

# BUSINESS ETHICS

PHL 3200 | Spr 2020 | 4 Credits  
MWF 9:20 – 10:25 PM  
Dunham 201  
Dr. Joel Jupp | [jjupp@aurora.edu](mailto:jjupp@aurora.edu)

## Course Catalog Description

This course is a study of the ethical principles that apply to business practices and goals. In addition to an examination of the moral theory and values behind a free market, this course examines a variety of ethically-charged issues, such as employer/employee rights and responsibilities, privacy in the workplace, whistle-blowing, corporate responsibilities, and advertising practices. Such issues are examined and critiqued in the light of the standpoints offered by different ethical systems and principles.

## Course Objectives

With an emphasis upon philosophy and its impact upon business, this course will study theoretical frameworks and ethical dilemmas, for the betterment of business and society. Beginning with philosophy and then applying theory to practice, this blended approach will demonstrate how business philosophy matters in the real world. Each week will focus on different aspects of business ethics, such as responsibility, fair pay, advertising, environmental care, and so forth. By the end of the course, students will be able to do:

1. Distinguish between different kinds of ethical approaches.
2. Summarize various philosophical contributions to business practice.
3. Analyze ethical theories for strengths and weaknesses.
4. Apply classic philosophical concepts to a modern business context.
5. Determine assumptions and values of businesses and consumers.
6. Solve ethical dilemmas by applying theoretical frameworks, personal intuition, and teamwork.
7. Propose practical solutions to complex business ethical concerns.

## Required Texts

Mackey & Sisodia, *Conscious Capitalism*

Epictetus, *Handbook* (free via Moodle)

Plato, *The Republic* (free via Moodle; also available as an e-book or audiobook\*)

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*

Mill, *Utilitarianism*

Marx, *Manifesto* (free via Moodle)

Additional articles available on Moodle

\*Optional, but recommended: <https://www.audible.com/pd/Platos-Republic-Audiobook/B01CO38QBA>

## ASSESSMENT

A = 90%-100% | B = 80%-89.99% | C = 70%-79.99% | D = 60%-69.99% | F = below 60%

Letter grades in this course are assigned as described by Aurora University's Undergraduate Catalog:

- A (4 quality points per semester hour) Denotes performance that consistently exceeds expectations and demonstrates comprehensive understanding of the subject.
- B (3 quality points per semester hour) Denotes performance that meets and at times exceeds expectations and indicates good preparation in the subject.
- C (2 quality points per semester hour) Denotes performance that meets expectations and demonstrates adequate preparation in the subject.

- D (1 quality point per semester hour) Denotes performance that is inadequate or inconsistently meets expectations and makes it inadvisable to proceed further in the subject without additional work.
- F (0 quality points per semester hour) Failure. Denotes performance that consistently fails to meet expectations.

Your grade for this course will consist of the following items:

Graded Item	Percentage
Participation/ Attentiveness	10%
Reflection Journal	15%
Case Studies / Quizzes	15%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Midterm Exam	15%
Group Presentation	10%
Research Summary	5%
Final Exam (incl. Big Picture Essay)	20%

**Participation.** Students are expected not only to be physically present, but mentally present. Points will be deducted for no verbal engagement, general inattentiveness (e.g., texting, ear buds, etc.), late arrivals, and other such actions that distract from learning. Plan on participating in class discussions, as that will improve the overall experience for everyone. (To assist with your participation grade, make sure that your Moodle profile includes your photo, so I can learn your name faster. This will help me remember your contributions to class discussions.)

**Reflection Journal.** Students will regularly write in order to engage with new material, to summarize readings, and to process class discussions. These exercises count for a significant part of the grade, so work diligently and keep these notes organized. If necessary, you may also be asked at random to submit a copy (i.e., a digital photo) of what you have written. At the end of the course, you will (1) complete a **checklist** of which ones you have written, (2) submit a **digital copy** of the entire journal (scans or photos), and (3) select **5 “highlighted” entries** of your best work – and **these should be typed**. To avoid heartache over a lost journal, save your work along the way; if handwriting, you can take photos/scans of your journal throughout the semester.

