# Course Syllabus: CNST 101 Online

## COURSE TITLE AND DESCRIPTION

*Ethics and Construction (3 credits).* A brief introduction to the philosophy of ethics and how it applies to the construction industry. No prerequisite required.

## INSTRUCTOR

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## COURSE DELIVERY

Blackboard, available at:
https://blackboard.indstate.edu/webapps/login/

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this course is to fulfill the Ethics and Social Responsibility (ESR) requirement of the Foundational Studies (FS) 2010 Program. It is not necessary to major in construction to take this course. Part of the course is dedicated to learning some of the more important roles in the construction industry so students can apply classical ethical theories to realistic case studies.

Traditionally, ethics was defined as the study of morality. Today, ethics is usually considered to be a set of commonly held rules established by a group. The rules may be published or merely understood. Ethical dilemmas have competing but equally compelling values. Ethics attempts to describe a balance between opposing views.

This is a course in applied ethics. The course attempts to apply ethical reasoning to problems encountered in the real world. This course uses the construction industry to provide case studies. Case studies provide an ideal way to think critically about ethical dilemmas. This course does not attempt to teach *what* to think so much as *how* to think about ethics.

## FOUNDATIONAL STUDIES OBJECTIVES (FS)

After completing this course, students will be able to:
1. Critically evaluate the ideas of others
2. Demonstrate the skills for effective citizenship and stewardship.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical implications of decisions and actions.
4. Express ethical reasoning effectively, professionally, and persuasively.

## ETHICS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OBJECTIVES (ESR)

After completing this course, students will be able to:
1. Understand the historical and philosophical bases of ethical decision making and social responsibility.
2. Use independent thinking, critical analysis, and reasoned inquiry when assessing personal, professional, and societal issues.
3. Demonstrate the ability to make personal and professional decisions by applying knowledge and skills obtained from the study of ethics and theories of social responsibility.
4. Articulate how an ethical framework and understanding of social responsibility shape personal actions.

## CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES (CM)

After completing this course, students will be able to:
1. Evaluate ethical issues in the construction industry.
2. Identify roles and responsibilities of parties to a construction contract.
3. Identify project management roles and responsibilities.

Students may vary in their competency levels with these abilities. You can expect to acquire these abilities only if you comply with the following:
- Faithfully log in every week
- Participate in weekly discussion boards
- Read and study all of the assigned text
- Participate in community engagement
- Complete all of the assignments and submit them on time

## REQUIRED READING

*Philosophy Made Simple, 2$^{nd}$ ed.* (1993) by Popkin and Stroll. Doubleday, New York. ISBN: 0-385-42533-3
*Program on Construction Ethics*,  American Institute of Constructors. Copies may be obtained from the AIC at their web site:
http://www.professionalconstructor.org/About/Publications/EthicsManual

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are expected to conform to the *Code of Student Conduct*:
http://www.indstate.edu/sci/docs/CodeConduct.pdf
You are not to use the work of another as your own. This is plagiarism.

## ACADEMIC FREEDOM

*Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject.*
The preceding comes from the American Association of University Professors statement on academic freedom. Though the entire statement speaks to many issues, it is this portion on the conduct of the course that is most relevant. For the purpose of Foundational Studies courses this means that faculty have the right to conduct their class in a fashion they deem appropriate as long as the material presented meets the learning objectives specified by the entire faculty

## TECHNOLOGY AND TIME REQUIREMENTS

You will need an Internet connection that is faster than "dial-up". The faster, the better. It should be in your home. If you have to go somewhere like a library or café to get connected, you will not have enough time to successfully complete the course. You will need to dedicate 6-9 hours per week to successfully complete all of the assignments. You will need a browser and a good word processor installed on your computer. You should login to the course web site and check your email at least three times a week.

## SUPPORTED BROWSERS, PLUGINS, AND OPERATING SYSTEMS

This is a matrix about supported browsers and operating system for Blackboard. It provides a very brief chart to check if a particular browser and operating system is compatible with Blackboard.

http://kb.blackboard.com/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=71860304

For best performance, Blackboard prefers Mozilla Firefox. To download this free web browser, go to:
http://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/.

While using Internet Explorer will likely work most of the time, there are situations when they do not get along well. For example, if you try to open a Microsoft Word document via Bb with IE, then you will get a dialogue box

requiring you to log into Bb again. If you do so you will be able to open the file without issue, but it's an extra and unnecessary step if instead you use Firefox.

