



COMM 4360.001
Communication Ethics
Spring 2017 (T/TH 10AM)
Course Syllabus

Professor Information

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Course Prerequisites

To take this class, you must have credit for RHET 1302 and upper-division standing.

Course Description

This course examines the conceptual perspectives and approaches for understanding and evaluating communication ethics in a variety of contexts. Contexts may include interpersonal relationships, small groups, organizations, intercultural encounters, public communication and technology-based communication. The course is designed to reveal values and ethical issues inherent in communication and provide resources for making and defending choices on ethical grounds.

Every day, we make decisions about the who, what, when, where, why, and how of our communication: e.g., we decide when to text, we address peers and supervisors with a chosen tone in email, we determine what messages to answer and which to ignore, and we choose our responses to the people around us. We apply our values perspectives to every decision we make and thus cannot separate ethics from life or from communication, the essence of being human. However, do we understand the decisions we make? Do we consider options per other perspectives? Do we understand why other people interact the way they do? Have we assessed the values and experiences that affect the lens we use to see, assess, receive, and respond? This class will provide you with a basic understanding of the most frequently used ethics theories and with the opportunity to apply those theories as you consider your own communication and the interaction around you—in personal and professional relationships and interactions. You will also reflect on your own life and experiences to create an ethical autobiography—your chance to personalize ethical analysis and reflect on who you are, what has influenced your perspective, and why you choose to communicate the way you do. You will also consider the ethical standards that exist in the corporate world and identify the theories behind those standards. And you will be able to apply ethical theories to a communication “case” to investigate a circumstance that interests you and present your findings and analysis to your class.

Be prepared to read advanced texts, to apply theories to news events and every-day experiences, and to collaborate with classmates to assess cases of communication. Come eager to read, learn, reflect, and grow as an individual and a communicator.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

To succeed in this class, you will

- define *communication* and *ethic*;
- recognize and apply basic ethical theories from Western philosophers to communication;
- research, analyze, and interpret complex topics as they relate to communication ethics;
- apply Western ethical philosophy to cases of communication;
- discuss ethical decisions and justify choices that you make in regard to communication;
- reflect on your own experiences and how they affect your ethical view of interactions;
- understand the role of ethical codes in corporate America; and
- improve your communication skills.

Required Texts

Becker & Becker, Eds. (2003). *A history of Western ethics* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Tompkins, P. S. (2011). *Practicing communication ethics*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Texts to Access

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: APA.

We will use APA style to format in-text and end-of-text citations in this class.

Additional texts will be listed throughout the Course Calendar and required through the semester. You can access those through the online McDermott Library collection.

Assignment Values

Assignment	Instructions for Submission	Value
Ethics Wiki (entries and comments)	Post on class wiki page	150 pts
Definition of <i>ethics</i>	Submit via turnitin.com	100 pts
Ethical Autobiography	Submit via turnitin.com	100 pts
Reflection Essay	Submit via turnitin.com	50 pts
Group Analysis of Corporate Code of Ethics	Submit via turnitin.com	100 pts
Team Evaluation	Submit via turnitin.com	100 pts
Ethical Analysis	Submit via turnitin.com	150 pts
Ethical Analysis Presentation	Present in class	100 pts
Low-Impact Assignments	Submit per Course Calendar	150 pts
Total		1000 pts

Grading Criteria

Grades will not be rounded up. Course assignments together are worth 1000 points, and students receive grades according to the following (standard UTD) scale:

930–1000	= A
900–929	= A–
870–899	= B+
830–869	= B
800–829	= B–
770–799	= C+
730–769	= C
700–729	= C–
670–699	= D+
630–669	= D
600–629	= D–
0–599	= F

“A” reflects excellent work. “B” reflects satisfactory work. “C” reflects work that fulfills course requirements but that contains issues that decrease the student’s effectiveness or indicate limited understanding. “D” reflects work that contains numerous issues and does not meet all course objectives. “F” reflects unacceptable work.

