

STRING THEORY

S C H O O L O F D E S I G N

Bus 245.I4 Business Ethics

Fall 2025

Total Hours: 45

Quarter Credits: 4.5

Faculty Name: F. Morgan Smyrl	Office Hours: Wednesday 12:30-2:00 PM, Thursday 8-11AM, Friday 12:30-2:00 PM (or by appointment)
Email: msmyrl@stringtheorieschools.org Room 706	Class Hours: See Academia for rotating 3rd block schedule

Course Description: Organizations have learned that the costs of unethical actions can be high. Consequences include legal ramifications, adverse brand images and tarnished corporate reputations. This course addresses business ethics through frameworks of moral dilemma in the context of business practice. Eminent philosophers and notable leaders of business start-ups are studied to establish foundations of grounded ethics while students examine how organizations can establish and build ethical cultures.

Prerequisites: Ent 145.E3 *Contemporary Social Problems / Social Entrepreneurship* or permission from instructor

IDeATE Program Educational Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes Alignment:

This course is designed to help students achieve the following IDeATE Program Educational Objectives:

- Think critically and creatively
- Apply knowledge to design challenges
- Navigate diverse landscapes

Completion of this course will yield the following student IDeATE Program Student Learning Outcomes:

- Construct core knowledge
- Work wicked problems
- Plan strategically

Course Learning Goals: The course is designed around the following learning goals. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Achieve literacy with the evolution of ethical thought and philosophical inquiry and how these ideas impact society.

- Gain fluency with contemporary applications of ethics to innovation in our economy.
- Think critically to craft potential strategic solutions to wicked ethical problems facing the fields of arts, design, technology, and entrepreneurship.

IDeATE Competencies and Mastery Credits:

Competencies	Course Specific Mastery Credits
Inquiry	Research: Selecting sources that support answering a particular research question with relevant, credible information that distinguishes between fact and opinion Identifying how a source is situated within the world of its origin (time period, location, socio-political climate, cultural conditions, etc.) and explaining how the perspectives within the source shape and/or are shaped by those conditions.
Design	Empathy: Engage the ability to understand and share the feelings of others when considering the impact of business on society.
Critical Thinking	Logic and Reasoning: Using logic and reasoning to justify a response or explain a phenomenon
Core Knowledge	Core Humanities, Entrepreneurship, and Technology
Collaboration	Dialogue: Communicating ideas and contributing to discussion through listening, questioning, connecting, and probing.
Communication	Storytelling: Sharing one’s unique truth and experience to move an audience
Engagement	Entrepreneurial and Growth Mindset: Grows skills and confidence to identify and make the most of opportunities, overcome and learn from setbacks, and succeed in a variety of settings, understanding that capacity can be developed through openness to growth, dedication, and hard work.

Course Materials:

Required Texts and Materials:

1. *Conscious Leadership* by John Mackey, Steve McIntosh, and Carter Phipps
2. *Applying Ethics* by Julie VanCamp

Suggested Resources:

1. The Building Blocks of Business Ethics
<https://michiganross.umich.edu/alumni/dividend/fall2015/building-blocks-business-ethics>

Mastery Grading System:

3.8 - 4.0 Exceeds Mastery	3.0 - 3.7 Mastery	2.0 - 2.9 Developing	1.0 - 1.9 Insufficient Evidence
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Whole number mastery grades (1 - 4) are recorded for each mastery credit aligned to each product, performance, or assessment, with points used to compute a synthesized mastery course grade for each student at the end of each quarter. Students must earn a mastery course grade of

2.0 or higher to receive credit for a course and evidence readiness for any future learning for which this course serves as a prerequisite in the IDeATE program.

Course Schedule (subject to change, with notice):