## PARTICIPATION

You cannot meet the objectives of this course by being a passive learner. Participation in an online course is "about posting something of relevance in a current discussion" (Hamilton, 2010). You will have weekly discussion boards and activities where you are expected to thoughtfully contribute to the conversation and learning by posting original ideas and responding to your colleagues using the terminologies and insights learned from our readings and activities. Your posts should have depth and meaning so that they bolster the conversation rather than stagnate it. Simply agreeing or disagreeing without providing additional commentary does not warrant strong participation. Remember, we are a community of learners, and we have a lot to glean from each other!

Reference

Hamilton, D. (2010).The online student's user manual: Everything you need to know to be a successful online college student. Author.

## AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT

Indiana State University seeks to provide effective services and accommodation for qualified individuals with documented disabilities. If you need an accommodation because of a documented disability, you are required to register with Disability Support Services at the beginning of the semester. Contact the Director of Student Support Services. The telephone number is 237-2301 and the office is located in Gillum Hall, room 202A. The Director will ensure that you receive all the additional help that Indiana State offers.
If you will require assistance during an emergency evacuation, notify your instructor immediately. Look for evacuation procedures posted in your classrooms.

## DISTANCE LEARNING CONCIERGE

The Distance Learning Student Services Concierge can help you with your distance education needs, including being an advocate as you work with numerous ISU departments and putting you in touch with various distance services.
http://www.indstate.edu/distance/studentServices.shtml

## ISU TUTORIAL SERVICES

ISU offers free tutorial services to all students in all subjects. Contact the center for more information on how they support distance students (812-237-3615).
http://www.indstate.edu/cfss/

## ISU WRITING CENTER

The ISU Writing Center can be located at:
http://libguides.indstate.edu/content.php?pid=18359&sid=125822

Location: Cunningham Memorial Library
812.237.2989
Hours:
11-9      Monday-Thursday
11-4      Friday
4-10      Sunday

## EMAIL COMMUNICATION

If you send me an email, you must put CNST 101 in the subject heading of the email. Provide your name, use professional email etiquette, and be clear and descriptive in your question, problem, or issue and I will respond in a prompt manner. Failure to put CNST 101 in the subject line may result in a lengthy delay to your response. It is requested that you check your email at least every other day to stay current and avoid missing any important

announcements or other correspondence. Missing important communications may jeopardize your success in the course. To email your instructors or colleagues, you can access the Send Email feature through Blackboard via the Tools button.

## ATTENDANCE

Attendance is important in an online class so that you don't miss out on vital information and communication. To accomplish this, you should log into this Blackboard course at least every other day to check for any new updates, announcements, postings, etc. One quick way to access all new elements is to utilize the "What's New" block on the Home Page button. This will provide a quick reference to anything that your instructor or colleagues have posted as well as any assignments that your instructors have recently assessed.

## POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Late assignments will be accepted, but the grade will be reduced one letter grade for every class day it is late.
2. Community engagement and experiential learning activities must be approved by the instructor.

## TOPICAL OUTLINE

Ethical Theories
    Classical versus Modern Ethics
    Platonism
    Aristotle: the doctrine of the mean
    Hedonism: the philosophy of Epicurus
    Cynicism
    Stoicism
    Christian ethics
    The philosophy of Spinoza
    Utilitarianism
    Kantian ethics

Classification of Ethical Theories
    Virtue (Character)
    Duty
    Principles
    Consequences

Project Participants

Organization of Companies

Project Delivery Systems
    Design-Bid-Build
    Construction Manager as Agent
    Construction Manager at Risk
    Design-Build

Case Studies

## ANNOTATED SCHEDULE

| Topic | Pedagogy and Assessment | Learning Objectives |
| --- | --- | --- |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ethical Theories | Discussion boards. Students will read discussions in the text about classical ethical theories. Students will then evaluate each theory in a discussion board noting the advantages and disadvantages of each. Students will be required to identify each of the classical theories with one of the four classifications. Students will be assessed based on the quantity and quality of their posts. | FS1, ESR1 |
| Project Participants | Students will contribute to a WIKI that will describe the roles and responsibilities of the major participants in a construction project. Students will be required to research the different roles using a variety of sources and citing those sources to the instructor. The WIKI will then be used as a reference for the case studies. Students will be assessed on the quality of their contributions and citations. | FS1, CM2, CM 3 |
| Organization of Design and Construction Companies | As described in Project Participants above, students will contribute to a WIKI describing the roles and responsibilities of people within design and construction companies. Students will be assessed on the quality of their contributions and citations. | FS1, CM2, CM3 |
| Project Delivery Systems | Students will contribute to a WIKI describing the four most widely used construction project delivery systems. The delivery systems are controlled by the contracts between the participants, which in turn define the roles and responsibilities of the participants. Students need to know this to understand what is expected of each participant. Students will be assessed on the quality of their contributions and citations. | FS1, CM2, CM3 |
| Case Studies | Students will be assigned to groups to evaluate case studies provided by the construction industry (AIC). Students will present an ethical argument consisting of a claim, reason(s), theory, and warrant. In turn, these will be evaluated by classmates in a discussion board or WIKI. Students will be assessed on the quantity and quality of their posts. | FS1, FS3, FS4, ESR1, ESR2, ESR3, ESR4, CM1 |
| Community Engagement | Students will be required to participate in an approved activity which makes a meaningful contribution to the community. Students will be assessed based on the quality of their journal and personal reflections on the ethical implications of the activity. | FS2, FS3, FS4, ESR2, ESR3, ESR4 |
| Course Papers 1 & 2 | Students will be required to write two papers based on the case studies they had to evaluate. The papers will develop from the text readings, their own research, and feedback from classmates and instructor. The papers will be assessed on clarity of the argument, application of historical theories, persuasive presentation, grammar, and punctuation. | FS3, FS4, ESR1, ESR2, ESR3, ESR4, CM1 |