Grades in this class reflect whether you

- Fulfill objectives for the class and particular assignments;
- Employ rhetorical strategies that develop logical arguments, strong claims, and adequate supporting evidence;
- Support your ideas and arguments with analysis and evidence from credible sources;
- Use correct mechanics, strong style, and appropriate organization;
- Edit and proofread **all** work before you submit assignments;
- Manage your time wisely and effectively to meet deadlines;
- Ethically present information address copyright, and correctly cite resources; and
- Present yourself professionally.

Course & Instructor Policies

In addition to all UTD policies that students must know and follow (available at <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>), the following policies apply.

Make-up and Late Work

In this class, you are scholars as well as professionals in training. Professionals who miss deadlines present poor work ethics and damage their reputations as well as increase costs, delay results, decrease profits, and lose their jobs. *For these reasons, you may not submit late or incomplete work unless you are hospitalized and provide a valid physician excuse.* Without exception, missed work results in a zero (0) on the assignment.

References, Copyright, and Plagiarism

UTD has a no-tolerance policy for plagiarism, copyright infringement, or scholastic dishonesty (including missing citations). I support and enforce that policy in my classes. *If you do not cite your sources with in-text and end-of-text citations using APA citation format (or an alternative with consent) or if you publish copyrighted work without permission, you will receive a referral to the Office of Student Conduct.*

Attendance

Treat this class as you would a job: Attend class and be punctual. Tardiness interrupts the class and is rude to your classmates. In addition, to learn communication skills, you must be present to practice those skills. You may miss one class without penalty; then you lose 20 points (in participation and professionalism) of your participation grade for each absence. If you miss a class, you are responsible to contact classmates and learn what you missed.

UTD excuses absences for religious holidays; however, students are responsible to inform the instructor *before* the holiday and to submit missed work *before* the absence. UTD also excuses absences due to extreme illness (excused with a physician's note) or emergencies (hospitalization or death) involving a student's immediate family with documentation (first day after absence).

Email

Each UTD student has a UTDallas.edu email account. The university provides email accounts for all official communication, and students in this class will abide by that policy: to ensure security of official communication. Therefore, *all official email correspondence must go to and come from official UTD emails.*

Title IX and Student Safety and Confidentiality

Students considering sharing personal information in email, in person, or within assignments or exams with faculty should be aware that faculty members and teaching/research assistants are required by UT Dallas policy to report information about sexual misconduct to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator.

Per university policy, faculty members must identify the student to the UT Dallas Title IX Coordinator. Students who wish to have confidential discussions of incidents related to sexual harassment or sexual misconduct should contact

- Student Counseling Center (972.883.2527 or after hours 972.UTD.TALK or 972.883.8255);
- Women's Center (972.883.8255);
- Student Health Center (972.883.2747);
- clergy person (legally recognized religious advisor) of their choice; or
- off-campus resource (i.e., rape crisis center, doctor, psychologist).

Students who are sexually assaulted or harassed or who are victims of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, or stalking are encouraged to directly report these incidents to the UT Dallas Police Department at 972.883.2222 or to the Title IX Coordinator at 972.883.2218. Additional information and resources may be found at <http://www.utdallas.edu/oiec/title-ix/resources>.

Comet Creed

In this class, we will abide by the student-created Comet Creed:

"As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the professor.



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Date of Class	Class Objectives, Student Preparation, and Assignment Deadlines
Week One	<p>Introduce the course, instructor, students, and syllabus. Introduce the course assignments and review APA citation standards.</p> <p><i>Preparation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain books and a notebook for COMM 4360.• Register for turnitin.com.• Introduce yourself on the Course Discussion Board through eLearning.
Week Two	<p>Consider differences between ethical perspectives and determine how to critically think to assess and apply ethical standards.</p> <p><i>Preparation for Tuesday</i> Read Tompkins (2011) Preface and Chapters 1 and 6.</p> <p><i>Submission</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete the Jung plus Enneagram Test (n.d.) and bring two printed copies of your results to class Thursday. (Submit one with your name on it.)• Choose your terms for your Ethics Wiki entries and put your name on your entries by 11:59pm on Friday, January 20. (Note what other people have claimed; you may not replicate terms. You will want to put your name at the bottom of your completed wiki entries.)
Week Three	<p>Investigate and discuss pre-Socratic and Greek ethical theories. No class meeting on Thursday.</p> <p><i>Preparation</i> Read Tompkins (2011) Chapter 7, Kahn Chapter 1 (2003), and Cooper Chapter 2 (2003).</p> <p><i>Submission</i> Complete your first entry on the Ethics Wiki by 11:59pm on Friday, January 27.</p>
Week Four	<p>Investigate and discuss Hellenistic, and Roman ethical theories.</p> <p><i>Preparation for Tuesday</i> Read Long Chapter 3 (2003) and Long Chapter 4 (2003).</p> <p><i>Submission</i> Complete your second entry on the Ethics Wiki by 11:59pm on Friday, February 2.</p>

