

TEACHING GUIDE BUSINESS ETHICS

GRADO EN ECONOMÍA (INGLÉS)

ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-27

Publication date: 04-07-2026



I.-Subject Identification

Type	FORMACIÓN BÁSICA
Teaching period	2 course, 2Q semester
Nº of credits	6
Language in which the subject is taught	English

II.-Presentation

The main objective of this subject is to introduce students to the study of ethics in general and business ethics in particular, which is considered as an applied ethics. Business ethics encompasses the people who work in an organisation, the organisational structure itself, the external environment in which it operates, the external environment in which they work (legal, social, administrative, etc.) and society in general. It is therefore a question of analysing the bases and factors on which business ethics and the company's ethics, with which it is closely related, are based.

As Karl Popper pointed out, "institutions do not act; people act in and through institutions". Hence, the ultimate aim of the subject is not only to transmit concepts, definitions, duties, and obligations, but also to form the ethical and social conscience of future professionals in economics. Without renouncing to professional efficiency and business competitiveness, they should be able to achieve a more humane economic and business world, more attentive to the concerns of those involved in business, a healthier environment and, in short, a more responsible and fairer society. For these reasons, the subject takes on special importance in the degree and in the training of future economists and managers of the economy.

No prerequisites are required, although a certain critical capacity and an interest in reading and writing are recommended.

- Deliberate plagiarism of published articles or papers by the student will result in immediate failure of the course.
- Students will receive clear instructions on how the course is to be conducted and what is required. Following these guidelines is part of the continuous assessment process.
- Indiscriminate copying from internet resources, such as Wikipedia, or AI is not permitted under any circumstances in essays, reports, or assignments. If this is detected, the student will not pass.
- Spelling mistakes in students' writing in the tests will be penalized.

III.-Learning outcomes

- CT02. Ability to organise and plan
 CT13. Commitment to values in the workplace
 CT18. Leadership
 CB01 .That students have demonstrated the possession and comprehension of knowledge in a field of study based on the foundations of general secondary education, at a level that, although supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that imply knowledge proceeding from the forefront of the field of study.
 CB02 . That students are able to apply their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional manner and have the skills that are typically demonstrated through the preparation and defense of arguments and problem solving within their field of study.
 CB03 . That students have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to express judgments that include a reflection on relevant topics related to social, scientific or ethical areas.
 CB04 . That students are able to transmit information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialized and non-specialized audience.
 CE13. Understanding how companies work and decisions are made
 CE14. Ability to convert an empirical problem into an area of research and reach conclusions

- Key for degrees not adapted to RD 822/21: **CB** - basic competences, **CG** - generic competences, **CE** - specific competences, **CT** - transversal competences.
- Key for degrees adapted to RD 822/21: **CON** - knowledge, **COM** - competences, **HAB** - skills.



IV.-Contents

IV.A.-Syllabus

I.INTRODUCTION TO RESPONSIBILITY

Topic 1. Training as responsibility. Learning objectives. Getting out of the comfort zone. Success and work. Learning to undertake.

Topic 2. Three qualities to develop: change, creativity, and leadership. What is change? Change and management. The creative process. What characterizes a leader and what is he/she good for. Leadership skills. The paradoxical success of the mediocre. When the illusion of Prometheus becomes the repeated realization of Sisyphus. The tragedy of Euripides: the deceitfulness of life. Hercules: "the noblest of men".

Topic 3. Vocation as an element of responsibility. What do we understand by vocation and our own interests?

Topic 4. Intelligence as a responsible concept. What is intelligence? Intelligence and responsibility.

Topic 5. Sticking to reasons and the "ethical discrepancy". Sticking to reasons: what does it mean to provide reasoning? Do we know how to argue? Are all opinions equally respectable?

Topic 6. Discourse as an element of responsibility. Diogenes as a model. The confusion of language and "political correctness".

II. ETHICS

Topic 7. What do we understand by ethics? A demand, fashion or business? The field of ethics. Is it possible to reach valid conclusions in ethics? Ethics, what ethics?

Topic 8. What is ethics for? The need for ethics. Ethical models. Why do good and not evil? Objectives and criteria of ethics. Phenomenology of the ethical decision. Different ethical models.

Topic 9. Ethics and Legality. Legality and legitimacy. When the legal is not good and the illegal is not bad.

III.- THE COMPANY

Topic 10. Characteristics of a company. What is a company? The purpose of the company. Sustainable development and sustainable companies. Responsibility in the company.

Topic 11. The business organization. Employees. Managers. Capital.

Topic 12. Ethics or Business. Ethical principles in business. Ethics in business and in the company. Fight against corruption.

IV. ETHICS IN BUSINESS

Topic 13. The business system. The market: free or intervened markets. Governments. The international sphere.

Topic 14. Business environment. Environment and sustainability. Consumers.

