

**Name of Assignment: Team Ethics Project**  
**Name of Course: Survey of Oral and Technology-Based Communication**  
**(Core class for interpersonal, public speaking, and group communication)**  
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**I.LOC:**

**LOC #7: Apply ethical communication principles and practices**

- Identify ethical perspectives
- Explain the relevance of various ethical perspectives
- Evaluate the ethical elements of a communication situation

**LOC #4: Create messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context**

- Locate and use information relevant to the goals, audience, purposes, and contexts
- Select creative and appropriate modalities and technologies to accomplish communicative goals
- Critically reflect on one's own messages after the communication event

**II. Assignment Rationale:**



McCombs Center for Leadership and Ethics at UT Austin has a free educational program called Ethics Unwrapped. The program helps college students become aware of ethical choices through student interviews, researched-based videos, and actual case studies. Over 500 colleges and universities have participated in the program. A trailer from the site will give you a taste of what to expect:

<http://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/series/concepts-unwrapped>

Why study ethics? Because good communication requires more than good manners. Civil communication is ethical and requires us to be respectful, demonstrate restraint, and show responsibility. Unfortunately, sometimes in the midst of decision-making we do not realize an ethical component is at play. Alternatively, we may realize there is a question of ethics, but we make decisions without thinking through the ethical ramifications. By studying and discussing the information in the Ethics Unwrapped program, you should be better prepared to recognize and navigate real-life ethical waters.

**III. Length of Assignment:** Four Weeks

**IV. Materials Needed:** Computer access and reliable internet access

#### **IV. Instructions:**

For this project, you will be in a virtual group of 3-4 members with all work conducted online. You will complete parts of the assignments individually; other parts require team interaction. At the end of the project, you'll complete a Team Reflection paper assessing your participation and that of others in the project.

#### **Team Product**

A 7-10 slide PowerPoint presentation with narration by one or more members. The PowerPoint should include:

- A title slide with an image, title, and names of presenters
- A preview slide for the main points
- One or more slides for each main point
- A review slide for the main points
- A memorable conclusion
- A blank slide as the last slide

Help for inserting narration in the PPT presentation:

<https://support.office.com/en-us/article/record-a-slide-show-with-narration-and-slide-timings-0b9502c6-5f6c-40ae-b1e7-e47d8741161c>

The content of the presentation should include:

- An Attention-Getter for the presentation
- An explanation of the ethical concept associated with the case study, made clear by examples relevant for the audience. (The Ethics Unwrapped website pairs an ethical concept video with each case study.)
- A description of the case study, with information drawn from the study's bibliography or other research sources. Cite research sources in oral footnotes and place written citations in the note sections on the relevant slide.
- The positions of opposing participants in the case study, with each participant's justification of his/her/the organization's behavior. How was the ethical concept evident in the behavior of the participants?
- Would greater respect, restraint, or responsibility on the part of both or either parties have resulted in a more ethical solution? What actions could they have taken?
- A Memorable Conclusion for the presentation. This should be two-three takeaways about this ethical concept. In other words, what did you learn about the ethical concept that you can apply to your own decision making in the future?

#### **How to communicate with your team members**

Much of your communication will take place in your team's Group Discussion Board on Blackboard. You can find your teammates and access this board by doing the following:

- Click on the **Team Areas** link in the left menu in Blackboard.
- Click on your team link.
- Click on **Group Discussion Board**. You will immediately notice the forums created for this team project. You can create threads, delete threads, and interact with each other on every forum.
- You are required to use the team's Group Discussion Board for some specified activities. Additionally, I highly recommend you use a group text such as GROUPME for quick communication and Google Docs for group editing of the team PowerPoint.

### **Week 1 Assignment- Getting Started Forum**

- Post personal cell phone numbers and email addresses on the Getting Started Forum. One team member takes responsibility for establishing a Google Doc and a GROUPME account.
- Visit the Ethics Unwrapped website at <http://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/case-studies>
- Select one case study for your team project from the following:
  - 1) Apple Suppliers & Labor Practices
  - 2) Cheating: Atlanta's School Scandal
  - 3) The FBI & Apple Security vs. Privacy
  - 4) Cyber Harassment
  - 5) German Police Battalion 101
  - 6) Miss Saigon Controversy
- Email a completed Planning Form to instructor  
Use the Planning Form template on Blackboard to record the following information:
  - Team leader (sends deadline reminders, acts as team liaison with instructor, posts documents, responds to team problems)
  - Division of labor (written commentary divided among all members; selection of images, slide design format, and creation of the PPT slide show without narration by one or more members; oral narration by one or more members; rough-draft and final product editing by one or more members, etc.)

**20 Individual Participation Points** for each team member who posts personal contact information and participates in the selection of the case study and delegation of tasks in the forum by the deadline.

### **Week 2 Assignment- Individual Accountability Forum**

- Individual written commentary assignments posted in the forum.

- Individual responsibilities for PowerPoint construction (without narration) posted in the forum.

**30 Individual Participation Points** for each member who posts assigned responsibility in the forum by the deadline.

### **Week 3 Assignment- Rough-Draft, Narrated PowerPoint**

- Leader responsible for posting the rough draft narrated PowerPoint in the forum.
- Instructor will provide feedback.

