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Professional Ethics

This course gives students a solid understanding of the role ethics holds across the professions. It develops students' ability to evaluate ethical issues with reason and logic, and it gives them the tools they need to resolve ethical dilemmas that they will encounter during their careers. Employers today are actively looking for employees with these skills.

An introduction to the philosophies that have informed ethical reasoning since antiquity helps students to realize that thinking through ageless questions such as "what is justice?" and "what does being an ethical person really mean?" is the first step to discovering what they value and how they can use ethics to guide them in their careers. Students then explore the qualities that characterize an ethical professional.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR THE COURSE

1. Display understanding of ethical concepts that form the basis of ethics in the industry
2. Identify the characteristics of an ethical professional
3. Display understanding of an ethical decision-making framework
4. Evaluate ethical dilemmas and propose ethical solutions
5. Identify ways that organizational cultures differ
6. Characterize the relationship between organizational culture and ethics
7. Display understanding of the ethical challenges employees face
8. Describe some of the ethical situations managers face
9. Evaluate specific ways managers can inspire and uphold ethical conduct in the workplace
10. Display understanding of the ethical challenges and opportunities of the digital realm
11. Identify and explain some of the ways the US federal government regulates business for ethics and legal compliance
12. Explain how the seven minimum requirements of the US Federal Sentencing Guidelines relate to common principles in business ethics
13. List and compare some of the ethical issues involved in setting up or doing business abroad
14. Evaluate some of the ethical questions that arise in an increasingly global marketplace
15. Define *marketing* and list its main elements
16. Describe and explain the ethical issues involved in marketing

CULMINATING PROJECT DESCRIPTION

For their culminating project, students conduct research to learn about the ethical issues facing their industry today. From these, they choose one that they feel is important to address. The driving question for the culminating project is, "What is a serious ethical issue currently facing our industry?" Students form teams of three to focus their research on their particular issue. They use what they have learned in this course, including a decision-making framework, to consider the implications of this issue and possible solutions. Before an invited audience of industry professionals, school personnel, classmates, and family, they present their findings and make their case for resolving the issue in either a panel presentation or an ethics bowl.

Project Components:

Over the course of this project, students conduct research in order to choose an ethical issue that they want to address in their industry. Their work includes:

1. Filling in an organizer with the results of their research
2. Taking notes in a guide as the group gathers information on their issue
3. Working together to use an ethical decision-making framework to come up with solutions to their issue
4. Writing a rough draft of a research report that undergoes peer review
5. Writing a final draft of the research report
6. Writing speaker notes to help them with their presentation
7. Participating in a panel presentation or an ethics bowl

CULMINATING PROJECT ASSESSMENT

There are three main assessments for the project:

1. A research report, assessed using a rubric
2. A presentation, assessed using a rubric
3. A critique of personal and team contributions to the project, assessed using assessment criteria