

**East Texas A & M University**  
**Business Ethics for Accountants**  
**ACCT 530 01W**  
**Summer I 2025 (June 2 – July 3, 2025)**

Professor: Dr. Caroline Hartmann  
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Office hours: Tuesday, Wednesdays and Thursdays 8:30 -10:30 AM by zoom (see attached link), otherwise by appointment.  
<https://tamuc.zoom.us/j/4401822877>  
Course Meeting Day/Time/Room: Virtual

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to provide an overview of business ethics in relation to the accounting profession. Ethical reasoning, cognitive processes and ethical decision making along with its effect on corporate governance are discussed.

**Course Materials:**

**Required Text:** Mintz, S. M., & Morris, R.E. 6th Edition. *Ethical Obligations and Decision Making in Accounting*. McGraw Hill. The Connect software is **NOT** required. The e-book is included in D2L as part of Inclusive Access. You do NOT need to purchase a separate textbook. Pre-recorded videos and lectures are available for each chapter so please be sure to review these in addition to reading the chapters.

**Required:** Texas State Board of Public Accountancy Ethics Rules.

[https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac\\_view=3&ti=22&pt=22](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=3&ti=22&pt=22)

**Qualified Educational Credit for the CPA Exam**

This course has been approved by the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy as meeting Board Rule 511.58(c). Students who take this course may be assured that the Board will recognize it in meeting the ethics requirement to take the Uniform CPA exam.

**Final Examination for the Master's/Specialist Degree**

All candidates must satisfactorily pass a comprehensive examination covering all the work within their master's/specialist degree programs. The Final Examination report for the Master's/Specialist Degree is submitted to The Graduate School at least three weeks prior to graduation.

**College of Business Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Our graduates will be competent business communicators (Written)
2. Our graduates will have the interpersonal competencies necessary to be analytical problem solvers in business (Analyze legal and ethical and global impacts of business decisions).

3. Our graduates will be effective business decision makers (Analyze and integrate relevant information to propose recommendations to ethical scenarios).

<b>COB Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)</b>	<b>Course Outcomes</b> - After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:	<b>Measurement Methods</b> (Outcome Assessments)
1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand the meaning of ethics and why ethics is important.</li><li>• Develop an understanding of various aspects of moral reasoning and use moral reasoning to identify unethical behavior.</li><li>• Identification of stakeholders, the issues involved, and the process for making an ethical decision.</li><li>• Provide recommendations to address ethical scenarios.</li><li>• Explain how corporate governance mechanism can influence ethical behavior.</li><li>• Discuss how to mitigate legal liability issues that accountants face and how these issues impact professional ethics.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experiential Case Discussions</li><li>• Research Paper Assignment</li><li>• Exams</li></ul>

**Student Responsibilities:**

1. Read assigned material on schedule
2. Check D2L for announcements and other information
3. Prepare for class discussions and examinations.
4. Participate in all case discussions

**Course Evaluation:**

Grades will be based upon the following items:

Case discussion postings	30%
Article discussion postings	20%
First Exam	15%
Second Exam	15%
Research Paper	20%

Grading scale: 90 - 100% =A, 80 - 89% =B, 70 - 79% =C, 60 - 69% =D and <60% =F. Your grade will be based on the activities above and weighted accordingly.

## Case Discussions

Part of your assignments will consist of weekly case discussions via the Discussion tab of each unit related to the topic assigned. Participation in the case discussion for each chapter (unit) is **mandatory** and everyone is expected to provide insightful comments and recommendations as well as respond to at **least one other student's response**. This does NOT mean simply responding "I agree or disagree" but providing an explanation/reasoning as to your answer. Please watch for **announcements** in D2L and in emails for reminders relating to the discussions and any other requirements. **All discussion postings need to be posted at the latest 1-2 days before the due date in order to give everyone a chance to post a response to other students' comments.**

## Article Discussion Postings

You will be required to read a few articles related to the topics discussed in some of the chapters. A list of articles will be assigned at the beginning of the semester and will be available for you in the course content section of the course. You will need to respond to the question(s) asked related to these readings in the discussion tab that is created for each chapter. Please note that NOT all chapters have assigned readings. I will be sending out reminders regarding these assignments.

## Examinations:

Two exams will be given during the semester. The exams will cover specific chapters as we cover the material during the semester. The exams will consist of short answer or open-ended questions where you will need to apply the material learned. There are **no** make-ups for the two exams. If you plan to miss an exam due to extenuating circumstances, you must notify the professor **prior** to the exam to set up an alternate time to take the exam.

## Research Paper:

Each student will be required to write a research paper on an ethical dilemma. The purpose of the research paper is to engage students in ethical issues pertinent to business and the accounting profession. You may choose the topic you wish to write about however please refrain from using Enron, WorldCom, Lehman Brothers, Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae and Waste Management as these cases are already widely discussed today. You will need to get **approval** from the Professor on your choice of topic. Sample research papers will be provided in D2L so you are aware of the expectations of the paper. **There will be a 10 point penalty for all research papers submitted late.** Please see outline below for the content of the paper:

### 1. Introduction

- Introduce the chosen company and the ethical scandal.
- Briefly describe what occurred and the major stakeholders involved.

### 2. Background and Summary of the scandal

- Provide a detailed narrative of what happened.

- Who was involved (individuals, leadership, company, etc.)?
- What actions were taken (or not taken)?
- What were the consequences (legal, financial, reputational)?
- Identify all affected parties: employees, shareholders, customers, regulators, the public, etc.
- Discuss how each group was harmed or benefited by the unethical behavior.

