



IDH 3931 The Ethics Think Tank
Being Intentional About
Developing as an Ethical Leader
Fall 2025, Dr. Brian Ray



Purpose & Goals

The purpose of this course is to explore ethical issues in a rational, pragmatic, responsible, and decisive manner. The objective is to prepare students to effectively resolve the myriad of ethical challenges they will face in their personal and professional lives. The foundation for being able to do so is critical thinking. Critical thinking is the ability to address issues from both sides, to evaluate the best arguments of each side, and to arrive at a conclusion based on a systematic analysis of those arguments. Critical thinking requires students to discover biases, viewpoints, and perspectives that affect the accuracy and persuasiveness of oral or written arguments, and to uncover reasoning errors or logical fallacies. Accordingly, effective use of critical thinking skills allows one to defend viewpoints, evaluate issues, analyze new information, and reach ethical conclusions – exactly what today's complex environment demands. Responding to ethical dilemmas is difficult and complicated. Once students are aware of the complexity of various issues, they will have a greater tendency to be more confident in their decision-making.

The classroom setting will have students divided into four teams. Each team will have its own "Honors TA" to facilitate the development of ethical reasoning skills as well as moral courage. With the notion that "iron sharpens iron," each student will encourage his/her peers in the development of competence, confidence, and courage which is needed to effectively deal with ethical challenges. The course will culminate in a mini ethics case competition, similar in nature to the types of endeavors one would expect to encounter in upper-level business courses.

The course has the following three Student Learning Objectives (SLOs):

SLO #1: Identify and prioritize personal values and apply those to making ethical decisions.

SLO #2: Activate the moral compass and develop a personal code of ethics.

SLO #3: Identify key organizational tools, policies, systems, and laws that apply to identifying and effectively navigating the 13 categories of ethical dilemmas.

1. **Standing Up to Power.** Your boss or someone else in authority is asking you to do something unethical. Ask yourself: *Can I get this done in some other way, without being unethical? How can I help my boss save face?*
2. **Made a Promise and World Has Changed.** You made a promise, but unexpected events have made it very hard to keep. Ask yourself: *Can I still keep my promise, even if costly to me? Does keeping this promise now make it harder to keep other promises?*
3. **Intervention.** You see something that's wrong but face risks if you try to stop it. Ask yourself: *Are you the right person to intervene or should you recruit help? Can you intervene in a way that creates the least harm to everyone involved?*
4. **Conflict of Interests.** Your personal interests and your work obligations are at cross purposes with each other. Ask yourself: *Who has a right to know the details and have I let them know? Would my actions cause others to question my motives or character?*
5. **Suspicious Without Enough Evidence.** You suspect something wrong is going on, but how you investigate could harm others. Ask yourself: *What happens if I act on the allegations and they are false? Does my bias push me to believe or dismiss too quickly?*
6. **Playing Dirty.** You have a chance to harm someone who has harmed you. Ask yourself: *Would my action really bring about justice? Does my action solve a problem or is it merely revenge?*
7. **Skirting the Rules.** To accomplish a worthy purpose, you have to go around the rules or break the law. Ask yourself: *Would those with authority over the rules/law want you to break them in this case? What are all the reasons the rule or law matters?*
8. **Dissemblance.** It helps you to misrepresent or allow someone to continue with a false understanding of your intentions or motives. Ask yourself: *Do I have the authority to reveal the truth? What are the real reasons I want to misrepresent the truth?*
9. **Loyalty.** Showing loyalty to someone comes at a cost to yourself or others. Ask yourself: *Have they shown loyalty to me? Does demanding your loyalty allow them to take advantage of you?*
10. **Sacrificing Personal Values.** Your work requires you to sacrifice values or relationships that you hold dear but that you can't reasonably expect from others. Ask yourself: *What costs am I willing to bear for my beliefs or relationships? What burden am I placing on others by imposing my beliefs or relationships?*
11. **Unfair Advantage.** You have the upper hand, but not in a way that you're sure is fair. Ask yourself: *What makes the advantage unfair? If I were the other party, how would I consider a person making my choice?*
12. **Repair.** You made a mistake, but can get away with not fixing it. Ask yourself: *Who should bear the cost for the mistake? Did you act unethically when you made the mistake?*
13. **Showing Mercy.** Someone has come asking for mercy, but granting it comes at a cost. Ask yourself: *Is mercy mine to give? Does showing mercy in this case hurt someone else?*

Key Assignments

Class Participation and Peer Engagement (25 points)

Convincing Others of Your Ethical Decision Making and Moral Courage (25 points)

Personal Ethical Dilemma (25 points)

Case Presentations (25 points)

Grading Scale (out of 1,000 points)

A 94 or more	B- 80 - 82.99	D+ 67 - 69.99
A- 90 - 93.99	C+ 77 - 79.99	D 63 - 67.99
B+ 87 - 89.99	C 73 - 76.99	D- 60 - 62.99
B 83 - 86.99	C- 70 - 72.99	E < 60.00

UF GPAs are as follows: A (4.0), A- (3.67), B+ (3.33), B (3.0), B- (2.67), C+ (2.33), C (2.0), C- (1.67), D+ (1.33), D (1.0), D- (.67), E (0.0).

