

MGMT 504: ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

Professor: Ryan Fehr (he/him)
Email: rfehr@uw.edu
Office: Paccar #565

Course Meeting Time:
Tuesdays & Thursdays
1:30-3:20 / 3:30-5:20, Paccar 392

COURSE OVERVIEW

For today's leader, ethically laden decisions, opportunities, and challenges are an inevitable part of the job. Employees and customers are expecting more from organizations than ever before. As work becomes more virtual and global, leaders must manage shifting priorities and perspectives at a rapid pace. The challenge for ethical leaders is to tackle these issues while keeping their values front-and-center in every decision they make.

This is primarily an ethics course, but it is not a typical ethics course. We will take an interdisciplinary, skills-based approach to ethics, with the goal of mastering the skills you need to become an ethical leader. We will specifically focus on four key areas:

- **Deeper Self-Awareness:** Ethics begins with your values, and an examination of how you tend to see the ethical challenges you are likely to face in the workplace. Through a range of cases, discussions, and activities, we will improve your awareness of your own values and priorities, and how these values and priorities interface with difficult ethical challenges.
- **Better Decision-Making:** Ethical decisions are often clouded by psychological biases, rationalizations, and other errors. We will work to identify trends in these errors and learn how to mitigate them.
- **Capacity for Action:** Ethical leadership isn't just about making decisions, it's also about taking action. Through case studies and discussion, we'll learn how to effectively move from intention to action.
- **Stronger Connections:** Ethics is a team sport. It requires us to forge strong relationships with our coworkers and integrate their insights and perspectives when taking action. Throughout this course, we will highlight the importance of engaging with others, understanding others' points of view, and building more connected, inclusive organizations.

COURSE READINGS

Each session will focus on a range of different issues. The readings provide a framework for analyzing and discussing these issues. You should come to class prepared to analyze the day's readings and contribute to class discussions. Six of the readings come from the Harvard course pack, which you can purchase via the link below. The remaining readings can be downloaded directly from Canvas.

<https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/948391>

COURSE OUTLINE

Class	Class Topic	Readings	Deliverables
Day 1: Sept. 29	Introduction to ethical leadership	Read: Building an Ethical Career (CP)	
Day 2: Oct. 4	Ethical leadership challenges	Read: Ethical breakdowns (CP) Read: Breakdowns at Wells Fargo (Canvas)	Submit: Quiz
Day 3: Oct. 6	Decision-making I	Read: Don't let power corrupt you (CP)	Submit: Quiz
Day 4: Oct. 11	Decision-making II	Read: Frameworks for ethical decision-making (Canvas) Read: Nisha Anderson (Canvas)	Submit: Mini Reflection
Day 5: Oct. 13	Ethics Group Discussion I: Making the right decision		Submit: Discussion Prep Submit: Debrief <i>*after class*</i>
Day 6: Oct. 18	Artificial intelligence and discrimination	Read: Stanislav Petrov (Canvas) Read: How to fight discrimination in AI (CP)	Submit: Quiz
Day 7: Oct. 20	Moral disengagement	Read: Moral disengagement note (CP) Read: Chris and Alison Weston (CP)	Submit: Quiz
Day 8: Oct. 25	Conflicts of interest	Read: Dr. Drug (Canvas)	Submit: Mini Reflection
Day 9: Oct. 27	Giving voice to values	Read: The Information Dilemma (CP) Read: Can your employees really speak freely? (CP)	Submit: Quiz
Day 10: Nov. 1	Whistleblowing	Read: Through the eyes of a whistleblower (CP)	Submit: Memo #1 - Case Analysis
Day 11: Nov. 3	Ethics Group Discussion II: Speaking up		Submit: Discussion Prep Submit: Debrief <i>*after class*</i>
Day 12: Nov. 8	The psychology of decision-making	Read: Ethical leadership and the psychology of decision-making (CP) Read: A better approach to avoiding misconduct (CP)	Submit: Quiz
Day 13: Nov. 10	Working across cultures	Read: How to preempt team conflict (CP)	Submit: Quiz
Day 14: Nov. 15	Building more inclusive organizations	Read: How to promote racial equity in the workplace (CP) Read: Unconscious bias training that works (CP)	Submit: Quiz
Day 15: Nov. 17	Ethics Group Discussion III: Leading in a diverse world		Submit: Discussion Prep Submit: Debrief <i>*after class*</i>
Day 16: Nov. 22	Working with employees	Read: Andrea Herrera (Canvas)	Submit: Mini Reflection
Nov. 24	<i>Thanksgiving</i>		
Day 17: Nov. 29	Customer rights	Read: Trek-ation (CP)	Submit: Quiz Submit: Memo #2 - Personal Ethics Statement, due by 11:59pm at night
Day 18: Dec. 1	Social impact	Read: The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits (Canvas) Read: Business Roundtable Redefines the Purpose of a Corporation (Canvas) Read: Strategy and Society (CP)	Submit: Quiz
Day 19: Dec. 6	Ethics Group Discussion IV: Social impact		Submit: Discussion Prep Submit: Debrief <i>*after class*</i>
Day 20: Dec. 8	Course wrap-up		<i>No reading or submission, focus on your final papers</i>