### 3. Application of ethical theories:

- You must use at least two of the ethical theories (i.e teleology, Rest's EDM model) learned in class to explain the reason and circumstances the individuals involved were able to commit the unethical acts that took place.
- You must also discuss how the style of ethical leadership contributed to the individual(s) ability to act unethically.

### 4. Alternative Actions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations:

- Provide recommendations/preventive measures on reducing the likelihood of the unethical scenarios occurring in the future.
- What can businesses, regulators, or the profession learn from this scandal?
- What policy or cultural changes are necessary within the company or industry?
- How can ethics training, codes of conduct, or compliance systems be improved?

Graduate students will prepare **a min of 8 page paper NOT including cover page, abstract and references.** The document should use APA or MLA style, font size of 12 and one-inch margins and be double spaced. It should include an Abstract and Conclusion section within the paper. Students are expected to use proper grammar and English language and to be able to communicate effectively in a written format. If English is not your first language, please make sure to have it proof-read. You have the option of sending a draft for me to review and provide feedback before you submit the final research paper at the end of the semester.

Students are expected to use electronic means such as databases and journal articles to research their relevant topic. Several theories will also be explained throughout the semester so students are expected to use these theories to support their reasoning and arguments related to the ethical dilemma being researched. The paper must demonstrate a mastery of the basic writing mechanics, be free of grammatical errors and supported by proper references. Please follow APA guidelines when writing the research paper. Wikipedia and Investopedia are not proper academic sources therefore academic research articles should be your main source of research support. All papers will be submitted through D2L via the drop box. Papers in excess of 15% of originality will NOT be accepted.

### Plagiarism and AI Use

Plagiarism represents disregard for academic standards and is strictly against University policy. Plagiarized work will result in an "F" for the course and further administrative sanctions permitted under University policy. Guidelines for properly quoting another

individual's writing and the proper citing of sources can be found in the APA publication Manual.

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit in this course, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

### **University Policies and Procedures:**

***Students with Disabilities:*** The Americans with Disabilities act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

**Texas A&M University – Commerce, Gee Library, Room 162 , Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835, Fax (903) 468-8148, StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu**

***Ethics:*** Integrity is the hallmark of the accounting profession and will be stressed throughout the course. Any type of student breach of ethics, including but not limited to: illegal activity, dishonest conduct, cheating, plagiarism, or collusion, will result in failure of assignment or exam (F) and/or further academic sanction (i.e. failure of course (F), dismissal from class and/or referral to Dean of the College of Business and Technology. All students are required to read, sign and submit the Academic Honesty Policy form via the drop box the first week of class.

*“All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.”* (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).

***Non-discrimination:*** A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

***Other:*** University policy will be followed in regards to withdrawals during the semester. It is the student's responsibility to conform with the university rules relating to dropping or withdrawing from the course.

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community

resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

### **Email Policy**

This is an online course utilizing D2L. You may e-mail me as well as any student in the class by utilizing the e-mail feature in D2L. Please write the number of the course and your name on all correspondence and any homework you submit. I will be communicating with you using your myLeo account that is provided by the university. Please check your e-mail frequently. The professor is NOT responsible for any technical difficulties experienced during the course. The quickest manner in which to get in touch with me is through email as I check the class in the mornings and in the evenings only.

### **Concealed Carry Policy**

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

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## **Class Schedule and Assignments ACCT 530 – Summer I 2025 June 2, 2025 – July 3, 2025**

**The syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the professor as needed to meet the objectives of the course. It is not anticipated that there will be any substantive changes.**

### **Chapter 1 & 2 Ethical Reasoning & Cognitive Processes (June 2 – June 8, 2025)**

- Respond to discussion posting on the discussion board for the following cases: 1-9 (Operation Varsity Blues) and 2-6 (Harvey Weinstein).
- Read assigned article (Thomas, 2012) and respond to question on discussion board.
- Be sure to respond to at least one classmate's response for the case and the article discussions.

Assignments are due June 8th by 11:59 pm.

### **Chapter 3 & 4 Organizational Ethics, Corporate Governance and Professional Judgment (June 9 - June 15, 2022)**

- Read additional assigned reading (Hartmann & Carmenate) and answer questions on the discussion board.
- Discussion posting: Answer Cases 3-5 (Theranos) and 4-10 (Johnson Pharmaceuticals) on the discussion board.

Assignments are due June 15th by 11:59 pm.

### **Exam I (Chapters 1- 4) due June 18, 2025**

#### **Chapter 5 & 6 Fraud, Auditor Responsibilities and Regulatory and Professional Obligations of Auditors (June 16 – June 22, 2025)**

- Read additional assigned reading (Gosh et al. 2010) and answer question on discussion board
- Discussion posting: Answer Cases 5-10 (EPS Sports) and 6-9 (North Face), on the discussion board.

Assignments are due June 22 by 11:59 pm.

#### **Chapter 7 & 8 Earnings Management and Quality of Financial Reporting (June 23 – June 29, 2025)**

- Read additional assigned reading (Bedard et al 2004) and answer discussion posting
- Discussion posting: Answer Cases 7-5 (Kraft Heinz), and 8-3 (QSGI, Inc.) on the discussion board

Assignments are due June 29th by 11:59 pm.

### **Research Paper and Exam II (June 3 – July 3)**

Research paper is due **July 1st.**

Exam II (Chapters 5-8) is due **July 3rd.**