## Business Ethics and Public Policy

## Philosophy 305

**Spring 2025**

**Syllabus**

## Instructor

Me: Adam Swenson, Ph.D. (I prefer to be called ‘Adam’)

Email: adam.swenson@csun.edu

Phone: ~~818.677.2750~~ (I am flaky about checking voicemail, please email/use canvas)

Office: ~~Sierra Tower 504~~ Couch, next to dog

## Topics

Ethical issues related to sales, advertising, business analytics, and big data, with an emphasis on emerging issues related to privacy, information security, manipulation, and autonomy.

## Materials

All readings and other required materials for this course will be posted on Canvas. There is no required textbook for you to purchase.

Links posted on Canvas to course documents, written lectures, and anything else written by me for you will go to this Github repository: <https://github.com/AdamSwenson/biz-ethics-docs>. If you’re git-savvy, feel free to clone and pull the repository at the beginning of each unit; if you have no idea what I just said, please ignore and just click the links on Canvas.

## Office Hours

I will hold office hours each week virtually via Canvas. I will also be very happy to make individual appointments to meet via zoom or phone. For details see:

<https://github.com/AdamSwenson/biz-ethics-docs/blob/master/policy-pages/Office%20hours.docx?raw=true>

## Course grade breakdown

Your course grade will be determined as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **% of course grade** | **Number** | **% of course grade each** |
| Weekly journals | 5% | 15 | 0.33% |
| Other participation | 4% | ? | ? |
| Unit assignments | 91% | 7 | 13% |

91% Unit assignments

The course is divided into 7 two-week units. A medium length essay (approximately 1000 words) and 2 peer review assignments comprise each unit. Each unit is worth 13% of your course grade (so, 7 units \* 13% each = 91% of course grade). See <https://github.com/AdamSwenson/biz-ethics-docs/blob/master/policy-pages/SKAA_explanation.docx?raw=true> for details.

I have been writing an app that will plug in to Canvas and (hopefully) improve these assignments. It may be ready for use this semester. If it is, each unit will still be worth 13% but the point assignments which comprise that 13% may change. I will seek your input before finalizing any changes.

5% Weekly journal entries.

See the Journal Policy [https://github.com/AdamSwenson/biz-ethics-docs/blob/master/policy-pages/Journal policies.docx?raw=true](https://github.com/AdamSwenson/biz-ethics-docs/blob/master/policy-pages/Journal%20policies.docx?raw=true) for details.

4% Other participation / engagement activities

I will occasionally ask you to do things like surveys or discussions to help me improve the class or keep you engaged with the course. I’m not sure how many of these things there will be, but together they will comprise 4% of your grade.

## Warning

I’ve taught this course several times fully online. But there will still be a lot of experimentation and adjustment as we figure out how to improve it together. I promise I will do everything I can to make this class awesome enough to compensate for the inevitable bumps and snags. I will be extremely grateful for any and all suggestions about what doesn’t work as well as it could or other ways of improving it.

## Course policies

**Academic integrity**

I take violations of academic integrity very seriously. I do not simply give ‘F’s’ for such violations; I refer any and all suspected violations of academic integrity to the Dean of Student Affairs. If you have any questions about what counts as a violation of academic integrity, please consult the Student Conduct Code (<http://www.csun.edu/catalog/policies/student-conduct-code>), CSUN Catalog (<https://catalog.csun.edu/policies/academic-dishonesty/>), or ask me.

## Accommodations and accessibility

If you have a disability and need accommodations, please register with the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) office or the National Center on Deafness (NCOD). The DRES office is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110 and can be reached at 818.677.2684. NCOD is located on Bertrand Street in Jeanne Chisholm Hall and can be reached at 818.677.2611. If you would like to discuss your need for accommodations with me, please contact me to set up an appointment.

I want everyone to be able to participate equally and fully in class. I will do my best to ensure that all materials are accessible when posted. If I miss something or if you run into other difficulties, please let me know right away so I can fix it. My apologies in advance for any frustration my errors cause.

**Participation and conduct**

In this class we will all learn from each other (including me from you). Therefore consistent, universal, and high quality participation is absolutely vital and required.

We will vigorously and critically argue over difficult ideas. We all lose out when someone does not feel able to contribute to our discussions. Therefore, each of us is responsible for ensuring a safe and respectful environment for all students to express their reasoned opinions.

The Class Conduct Policy ([https://github.com/AdamSwenson/biz-ethics-docs/blob/master/policy-pages/Class conduct policy.docx?raw=true](https://github.com/AdamSwenson/biz-ethics-docs/blob/master/policy-pages/Class%20conduct%20policy.docx?raw=true)) describes our rules, guidelines, and handling of violations.

*By remaining enrolled in this course, you agree to conduct yourself in accordance with the Class Conduct Policy and its revisions.*

**Email and Canvas communications**

All communications from me will be sent to you via Canvas or via email to your CSUN email address. You are responsible for the contents of these communications. Therefore, you must check your CSUN email and Canvas messages frequently.