Tips for success:

- “Journal” does not imply less effort; college-level work (at the 300-level) is expected.
- Read *Conscious Capitalism*, as entries can also include reflections on that reading.
- Write down the prompt in case you run out of time or need to finish later.
- If absent, ask a fellow student for the prompt that you missed.
- Remember to add the checklist at the beginning of your journal!
- By the end of the semester, your final journal will be somewhere around 4000 words, or a 16-page paper, so it should be thought of as a “paper in progress” that you slowly write throughout the semester.
- **TURN IN BEFORE GROUP PRESENTATIONS START.**

**Case Studies / Quizzes.** Assessment will involve in-class case studies and online activities that test your reading comprehension and/or challenge you to dig deeper. The instructor reserves the right to add additional case studies and to adjust the dates of these, as needed.

**Annotated Bibliography.** Find 10 reputable sources (e.g., peer-reviewed journals) that you will use for your group presentation. Read these sources so that you have a general overview of the content. Note: For the benefit of your group, it is best to use different sources from your other group members, so you have more resources to work with. For each source, provide an accurate **citation** (APA or MLA) as well as a thoughtful, 1-2 paragraph **summary**.

**Group Presentation: Ethical Dilemma.** Student groups will present an extended explanation, analysis, and engaging activity to the class. As a 300-level course, these presentations will be graded accordingly, so work is expected to be high-quality in every aspect of the presentation. Each group should have a person in charge of (1) organizing / note taking, (2) designing, (3) researching, (4) lead presenting, and/or (5) discussion leading; it is okay if some students speak more than others, but everyone should present something during the actual presentation.

For this project, select & investigate a recent ethical dilemma in business. Using a news story, explain the nuances of the ethical controversy to the class.

- (1) **Present the issue** (who, what, when, where, why) – introducing the “case study” to the class. (Keep in mind this should not be a case study already covered in class.) Everyone in the group should present a part of the presentation.
- (2) **Introduce possible solutions** – i.e., various ways of addressing the dilemma. In other words, fairly present different approaches, without yet sharing which one you think is the best (which you’ll do in step 4).
- (3) **Lead a class discussion** to gather ideas and feedback. Include an engaging activity or instructional tool (e.g., handout, graphs, diagrams, news clippings, etc.) to help students understand the issue as best as possible. Go beyond the simple/obvious, and ask challenging questions to help your hearers think through the issue.
- (4) **Share your group’s suggested solution**, which you decided prior to your presentation time. Explain why you chose that solution by using content from class sessions and textbook readings. Be specific and detailed.

(Note: To ensure a good group grade, also have a backup person who can fill in each part in case of any emergencies; not showing up for your presentation can result in a 10-100% reduction of your group grade – depending on the situation – according to peer feedback and instructor discretion. To avoid this subjective element, be sure to be present and contribute during your group presentation.)

**Research Summary.** Each member of group must submit a 1000-word essay of your personal research and a detailed summary of your contributions to the group. Organize the summary into two parts: (1) what you researched and (2) how you helped the group. This assignment is an opportunity to defend your work and offer insight into your group’s dynamics.

**Big Picture Essay.** This essay will be written in class. The activity is designed to help you process your learning and to summarize the “big picture” takeaways from the course. Be specific and detailed for full credit. Students receive credit for completing this essay, and the essay is also used when curving final grades, so it is an important part of the grade.

**Midterm and Final Exam.** Exams will cover both the readings and class lectures. Paying attention in class and completing the readings will be your best way to prepare. Class lectures are not merely a review of the readings, so meticulous lecture notes will help you with the exams. Only handwritten or printed notes are allowed during the exams.