Week #	Topics/Experiences	Content	Products/Performances/ Assessments
Week 1	Essential Question: What makes a decision ethical?	Conscious Leadership: Chapter 1 - Put Purpose First Survey of Ethical Thought	Content Quiz 1 Socratic Seminar 1: Essential Question Case Study: Choose a target organization
Week 2	Empathy and Ethics	Conscious Leadership: Chapter 2 - Lead with Love Applying Ethics: Part 1 -Chapter: Moral Reasons	Content Quiz 2 Deliberate Practice: Empathetic Interviews
Week 3	The Role of Reason	Conscious Leadership: Chapter 3 - Always Act with Integrity Applying Ethics: Part 1 -Chapter: Good Reasoning	Content Quiz 3 Case Study: Organization Background Research
Week 4	Ethics in the Arts	Conscious Leadership: Chapter 4 - Find Win-Win Solutions Applying Ethics: Part 2 -Chapter: Sexual Morality	Socratic Seminar 2: How do ethos, pathos, and logos impact ethical decisions and inform personal integrity? Content Quiz 4 Case Study: Draft your interview questions
Week 5	Ethics in Innovation	Conscious Leadership: Chapter 5 - Innovate and Create Value Applying Ethics: Part 2 -Chapter: Genetic Engineering, Stem Cell Research, and Human Cloning	Content Quiz 5 Written Speech Critique and Analysis Case Study: Interview 1
Week 6	Ethics in Design	Conscious Leadership: Chapter 6 - Think Long Term Applying Ethics: Part 2 -Chapter: Animal Rights and Environmental Ethics	Content Quiz 6 Case Study: Interview 2
Week 7	Ethics in Entrepreneurship	Conscious Leadership: Chapter 7 - Constantly Evolve the Team Applying Ethics: Part 2 -Chapter: Discrimination	Content Quiz 7 Case Study: Draft Presentation
Week 8	Ethics in Technology	Conscious Leadership: Chapter 8 - Regularly Revitalize	Content Quiz 8 Case Study: Uplevel Presentation

Week #	Topics/Experiences	Content	Products/Performances/ Assessments
Week 9	Case Study Presentations	Conscious Leadership: Chapter 9 - Continuously Learn and Grow	Content Quiz 9 Case Study: Final Presentations
Week 10	Essential Question: What makes a decision ethical?	All course texts	Socratic Seminar 3: Essential Question Narrative Self-Reflection

Submission Dates:

SUBMISSION DATE	PRODUCT/PERFORMANCE/ASSESSMENT DUE
weekly on Fridays	Chapter quizzes
TBD Week 1	Socratic Seminar 1
TBD Week 1	Case Study Organization Proposal
TBD Week 3	Case Study Organization Background Research
TBD Week 4	Socratic Seminar 2
TBD Week 4	Case Study Interview Questions Draft
TBD Week 6	Case Study Interview Summaries
TBD Week 7	Case Study Presentation Outlines
TBD Week 8	Case Study Presentation Edits
TBD Week 9	Case Study Final Presentation
TBD Week 10	Socratic Seminar 3
TBD Week 10	Narrative Self-Reflection

IDeATE PROGRAM POLICIES:

Academic Integrity: IDeATE students and professors uphold academic integrity as one of our highest priorities, and the String Theory School of Design investigates any allegation of violations of academic integrity. Violations include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and other forms of academic misconduct. Students who believe they have been wrongly accused or sanctioned have a right to an appeals process.

Attendance Requirements:

Students are expected to attend all classes, and must notify professors if they are not able to attend class for any reason. It is the student's responsibility to inquire about experiences, content, and work missed due to that absence. For further information on the attendance policy, please consult the IDeATE Program catalog.

Course Change Policy: IDeATE program faculty reserve the right to make changes to the course during the quarter to best actualize course learning goals. Changes will be announced to individual classes and conveyed in writing in advance of the change.

Accessibility and Disability Accommodations: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations and services need to complete an Accessibility Form, along with documentation from a licensed medical professional with a diagnosis of disability (defined as an impairment and/or condition that substantially limits a major life activity for 6+ months). Temporary adjustments are available for individuals with short-term impairments, i.e., those due to accident or injury. Please see the String Theory School of Design IDeATE Program course catalog for more details.

Course Drops and Withdrawals: Enrolled students may drop a course through the end of Week 1, and may withdraw from a course through Week 7. Please be aware of the potential financial and academic implications of course drops and withdrawals. Please see the String Theory School of Design course catalog for more details. Once registered, it is your obligation to attend, drop, or withdraw. Dropping will remove the course from your transcript. Withdrawing will result in a “W” on a student’s transcript.

Commitment to Inclusive Practices: The String Theory School of Design welcomes individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, and promotes an inclusive and respectful environment that enriches the school community and the educational and employment experience of its members. To report an incident, sexual misconduct, discrimination or harassment based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, age, veteran status, or any other protected category or identity, please follow current guidance in the String Theory School of Design IDeATE Program course catalog.

Professor’s Welcome:

[add a note of welcome that creates a sense of belonging]

Course Specific Expectations:

[add a narrative paragraph or bulleted expectations no more than a half page in length]