

Special Topics: Human Resources Management and Ethics
Course Number: 37:533:330:01

Rutgers University
School of Management and Labor Relations
Human Resources Management Department
Spring 2026

Instructor: Ryan Greenbaum
Class Day/Location: Wednesdays, 2:00 – 5:00 pm, TIL 204
Office: 135 Janice H. Levin (JLB) Building
E-mail: Ryan.Greenbaum@rutgers.edu (best way to contact me)
Phone: (848) 445-4528 (office phone)
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11 am – noon or by appointment
Zoom/phone meetings are available upon request.

Course Materials

A charged laptop computer or tablet with typing features and access to the internet are required for this course. Please bring one of these noted electronic devices to each class. If you do not have access to a portable device, please plan to print out and bring to class that day's in class assignments. If you are completing the assignments by hand, please write legibly, as an inability to do so may prevent the professor from understanding your work, which could result in point deductions.

Required Reading

The required readings for this course are shown via the Course Schedule at the end of this syllabus and are provided by your teacher on CANVAS. These articles are made available to your professor and to you through the databases subscribed to by Rutgers Libraries.

The New York Times Subscription

As a student of SMLR, you receive free access to *The New York Times* (NYT). You will be asked to read NYT articles for this course. To register for your account, go to this page: <https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/indexes/nyt-digital> and follow the instructions.

Once you've successfully subscribed to the *New York Times*, you can search for articles that I specify per the "Fall Schedule" (at the end of the syllabus). If the schedule notes a "New York Times" article, go to the NYT's homepage. Click the "search" icon. Copy and paste the title of the article from the syllabus into the "search" function. Press "enter." The article should come up. Confirm the article date/author to ensure that you're reading the correct article.

Course Description and Purpose

The objective of this course is to increase the student's ability to manage the ethical aspects of human resources practices and work. Each student will develop skills necessary to analyze and address ethical issues, to provide ethical leadership at work, and to manage human resources responsibly. The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- Identify and address common ethical issues that arise at work.
- Analyze and suggest resolutions to ethical dilemmas
- Identify key tools to managing ethical conduct
- Identify personal values and apply those to making ethical decisions
- Understand how context can influence ethical conduct
- Identify and address common ethical issues that arise when managing human resources

This course fulfills the following learning objectives outlined by the *School of Management and Labor Relations*.

Knowledge of Theory, Practice and Application	
IV. Theoretical Perspectives	– Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background of a particular work situation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate an understanding of the practical perspectives, theories and concepts in the management field of study • Evaluate and apply theories from social science disciplines to workplace issues
V. Understanding Context	– Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of, and perspectives on work • Analyze a contemporary global issue in the management field from a multi-disciplinary and intersectional perspective • Analyze issues related to business strategies, organizational structures, and work systems • Analyze issues related to selection, motivation, and development of talent in a local and global context

Course Outline

Section I: Why Does Unethical Behavior Persist?

- “Bad” People and Common Psychological Failures
- A Deep Dive into Moral Disengagement
- Rewards, Business Frames, and Bottom-line Mentalities
- Unethical Leadership, Power, and Corruption
- Unethical Culture/Climate

Section II: How to Avoid Ethical Lapses

- Classic Moral Reasoning
- Rational versus Intuitive Approaches
- Ethical Leadership and Culture
- Ethics and Human Resources Management
- Building an Ethical “Self-Brand”

Section III: Proactive Ethical Considerations

- Corporate Social Responsibility & “Blowing the Whistle”
- Global Considerations

Course Format

Each class occurs on a single day of the week over a three-hour period and will include a mix of short lectures, class discussions, Ted Talks, individual assignments, and an in-class group project.

