

# MKT 236: BUSINESS ETHICS, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Department of Marketing | College of Business | Illinois State University | Fall 2025



*“Yes, the planet got destroyed.  
But for a beautiful moment in time we  
created a lot of value for shareholders.”*

TIME & LOCATION:

**Section 1: MW 9:35-10:50 AM, SFHB 369**

**Section 2: MW 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM, SFHB 367**

PRE-REQUISITE: MKT 230

TEXTBOOK: *The Future of the Responsible Company*  
by Vincent Stanley with Yvon Chouinard (© 2023)

INSTRUCTOR: Elisabeth Reed

OFFICE HOURS: **Wednesdays 2:00-3:00 PM or by appt.**

**Office of Sustainability, 305 N. School St.**

CONTACT INFO: [ereed2@ilstu.edu](mailto:ereed2@ilstu.edu) | 309-438-4425

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Focuses on business ethics and ethical decision-making, corporate social responsibility, corporate governance, sustainability, and risk management issues related to sustainability.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand how sustainability, ethics, and social responsibility influence marketing decisions, and examine how responsible business practices can affect brand perception, customer loyalty, and long-term business strategy.
2. Develop an understanding of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and explore how these global goals are referenced or supported through marketing strategies
3. Apply key sustainability and marketing concepts—such as ESG, greenwashing, circular economy, value propositions, and stakeholder engagement—to assess their impact on business practices and consumer perceptions.
4. Analyze ESG reports and sustainability strategies to understand how companies measure and communicate their environmental, social, and economic commitments—and how these efforts inform marketing approaches and/or broader organizational goals.
5. Evaluate real-world marketing practices, with attention to ethical branding, inclusivity, transparency, and the complexity of aligning values with action.
6. Reflect on personal consumption habits and values, and consider how marketing influences individual behaviors.
7. Collaborate on projects and case studies that explore sustainable marketing strategies, drawing on local and global examples, guest speakers, and interdisciplinary perspectives to connect course concepts to real-world challenges.

## **ATTENDANCE**

You are expected to be on-time and attend ALL regularly scheduled classes. Attendance may be taken periodically. It is your responsibility to locate and read any assignments and announcements missed by your absence from class. Missing class due to work conflicts is not an acceptable excuse. Absences, totaling the equivalent of one week's scheduled class time, may result in a diminished grade when your final grade is on the border line. Repeated tardiness or early departure may result in a lowered grade. Missing class regularly means that you will miss assignments and in-class activities. There are no make-ups for in-class activities, exams, or other assignments without documentation of an excused medical circumstance, family emergency, or University-accepted absence (e.g., a field trip, athletics, etc.). For each case, written documentation is required for the absence to be considered excused. The documentation for a planned absence must be submitted at least one week BEFORE the class date in question; a doctor's note is required within a week and will be subject to verification.

***Absences due to Student Bereavement:*** Students who experience the death of an immediate family member or relative as defined in the University Student Bereavement Policy will be excused from class for funeral leave, subsequent bereavement, and/or travel considerations. Students are responsible for providing appropriate documentation to the Dean of Students office and for contacting the instructor as soon as possible to make arrangements for completing missed work. More information is available in the Student Bereavement Policy at <http://www.policy.illinoisstate.edu/2-1-27.shtml>

## **PARTICIPATION**

Students are expected to be prepared for and participate in each class session. Class participation includes sharing of relevant ideas, thoughtful comments, and questions that contribute to class discussion and activities. Each student is responsible for the ideas and information presented during class meetings using correct industry vocabulary. Thoughtful reading of the textbook and other reading assignments, and participation in discussions, will prepare you for tests and assignments. To support a respectful and focused learning environment, please silence and put away your phone during class. Being fully present—without distractions—is essential to your participation, learning, and contribution to the classroom community.