**30 Team Participation Points** for all team members if rough-draft PPT posted in forum in good order by due date.

### **Week 4 Assignment- Final Narrated PowerPoint**

- Edit rough-draft PPT in light of instructor feedback
- Leader responsible for posting Final PowerPoint in the forum.
- Team Reflection paper due in Blackboard

## **V. Rubrics:**

Final Narrated PowerPoint (100 Points)

#### Quality of PowerPoint slides = 20 Points

Correct sequence of slides as listed in assignment; correct spelling; consistent use of capitalization and font styles; attractive images, engaging design

#### Quality of Narrated Comments = 20 Points

Conversational; satisfactory volume and pace; aligned with images; proper articulation and pronunciation; rehearsed

#### Content = 40 Points

Effective Attention-Getter; ethical concept explained and made clear by relevant examples; important features of case study explained; positions of opposing parties presented in objective manner; discussion of how ethical concept is at play in the case study; suggestions for alternative, more ethical behavior; two-three takeaways from the case study

#### Final Impression = 20 Points

Comprehensive analysis; professional presentation

## Team Reflection Paper (20 Points)

Students who complete all parts of the Team Reflection paper in a thoughtful manner receive full credit.

Provide candid responses to the following questions (please double space your document). Write answers below each question. Honest responses are encouraged. Refer to teammates by name. Answers are confidential. Word criticism in constructive, “face-honoring” language.

***NOTE: I WANT MORE THAN JUST A DESCRIPTION OF WHAT YOUR TEAM DID. THINK ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WHAT OCCURRED – APPROACH IT AS A CONSULTANT ASKED TO IDENTIFY THE BEST/WORST PRACTICES YOUR TEAM DISPLAYED.***

- 1) List the people on your team (including those, if any, who “departed” or went AWOL).
- 2) List the different “channels” of communication your team employed.  
Best channels?  
Why?  
Less effective channels?  
Why?
- 3) Describe how your team worked to accomplish its goal of putting together a narrated PowerPoint.  
What helped this process go smoothly?  
What hindered this process?  
Would you have done anything differently?
- 4) Did your team develop “cohesiveness?” Did team members help each another to develop a good presentation?  
If yes, what factors led to this? If no, why not?
- 5) Looking back at question 1, assign “task” roles to group members according to their participation in your work group. These roles include labels such as: initiator-contributor; information seeker; information giver; clarifier; evaluator-critic; procedural technician. Apply as many labels to each individual that you think appropriate, and include yourself in the analysis. Please justify your responses—what specific behaviors warrant these labels?
- 6) Looking back at question 1, assign “maintenance” roles to group members according to their participation in your work group. These roles include labels such as: *Encourager, harmonizer-tension reliever; gatekeeper; feeling expresser; compromiser; and follower*. Apply as many labels to each individual that you think appropriate, and include yourself in the analysis. Please justify your responses—what specific behaviors warrant these labels?
- 7) Now, go back and name teammates who engaged in “disruptive” roles on your team, if applicable. Name the type of dysfunctional role played. Please justify your responses—what behaviors warrant these labels? Be sure to include yourself in the analysis.

- 8) Did your team experience any conflict? Explain. If so, how did the team respond? Could your response have been better? If so, explain.
- 9) Team work will play a significant part of your professional and personal life. As a communicator, what specific skill(s) do you need to improve upon to create a more positive disposition when working with others?
- 10) If giving advice to students doing the Team Project next semester, what three things have you learned about teamwork or the project that would help them do a good job?
- 11) Finally, list and evaluate each of your team members (include yourself) on the following scales. Four sets of scales are provided. Include a name for every set along with your ratings.

**YOUR NAME HERE:**

1. Value to the team on the **task level**: Provides/asks for important information, initiates discussion, gives instructions, tests reality, clarifies, summarizes, diagnoses, active participant, etc.)

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

2. Value to the team in promoting **effective relationships**: Harmonizes interaction, relieves tension, offers praise, responds empathetically, gives praise when appropriate, etc.

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

3. Ready and willing to **work hard** on the project: Well prepared, committed to the team's goal, keeps in touch, participates on discussion boards, stays on task.

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

4. Probability that I would be willing to work with this individual again on a Team Project.

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Outstanding

**Etc.**

**VI. Notes**

- 1) The Team Reflection paper assignment was written by Eric Carlson, teaching faculty at UT Dallas.
- 2) The concept of using team forums for a COMM1311 team project was developed by Eric Carlson and Allison Templeton, teaching faculty at UTDallas
- 3) The goal of the Team Ethics Project is not to direct students to a specific resolution, but rather to help students see the case study through the eyes of the main characters in the scenario. Students are often quick to choose sides, and need to be encouraged to see the intent of each party in the scenario. Rarely is one side "all bad" or "all good." Team members do not always agree on the issues, which gives them an opportunity to use the

listening, perception checking, decision-making, and conflict resolution skills addressed earlier in the semester.

- 4) This project makes students think about ethical issues. As one student concluded in an end-of-semester comment: "I discovered that ethical issues are not always clear cut. There is not always an easy solution. Both sides can have merits. In the future, I need to spend more time thinking about each side before making quick judgments. Ethical questions are hard."