

**BUS 4500 / Fall 2018**  
**Business Ethics and Sustainability**  
**CRN 44136: T, R: 8:00-9:15; Schneider 2000**

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**Required Resources:**

- Palmer, T.B. (2018). *Business Ethics and Sustainability*. (McGraw Hill Create book available in the bookstore only. ISBN= 9781309066980)

**What this course is about**

This course seeks to develop students' understanding of business ethics and sustainability. The goal is to provide students with a strong foundation to become the next generation of responsible business leaders when they leave WMU. Students will assess activities from different functional areas of business in the context of developing sustainable practices. Coverage includes concepts as they relate to a firm's social, environmental, and economic performance. Diverse viewpoints regarding opportunities available to business through sustainability will be explored in the context of alternative strategies for the firm.

Why pair ethics and sustainability? As we'll discover, sustainability means meeting the needs of the present without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to have their needs be met. From an ethics lens, is it possible to address the needs of future peoples when the needs of the vast majority of the world's present population are not being met? What exactly are the needs that must be met? Whose needs matter most? These are challenging, ethical, questions.

The primary objectives of the course are:

1. Develop a firm ethical foundation on which to make business decisions
2. Gain insight into the business rationale for sustainability
3. Explore the consequences of business decisions to all relevant stakeholders

The course also supports a learning goal and several outcomes of the BBA in the Haworth College of Business.

BBA Learning Goal #5: Students will understand ethical business practices

- a. Students will be able to define ethics
- b. Students will be able to recognize an ethical dilemma
- c. Students will be able to describe a framework for resolving an ethical dilemma
- d. Students will be able to define sustainability
- e. Students will be able to apply sustainability concepts to their academic major
- f. Students will be able to apply sustainability concepts to their personal lives

**Strategies to meet objectives**

**A. Exams (55%)**

The two exams will be comprised of multiple choice questions. Exam 1 (25%) tests only material discussed in part 1 of

the semester and exam 2 (30%) tests only material discussed in part 2 of the semester. The objectives tested by the exams include your recall, recognition and knowledge of important concepts and analytical techniques covered in the course.

A comprehensive final exam will be given during final exam week. The exam will include a combination of multiple choice questions and writing questions, including the application of class topics to contemporary global issues. The test will be a rigorous cross-examination of all material covered in BUS 4500. Not all students will be taking the comprehensive final. It will be taken by any student who misses, without advanced notice, either exam 1 or exam 2. The comprehensive final can also count as one required element of a substitution for service-learning (see below) for a small subset of students enrolled in class. The final exam cannot count for both a make-up exam and the service-learning substitution.

#### **B. Quizzes (10%)**

Ten percent of your course grade will be determined by unannounced quizzes. Six (6) quizzes will be administered throughout the semester. The quizzes will include a small number of multiple choice questions about material covered in recent classes. Students may drop their lowest quiz score. Your overall quiz grade, therefore, will be based on your five highest quiz scores. Quizzes may be given at the beginning of the class, during the middle of a class, or at the end of a class period.

#### **C. Contribution/Professionalism (10%)**

Ten percent of your final grade will be based upon your active contribution, either in-class or to online discussions. ***If you choose not to contribute, please don't expect to receive points for this component of your grade.***

There are four discussion boards available for posts on e-Learning. Three are devoted to news items about the three elements of sustainability: People (sustainability news associated with employees, diversity/inclusion, communities, etc.), planet (sustainability news associated with the natural environment), and profit (sustainability news about triple bottom lines, sustainability reporting, job creation, firm initiatives to help family incomes). The fourth board is devoted to news about ethics. Find articles, reports, websites, etc. that you think add to our class' understanding of these topics. Be sure to include a link to the article or website along with your opinion of what you found. You may also reply to the posts of others.

You can post a total of **three items** per week as long as one is an original post (i.e., you can't have three replies). Each online discussion post to any of the boards counts for one point, or tally. Replies to others' posts must be substantive. To get credit for a reply, you must go beyond comments like, "great post," or "I agree."