Week Five	<p>Investigate and discuss medieval and Renaissance ethical theories.</p> <p><i>Preparation</i> Read Davis Chapter 5 (2003), MacDonald Chapter 6 (2003), and Kraye Chapter 7 (2003).</p> <p><i>Submission</i> Read your classmates' entries on the Ethics Wiki and comment on four by 11:59pm on Friday, February 10.</p>
Week Six	<p>Investigate and discuss ethical theories of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries.</p> <p><i>Preparation for Tuesday</i> Read Schneewind Chapter 8 (2003), Singer Chapter 9 (2003), and Schacht Chapter 10 (2003).</p> <p><i>Submission</i> Bring a printed copy of your drafted Definition of Ethics (at least 1 page, single-spaced, with 4 sources) to class.</p>
Week Seven	<p>Investigate and discuss ethical theories of the 20th century.</p> <p><i>Preparation for Tuesday</i> Read Schroeder Chapter 11 (2003) and Donagan Chapter 12 (2003).</p> <p><i>Submission</i> Submit your Definition of Ethics by 11:59pm on Friday, February 24, via turnitin.com.</p>
Week Eight	<p>Apply values and principles for ethical reasoning.</p> <p><i>Preparation for Tuesday</i> Read Tompkins (2011) Chapters 3–5.</p> <p><i>Submission</i> Revise Course Wiki entries. Add additional resources by 11:59pm on Friday, March 3.</p>
Week Nine	<p>Personalize ethical decision making and determine what experiences influence your choices and standards. (Writing Days—no class meetings)</p> <p><i>Preparation</i> Read Tompkins (2011) Chapter 2.</p> <p><i>Submission</i> Submit your Ethical Autobiography by 11:59pm on Friday, March 10, via turnitin.com.</p>
March 13–17	Spring Break

Week Ten	<p>Apply values and principles for ethical reasoning. Welcome Colonel Charles Tucker, USAF Ret.</p> <p><i>Preparation for Tuesday</i> Review Tompkins (2011) Chapter 4.</p> <p><i>Submission</i> Submit your Reflection Essay on truth versus honesty by 11:59pm on Friday, March 24, via turnitin.com.</p>
Week Eleven	<p>Consider corporate ethics.</p> <p><i>Preparation for Tuesday</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Connor (2010), O'Brien (2011), Paul (2013), and Sockell (2013). • (Each student) Find three corporate codes of ethics. (Note the definition in Tompkins.) Begin by searching for companies that interest you for internships or future employment. Bring a printed copy of each to class—to share with your team. <p><i>Submission</i> Have your team leader submit a copy of the corporate code of ethics that your team will be analyzing.</p>
Week Twelve	<p>Consider contexts of ethical practice.</p> <p><i>Preparation for Tuesday</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Tompkins (2011) Chapters 8 and 9. • Find a case related to communication and ethics for your Ethical Analysis. <p><i>Submission</i> On the Course Discussion Board, post the link for the foundation for your Ethical Analysis.</p>
Week Thirteen	<p>Consider communication ethics and digital communication.</p> <p><i>Preparation for Tuesday</i> Read Tompkins (2011) Chapter 10.</p> <p><i>Submission</i> Submit (one team member only) Team Analysis of Corporate Code of Ethics by 11:59pm on Friday, April 14, on turnitin.com.</p>
Week Fourteen	<p>Attend and evaluate Ethical Analysis presentations.</p> <p><i>Preparation for Tuesday</i> Submit Team Evaluations by 11:59pm today on turnitin.com.</p>
Week Fifteen	<p>Attend and evaluate Ethical Analysis presentations.</p>
Final Examination	<p>TBD</p> <p><i>Submission</i> Due: Submit your Ethical Analysis by 11:59pm on Friday, April 28, via turnitin.com.</p>

