

ACCT 4600
ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM

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Required Textbooks:

Brooks, Leonard (2006). *Business and Professional Ethics for Directors, Executives, and Accountants*, 4th edition, South-Western Publishing.

Cheffers, Mark and Pakaluk, Michael (2004). *Understanding Accounting Ethics*, Allen David Press.

Additional Readings as assigned.

Recommended Textbook:

May and May (2006). *Effective Writing: Handbook for Accountants*, 7th edition, Prentice-Hall Publishing.

Course Prerequisites:

ACCT 3070, 3830, and 3610, or equivalents, with grades of C or better in each and Advanced Business Standing; accounting senior; or permission of Department Chairperson.

The accounting curriculum at the University of Wyoming is intended to be integrative, and each course assumes that you arrive with a solid grasp of the concepts you learned in your prior accounting courses.

Course Description:

This course examines professional ethics for accountants from both a philosophical and business perspective. Moral development, ethical reasoning, and ethical decision making provides a framework for examining the importance of ethics in the accounting profession. Professional guidance on ethics in accounting will also be examined, including the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, and the codes of conduct for other professional accounting organizations. In addition, this course fulfills a University Studies Program WC requirement. Accordingly, students will complete writing assignments throughout the semester including a research-intensive term paper that includes an oral presentation.

Learning Objectives Relating to Ethics and Professionalism:

- Use the theories of moral and character development to understand ethical frameworks.
- Analyze and use ethical frameworks for decision making.
- Explain the role of integrity and professional ethics in the accounting profession.
- Evaluate corporate governance policies and practices.
- Apply professional codes of ethics to specific accounting situations.

Learning Objectives Relating to WC:

- Communicate effectively to academic and/or professional audiences.
- Make effective use of multiple drafts, of revision and editing, of computer technology, of peer and instructor comments, and of collaboration in the achievement of writing.
- Recognize and understand more advanced aspects of writing that respond to the purposes and needs of audiences in a professional setting.

Student Services:

If you have a physical, learning, or psychological disability and require accommodations, please let us know as soon as possible. You will need to register with, and provide documentation of your disability to University Disability Support Services (UDSS) in SEO, Room 330 Knight Hall.

Attendance:

Attendance is expected. Much of your learning is based on your contribution and the contribution of your classmates to the discussion of the materials. If you are not in class, significant contribution is not possible. At the end of the semester, your contribution to the class discussion will be evaluated and may impact your grade.

Late Assignments / Exams Policy:

Assignments will not be accepted late. If you know in advance you will miss a class on a due date or exam date, you must make alternate arrangements ahead of time. In cases of emergency, an alternate exam may be arranged, but only if the emergency is documented. The alternate exam will not be the same as the other exam, and its difficulty level may be raised for the extra time the student had to prepare.

Academic Dishonesty:

We believe that academic integrity is the best practice for professional integrity so necessary in the accounting profession. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course, and violators will be found and disciplined to the fullest extent of University Regulations. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to

- Representing the work, thoughts, and ideas of another person as your own;
- Allowing another student to copy your work;
- Being complicit in academic dishonesty by suspecting or knowing of it and not taking action;
- Giving or receiving assistance without authorization on any assignment or exam; or using unauthorized electronic devices or other material when prohibited from doing so.

Academic dishonesty in a group project will be handled on a case-by-case basis. If a preponderance of evidence shows that the group as a whole was complicit in an act of academic dishonesty, all members will be penalized identically for that act. If the evidence shows that one member is largely responsible for the academic dishonesty, that member will be penalized for the act. All group members are responsible for carefully monitoring their group's work so that sources are cited properly, all work that is not quoted or cited is indeed the group's own work, and academic integrity principles are preserved.

Any case of academic dishonesty will be prosecuted in accordance with UNIREG 802 Rev. 2. Academic dishonesty can result in a permanent "F" in this course, a permanent notice of academic dishonesty in your student citizenship file, or suspension from the University. For more information on academic dishonesty, see University regulations.

Classroom Decorum:

UNIREG 29, Change 1, sets forth both student rights as well as obligations in the classroom. It is expected that each student will come to each class prepared to engage in discussion of the assigned problems or written materials. Spirited discussion of these topics is encouraged while also recognizing that each of us brings something unique to the class. Common courtesy and civility should be your guide. Behavior that is disruptive or demeaning will not be tolerated. Foul language will result in expulsion from the classroom. Cell phones and other instant communication devices are to be kept off during class and out of sight except in extraordinary circumstances, in which case you must have cleared it with the instructors before class. Unless there is an emergency, it is expected that all students will remain in the classroom during the entire class.

Professionalism:

The accounting profession has long prided itself on its objectivity and integrity throughout the past 100 years of its development. Unfortunately, instances of fraudulent and illegal behaviors have cast a cloud over all of us in the profession. Recent evidence suggests that the profession is regaining the esteem it once enjoyed in terms of being trusted business advisors.

It is imperative that each of us reflects on our personal integrity and that we behave in a manner that exemplifies objectivity and integrity in our daily lives. Those of you about to enter the profession of practicing accountants have the opportunity to exude the qualities expected of professionals and to further increase the esteem in which the profession is held.