Discussion boards will be open for one week at a time. On Monday morning, the previous week's boards will close and your contribution tally will be updated. An identical set of four discussion boards will then be open for the next week. If you miss a week, you can make up for it by contributing in class. Contribution tallies are accrued during the semester and your grade will be awarded in two stages. At the first exam, I'll award half your grade (5%) based on the number of tallies you have achieved to date from both in-class and online contributions. The other half of your contribution grade will be awarded after the second exam based on the number of tallies accumulated from mid-term onward. This is done to balance out contribution over the entire semester.

A fifth discussion board will be devoted to in-class and outside speakers. These may include different Haworth speaker series as well as other sustainability presentations on campus or in the community. If you attend a speaker presentation, please report two things you learned from the talk. Because I will not be able to personally attend all the events, I will trust that if you make a post, you actually attended the event. This is, after all, a class about ethics.

Professionalism: Because this is a senior level course, it's reasonable for me to expect you to act professionally. I want you to remain engaged with what we are doing in class. Therefore, please put away all cell phones or other electronic devices that are not being used for note taking or our in-class polling. Your contribution/professionalism score will be reduced for lack of professionalism.

#### D. Service-Learning (20%)

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has!" *Margaret Mead*

Service-learning is an academically rigorous instructional method that incorporates meaningful community service into the curriculum. Focusing on critical, reflective thinking and civic responsibility, service-learning involves students in organized community service that addresses local needs, while developing their academic skills, respect for others, and commitment to the common good. Service-learning is **active learning** and is embraced in the university's strategic plan. It is different from community service because both the service provider (you) as well as the organization you are working with benefits from the relationship. Service-learning encourages students to see their world through a different lens.

Service-learning is a natural fit with BUS 4500. It will provide you with the opportunity to *experience* how organizational decisions impact stakeholders beyond those within traditional organizational boundaries. Therefore, by incorporating a service-learning component into this course, I hope to:

1. Help you develop your own perspective on social responsibility.
2. Increase your awareness of outcomes of organizational decisions on stakeholders other than stockholders.
3. Help you become socially responsible business leaders and citizens, who recognize the importance of the corporate sector taking a socially responsible perspective.

Each student will review and sign the "Guidelines and Conduct Expectations for Students in Service-Learning" form. This form is a contract between you and me and it will ensure you get the most out of your service-learning experience and helps ensure professionalism from our students toward our community partners. The form will be administered in class on September 4. Students who fail to attend that class will need to complete the online form found in the eLearning dropbox. It must be completed by September 9.



#### *Service-learning and SPuRS:*

Service-learning through BUS 4500 is a SPuRS-approved activity satisfying one item within the advanced level of the Leadership and Service pillar. The service-learning component of BUS 4500 requires a minimum of 15 hours outside of class, and it supports career readiness competencies such as: professionalism, work ethic, teamwork, and global and intercultural fluency as defined by the National Association of College and Employers (NACE). Satisfactory

completion of this requirement will be reported to the SPuRS program manager at the end of the term and updated to your SPuRS progress report manually.

Last semester, 240 of out 260 enrolled students completed nearly 3,600 hours of service to Kalamazoo and southwest Michigan through BUS 4500. Once again, it is expected that all students will complete a service-learning project. However, students who can document inflexible schedules (e.g., a letter from an employer, coach, email from an academic advisor) may substitute an alternative assignment AND a comprehensive final exam for service-learning. Requests must be submitted (along with all accompanying paperwork) and approved by September 16. I will meet with

you personally to discuss the alternative assignment, Aim2Flourish.

eLearning contains a full description of how service-learning will be implemented this semester. Click on the service-learning tab to find information about how to sign up, the expectations I have for how you conduct your service, and a rubric that is used to evaluate a brief reflection paper you will write following your experience.

**Steps in the Process:**

1. Identify your service partner and activity.
2. Complete your fifteen hours.
3. Write a reflection paper and submit it through the eLearning dropbox.