Bibliography

- Becker, L., C., & Becker, C. B., Eds. (2003). *A history of Western ethics* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Connor, M. (2010, January 31). Toyota Recall: Five Critical Lessons. *Business Ethics*. Retrieved from <http://business-ethics.com/2010/01/31/2123-toyota-recall-five-critical-lessons>
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Course Calendar

Ethics Wiki Entries

For two entries (one person and one term), write an entry—a definition of an ethics-related term (in relation to the study of ethics)—on the Course Ethics Wiki (found on eLearning). Each entry should be 300–500 words and **include references from 5–8 credible sources (not just a Web site that you find) with citations in APA format (in-text and end-of-text citations—see your calendar for examples or visit the Purdue OWL).**

Your entry for a term should address the etymology, definition, relation to ethics, and (if available) creator of the term or the person who brought the term into the realm of ethics. Your entry for a person should address the person’s nationality, historic context, profession and training, link to the realm of ethics, and other relevant information related to the person. (We do not need a biography of the person.) Use strong English mechanics (capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar).

You will then be assigned to comment on four entries from other students. Seek 2 additional, unique, credible sources and cite those with your comment (with in-text and end-of-text citations in APA style). Your comment should be 200 words and goes in the comment section of the appropriate Wiki Entry with your name at the end (so you receive credit for your comments). Comments should be mature and should add to the content of the Wiki Entry and illustrate your understanding of this term.

Definition of Ethic

What is “ethics”? How do philosophers define it? Write an essay of 750–1000 words (singled spaced) defining ethics and concluding with a personal definition based on what you have learned from class readings and from your own research. (Go through the writing process and cite your sources with in-text and end-of-text citations in APA style.) **You should cite 5–10 credible sources (with in-text and end-of-text citations) from *outside of class sources*.** Submit the essay via turnitin.com by the deadline on the course calendar.

Ethical Autobiography

Per the assignment in Tompkins (p. 42), write “an ethical autobiography to identify key elements of your personal ethical standard. Using the outline of moral development presented in this chapter, describe key influences on how you developed your personal ethical standard.” Submit the essay via turnitin.com by the deadline on the course calendar. Cite any outside sources you reference.

Group Analysis of Corporate Code of Ethics

As a team (assigned), analyze a code of ethics from a corporation. Identify the values addressed in the code, the audience for the code, and the values. Investigate the organization behind the code of ethics and identify if any history or values or tasks related to that organization are related to the code. Address words, patterns, and other data expressed in the code.

This document is a team-written assignment, an analysis of ~3000 words. **Again, provide in-text and end-of-text citations in APA style for all sources.** One team member will submit the analysis via turnitin.com by the deadline on the course calendar. (Include all members’ names on the document.)

After your analysis is complete, you will complete the Team Evaluation—for yourself and for your team members (each team member completes a form in confidence)—and submit it via turnitin.com by the deadline on the course calendar.

Ethics Analysis and Presentation

In lieu of a final examination in this class, you will submit an Ethics Analysis—a study of a current affair or case in the media that addresses a recent public situation/event (something in the news in the last 6 months). Address the events surrounding the situation (in detail with documented sources), analyze the ethical dilemmas related to the occurrence, and evaluate the outcome. Your assessment will be 6–8 pages singlespaced **with cited sources (in-text and end-of-text citations) in APA format**. Submit your essay via turnitin.com by the deadline on the course calendar.

You will present this case to the class, providing background for the case and considering a variety of ethical dilemmas and theories as they relate to this case.