Grading and Course Requirements (subject to change)

Activity	Points	% of Grade
1. Group Moral Debate	380	38%
2. Ethical Dilemma Analysis	250	25%
3. Concept Reinforcements	140	14%
4. Pre-Class Work/Concept Notes	110	11%
5. Ted Talk Reflections	70	7%
6. Debate Reflection	40	4%
7. “Getting to Know You”	10	1%
Total Points	1000	100%

Percentage	Grade
90-100%	A
85-89.9	B+
80-84.9	B
75-79.9	C+
70-74.9	C
60-69.9	D
≤59.9	F

Descriptions of Assignments

1. Group Moral Debate Assignment (380 points, 38% of grade)

You will be assigned to a group. With your group, you will debate a moral issue that is politically charged. The debate deliverables are broken up into ten parts, each with their own point value, that leads up to the total possible points of 380, or 38% of your grade. Most of the group work will be completed during class. The parts of the project include the following, with instructions provided via CANVAS on the days on which the work will be completed.

PART	POINTS
1. Topic Selection	5
2. Interview Questions	15
3. Transcribed Interviews	60
4. Interview Integration	40
5. Research	60
6. Concept Application	60
7. Presentation Compilation	30
8. Presentation Reflection	50
9. Presentation Practice	20
10. Presentation to Class	40
TOTAL POINTS	380

2. **Ethical Dilemma Assignment (250 points, 25% of grade)**

You will identify an ethical dilemma and analyze it using key concepts covered in class. This is an individual assignment with most deliverables submitted during class. The assignment is broken up into multiple parts that will be assigned throughout the semester.

PART	POINTS
1. Dilemma Description	10
2. Value Description	10
3. The Dilemma and Your Values	10
4. Consequentialist Analysis	20
5. Consequentialist Final Calculation	10
6. Golden Rule Definition	10
7. Golden Rule Application	10
8. Categorical Imperative Definition	10
9. Categorical Imperative Application	10
10. Veil of Ignorance Definition	10
11. Veil of Ignorance Application	10
12. Moral Community	5
13. Moral Community Application	10
14. Disclosure Rule Definition	10
15. Disclosure Rule Application	10
16. Role Model and Why	5
17. Role Model Application	10
18. Three Concepts Definitions	20
19. Three Concepts Application	30
20. Two Concepts Reflection	10
21. Three Concepts Tools	20
TOTAL	250

3. **Concept Reinforcements (35 points each, 140 points total, 14% of grade)**

At the start of four different classes, you will be asked to reinforce a concept from the last class either by (1) writing a multiple-choice exam question, or by (2) applying the concept to an event. Students are encouraged to review their note pages and/or the prior class's slides to prepare for the concept reinforcements. Your professor will also briefly go over the concepts prior to assigning the concept reinforcements. Your professor has provided an example of the concept reinforcements through CANVAS.

4. **Ted Talk Reflections (70 points, 12% of grade)**

Throughout the semester, you will watch Ted Talks. Your professor has prepared reflection questions that you will answer and submit for grading.

5. **Pre-Class Work (5 points each, 50 points total, 5% of grade)**

To get you ready for class each week, you will need to do some preparation. Sometimes this is a little bit of reading. Sometimes it is just watching a short video. You'll be able to find these materials in the "Pre-Class Work" page each week. These will need to be done BEFORE each class begins.

6. **Concept Notes (5 points each, 50 points total, 5% of grade)**

For particular lectures, your professor will give you a note document where you will be asked to record the definition and/or an example of the concept explained during lectures. These note pages are to be turned into CANVAS. You will refer to these notes for other assignments throughout the semester.

7. **Debate Reflections (20 points each, 40 points total, 4% of grade)**

At the end of the semester, groups will present their moral debates. Your professor has created questions that will help you to reflect on each group's moral debate. This assignment requires that you answer the questions for *all* presentations. Your reflection is to be turned in immediately following that day's presentations.

8. **"Getting to Know You" (10 points, 1% of grade)**

For the start of the semester, your professor has created a "getting to know you" assignment to learn about you and your thoughts regarding this course. Complete and submit the "getting to know you" template.