WORKLOAD AND GRADING

This course is graded out of a possible 100 points. In accordance with Foster policy the class median will be between 3.3 and 3.5. Your grade is determined by several components:

Graded Component	Due Date	Points
Mini Reflections	Before class	6
Discussion Preps and Debriefs	Preps due before class, debriefs due by 11:59pm the day after class	12
Quizzes	Before class	10
Memo #1: Case Analysis	November 1 st before class	12
Memo #2: Personal Ethics Statement	November 29th by 11:59pm	12
Ethics by Design Team Paper	December 13 th by 11:59pm	36
Course Engagement	N/A	12

1. Mini Reflections (6 points total, 2 points each)

On several days when a case reading is assigned, you will be required to submit a mini reflection before 1:30pm/3:30pm the day of class. The goal of the mini reflections is to deepen and personalize your perspective on each ethical dilemma through disciplined introspection. Submissions that demonstrate careful reading and thoughtful reflection will receive 2 points. Submissions that suggest limited reflection will receive 1 point. Reflections not uploaded before class will receive 0 points. Each reflection should be approximately 250 words, and can be written/submitted directly in canvas. Reflection questions are provided on Canvas and in the deliverables document.

2. Discussion Preps and Debriefs (12 points total, 3 points each)

Four times during the quarter, you will be meeting in assigned ethical discussion groups. These group discussions are meant to complement the in-class experience, providing you with an opportunity to have an in-depth conversation about important ethical issues in a peer-focused setting. As a prompt for these meetings, you will be asked to complete a discussion prep wherein you offer your perspective on an important foundational issue as it relates to ethics at work. Each should be 500 words on average – about twice as long as the mini reflections. Submissions that demonstrate careful thought will receive 2 points. Submissions that suggest less care will receive 1 point. Discussions preps not uploaded before class will receive 0 points. Debrief surveys receive 1 point when completed on time, and 0 points when not completed on time. Discussion prep questions are provided on Canvas and in the deliverables document, and can be written/submitted directly in canvas.

3. Quizzes (10 points total, 1 point each)

For several classes, you will be required to complete a brief quiz on the readings. These are 2-4 question quizzes, with each question worth .25-.5 points. Note that these quizzes must be taken independently. Any sharing of answers with classmates is a violation of the Foster School's Code of Conduct Guidelines. Quizzes will be opened on a rolling basis. Generally speaking, I will open each quiz a week before it is due.

4. Memo #1: Case Analysis (12 points)

For your first memo, your task is to write a comprehensive analysis of “Through the eyes of a whistleblower”. This case tells the story of Sherry Hunt blowing the whistle at Citi, and brings together several key themes from the first half of the course. For this analysis, you are tasked with two key questions. First, what psychological biases, situational and organizational forces, etc. led to the current situation? In other words, what forces enabled misconduct to persist for so long, and why hadn't more people spoken up by this point? For your second key question, consider what Sherry should do next, presuming she wants to speak up in some way. In other words, what course of action should she take to make her voice heard? What resistances might she face along the way, and why is this the best course of action? The memo should be about 2-3 double-spaced pages

long, using one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman Font. Additional assignment details are on canvas and will be discussed in class.

5. Memo #2: Personal Ethics Statement (12 points)

For your second memo, I will ask you to write a personal statement, which focuses on your future self. It will have two components. First, it will ask you to reflect on your legacy. Second, it will ask you to reflect on the principles and values that are most important to you and will help you realize your legacy. The memo should be about 2-3 double-spaced pages long, using one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman Font. Additional assignment details are on canvas and will be discussed in class.

6. Ethics by Design: Team Paper (36 points)

In lieu of a final exam this final team project will ask you to use what you have learned in this class to propose how an existing organization might be redesigned to encourage more ethical behavior and deeper social impact. This paper is intended to represent the culmination of what you have learned in the class. As such, the paper will be graded on your ability to effectively and creatively apply course principles toward creating more ethical and impactful organizations. The paper should be about 10 double-spaced pages long, using one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman Font. Additional assignment details are on canvas and will be discussed in class.