Low-Impact Assignments

Students do not need to submit anything to finalize this grade. To earn these points, prepare for and attend classes, participate in discussions and in-class activities, communicate professionally, and be part of small-group activities.



COMM 4360.001
Communication Ethics
Spring 2017 (T/TH 10AM)
Course Assignments

Ethics Wiki Entries

For two entries (one person and one term), write an entry—a definition of an ethics-related term (in relation to the study of ethics)—on the Course Ethics Wiki (found on eLearning). Each entry should be 300–500 words and **include references from 5–8 credible sources (not just a Web site that you find) with citations in APA format (in-text and end-of-text citations—see your calendar for examples or visit the Purdue OWL).**

Your entry for a term should address the etymology, definition, relation to ethics, and (if available) creator of the term or the person who brought the term into the realm of ethics. Your entry for a person should address the person’s nationality, historic context, profession and training, link to the realm of ethics, and other relevant information related to the person. (We do not need a biography of the person.) Use strong English mechanics (capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar).

You will then be assigned to comment on four entries from other students. Seek 2 additional, unique, credible sources and cite those with your comment (with in-text and end-of-text citations in APA style). Your comment should be 200 words and goes in the comment section of the appropriate Wiki Entry with your name at the end (so you receive credit for your comments). Comments should be mature and should add to the content of the Wiki Entry and illustrate your understanding of this term.

Definition of Ethic

What is “ethics”? How do philosophers define it? Write an essay of 750–1000 words (singled spaced) defining ethics and concluding with a personal definition based on what you have learned from class readings and from your own research. (Go through the writing process and cite your sources with in-text and end-of-text citations in APA style.) **You should cite 5–10 credible sources (with in-text and end-of-text citations) from outside of class sources.** Submit the essay via turnitin.com by the deadline on the course calendar.

Ethical Autobiography

Per the assignment in Tompkins (p. 42), write “an ethical autobiography to identify key elements of your personal ethical standard. Using the outline of moral development presented in this chapter, describe key influences on how you developed your personal ethical standard.” Submit the essay via turnitin.com by the deadline on the course calendar. Cite any outside sources you reference.

Group Analysis of Corporate Code of Ethics

As a team (assigned), analyze a code of ethics from a corporation. Identify the values addressed in the code, the audience for the code, and the values. Investigate the organization behind the code of ethics and identify if any history or values or tasks related to that organization are related to the code. Address words, patterns, and other data expressed in the code.

This document is a team-written assignment, an analysis of ~3000 words. **Again, provide in-text and end-of-text citations in APA style for all sources.** One team member will submit the analysis via turnitin.com by the deadline on the course calendar. (Include all members’ names on the document.)

After your analysis is complete, you will complete the Team Evaluation—for yourself and for your team members (each team member completes a form in confidence)—and submit it via turnitin.com by the deadline on the course calendar.

Ethics Analysis and Presentation

In lieu of a final examination in this class, you will submit an Ethics Analysis—a study of a current affair or case in the media that addresses a recent public situation/event (something in the news in the last 6 months). Address the events surrounding the situation (in detail with documented sources), analyze the ethical dilemmas related to the occurrence, and evaluate the outcome. Your assessment will be 6–8 pages singlespaced **with cited sources (in-text and end-of-text citations) in APA format**. Submit your essay via turnitin.com by the deadline on the course calendar.

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Low-Impact Assignments

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**COMM 4360.001
Communication Ethics
Spring 2017 (T/TH 10AM)
Course Syllabus Contract**

I have read the syllabus for COMM 4360 and the university policies (<http://coursebook.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>). I understand that content and communication related to this course may be used for future examples and research but that my identity will be blinded and my confidentiality will be protected if content is used.

I also understand that my contact information listed on this contract will ONLY be used for course-related activities and information.

By signing this contract, I acknowledge that I have read the policies and this syllabus and that I am expected to abide by ALL university policies; to attend class; and to submit quality, unique work by all deadlines to fulfill requirements for this class.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Student ID Number

Mobile Telephone Number