Grading:

Your grade is composed of six items. The six items, the level of Bloom’s taxonomy they are designed to assess, and the professional skill(s) they are designed to assess are discussed in greater detail below. The six items are:

- (1) exams (apply, analyze, evaluate, create; written communication)
- (2) case analyses (apply, analyze, evaluate, create; interpersonal communication, written communication, oral communication)
- (3) written project (apply, analyze, evaluate, create; written communication)
- (4) project presentation (apply, analyze, evaluate, create; oral communication)
- (5) professional standards game (apply, analyze, evaluate, oral communication; interpersonal communication)
- (6) writings (apply, analyze, evaluate, create; written communication)

The following weights are assigned to each item:

(1)	2 exams @ 100 each	200
(2)	Case analyses	50
(3)	Written project	100
(4)	Project presentation	25
(5)	Standards game	25
(6)	4 Writings @ 25 each	<u>100</u>
		500

Letter grades are based on a 90-80-70 grading scale.

Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy:

Revised-Bloom’s taxonomy of cognitive objectives suggests that people learn in a hierarchical fashion. That is, lower-level skills must be developed before higher-level skills. According to the revised-Bloom’s taxonomy, there are six levels in the hierarchy as shown below. Since this is a senior-level, capstone course, we will work at the upper levels of Bloom’s taxonomy.

- Remember** Retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory
- Understand** Construct meaning from instructional messages including oral, written, and graphic communication
- Apply** Carry out or use a procedure in a given situation
- Analyze** Break material into its constituent parts and determine how the parts relate to one another and to the overall structure
- Evaluate** Make judgments based on criteria and standards
- Create** Put elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganize elements in to a new pattern or structure

Exams:

Exams are primarily essay in nature although some short answer and/or multiple choice questions may be used. Exams are designed to assess the student's mastery of the subject matter and his or her ability to apply the theories to various situations to create a viable solution. **Dates: October 4 and November 6.**

Case analyses:

During the last third of the semester, students will be divided into teams to discuss and analyze cases. Some cases will require written solutions while other cases may require oral presentations to the class. Students should refer to the May & May text for guidance when written solutions are required.

Written project and presentation:

Each student will complete a written project on Moral Courage during the semester. The May & May text is your reference guide for this project. This project will require multiple drafts. The first draft which will consist of an annotated outline will be due **September 27**. The second draft which should be a completed paper (less bibliography) will be due **November 13**. The final paper is due **December 6**. The final paper must include an executive summary and bibliography. Before handing in the first draft you must have it peer-reviewed (**November 8**). Your peer reviewer must complete the grading rubric and attach it to your paper. You will then get feedback from each instructor using the same rubric. Thus, for your draft, you get three sets of eyes critiquing your work! While this project is larger than much of the writing you will do as a professional accountant, good writing skills are transferable across audiences. During the final exam period, **December 13**, you will present your project to the class.

Required: Pick a famous person (your definition) from history who has publicly exhibited moral courage (you must define). Write a 10-12 page biography of this person describing the circumstances under which moral courage was exhibited and why you feel this person's acts were noteworthy. Your oral presentation about your noteworthy person should be 5-8 minutes in length. You should refer to May & May, chapters 8 and 11 for the written project and chapter 15 for the oral presentation.

Professional Standards Game:

Rather than having a dry, boring multiple-choice test over professional standards and their applicability to ethical situations, we will play "ethics bingo" for fun, prizes, and points. **Date: November 20, 2006**

Writings:

Throughout the semester we will engage in a series of writing assignments concerning various ethical/professional issues. Each writing assignment requires a different professional format; therefore, you will receive practice in various professional writing formats.

Writing #1: Format: **Letter**, see May & May, chapter 9. Write a letter to the Dean of the College of Business (Brent Hathaway) answering the following question, “What does it mean to be a professional accountant?” **Due Date: September 11.**

Writing #2: Format: **Memo**, see May & May, chapter 10. Write a memo to your boss describing the strategies you can employ to better prepare to act with moral courage when under professional duress. **Due Date: September 27.**

Writing #3: Format: **Essay**, see May & May, chapter 12. Warren Buffet is reported to have once said, “It takes 20 years to build a reputation and 5 minutes to ruin it.” Write an essay describing the process of rebuilding a reputation. **Due Date: October 30.**

Writing #4: Format: **Email**, see May & May, chapter 10. Write a memo to a new employee in your firm describing the usefulness (or lack thereof) of the various Code of Conduct for making ethical decisions. **Due Date: November 20.**

Disclaimer:

Should changes to this syllabus and/or assignment schedule become necessary; students will be notified in class of the changes as soon as possible. Each student is responsible for obtaining information concerning changes if they are not in class.

Instructor duties

We are responsible for determining the topics examined during the semester, leading the discussion of the assigned material, providing an environment to encourage learning, and assessing your mastery of the course materials. We will strive to be on time, prepared, enthusiastic, and ready to ask and answer questions.

Student duties

You are responsible for studying the assigned material, completing the assigned writings, and participating in the class discussion. It is your responsibility to utilize the opportunities provided to learn. You should be on time, prepared, enthusiastic, and ready to ask and answer questions.

Philosophy

People learn from three sources -- themselves, their peers, and their instructors. Each of these valuable sources is used throughout the semester to enhance the learning process. Failure to take advantage of these sources places a greater learning risk on you.