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# CPRE 394 ETHICS ESSAY

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## PURPOSE OF HAVING/FOLLOWING “CODE OF ETHICS”

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It is very important to have a code of ethics when you are a part of an organization of large group. This document defines good behavior between all members of the group. It also allows you to have a good way of defining what it means to be ethical in your group/organization. Oftentimes, our actions can be considered a part of a “gray” area in terms of ethics and it can be hard to know what is okay and what is not okay. Having a code of ethics allows us to clearly state these boundaries.

Once a code of ethics has been defined, it is important to follow it. The code tells us what actions are ethical and what actions are not. If we are to function as a good organization, then having a code of ethics to tell us what is okay is needed to increase productivity and efficiency. This also protects members who are following the code and isolates members who are not following it. This makes it easier to identify members of an organization who should not be a part of the organization due to ethics violations.

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## ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

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When I am faced with an ethical situation, I try to first figure out who is involved in the situation and how my actions can affect them. If there is a code of ethics present, I will try to follow that as well. I try to find the best way to find a solution to the situation that helps all member involved while still adhering to the code of ethics. If there isn't a code of ethics present, I still try to make a decision that helps everyone out, but I use my own moral compass in place of the missing code of ethics.

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## GROUP CASE STUDY

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My group discussed the Volkswagen engine emission fraud. We went through the different steps that Volkswagen performed and discussed if those steps were ethical or not. We all had a similar opinion on the matter and we all agreed that there was clearly unethical behavior going on. Volkswagen had members of leadership who decided this unethical behavior and this decision propagated down to all lower level members. After choosing to do they, they also chose to try to cover up how widespread this issue was. Our group came to a consensus on what the problem was, but in this case study, the facts had already been revealed about the unethical behavior. There was not a better decision to make except to not have tried to fake the emissions test in the first place.

## VIRTUE OF ETHICS

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I think all 6 virtues relate closely to our case study. There was a clear violation of all virtues by Volkswagen Upper Management. Out of the 6 virtues, I think that Honesty, Responsibility, and Integrity are the 3 most important virtues in this case study. Honesty clearly relates because Volkswagen was not honest with the public and tried to hide their fraud. Responsibility relates because Volkswagen did not take responsibility for the problem until the problem was found to be very widespread and evidence was collected against them. Finally, Integrity relates to the case because Volkswagen committed this fraud in the first place. If they were using this virtue, they would have known that this was not the right decision to make in the first place.

The other three virtues are not irrelevant in this case, but I believe they are less important. Charity was broken in this case because Volkswagen was not thinking of the public and how their actions contributed to Global Warming, something that is bad for everyone. But I feel like this is less important than the other three I chose. Fidelity also relates to someone because Volkswagen was not faithful to the public when misleading them about their engines' emissions. But again, I feel like the other three above were stronger. Finally, Self-Discipline relates to the case because Volkswagen was clearly indulging themselves when they made the decision to fake their emission results. This was in their own self-interest alone and no one else's. But again, I think the other 3 virtues are more related to the case.

I think the six virtues listed in the "Virtues of Ethics" cover this case study effectively. The three that I chose above are all closely related to the case and I think cover the aspects of the case study. The main issue was misinformation and Volkswagen misleading the public. This is covered in the Honesty and Integrity virtues.