### **AURORA UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT**

Aurora University is an inclusive community dedicated to the transformative power of learning. As a teaching-centered institution, we encourage undergraduate and graduate students to discover what it takes to build meaningful and examined lives. Our singular goal is to empower our students to achieve lasting personal and professional success.

### **AURORA UNIVERSITY CORE VALUES**

**Integrity:** Aurora University adheres to the highest standards of integrity in every aspect of institutional practice and operation. Through this proven dedication to honesty, fairness, and ethical conduct, we lead by example and inspire our students to do the same.

**Citizenship:** Aurora University exercises the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in an inclusive educational community, founded upon the principles of mutual respect and open discourse. We live within our means and manage our resources wisely and responsibly, while sustaining an environment that fosters teamwork and promotes services to others. We serve the needs of the Fox River Valley, McHenry County (Illinois), Walworth County (Wisconsin), and online learners by offering myriad educational and cultural opportunities to our students and the community-at-large.

**Continuous Learning:** Aurora University works and lives as a non-profit organization dedicated to continuous learning. We help students achieve their full potential.

**Excellence:** Aurora University pursues excellence by embracing quality as a way of community life.

## **AURORA UNIVERSITY LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Effective Communication - Students will communicate clearly and offer well-supported arguments in their writing and speaking.

Critical Thinking - Students will demonstrate skills of analysis, problem solving, and application.

## **AURORA UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Creative Thinking - Students will demonstrate original or imaginative ways of thinking about, reacting to, or working in the fine, performing, or literary arts.

Discovery and Reflection - Students will demonstrate how discovery and reflection in regard to the world have affected how they view their sense of purpose.

Quantitative Reasoning - Students will evaluate and utilize quantitative evidence, methods, and models effectively

Intercultural Knowledge - Students will demonstrate an understanding of cultural differences and human diversity.

Social Scientific Inquiry and Analysis - Students will utilize scientific principles, models, or theories to promote and demonstrate understanding of social phenomena.

Scientific Reasoning - Students will utilize scientific principles, models, or theories to promote and demonstrate understanding of natural or physical phenomena.

## **ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

### **Academic Support Center**

The ASC offers free professional writing, math, and science tutoring for specific courses to all registered AU students, at all levels and locations. The instruction provided is intended to enhance classroom learning. The support is provided through recitations, group and individual tutoring, and drop-in study sessions. Students are encouraged to schedule appointments to ensure a tutor is available to meet their learning needs. Located in Phillips Library, the office is open six days a week and students can contact the ASC via the web at <http://aurora.edu/asc> or by calling (630-844-5520).

### **Phillips Library**

The library is the premier destination for scholarly, credible sources. High quality sources increase the likelihood of producing a high quality paper. Scholarly and popular journals as well as ebooks can be located through the library website ([aurora.edu/library](http://aurora.edu/library)). Librarians are a valuable resource; please do not hesitate to ask a librarian (<http://aurora.libanswers.com/>) for assistance with any research questions. They are available by chat, text, phone or in person by walk-in or appointment.

## **ACADEMIC REGULATIONS\***

### **Code of Academic Integrity**

Aurora University's core values include integrity and ethical behavior. A community of learners, Aurora University students and faculty share responsibility for academic honesty and integrity. The University expects students to do their own academic work. In addition, it expects active participation and equitable contributions of students involved in group assignments. Aurora University's Code of Academic Integrity (henceforth, the Code) prohibits the following dishonest and unethical behaviors, regardless of intent.