CONVINCING OTHERS OF YOUR ETHICAL DECISION MAKING SKILLS & MORAL COURAGE

Each student will tape two videos (e.g., iPhone, etc.) answering each of the two questions below that might come up in an interview for an internship or full-time position?

Question #1: How would you handle an ethical dilemma in our industry?

Questions #2: Give me an example of when you showed morale courage?

The following reflective questions should help you know if you've developed convincing and genuine answers to both questions.

- *After hearing my responses, could a stranger infer the kind of ethical choices I would make?*
- *Would s/he know what is important to me with regard to ethics in the workplace?*
- *Would those who know me well (e.g., family and friends) agree that my responses are a good reflection of the type of employee I'll be?*

PERSONAL ETHICAL DILEMMA PAPER

Describe a personal ethical dilemma you've recently faced or are currently facing. Use a dilemma from an organizational setting such as work, school, an internship, or volunteer service.

Write an engaging one-page summary of your dilemma, taking care to write it without making a decision for the reader. Conclude your summary with a simple restatement of the decision at stake.

** This assignment should be 600-700 words (+/- 10%).*

IDH 3931 Being Intentional About Developing as an Ethical Leaders: Fall 2025

Page 4

Class Schedule (all meetings take place 210 Heavener Hall)

Saturday, August 16

5:30pm-6:45pm Meet and Greet Plus Icebreakers with Superstar Ethics TAs

Sunday, August 17

9:00am-9:30am Introduction and Goals for the Course
9:30-10:30am Developing Moral Courage & Identifying/Living Personal Values
10:30am-10:45am Break
10:45am-11:30am Introduction to the Case for Monday's Presentation
11:30pm-12:45pm Lunch
12:45pm-1:45pm Ethical Lenses and Gut Reactions
1:45pm-2:30pm Introduction to the 13 Ethical Dilemmas
2:30pm-3:15pm Honors Students' Time with Superstar Ethics TAs
3:15pm-4:00pm Initial Group Work on the Ethics Case Presentation

Monday, August 18

9:00am-10:00am Group Work on the Ethics Case Presentation
10:00am-11:00am Honors Students' Time with Superstar Ethics TAs
11:15am-12:00pm UF Honors Program Meet and Greet (location TBD)
12:00pm-1:00pm UF Honors Lunch (location TBD)
1:15pm-1:45pm Ethical Dilemmas #1 and #2
1:45pm-1:55pm Break
1:55pm-2:55pm Ethical Dilemmas #3 and #4
2:55pm-3:05pm Break
3:05pm-4:00pm Ethical Dilemmas #5 and #6
6:00pm-8:00 pm Pizza Party at Dr. Ray's House

Tuesday, August 19

9:00am-10:00am Ethical Dilemmas #7 and #8
10:00am-10:15am Break
10:15am-11:15am Honors Students' Time with Superstar Ethics TAs
11:15am-11:45am Ethical Dilemmas #9 and #10
11:45am-1:00pm Lunch
1:15pm-2:00pm Group Work on the Ethics Case Presentation
2:00pm-2:15pm Break
2:15pm-3:00pm Ethical Dilemmas #11 and #12
3:00pm-3:15pm Break
3:15pm-4:15pm Ethical Dilemma #13
Evening Activity Student Groups Rehearse Ethics Presentations

IDH 3931 Being Intentional About Developing as an Ethical Leaders: Fall 2025

Page 5

Wednesday, August 20

9:00am-10:30am	Group Presentations and Evaluations
10:30am-10:45am	Break
10:45am-11:45am	Convincing Others of Your Ethical Decision-making Skills & Moral Courage

Other Course Issues

Academic Honor Code: By virtue of enrolling in this course, students commit themselves to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity." Students are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." It is assumed that students will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of a student's obligation to uphold the Honor Code, s/he should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is each student's individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. More information regarding the Student Honor Code can be found at the following URL: www.dso.ufl.edu/SCCR/honorcodes/honorcode.php.

Student Issues: Students registered with the Office for Students With Disabilities should contact Dr. Ray by the second week of class. As a UF student, each member of the class agrees to the following statement: "I understand the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University." Suspected violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office.

In-Class Recording: Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.