7. Course Engagement (12 points)

Engagement doesn't mean talking a lot. It involves being fully invested in the material and conversations we have each class. Two factors go into your course engagement grade. Half of your grade will be decided by a peer assessment of your contributions to your ethics group discussions and final paper. The other half of your grade will be determined by the quality of your contributions to the class overall. Note that this inevitably requires your attendance and active participation in our live sessions.

Policy on Late Assignments

Notify me BEFORE an assignment is due if an urgent situation arises and you cannot submit an assignment by the due date. Published assignment due dates (Pacific Standard Time—PST) are firm. Please follow the appropriate University policies to request an accommodation for religious observances. Mini reflections, discussion preps and debriefs, and quizzes are designed to be completed by the due time/date and will not be accepted late. The two memos and ethics by design papers will be penalized 20% for each day they are late (20% penalty when up to 24 hours late, 40% penalty when 24-48 hours late, etc.).

Policy on Incompletes

An Incomplete may be given only when the student has been in attendance and has done satisfactory work to within two weeks of the end of the quarter and has furnished proof satisfactory to the instructor that the work cannot be completed because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student's control.

INSTRUCTOR OVERVIEW

Ryan Fehr is a Professor and Michael G. Foster Faculty Fellow at the University of Washington's Foster School of Business, where he teaches undergraduate and MBA courses on ethics, leadership, and related topics. His research focuses on building more positive relationships at work, with a particular interest in gratitude, compassion, and forgiveness, which he has studied in organizations ranging from a microlending nonprofit in Pakistan to a large airline catering service in China. His work has been featured in news outlets such as the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*, and in bestselling books such as Dan Pink's *When* and Marie Kondo and Scott Sonenshein's *Joy at Work*. He lives in Capitol Hill with his wife and 4½-year-old daughter.

OTHER POLICIES, RESOURCES, AND INFORMATION

DEI Resources

The Foster School maintains a number of DEI-related resources, such as a DEI glossary and information on joining relevant communities of practices [here](#).

Well-Being Resource Resources

Students seeking mental health resources can find support [here](#).

Students facing food insecurity can find support [here](#).

Access and Accommodations

If you have special needs due to a physical, emotional, or learning disability, please contact me immediately, ideally before our first class session. I will accommodate students' special needs to the best of my ability.

Students with disabilities should contact Disability Resources for Students to develop reasonable accommodations. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS via the information below. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

Website: <http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/>

Guide: [Getting Started / Accessing Resources](#)

Email: uwdrs@uw.edu

Phone: 206-543-8924

Non-Discrimination Policy

UW policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation of any kind. For more information about these policies, please visit [here](#).

Religious Observance Accommodation

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy (<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form (<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>).” For more information about the Religious Observance Accommodation Policy, please visit the program office.

Video Recordings and Confidentiality

For learning and review purposes, I will record our class sessions and post them to canvas. To ensure student confidentiality, please do not share any of the videos with anyone outside of our class.

Student Conduct

This program employs the principles and procedures espoused by the [University of Washington Community Standards and Student Conduct guidelines](#) to maintain academic integrity in the course. The Code establishes the expectation that students will practice high standards of professional honesty and integrity.

Notably, the Code at the Foster School of Business prohibits cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism—including improper citations of source material—as it pertains to academic work. Suspected violations will be handled in

compliance with the [University of Washington Student Conduct Code](#) as outlined in [Washington Administrative Code 478-121](#).

Copyright

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Student Grievance Procedure

Students seeking resolution of conflict or grievances may contact the program office or the University's Ombudsman Office [here](#).

Tech Support

For network use policies, please read the University of Washington's [Student Use of UW Computing Resources Policy](#). To monitor the status of campus networks and services, visit <https://eoutage.uw.edu/>. For canvas support, visit <https://itconnect.uw.edu/learn/tools/canvas/canvas-help-for-students/>

Syllabus Purpose and Disclaimer

This syllabus serves as a guideline for what to expect in this course and an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. Before contacting the instructional staff, please review these documents first to see if your question is addressed. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule, but adjustments may be necessary to accommodate errors, omissions, or unforeseen events (such as weather events). In the event changes are made to the syllabus, students will be informed on the course website and via email. It is your responsibility to be aware of these changes, so please check your email and the course site often.