## **CANVAS**

Grades will be recorded on Canvas. Students should regularly check their grade on Canvas and direct any questions concerning a posting within a week of the posting; or this grade may not be changed. Any questions regarding your grades can be handled through a professional appointment with me or through a courteous email or phone call, and handled in a timely manner.

## EVALUATION OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Your grade will be based on several large projects, in class assignments, reading assignments and two comprehensive exams. Specific grading criteria for each assignment will be provided with the project instructions.

Letter grade	Scale
A	90 – 100%
B	80 – 89.99%
C	70 – 79.99%
D	60 – 69.99%
F	60.00 or below

Your grade may be determined at any time throughout the semester by dividing the total number of points earned by the total of points possible at that time. The above grading scale will be used.

*In case of borderline grades...  
attendance and class participation counts!*

## DEADLINES AND LATE WORK POLICY

- All assignments & projects are to be turned in on time! Please check the course schedule and make note of the various due dates. There is a ZERO TOLERANCE policy for late work. Late work is not allowed unless you have an extreme situation or illness in which you have properly communicated with me in a timely manner.
- Homework and assignments are due IN CLASS on the date they are due, unless otherwise specified. Submitting via email in your absence is not allowed and the assignment will not be accepted.

## FINAL EXAM

The Final Exam is a cumulative exam including a combination of multiple-choice, T/F, and short answer questions. **Students who have a final grade of 94% or higher and have not lost any professionalism points will be exempt from taking the final exam.**

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The College of Business has established Standards for Professional Behavior and Ethical Conduct. Students enrolled in College of Business classes are expected to maintain high standards of ethical conduct within the classroom and when completing assignments, projects, and/or exams. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, such as cheating, will not be tolerated. Students are expected to provide appropriate citations for non-original writing, even if the original work is paraphrased. Penalties for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty may be severe.

## **PROFESSIONALISM**

All students in this course are expected to be familiar with the College of Business Standards of Professional Behavior and Ethical Conduct:

<https://business.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/about/Standards%20of%20Professional%20Behavior.pdf>

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF PROFESSIONALS:**

1. Professionals produce results, not excuses.
2. Professionals meet deadlines.
3. Professionals know how to accept valid criticism from superiors or from other professionals or colleagues who are in a position to evaluate their work.
4. Professionals are not whiners. All of us have our work rejected or torn apart from time to time. That's life. You need to accept this, profit from it, hold your head high, and get on with your life.
5. Professionals accept responsibility for their own actions and do not try to shift the responsibility for their own actions (e.g., sloppy work, missed deadlines, etc.) to others.
6. Professionals demonstrate good manners and consideration for others. This means, for example, that you listen in class instead of talking to the person next to you. This means that you don't read a newspaper in class.
7. Professionals keep appointments (meetings, classes, etc.).
8. Professionals are to a large extent self-motivated and take professional pride in their work. This means that they set high standards for themselves and strive for excellence. You should be your own toughest critic.
9. Professionals know how to take hints and "read" non-verbal messages their superiors and colleagues are sending them about their work and behavior. Most superiors don't like confrontations; they prefer that you get the point before things ever reach the confrontation stage.
10. Professionals learn from their own failures. Everyone encounters failures and big disappointments from time to time. Your attitude should be, "What do I need to learn from this failure?"

*(Thanks to Dr. Dennis Lowry for outlining and sharing these characteristics.)*

## **COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND RESPECT**

University classrooms are among the most diverse learning environments you may encounter. In this course, we will engage across a range of differences—including, but not limited to, sex, gender, sexuality, race, nationality, economic background, religion, age, ability, and political perspectives. This diversity is a strength and will enrich our discussions and learning experiences. All students are expected to contribute to a respectful, inclusive, and equitable classroom. Discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

## **NEED ACCOMMODATIONS?**

Any student needing accommodation for a documented disability should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TTY).

## **Counseling Services**

Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at [Counseling.IllinoisState.edu](http://Counseling.IllinoisState.edu).