- **Cheating.** Cheating is obtaining, using or attempting to use unauthorized materials or information (for example; notes, texts, or study aids) or help from another person (for example looking at another student's test paper, or talking with him/her during an exam), in any work submitted for evaluation for academic credit. This includes exams, quizzes, laboratory assignments, papers and/or other assignments. Other examples include altering a graded work after it has been returned, then submitting the work for re-grading; or submitting identical or highly similar papers for credit in more than one course without prior permission from the course instructors.
- **Fabrication.** Fabrication is unauthorized falsification, invention or copying of data, falsification of information, citations, or bibliographic references in any academic course work (for example, falsifying references in a paper); altering, forging, or falsifying any academic record or other University document.
- **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is representing someone else's work (including their words and ideas) as one's own or providing materials for such a representation, (for example, submitting a paper or other work that is in whole or part the work of another, failing to cite references, presenting material verbatim or paraphrased that is not acknowledged and cited).
- **Obtaining an Unfair Advantage.** This is (a) stealing, reproducing, circulating or otherwise gaining access to examination materials before the time authorized by the instructor; (b) stealing, destroying, defacing, or concealing library materials with the purpose of depriving others of their use; (c) intentionally obstructing or interfering with another student's academic work; or (d) otherwise undertaking activity with the purpose of creating or obtaining an unfair academic advantage over other students' academic work.
- **Unauthorized Access to computerized records or systems.** This is unauthorized review of computerized academic or administrative records or systems; viewing or altering computer records; modifying computer programs or systems; releasing or dispensing information gained via unauthorized access; or interfering with the use or availability of computer systems of information.
- **Facilitating academic dishonesty.** This is helping or attempting to assist another commit an act of academic dishonesty in violation of this Code (for example, allowing another to copy from one's test or allowing others to use or represent one's work as their own).

Students are advised to consult the [University's Code of Academic Integrity](https://aurora.edu/academics/resources/code.html#.WZTQelGQzIU) at <https://aurora.edu/academics/resources/code.html#.WZTQelGQzIU> to review the consequences of violating these expectations, consequences which will be enforced within this course. In addition, if a student is found guilty of violating any of the above provisions, the student will receive a sanction ranging from an F on the assignment in question, to an F in the course.

### **Classroom Conduct Policy**

Students enrolled in AU courses have the right to learn in an environment where all individuals are treated equitably and with respect. Behaviors at a physical campus or in an online learning classroom, or at an internship/clinical placement, that interfere with the learning experience are not permitted. Disruptive or disrespectful behaviors will be referred to the School Dean for consideration of further action, up to and including dismissal from the institution in serious instances.

### **Disability Statement**

Aurora University is committed to providing equal access for students with documented disabilities. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) students must contact the AU Disability Resource Office. Visit their website at

<http://www.aurora.edu/dro> in order to initiate a request for accommodations. More information can be obtained by emailing [disabilityresources@aurora.edu](mailto:disabilityresources@aurora.edu).

### **Electronic Devices**

Students are asked to limit use as to avoid disturbing the learning environment. The instructor reserves the right to further limit use if, in their opinion it is interfering with the orderly functioning of the class. Please refer to the specific policy mandated by your instructor.

### **Final Exam**

All classes are required to meet during the assigned final examination period at the end of the semester as this is considered to be part of the required meeting time for the course. Alternative testing during finals week is provided through the Academic Support Center for students who receive such accommodations through the Disability Resource Office and for students who receive permission to take the exam after the assigned final examination period due to illness or other emergency.

*\* Please refer to the Aurora University Catalog for additional information regarding academic regulations and requirements.*

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Students are encouraged to be aware of measures that Aurora University has taken to create a safe learning environment, as well as their own role in emergency preparedness efforts. All classrooms and labs have deadbolt locks installed in entry doors, and university buildings can be placed into a lockdown status. AU has also installed evacuation maps along with emergency response guides in each classroom and building on campus. Maps include the floor plan of that particular building floor; building name and address; fire evacuation routes; and severe weather safety zones. To help prepare for emergency situations, please make sure to review these maps and guides regularly. As the university puts in place other safety procedures, the campus community will be notified.