## Grade disputes

Grading is a difficult process and sometimes mistakes get made. I want you to receive the correct grade and to understand why you received a particular grade. Therefore, if you ever have any questions or concerns about any grade, I want you to discuss it with me. To encourage you to do so, I promise your grade will never be lowered after such a conversation. Any requests for grade reevaluations must take place within 10 working days of receiving your grade. After 10 days, the grade becomes permanent.

## Late assignments

Different types of assignment have different late policies which depend on the purpose of the assignment and various logistical considerations. The late policy will be included in the announcement for each assignment.

## Plus/minus grading

I will use plus/minus grading in this course.

## Savings clause

Every aspect of the course, including requirements, policies, and practices, is subject to change at my sole discretion. For any substantive matter (i.e., significantly affecting grades) I will not make changes without requesting input from the class. The version of this syllabus posted on Canvas will always be the current and authoritative version.

## Scheduling

All dates are subject to change. Any changes to the course plan and assigned readings will be announced in class and updated on the Canvas. I will also post various supplementary materials. It is your responsibility to be up to date on all changes. Thus please check Canvas frequently.

## Title IX / Sexual misconduct disclosures

As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help maintain a safe learning environment on our campus. In the event that you choose to write, speak or otherwise disclose about having experienced sexual misconduct/sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking and specify that this violence occurred while you or the perpetrator were a CSUN student, federal and state laws require that I, as a “responsible employee,” notify our campus Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator will contact you to inform you of your rights and options as a survivor and connect you with support resources, including possibilities for holding accountable the person who harmed you. Know that you will not be forced to share information and your level of involvement will be your choice.

CSUN’s Title IX Coordinator is located at:

University Hall, Room 285

Phone: (818) 677-2077

If you do not want the Title IX Coordinator notified, instead of disclosing the experience to me, you can speak **confidentially** with our Campus Care Advocate.\*

CSUN’s Campus Care Advocates can be contacted here:

Klotz Student Health Center, Room 140G

Phone: (818) 677-7492  
E-Mail: Careadvocates@csun.edu

For more information regarding your university rights and options as a survivor of sexual misconduct/sexual violence, please visit the University’s Title IX website at: http://www.csun.edu/shinalight

\*Note: If it is determined that an alleged perpetrator poses an imminent threat to the broader campus community or if person(s) under 18 years of age are involved, our Campus Care Advocate is required to notify our Department of Police Services.

## Curricular information

## Official course description

*Prerequisite: Completion of the lower division writing requirement.* Examination of private and public economic institutions through the lens of moral philosophy. Emphasis on real-world issues that concern the conduct of individuals and businesses in contemporary society, such as hiring and job discrimination, unionization, exploitation, workplace conditions, automation, corporate responsibility, or the environment. Regular written assignments are required. (Available for General Education, D1 Social Sciences or E Lifelong Learning.) (WI)

**Role in the General Education Program**

*1. Social Sciences and California and Local Government (Section D1)*

*Goal:* Students will understand the complexities of social relations and human experiences and the ways in which they have changed over time, as well as the nature, scope and the systematic study of human behaviors and societies. Students will understand and reflect upon United States history, institutions and ideals; the Constitution of the United States; and the principles of state and local government as established in California.

*Student Learning Outcomes*

Students will:

1. Explain how social scientists conduct the systematic study of social relations, human experiences and patterns of change over time.
2. Analyze and explain the multiple perspectives found in the social sciences that underlie debates on important historical and contemporary issues.
3. Apply appropriate social scientific methods to collect data, analyze, evaluate, explain and/or solve problems in social relations and human behavior.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of how social problems impact individuals, communities and societies.

*2. Lifelong Learning GE Requirement (Section E)*

*Goal*: Students will develop cognitive, physical and affective skills which will allow them to become more integrated and well-rounded individuals within various physical, social, cultural and technological environments and communities.

*Student Learning Outcomes*

Students will:

1. Identify and actively engage in behaviors conducive to individual health, well-being, or development, and understand the value of maintaining these behaviors throughout their lifespan;
2. Identify and apply strategies leading to health, well-being, or development for community members of diverse populations;
3. Apply the knowledge and skills of science and technology and evaluate how they impact individuals, the community, and/or society.

*3. Writing Intensive GE Requirement*

*Goal*: Students will develop their abilities to express themselves and the knowledge they have obtained through practicing various forms of writing within different disciplinary contexts. Writing intensive courses will build upon the skills gained in the Analytical Reading and Expository Writing section of Basic Skills. In each WI course students will be required to complete writing assignments totaling a minimum of 2500 words.

*Student Learning Outcomes*

Students will:

1. Develop and clearly define their ideas through writing;
2. Ethically integrate sources of various kinds into their writing;
3. Compose texts through drafting, revising, and completing a finished product;
4. Express themselves through their writing by posing questions, making original claims, and coherently structuring complex ideas;
5. Revise their writing for greater cogency and clarity;
6. Utilize adopted communication modes and documentation styles of specific disciplines (MLA, APA, Chicago, CBE, etc.) where appropriate.