



Course Syllabus: **Human Resource Development Ethical Issues**

College of Education
COUN 4373 Section X10/DX1
Fall 2022

Contact Information

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Course Description

A seminar in human resource development ethical issues. Human resource professionals are the enforcers of organizational codes of ethics. This course will explore organization codes of ethics, confidential issues of management and/or the employees, company values and standards, and mandatory compliance with codes of ethics.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Ethical and Legal Issues in Human Resources Development: Evolving Roles and Emerging Trends, Clarethia Hughes, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2020-21](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

Grading

Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of ethical principles in the business environment through completion of a case study, analysis of current issues in human resources by a review of current articles, and satisfactory completion of a final exam. Assignments and point values are:

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Weekly discussion posts	130
Participation	65
Minimum wage argument	100
Ethics in Action Project	100
Ethics cast study	150
Final Exam	100
Total Points	655

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	589
B	524 to 588
C	458 to 523
D	393 to 457
F	Less than 393

Projects Required

Specific readings and assignments are posted in D2L. Be sure to review carefully each week. (Note: Reading items may be added as the course progresses to take advantage of current events.)

- **Participation in Discussion Posts**

Because much of the value of the course is based upon the discussion of various cases and scenarios, participation in the weekly posts is an important consideration in successfully completing the course. Each week I will have an article, proposed legislation/regulation, or some other ethics issue for discussion/debate. The expectation is that you will post your own response and comment on at least two other student posts. I would expect your posts on the comments of other students to be more than a "me too" type response. 130 points for your own posts (10 points each week) and 65 points for your responses to other student posts (5 points each week) possible.

- **Ethics in Action Project**

Pick a product or service you use and research the product for its lifecycle cost and the company that makes it in terms of its social responsibility consciousness (this includes treatment of employees in addition to product safety, etc.). There are consumer websites with reviews of various products, based upon certain criteria. You may also find information on the company

website, various blogs and news articles as well as public filings. Be sure to evaluate the credibility of your sources. Once you have determined your thoughts on the product/service, take some action. Notify the company what you like/don't like about their product/service. An email to their customer service or a post on their Facebook page or some other mechanism is fine. Your deliverable is a 1 or 2-page write up to summarize your research and your action. If your company responds, include this in your write-up. Include your resources in a separate page. Include a copy of your action as an attachment. **Due September 18.** Total points: 100.

- **Minimum Wage Argument**

- In this case, values may be translated into company policy or public policy—which is central to the argument about whether a minimum wage should be imposed upon businesses (and then the corollary—what should that wage be?)
- In this assignment, you'll explore the arguments for and against a higher minimum wage, looking at two separate issues. How should a company set the minimum pay for their workers and second, should the government set a minimum wage?
- Deliverable: 3 -5 pages (cover page and bibliography do not count toward this total) with your ethics-based argument for or against a minimum wage increase
 - Include facts and research relating to the status of wages in the US and the impact of minimum wage increases
 - Discuss the values relating to setting wages on the part of employers and as a matter of public policy
 - State your position and support it
 - Minimum of 3 references
- **Due: October 9**
- Total points: 100

- **Ethics Case Study**

- Choose a company or organization which has had an ethical problem which led to issues which came to the attention of the media or the government (there are many to choose from).
- Use the company as the basis of the assignment. Analyze the case and determine the following:
 - The timeline of events
 - The ethical issues and dilemmas in the case
 - Factors that contributed to the ethical issues encountered by the company
 - The impact of the ethical issues on the company
 - A review of practices which could have prevented or mitigated the problems encountered, with an emphasis on HR practices
- Deliverables:

Written paper, 6-9 pages. Include a cover page and bibliography (not part of the page count)

- Minimum 5 references
- **Due: November 13**
- Total Points: 150 (Note this is more heavily weighted than other assignments—I expect a thorough job.)

Final Exam

This will be an essay exam. Generally, you can expect some short answer questions, a longer application-based question and a case study of some type. I will place this in the last weekly module. It is a “take home” exam. It is due the first day of finals week (**December 2**). 100 points.

Extra Credit

The entire class will have the opportunity to “give back” at the Sikes Lake Cleanup on September 10. It is entirely optional to participate, but if you do, take a picture and a sentence or two about the event. (I’ll be there after I finish leading the bird walk at Lake Arrowhead State Park) to get credit. 15 points (Note: I realize in an online course, some students may not be local to MSU, so you may substitute a similar community project in your area—since I won’t see you, submit a picture and a sentence or two about what the project was.)

In addition to this project, individuals may elect an independent project. If you think you will need extra credit, you are welcome to earn up to 25 points each with the following projects. You may elect to do neither, one of the projects, or both. Due **December 2**.

- Choice #1
Read a fiction novel or watch a fictional movie that focuses on a workplace dilemma. Write a short paper (2 – 3 pages), discussing one ethical issue faced by a character in the book/movie in a business environment. Provide a short summary of the situation, the ethical issues involved and the decision-making process the character used to resolve the dilemma. You may have to infer some of the thinking. Discuss possible alternatives to the choice made by the character.
- Choice #2
Interview an HR manager/director to discuss ethical issues they have faced and their involvement in ethical issues in their company. Discuss their company ethics programs and codes of conduct. Provide a short report (2 - 3 pages) of your findings.

Late Work

I will accept late work, subject to a 10% late penalty, except at the end of the semester. I will not accept any work after December 2.

Make Up Work/Tests

Subject to Late Work penalty. This is a "no excuses" policy. No make up work is permitted after December 2.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. **Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. **Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

Notice

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 8/22 to 8/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review syllabus--become familiar with the course requirements• Introduce yourself to the class• Read the supplemental articles provided• Respond to the discussion question• Read chapter 1 of your text	8/28
Week 2 8/29 to 9/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read supplemental material on Wells Fargo• Read chapter 2• Respond to discussion question	9/4
Week 3 9/5 to 9/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read chapter 3• Read supplemental articles• Respond to the weekly discussion question	9/11
Week 4 9/12 to 9/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No reading from the textbook this week• Read supplemental article• Ethics in Action project is due--place in the dropbox• Respond to discussion question	9/18
Week 5 9/19 to 9/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read chapter 4• Review supplemental material• Respond to discussion question	9/25
Week 6 9/26 to 10/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read chapter 5• Review supplemental material• Respond to discussion question	10/2

Course Schedule

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 7 10/3 to 10/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading from your text this week, since the Minimum Wage Argument is due • Submit Minimum Wage Argument assignment • Review supplemental material • Respond to the weekly discussion question 	10/9
Week 8 10/10 to 10/16	<p>Although I try to steer clear of politics in class, but the ethics dust-up surrounding Scott Pruitt a couple of years ago has lessons for all organizations, so I have decided to use the incident in this class.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read chapter 6 • Review the supplemental materials • Respond to the discussion question 	10/16
Week 9 10/17 to 10/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read supplemental material • Respond to discussion question 	10/23
Week 10 10/24 to 10/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reading from the textbook this week • Read supplemental article • Ethics in Action project is due--place in the dropbox • Respond to discussion question 	10/30
Week 11 10/31 to 11/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read supplemental materials • Respond to discussion question 	11/6
Week 12 11/7 to 11/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit ethics case study • Respond to discussion question 	11/13

Course Schedule

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 13 11/14 to 11/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read supplemental materials• Respond to discussion question	11/20
Thanksgiving Vacation 11/24 - 11/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rest and relaxation	NA
Week 14 11/1 to 12/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit final exam• Submit any extra credit you want considered	12/2