

**RESEARCHED ETHICS PAPER**  
25% of Final Grade

**1. Purpose**

An understanding of ethics in business situations will help you formulate your personal standard of ethics regarding an issue of importance in your field.

**2. Written Assignment**

**Option 1**

Write an essay exploring an ethical issue current in your field. If you're having difficulty finding a topic, you might consider developing your essay around one of the following topics as it pertains specifically to your field, company, or institution:

- Environmental degradation caused by some aspect of the modern business ethic.
- Issues related to health insurance or health care.
- Issues related to outsourcing.
- Disclosure laws; corporate buying and selling of information about individuals; businesses scanning people's computer hard drives or tracking peoples' internet activities for marketing, hiring, or other purposes; computer or video surveillance in the workplace.

**Option 2**

Choose one of Machiavelli's themes in *The Prince* and write an essay in which you discuss its relevance to contemporary corporate society. You may choose from one of the following general topics, or propose a topic of your own.

- Using Machiavelli as a model, compare and contrast one or two different ways in which an individual can rise to power in a corporate environment. Discuss the ethics of each of these approaches.
- Do you agree with Machiavelli's thesis that stability and power are the only qualities that matter in the evaluation of governments (i.e. corporations)? If not, what else matters?
- Is it possible to defend Machiavelli's advice by an appeal to a higher moral purpose for which traditional virtues must give way? If not, can one defend Machiavelli's book from the charge that it indicates that evil in (corporate) politics is preferable to good?
- Discuss the significance of one of the following in Machiavelli's *The Prince*: a) the concept of fortune; b) the discussion on promise keeping and promise breaking; c) the ruler's attitude to cruelty and mercy; c) the example of David and Saul in chapter 13.

Focus directly upon the issue you have selected, and, by paying close attention to the text, evaluate Machiavelli's treatment of the topic. Then explore some of the ramifications of his discussion to contemporary corporate society.

### **Length & Format**

Five-seven pages double spaced, using MLA format. You must use at least three sources. Keep in mind that the sources you use reflect on how seriously you approached your research, and you will be evaluated on their applicability and strength.

### **Due Dates**

Topic proposal memo: Tuesday, Feb. 17.

First draft: Thursday, Feb. 26 (bring 2 copies).

Final draft: Tuesday, Mar. 3.

Note: Once I have accepted your topic proposal, you can only change your topic with my permission. Permission to change your topic is not automatic, and if granted, does not necessarily mean acceptance of your new topic idea; I may instead assign you a new topic. Any topic change must be accepted by me before you turn in the first draft of the report. No topic change will be accepted after the first draft is turned in.

### **Grading Criteria**

See the course web site for complete grading criteria. I am going to work up and down from a "C." Clean sensible copy with competent presentation of all the components will earn at least a C. You can go up from there for quality content and organization and style. You can go down from a C for failure to complete all the elements effectively.

### **Penalties**

Failure to bring in a draft on the due date will result in a one letter grade penalty on your final report. If late, your report will be docked one letter grade for each calendar day it's late up to one week, after which you will receive no credit.