Aurora University follows the **Run, Hide, Fight protocol** in the event of an active shooter. Run, Hide, Fight is the leading protocol followed across college campuses and is endorsed by both local and federal law enforcement agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security. Run, Hide, Fight provides the campus community with clear, actionable steps:

**RUN** - If there is a clear, accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate.

- Have an escape route and plan in mind.
- Evacuate regardless of whether others agree to follow.
- Leave your belongings behind.
- Help others escape, if possible.
- Follow the instructions of any police officers.

**HIDE** - If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide

- Your hiding place should...
  - Be out view.
  - Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction (Example – an office with a closed and locked door, behind a file cabinet, or a copier).
  - Not trap you, or restrict your options for movement (for a fast escape).
- You should...
  - Silence your cell phone (including vibrate mode) and remain quiet.
  - Lock and barricade the door.
  - Turn off the lights in the room and remain calm and quiet.

**FIGHT** - As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the shooter.

- You should...
  - Act as aggressively as possible against armed intruder. Yell and scream.
  - Improvise weapons or throw items at the armed intruder

- Commit to your actions . . . your life depends on it.

At Aurora University, everyone is responsible for creating a safe environment, so it is important for students to report suspicious or threatening objects, people, or conditions to Campus Public Safety. In emergency situations call 630-844-5450 or 911 or x555 (if calling from on campus); in non-emergency situations call 630-844-6140 or x6140 (if calling from on campus).

In the event of campus classes or offices being closed due to inclement weather, or an emergency situation affecting the campus, AU has an emergency alert notification system that will send important messages through text, email, and the university's social media channels. All current students are automatically enrolled to receive both text and email messages. Please make sure to keep your phone number and contact information updated in WebAdvisor, as well as allow your phone to receive short code messages.

If you do not have text messaging enabled on your cellular phone, you can check the AU website homepage and social media channels to see if there is an emergency announcement.

### **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY**

Aurora University does not tolerate sexual misconduct against students, staff, faculty, or visitors, in any form, including but not limited to: sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating/domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault. The University also provides assistance for community members reporting sexual misconduct. For additional information, including detailed definitions, reporting options, and support resources, please see AU's Sexual Misconduct website at <https://aurora.edu/sexual-misconduct/>.

The University has designated the following individual to enforce the sexual misconduct policy and to educate the community regarding reporting and prevention:

Title IX Coordinator: Mary Weis, VP for Human Resources, [mweis@aurora.edu](mailto:mweis@aurora.edu)  
630-844-3866, Eckhart Hall 104B

**Confidential on-campus support and resources are provided by the following offices:**

Counseling and Psychological Services, Dr. Marcie Wiseman, [mwiseman@aurora.edu](mailto:mwiseman@aurora.edu), 630-844-4932,  
Founders Annex, 1317 Marseillaise Place

Health Services, Cheryl Block, [cblock@aurora.edu](mailto:cblock@aurora.edu), 630-844-5434, Wellness Center, 1317 Marseillaise  
Place

University Chaplain, Mark Woolfington, [mwoolfington@aurora.edu](mailto:mwoolfington@aurora.edu), 630-844-6175, 430 S. Evanslawn

## COURSE SCHEDULE

*Changes can be made, if helpful for instruction. Check with instructor if absent.  
Sample topics can carry over to subsequent weeks, and some topics will recur in later weeks.*

### UNIT 1: ETHICAL THEORY

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
1/6	Review Syllabus, Online Quiz	Syllabus, Self-introduction, Initial Definitions (Ethics, Business, etc.), In-class documentary
1/8	Update Moodle bio & Get textbooks	
1/10	Mackey, ch. 1 & 2; <i>The Corporation</i>	

WEEK 2: AGENCY		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
1/13	Epictetus, #1-15	Stoicism, Free Will, Determinism, Individual Responsibility, Corporate Agency
1/15	Epictetus, #16-30	
1/17	Epictetus, #31-50	

WEEK 3: PERSPECTIVES		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
1/20	<b>NO CLASS (MLK Day)</b>	Economic Theories, Ethical Theories, Absolutism vs. Relativism, Ethics vs. Morality
1/22	<i>Economic Theories</i> , Ch. 1 (pp. 1-51)	
1/24	<i>The Corporation</i> (in class)	