Make-Up Policy

Students are strongly encouraged to attend classes because most course work is completed during regularly scheduled class time. Students will only be given an extension on assignment due dates if they have an excused absence that includes (a) an illness accompanied by a doctors

note, (b) a documented critical circumstance, such as a car accident (police report) or death in the family (tribute page), (c) involvement in a university sponsored event, or (d) the observance of a religious holiday. Please see Rutgers policy regarding religious holidays:

<https://scheduling.rutgers.edu/scheduling/religious-holiday-policy>

Students who miss an assignment due date for *unexcused* reasons can complete and submit their assignments with a point penalty as shown below. As an example, if an assignment is usually worth 10 points, and you submit it 2 hours late (i.e., *less than 24 hours*), the maximum points you can receive is 9 points (which is 90% of 10 points). This does not mean you will receive 9 points; this is simply the maximum points you can receive. You may receive less than 9 points for not submitting the highest quality work.

Time Elapsed	You Can Earn
Less Than 24 Hours	90% of Maximum
More Than 24 Hours, Less Than One Week	70% of Maximum
More Than One Week, Less Than Two Weeks	50% of Maximum
More Than Two Weeks	0%

Diversity and Inclusion

Class discussions are particularly vibrant and interesting when students provide diverse perspectives. When discussing our own experiences and opinions, as well as offering feedback to others, it is important that we refrain from comments or terms that may come across as less inclusive to others. By striving towards inclusivity, more students are likely to speak up and to educate us with diverse opinions and insights. Sometimes individuals use less inclusive terms without recognizing their potential offensiveness. In these instances, I hope that our class will kindly speak up as to educate one another on our views/opinions, as well as some of the best practices regarding diversity and inclusion. For more guidance regarding inclusive language, please find the “Pratt Inclusive Language Guide” on our course website through CANVAS.

University Guidelines and Resources

Rutgers Resources for Student Success

The School of Management and Labor Relations website has resource page for current students that includes information regarding:

1. Victim and Mental Health Support
 - a. CAPS (Counseling, Alcohol and Other Drug Assistance and Psychiatric Services)
2. Academic Support
3. Financial Emergency Support

Please use the following link to receive access to this information:

<https://smlr.rutgers.edu/academic-programs/current-students>

Academic Honesty

The University's policy on cheating and use of copyrighted materials is enforced in this class. Students are expected to pursue knowledge with integrity. Please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy for more detail regarding these policies: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers>

Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodations for disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services to determine their Coordinator. The Coordinator will then provide documentation to the student. Upon review and approval, the student must then provide this documentation to the instructor. Please refer to the Office of Disability Services for Students for more detail regarding requests for accommodations: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Statement as a Responsible Employee

Rutgers faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. Rutgers has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The University strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the University. Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to [Policy 10.3.12](#)) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the University. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the University's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of resources in Appendix A to University Policy 10.3.12. For more information about your options at Rutgers, please visit endsexualviolence.rutgers.edu

Tentative Schedule (subject to change per professor's discretion)
More detailed schedule with assignments on Canvas

TOPIC	DATE
Syllabus Why Study Ethics?	21-Jan
Bad” People and Common Psychological Failures	28-Jan
Moral Disengagement	4-Feb
Rewards, Business Frames, and Bottom-line Mentalities	11-Feb
Power and Leadership	18-Feb
Unethical Leadership and Culture	25-Feb
Classic Moral Reasoning	4-Mar
Rational versus Intuitive Ethics and Emotions	11-Mar
<i>No Class – Spring Break</i>	18-Mar
Ethical Leadership and Culture	25-Mar
Ethics Related to Human Resource Practices	1-Apr
Building an Ethical “Self-Brand”	8-Apr
Corporate Social Responsibility and Blowing the Whistle	<i>15-Apr</i>
Global Considerations	22-Apr
Final Presentations	29-Apr