CONTENTS:

Session	Content	In class discussion	Home Assignments to prepare before class

Week 1 **Session 1** JUN 3 (TUE) 9:00am- 11:30pm	**Introduction & Business Ethics** • The objectives, methodology, content and organization of the work are presented in detail • Discussion: Business Ethics: Oxymoron or Good Business? Why it's important? • Individual vs corporate ethics **Individual Responsibility & Philosophies of Ethics** • Exercise: Peter Green's first day (ethical decision-making) • Philosophical Bases of Ethics and Ethical Dilemmas **Corporate Responsibility & Ethics in Organizations** • Can corporations be "ethical"? How do moral notions apply to corporations? • Why businesses should act ethically, stakeholder relationships, governance	• Slides • Matthews (1991) "Peter Green's First Day" • Malden Mills and J&J dilemmas • McCoy B. H. (1997), "The parable of the Sadhu"	• Crane et al. (2019), Business Ethics – Chapter 1 (up to page 12 excluding boxes) • Crane et al. (2019), Business Ethics – Chapter 3 p- 93-109 excluding boxes)

Week 1 **Session 2** JUN 5 (THU) 9:00am- 11:30pm	**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) – Strategy & Challenges** • What is CSR? • Integrating CSR into Corporate Strategy • Is CSR just “greenwashing”? Exercise: Socio-economic analysis relating to a specific stakeholder **Ethical Decision Making** • Models for ethical decision making in business • Normative considerations in ethical choices • Practical applications of ethical frameworks in business • Managing and Reporting on Business Ethics	• Slides • TED TALK Michael Porter: Why business can be good at solving social problems	• Molteni, Pedrini (2010) “In search of socio-economic syntheses” • Crane et al. (2019), Business Ethics - Chapter 5 (p. 199-203)
Week 2 **Session 1** JUN 9 (MON) 9:00am- 10:30pm	**Organizational Culture and Global Ethical Issues – Part 1** • Defining corporate culture, leaders’ roles, and cross-cultural influences • Exercise: Analyze global corporate culture and its ethical dimensions • Globalization, values, and ethical challenges faced by multinational corporations	• Slides • Crane et al. (2019), Business Ethics - Chapter. 1 (p. 17-28)	• Hofstede (ed., 1996), Introduction (p. 3-14)
Week 2 **Session 2** JUN 11 (WED)	**Visit to GEICO**		

9:00am- 10:30pm			
Week 3 **Session 1** JUN 16 (MON) 9:00am- 10:30pm	**Sustainability & Corporate Ethics** • Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility • The link between ethical decision-making and sustainability practices • Exercise: Outline a sustainability plan using M. Porter's value chain model • How the supply chain and business models can be aligned with ethical principles **Ethics in Finance** • Analysis of ethical challenges in the financial world • What are the ethical concerns in modern finance? **Circular Economy** • Circular Economy: Definition and examples of successful circular economy projects	• Slides • Video on the role of sustainability manager: Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship and Doughty Centre for Corporate Responsibility Cranfield School of Management • The bright side of waste | Giulio Bonazzi | TEDxMarrakesh (in class)	• Crane et al. (2019), Business Ethics- Chapter 6 (p. 262-270)

Week 3 Session 2 JUN 19 (THU) 9:00am-10:30pm	**Social Media, Ethics, and Societal Impact** • Psychological, social, and ethical implications of social media in business • Discussion on the role of social media in shaping societal values • Project Check-in **Fighting Poverty & Inequality** • Do businesses have a moral responsibility to address global poverty and inequality? • Discussion: Case study – “Nurturing a Deal” and possible strategies for addressing inequality	• Slides • Excerpts from The social dilemma (Netflix) • Case: Nurturing a deal	• Crane et al. (2019), Business Ethics- Chapter 8 (p. 361-373 excluding boxes)
Week 4 Session 1 JUN 24 (TU) 9:00am-10:30am	**Final Exam**		
Week 4 Session 2 JUN 26 (THU) 9:00am-10:00am	**Presentation of Business Project**		

TEXTBOOK

Crane A., D. Matten, S. Glozer, and L. Spence. *Business Ethics. Managing Corporate Citizenship and Sustainability in the Age of Globalization (Fifth Edition).* Oxford University Press, 2019.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Hofstede, G. "Dimensionalizing Cultures: The Hofstede Model in Context." In *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture, 2*(1).(2011) https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014.
- Molteni, Pedrini. "In search of socio-economic syntheses." In *Journal of Management Development*, 2010.

MOVIES

- *The Social Dilemma:* available on Netflix