**After your experience:**

1. If you are uncertain how to apply your service (hence, learn), meet with me to talk about it.
2. Write about your experience. To make it easier for me to evaluate, you should **structure the paper using the following format:**
  - a. **Describe.** First, briefly (2 to 3 paragraphs) overview what you did. What activities were you involved with?
  - b. **Apply / Zoom in.** Using two clearly defined examples, relate the experiences you had to concepts from class. Be prepared to demonstrate how you learned something new about the focus of your application. I want to be able to see the **"value-added"** from your service-learning experience. For example, if your application is about corporate social responsibility, I need you to tell me something **new** that you learned about CSR. I want you to be very explicit about this in your writing. Strict applications of course topics without evidence of learning will reduce your grade.
  - c. **Reflect / Zoom out.** What did you learn from the service-learning experience as it relates to organizations that you will take with you? What overall insight did you gain?
  - d. **The rubric** I use to evaluate your service-learning paper is available on eLearning.

**E. Homework Assignments (5%)**

**a. Slavery Footprint: Made in a Free World. Due October 2.** It's not easy to be a socially responsible consumer. Even if you buy mostly local products and diligently keep track of corporate environmental footprints, you may still be leaving a trail of slaves in your wake. After all, who do you think is digging up the minerals in your smartphone or picking the cotton for your T-shirts? The [Slavery Footprint](#) website can tell you approximately how many slaves have pitched in to make the goods you enjoy on a daily basis.

I'd like you to calculate your footprint and in a paragraph, tell me your "score" and explain it. Are you surprised at what you found? Can you tell which types of products you consume impacted your score the most?

**b. Can you survive on \$1,000? Prove it. Due October 16.** **\$PENT** is an online game about surviving poverty and homelessness. Players must make the difficult decisions necessary to live for one month on \$1,000, often having to choose between equally disagreeable options. The dilemmas they face represent those that bring people to places Ministry with Community in Kalamazoo. Do you make a healthy meal or keep the lights on? Cover the minimum on your credit cards or pay the rent? Hope your sick daughter gets better on her own or risk your job by leaving early to take her to the doctor? Let your son play in the after-school sports league or save the money needed for his uniform? The game ends when players either run out of money before the end of the month or make it through with money left over. Since its launch in February 2011, the interactive game SPENT has been played more than 4 million times in over 218 countries. Play the game at <http://playspent.org/>

**After you've played the game, answer the following questions:**

1. What job did you select? What's your reasoning?
2. Home; the farther away the more gas you spend and the more wear and tear on your car. Where did you end up?
3. What's your ending balance? Did you make it through the month?
4. What did you choose to go without? How did you feel about that?
5. Did you make choices that were illegal or not honest? If so, why?
6. How did this game affect your view on poverty?

**c. Carbon Footprint Calculator. Due November 6.** Many of our daily activities - such as using electricity, driving a car, or disposing of waste - cause greenhouse gas **emissions**. Together these **emissions** make up a household's **carbon footprint**.

Do you know the size of the footprint you leave behind? Choose any of the calculators you like. Popular ones are:

<http://www.nature.org/greenliving/carboncalculator/>

<http://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>

<https://www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/>

Once you've calculated your footprint, write a paragraph reflecting on what you found.

**Grading plan**

Homework	5%	Service-Learning	20%
Exam 1	25%	Contribution/Professionalism	10%
Exam 2	30%	Quizzes	10%

**Standards of Success:**

A	92 - 100%	Outstanding, exceptional, extraordinary	BA	88 – 91.9%
B	82 - 87.9%	Very good	CB	78 - 81.9%
C	72 - 77.9%	Satisfactory, Acceptable, Adequate	DC	68 - 71.9%
D	60 - 67.9%	Poor	E	0 - 59.9% Failing

**Special Accommodations:** Students who need special accommodations due to a disability should make an appointment to discuss your needs with me as soon as possible.

