# Guide for Online Students (Business Ethics)

Welcome to PHIL 2130: Business Ethics! This document provides the information that specifically relevant to online students. Please read the following material *carefully,* and feel free to let me know if you have any questions.

## First Things First

Before doing anything else, you should do the following things:

1. Carefully review the **syllabus** for information about grading criteria, and the course calendar.
2. Please complete the **syllabus quiz** (there should be a link on D2L). This is due on **Friday.** You can take this up to two times (only the highest score counts).
3. Go to the course discussion board and introduce yourself to your group members in the “**Five-Fingered Introduction”** activity (see below).

**The “Five Fingered Introduction.”** Please include the following information. You should aim to write around 300 words (*note:* this is shorter than your normal post):

1. (Index finger) Your name, major, year in school, and professional goals.
2. (Middle finger) Someone (either real or fictional) you look up to as an ethical role model, and an explanation of why this is.
3. (Ring finger) Someone or something that you "love" or care about deeply. (What motivates you in life? In your career?).
4. (Pinky) Are there are any "shortcomings" that you want to improve upon in this class? Which skills, if any, do you want to work on? What topics do you want to know more about?
5. (Thumb) What is a special talent, ability, or experience that distinguishes you from other people? Tell us a little bit about this.

(Photo) If you can manage it, try to attach a favorite photo of yourself to your discussion post. Please try to finish this by **Tuesday.** (If you join the class late, just get it done ASAP).

**Then…** Choose TWO of your group members' introductions to reply to, and note something that you have in common with them. Please try to finish this by **Thursday.** After this, I’d encourage you to get started on the material for weeks 1 and 2 (which you can find in the “Content” area of D2L).

## How Do I Get Ahold of You?

If you have question that you think will be of interest to other students, please post it in the **“Questions for the Instructor”** portion of the discussion board. Here is my other contact info:

**Email:** [Brendan.Shea@rctc.edu](mailto:Brendan.Shea@rctc.edu).During the work week (Mon-Fri), I should respond within 48 hours (and I’m usually faster than this). If you don’t hear from me by then, please resend the message. Before emailing me, please be sure to double-check that your question isn’t answered on the syllabus (or in this document).

**Phone:** (507) 722-1146. During office hours (see syllabus), I can be reached at this number. I can also get text messages on this number, but I only check them once a day or so (Mon-Fri), so the same 48-hour response window applies.

**Office at RCTC campus:** Memorial Hall 435. I realize many online students have schedules that prevent them from meeting during normal work hours. If this is the case for you, and you’d still like to meet, please let me know, and we’ll try to work something out.

## Weekly Schedule and Due Dates

A “week” runs from Sunday morning to Saturday night. The list of readings and assignments for each week can be found in your syllabus, and I will generally post this to D2L at the beginning of the week, as well. In a “normal” week of class (where there isn’t an exam), the due dates will be as follows:

**Tuesday:** Your 500+ word reading response essay is due. These should be posted to the D2L discussion board. Details about the requirements for these posts are provided below. You will have the chance to revise and expand these essays for your exams.

**Thursday night:** Your two 100+ word comments to other students’ response essays are due.

**Friday:** If there is a quiz, it will generally be due on Friday.

**Saturday:** Please make sure to read (and briefly reply to) those who have left comments on your post.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due at **11:30 PM**. The first week of the class is NOT a normal week—please see above for information about the assignments for this week.

## Discussion Board Posts

**What should I write about?** Your discussion board posts serve as rough drafts for your exams. So, each week, you should choose ONE exam question to write an essay in response to. I encourage you to write on a topic related to the week’s reading/videos/materials.

**What are the minimal requirements for discussion board posts?** A good post should

1. RESPOND fully to the question(s) asked,
2. provide EVIDENCE of having *carefully* done all of the reading (including textbook chapters, handouts, videos, and so on),
3. meet the MINIMAL WORD COUNT (of 500 of your *own* words),
4. use COMPLETE SENTENCES and be divided into PARAGRAPHS, and
5. properly CITE any sources used (any citation style works; there’s no need to cite class handouts/books besides noting the page number or handout title).

Finally, please be POLITE to one another! It’s fine (and good!) to disagree about an issue, but make sure to keep your focus on the *issue* and not on the *person.*

**How long should I spend on this?** I expect students to spend at least TWO HOURS composing response essays. I realize I can’t enforce this, but everyone (you, your classmates, etc.) really will get a lot more out of the class if everyone does their part and puts in a genuine effort.

**Will writing more help my grade?** If the material you add is relevant to answering the question(s), it can definitely help. However, rambling, long quotes, or repeating yourself won’t help your grade. Because of time constraints, I generally stop reading at 1,000 words or so (so no ten-page papers!).

**How will my response by graded?** The discussion board posts will be graded on a scale of 0 to 5, with a 4 representing a “standard” grade for a satisfactory response. There are no intermediate grades (of 3.5, 4.5, etc.). Here are the grading criteria.

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| Grade | Description |
| 0 | No post submitted, or plagiarism (this includes *any uncited use of information besides that provided in the notes/books*). |
| 1 | A response was submitted, but fails to address course material or add to the course discussion in a meaningful way. Very short or off topic posts may receive this grades. |
| 2 | The response falls significantly below (<50%) minimal expectations. **Essays that simply report what “you believe” about the issue without seriously engaging the course material may receive grades of 2 or 3.** |
| 3 | The response falls below (50%-99%) of minimal expectations. The essay may fall short of the word count or fail to address relevant course material. |
| 4 – Standard | Good response! The response meets the minimal word count, and shows significant engagement with course material. The post provides convincing evidence that you have thought carefully about this week’s material. |
| 5 | Excellent! The essay exceeds minimum requirements. While there is no single way of doing this, it might involve (1) creatively extending the class material to an original case, (2) bringing in outside research/experience relevant to the matter at hand, (3) providing an original criticism/argument against the reading, etc. Doing these things successfully often (but not always!) requires exceeding the minimal word count by a significant margin. |
| Comments Penalty (-1) | Each missed, short, or inappropriate comment will result in a -1 penalty. On the other hand, if you leave especially helpful comments, you may receive +1 bonus points. |

**Relationship to exams.** You’ll eventually be revising and expanding some of your discussion board posts for the exams. As opposed to the discussion board posts (when I’m mainly concerned about good-faith effort), I’ll also be looking much more closely at things like accuracy, attention to detail, and so on.