WEEK 4: CASE STUDY		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
1/27	<i>The Corporation</i> (in class)	Finish documentary; meet with group to discuss; complete group case study; read ahead in Plato
1/29	Group Work / Read ahead!	
1/31	<b>Moodle:</b> Case Study / Quiz	

WEEK 5: VIRTUE & PLATO		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
2/3	Plato, Book 1	Justice, Ideals, The "Good," Business & State, Traits
2/5	Plato, Book 2	
2/7	Aristotle, Book 1 & 2	

WEEK 6: VIRTUE & ARISTOTLE		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
2/10	Aristotle, Book 3	Aristotle, Balance, Habit, Practice
2/12	Aristotle, Book 4	
2/14	Aristotle, Book 5 (Quiz?)	

WEEK 7: DUTY & RIGHTS		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
2/17	Moodle Article	Business Duties, Consumer Rights, Employee Rights, Contracts, Obligation, Supererogation
2/19	Moodle Article	
2/21	Kant, Section 1	

WEEK 8: MISSION & METHODS		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
2/24	Kant, Section 2	Deontology, Categorical Imperative, Business Goals, Ends & Means, Mission, Purpose
2/26	Kant, Section 3	
2/28	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	

<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
3/2	SPRING BREAK	
3/4	SPRING BREAK	
3/6	SPRING BREAK	

<b>WEEK 9: PROFIT &amp; EFFECTS</b>		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
3/9	Mill, Ch. 1 & 2	Consequentialism, Utilitarianism, Sales/Trade, Social Impact, Copyright/Trademark
3/11	Mill, Ch. 3 & 4	
3/13	Mill, Ch. 5	

## UNIT 2: APPLIED ETHICS

<b>WEEK 10: MARKETS</b>		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
3/16	"Nawabdin Electrician" (Moodle)	Legality, Market Failure Approach, Government, Monopoly, Free Market, Fair Transactions
3/18	Rawls, "Justice as Fairness"	
3/20	Choptiany, "Critique of John Rawls"	

<b>WEEK 11: LABOR</b>		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
3/23	Marx, <i>Communist Manifesto</i> (1st half)	Fairness, Unionization, Worker Rights, Workplace Conditions, Strikes, Wages, Unemployment
3/25	Marx, <i>Communist Manifesto</i> (2nd half)	
3/27	Case Study / Quiz	

<b>WEEK 12: RHETORIC</b>		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
3/30	<i>Conscious Capitalism</i> , Part One	Ethos/Pathos/Logos, Advertising, Persuasion, Honesty/Transparency, Codes of Conduct
4/1	<i>Conscious Capitalism</i> , Part Two	
4/3	<i>Conscious Capitalism</i> , Part Three	

<b>WEEK 13: SOCIAL ISSUES</b>		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
4/6	<i>Conscious Capitalism</i> , Part Four	Political Involvement, Lobbying, "Rent-Seeking," Healthcare, Education, etc.
4/8	Moodle Article / Group Planning	
4/10	<b>NO CLASS</b> (Easter Break)	

<b>WEEK 14: GLOBAL ISSUES</b>		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
4/13	Moodle Article / finalize presentation	Environment, Global Warming, Poverty, Human Rights, Sweatshops, Cultural Customs, etc.
4/15	<b>Reflection Journals Due</b>	
4/17	<b>GROUP PRESENTATIONS</b>	

<b>WEEK 15: PRESENTATIONS</b>		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
4/20	GROUP PRESENTATIONS	
4/22	GROUP PRESENTATIONS	
4/24	GROUP PRESENTATIONS	

<b>WEEK 16: FINAL EXAM</b>		
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Assignments</i>	<i>Topics</i>
4/27-5/2	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	<b>CHECK SCHEDULE</b>