## CLASSICAL ETHICAL THEORIES

Students will be required to read the descriptions and criticisms of classical ethical theories given in the text. A discussion board or WIKI will be provided for each theory. A different theory will be discussed each week.

## W I K I S

A WIKI is a website which allows users to add, modify, or delete its content using a web browser. Students will use WIKIs in this course to identify and define the following: project participants, various roles within design and construction companies, and project delivery types. WIKIs will also be used to discuss the case studies. The final products will be a collaboration of all students in the course. You may use any source you believe to have credibility. You are expected to participate and contribute. Do your homework. The WIKIs in this course should serve as reliable references for students enrolled in the course as well as anyone else who may be interested. Accuracy is paramount. Strive to be as accurate as possible. Double-check your references. You do not want to post misinformation.

## C A S E   S T U D I E S

Case studies from the construction industry will be assigned from the *Program on Construction Ethics* published by the AIC. (See required reading.) The case studies will be evaluated and discussed in groups using the WIKI feature in Blackboard. One student will evaluate the ethical dilemma presented by the case study using the "Case Study: How to construct an argument" outline or protocol provided by the instructor, while the other students in the group will respond to the validity of the argument (or reasoning). Please bear in mind that all responses should be polite and constructive. The discussion is about ideas—not personalities. The human ego should play no part in these discussions. Students will rotate presenting their arguments each week. The argument is due by Thursday; responses are due by Sunday evening. MISSING DUE DATES WILL LOWER YOUR GRADE.

## C O U R S E   P A P E R S   1   A N D   2

You will write an essay about the ethics and recommended behavior of the person(s) assigned to you in the case studies. You will be given at least two case studies to evaluate. The essays must be typed and approximately a 1000 words in length. Begin with what you learned by your reading and responding to feedback from your colleagues in the discussion boards. Your essay will reflect what you have learned through this process. Revise, edit, and polish your final response as you see fit. Along with the essay, submit the "How to Construct an Argument" outline on which the essay is based. Grades will be based on the clarity of the argument, application of ethical theories, accuracy, grammar, and punctuation. Grades will be lowered for late submittals.

## C O M M U N I T Y   E N G A G E M E N T   /   E X P E R I E N T I A L   L E A R N I N G

Prior approval by the instructor is required to receive full credit for these activities. You will need to document your activities in a journal and relate the activities to ethical issues discussed in the class. Expect to dedicate about eight hours for this activity.

Community engagement activities include those organized or approved by Indiana State University as well as those that fit the spirit of the ISU definition of community engagement. Some organizations that may qualify are as follows:

- Habitat for Humanity
- ISU Institute for Community Sustainability
- Lighthouse Mission
- Ryves Neighborhood Partnership
- Riverscape (Wabash River)

Experiential learning activities allow you to apply ethical principles learned in this course in a practical, creative way. Activities associated with a club or church may qualify. Prior approval is required.

## G R A D E S

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

| WIKI participation | 10% |
|---|---|
| Case study participation | 20% |

| First paper | 30% |
|---|---|
| Second paper | 30% |
| Community engagement/experiential learning | 10% |
| Total | 100% |

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

| 97 or higher = A+ | 87 to 89 = B+ | 77 to 79 = C+ | 67 to 69 = D+ | Below 60 = F |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 93 to 96 = A | 83 to 86 = B | 73 to 76 = C | 63 to 66 = D | |
| 90 to 92 = A- | 80 to 82 = B- | 70 to 72 = C- | 60 to 62 = D- | |