# Business Ethics Exam 1

The guidelines are as follows:

1. The exam consists of SIX questions. However, you should only answer **THREE** of them.
2. Each essay should be between **500** and **1000 words.** I won’t penalize you for going over, though please make an effort to be concise as is possible, given the material. Basically, make things “as simple as possible, but no simpler.”
3. Direct quotes from the book or handouts can be **cited** simply as (page number or handout name). If you choose to use outside resources, please use a standard citation style (such as APA, MLA, or Chicago), and provide a full citation. As a rule, **no more than 15%** of your paper should be quotes.
4. Please don’t use the words or ideas of others without proper attribution. Please see the syllabus for details on the policy regarding **plagiarism and academic integrity.** I regularly use [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) to check for plagiarism or related issues.
5. Since the goal of the exam is to demonstrate how well *you* understand the class material, you should try to **use your own words and examples to explain what you’ve learned.** Essays that simply reproduce the handouts will not receive good grades. Nor will essays that simply “give your thoughts” on an issue (without demonstrating knowledge of the class material, and the ability to apply it to novel cases).
6. Please submit your exam as a SINGLE MS WORD file to the D2L assignment folder. Each essay should start on a new page. I will grade exams on a **first-submitted, first-graded** basis. Please don’t submit your exam until you are ready for it to be graded.

**Note for online students:** It is OK to use what you’ve written for the discussion board as a “rough draft” for the exam answers. However, you’ll probably want to edit/expand on this, as the grading criteria for the exam require more than do the grading criteria for those pots.

## The Questions

Answer THREE of the following questions:

1. Choose ONE case study from chapters 1, 2, or 4 and write an analysis of it. You should follow the case study guidelines in “How to Respond to Case Studies” (available in D2L).
2. Offer a self-analysis of yourself as an ethical thinker, especially as this applies to your professional life. Which ethical theory (or theories) do you tend to rely on the most? In what sorts of situations or circumstances are you most prone to fall short of your ethical ideals (as we all do)? **Ethical theories** include consequentialism/utilitarianism, virtue ethics, deontology, social contract theory, etc.
3. Carefully explain Carr’s argument (pp. 36-41) that it is morally OK to bluff in business, using your own words and examples. Then, offer a critique of this argument.
4. Choose ONE theory/idea about justice covered in chapter 4 (or the related lecture notes) and explain it to the best of your ability. Now, apply it to a current issue involving the economy or business world in some way (this could be anything from taxes to health care to minimum wage...).
5. Write a short story examining issues of honesty and trust in a business setting. Your short story should somehow bring in ideas/information from the course readings and lecture notes.
6. Conduct a 25- to 30-minute conversation about business ethics with someone (not in this class) with at least 10 years of experience in business (preferably in a role such as a manager, owner, accountant, etc.). In this interview, you should choose one or two ideas that you’ve found especially interesting in class (such as those relating to honesty, justice, etc.), and carefully explain what these ideas to the person (it’s your job to “teach” these ideas, even if the person is already familiar with them). Now, talk to the person about the applicability of these principles/ideas to their own line of work. Write up a description of the conversation, together with some reflections on what you learned while doing it.

## Exam Grading Rubric

Each essay is worth TEN points, and the whole exam is worth 30 points. Your grade will depend on how well you do each of the following:

1. How well are you able to **explain** the relevant course material? (Very important)
2. To what extent can you make an (evidence-based) **argument** for a **thesis?** (Very important)
3. To what extent do your paper’s **structure** (e.g. intro/body paragraphs/conclusion) and **language** (e.g. grammar, style) make it easy for a reader to follow? (Important to the extent that they impact the two criteria above)

The grading criteria are as follows:

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| Grade | Description |
| *0* | No answer submitted, or evidence of plagiarism. |
| *1-4* | Significantly below minimal requirements, in terms of content (e.g., doesn’t address the question at all), or word count. |
| *5-6* | Fails to meet minimal requirements in terms of content (e.g., addresses a related question) or word count. Essays that simply report what you “believe” or “feel,” without providing an *argument* may receive this grade. |
| *7* | Meets minimal requirements in terms of both content (it clearly addresses the assigned question) and word count. However, there may be some significant errors or omissions when it comes to the explanation of relevant class material, or providing a detailed response to the question. |
| *8* | Fully meets both content and word count requirements, and provides satisfactory explanations of relevant arguments and concepts from class. There are no majorerrors in argumentation or explanatory gaps. |
| *9-10* | Goes *significantly* above the minimal requirements. The essay’s treatment of course material shows a full mastery of the relevant content, and provides a creative, well-thought out response to it. |

I will grade essays in the order they are submitted (first-come, first-serve). Grades go up in whole-number increments (there is no .5).

## Tips on Writing Philosophy

Philosophy essays can be a bit different from other sorts of writing. Here are some general tips:

1. You should have an **introduction** that concisely introduces the topic, and a **thesis sentence** that clearly states your position. Philosophy papers often begin with theses of the form “I will argue X because Y.”
2. When discussing tough ethical or philosophical issues, **avoid phrases like “I feel,” “I think,” or “I believe.”** Part of taking these issues seriously involves granting that one’s actions and beliefs have consequences for other people, and that (for this reason) they need to be defended with the sorts of ***arguments*** and ***reasons*** that these other people could actually accept. For this reason, appeals to your *own* emotions, religious beliefs, etc. are generally (though not always) inappropriate.
3. Pretend you are writing to **an intelligent and interested (but relatively ignorant) 12-year-old** who doesn’t know anything about the subject (rather than your philosophy professor). This means you’ll need to write clearly, explain new concepts, and offer interesting, memorable examples. A significant portion of your grade will be based on your ability to explain the arguments/concepts we’ve been studying using your own words and examples.
4. Your essay should have multiple paragraphs, each of which has a clear **topic sentence** that clearly relates back to your thesis. When writing philosophy, it’s easy to get “off topic.” So, always ask yourself: is this paragraph helping me provide evidence for my thesis? If the answer is “no,” it should be cut or revised.
5. You should always consider possible **objections** to your thesis. Ask yourself: “How would a smart, well-educated opponent respond to my argument?” In some cases, this might be a real author who you can cite; in other cases, you’ll have to play your own “devil’s advocate.”
6. The conclusion should help the reader appreciate the way your argument fits into the “big picture.” For example, what exactly do you take yourself to have shown? How does this relate to similar cases? What might be the “next ste” of this argument, if you had more time and space?