**Professional Written and Oral Communication Standards Guideline:**

Effective communication skills are critical to Haworth College of Business students' personal and professional success. In accordance with the College's learning goal that students must be effective communicators, business students must practice professional standards in written and oral communications. Students' assignments, therefore, must meet minimum standards to be acceptable. Standards for written work address errors in form including spelling, punctuation, format, and basic grammar, as well as technical English errors. Standards for oral work include professionalism in demeanor and dress, presentation delivery skills, quality of graphic support, and the above standards for written work. If these standards are not adhered to, the student's grade may be adjusted accordingly. Students are encouraged to seek assistance through the Haworth College of Business Communication Center.

**Academic Integrity**

Students are responsible for making themselves aware of and understanding the University policies and procedures that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. The academic policies addressing Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog at <http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=974> and the Graduate Catalog at <http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=1030>. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s) and if you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with your instructor if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.

Students and instructors are responsible for making themselves aware of and abiding by the “Western Michigan University Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, and Stalking Policy and Procedures” related to prohibited sexual misconduct under Title IX, the Clery Act and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Campus Safe. Under this policy, responsible employees (including instructors) are required to report claims of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator or designee (located in the Office of Institutional Equity). Responsible employees are not confidential resources. For a complete list of resources and more information about the policy see [www.wmich.edu/sexualmisconduct](http://www.wmich.edu/sexualmisconduct).

In addition, students are encouraged to access the Code of Conduct, as well as resources and general academic policies on such issues as diversity, religious observance, and student disabilities:

- Office of Student Conduct [www.wmich.edu/conduct](http://www.wmich.edu/conduct)
- Division of Student Affairs [www.wmich.edu/students/diversity](http://www.wmich.edu/students/diversity)
- Registrar’s Office <http://www.wmich.edu/registrar/calendars/interfaith>
- Disability Services for Students [www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices).”

### Tentative Schedule

Session / Date	Topic	Chapter
Session 1 8/30	Course Overview, Syllabus review Introduction to Service-Learning	
Session 1 9/4	Service-learning: Meet the community partners SPuRS, Haworth Career Advising Complete Guidelines and Conduct Expectations form	
<b>Business Ethics</b>		
Session 2 9/6	Why study ethics?	1
9/9	Service-learning: Sign-up with a community partner on Signupgenius	
Session 3 9/11	Ethical Theory and Business	1
9/13	Guest Lecture: Devin O'Herron, Haworth Inc.	2
9/14	Service-learning: Contact your community partner. Submit copy of sent email in the Dropbox	
Session 3 9/18	Ethical Theory and Business	2
Session 4 9/20	The Corporation and its Stakeholders	4
Session 5 9/25	Functional ethical issues /Marketing	3
Session 6 9/27	Functional ethical issues / Supply Chain and International Business	9
Session 6 10/2	Functional ethical issues / Supply Chain and International Business HW: Slavery Footprint: Made in a Free World	9
10/4	Guest Lecture: Chris Johnson, Center for Justice, Rights & Dignity	
10/9	<b>Exam 1</b>	
<b>Sustainability</b>		
10/11	Introduction to Sustainability Guest Lecture: Neil Drobný, Ohio State University, Fisher College of Business	
<b>Sustainability's Social Pillar</b>		
Session 7 10/16	Social Pillar: The Issues and Implications HW: \$pent	5-8
10/18	Fall Break	
Session 7 10/23	Social Pillar: The Issues and Implications	5-8
Session 8 10/25	Social Pillar: The Business Response	5-8
Session 8 11/1	Social Pillar: The Business Response	5-8
<b>Sustainability's Environmental Pillar</b>		
Session 9 11/6	Environmental Pillar: The Issues and Implications HW: Carbon Footprint Calculator Election Day, VOTE!	10
Session 9 11/8	Environmental Pillar: The Issues and Implications	10

11/13	Guest Lecture: Sean Ansett, AtStake Advisors Service-learning reflections completed	10
Session 10 11/15	Environmental Pillar: The Business Response	10
Session 10 11/20	Environmental Pillar: The Business Response	10
11/22	Thanksgiving	
Session 11 11/27	Sustainability and Global Public Policy	
Session 12 11/29	Course Closure	
12/4	Exam 2	
12/6 (8:00 am)	Comprehensive final exam for non-service-learning students and make-up exams	