

Philosophy 323G
Engineering Ethics
Dr. Danny Scoccia
NMSU—Spring 2007

Course objectives

This course exposes engineering students to some of the moral issues that they can expect to confront in the course of their careers as engineers. These include issues of public safety and acceptable risk; honesty in research and testing; loyalty to one's employer and the ethics of whistle-blowing; bribery, gifts, and conflicts of interest; the duty to respect client confidentiality; and duties to the environment. We will try to formulate reasonable criteria for what counts as responsible engineering practice by engaging in critical reflection on some fictitious and several factual case studies. Students should emerge from this course with a better understanding of what it is to be a responsible and ethical engineer.

Grading-course requirements

i) 10 homework assignments	10 pts each	100 points
(These will pose questions about the assigned reading. Each homework should be between a quarter and a half page in length, typed and double spaced).		
ii) A midterm		60 points
(3 pages long; made up of 3 or 4 short answer essays; assigned at about week 7).		
iii) 2 short essays	50 pts. each	100 points
(About 2 pages long)		
iv) Oral presentation		40 points
v) Final exam		100 points

All of the written assignments will be distributed and must be turned in through the WebCT site for this course.

Attendance policy and office hours

Attendance is mandatory; roll will be taken. If you miss more than 3 classes without a valid excuse, you'll be penalized a half grade; more than 6, a full grade. Also, if you decide that this class is not your cup of tea, then you must drop it yourself. Don't assume that the instructor will automatically drop you after you stop attending lectures or turning in written assignments.

My official office hours for the semester are Tues, Weds, and Thurs. 1-2. My office is Room 334, Breland Hall. My campus phone number is 646-1441. My e-mail (the most reliable means of contacting me) is dscoccia@nmsu.edu.

Course readings

The primary text for this course is Deborah G. Johnson (ed.), *Ethical Issues in Engineering* (Prentice Hall, 1991). The numbered readings below are from this text.

Lesson plan for semester

The following schedule is approximate and tentative. The instructor reserves the right to make minor changes to it.

Weeks 1-4 (1/18-2/8)	Engineering as a profession. The professional ethics codes of the NSPE and other engineering societies. Similarities between the ethical duties of engineers and other professionals. Introduction to Kantian and utilitarian approaches to defining our moral duties. Readings: # 5, 6, 10, 11, 12.
Weeks 5-7 (2/13-3/1)	The duty to hold “paramount” the public’s health, safety, and welfare. Reading: #14, 17.
Weeks 8-10 (3/6-3/29)	The duty to be a loyal or faithful employee, and the limits of that duty; whistleblowing; confidentiality agreements. Readings: #20, 22, 23
Weeks 11-13 (4/3-4/19)	Avoiding conflicts of interest; other duties to the client and/or employer. Readings: #25, 25
Weeks 14-15 (4/24-5/3)	Bribes and gift giving. Readings: #27, 28.

Plagiarism and Cheating

University regulations require me to inform you that plagiarism (both “intentional” and “unintentional”) and cheating will not be tolerated and could possibly result in a F for the course. For a definition of “plagiarism,” go to:

<http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/plagiarismforstudents.htm>

Non-Discrimination & Sexual Harrassment Policies; Students With Disabilities

Feel free to call Jerry Nevarez, Director of Institutional Equity, at 505-646-3635 with any questions you may have about NMSU's Non-Discrimination Policy and complaints of discrimination, including sexual harassment.

Feel free to call Michael Armendariz, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, at 505-646-6840 with any questions you may have on student issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. All medical information will be treated confidentially.