Topic 15. Corporate Social Responsibility. Concepts and definition of CSR. What is it for? Key word: responsibility. Integration of CSR in the company.

Topic 16. Initiatives to promote CSR. The Global Compact. Global Reporting Initiative. ILO Declaration. OECD Guidelines for multinationals. The European Commission's Green Paper. Forum of experts.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Topic 17. Is ethics in business possible? Final analysis of the most important issues.

IV.B.-Training activities

Type	Title
Resolution of exercises, problems, case studies	Participation in classroom discussions regarding ethical dilemmas or any topic related to the contents.
Lectures	Book chapters/book and articles as determined at the beginning of the course.
Oral presentations	Case study related to present ethical debates: individual work or teamwork
Theoretical sessions	Attendance at lecture sessions
Realización de Pruebas	Test on readings and final exam



V.-Student workload

Theoretical sessions	38
Resolution of exercises, problems, case studies, etc.	16
Practical sessions in experimental, technological and clinical laboratories, fieldwork, etc.	0
Tests and/or exams	6
Academic tutorials	30
Related activities: conferences, seminars, etc.	18
Preparation of theoretical sessions and self-study	40
Preparation of practical tasks, exercises, case studies, projects, etc.	20
Preparation for tests and/or exams	12
Total student workload	180

VI.-Methodology and academic programme

Type	Period	Content
Theoretical sessions	Week 1 to Week 15	MD1: Theoretical explanations MD2: Practical explanations. The classes will have a theoretical-practical approach in order to encourage student participation. The lecturer will explain the main contents of each topic, present practical activities, answer questions raised, give indications on how to find additional information and promote open, critical and constructive debate.
Other activities	Week 1 to Week 15	MD5: Readings: Documents, articles, news, audiovisual support content and other resources to work on the contents of each subject will be provided. Student participation through the resolution of questions and doubts in the classroom, as well as their contribution to the forums of the different subjects. Also, presentations to the rest of the students can be considered.
Active methodologies or innovative teaching	Week 1 to Week 15	MD6: Use of audiovisual tools. MD7: Teamwork. MD8: Individual work. Presentation of case studies in the classroom or on-line.



Academic tutorials	Week 1 to Week 18	Academic tutorials with the lecturer. MS3: Carrying out tutorials with the lecturer through the Virtual Classroom (Aula virtual) or on-site. The students will be able to ask any questions that have not been resolved in the classroom, as well as request additional bibliography and/or any type of information related to the subject.
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VII.-Assessment methods

The general assessment method is continuous as established in the *Regulation for the Assessment of Learning Outcomes* of Rey Juan Carlos University.

All the assessment systems established in the degree report must be employed, except for those that have a minimum weight of 0%, which can be used by professors in the academic years they consider relevant. Each assessment system may be applied through one or more assessment activities, consistent with the system. No assessment activity can exceed individually 60% of the overall grade for the subject.

The sum of non re-evaluable activities cannot exceed 40% of the overall grade for the subject and, in general, should not have an established minimum grade (except for practical activities in which, strictly speaking, the conditions of the ordinary call cannot be reproduced in the extraordinary call).

Those students who do not manage to pass the subject in the ordinary call, or do not attend this first call, may attend the extraordinary call only for failed re-evaluable assessment activities.

The distribution and characteristics of the assessment activities are described below.

VII.A.-Description and weight of the assessment activities

Ordinary continuous assessment:

The distribution and characteristics of the assessment tests are those described below. Only in exceptional and specially motivated cases, the lecturer may incorporate adaptations in the Guide. Such changes will require the prior express authorisation of the Degree Coordinator, who will notify the Vice-Rector's Office with responsibility for Academic Organisation of the modification made. In any case, the proposed modifications must comply with the provisions of the verified report. For such changes to be effective, they must be duly communicated to students through the Virtual Classroom at the beginning of the academic year.

The sum of the non-reassessable activities may not exceed 50% of the grade for the subject and, in general, may not have a minimum grade (except in the case of laboratory or clinical practicums, when duly justified), avoiding the incorporation of tests that exceed 60% of the weighting of the subject.

Extraordinary assessment: Students who do not manage to pass the ordinary assessment, or who have not attended the exams, will be subject to an extraordinary assessment to verify the acquisition of the competences established in the guide, only of the re-evaluable assessment activities.

Description of the assessment tests and their weighting:

The established system is continuous assessment. The assessment tests will be as follows:

1. Critical commentary on readings. Minimum grade: not required. Weighting 15%. Not re-evaluable. As it is conceived as an activity of active participation carried out at a specific time during the course, it is not re-evaluable due to its essentially practical nature and linked to a specific context.
2. Class participation. Minimum grade not required. Weighting 10%. Not re-evaluable. Once the course and the face-to-face teaching have finished, there is no room for re-participation in class.
3. Class presentation in audiovisual format on topics proposed in class. Minimum grade: not required. Weighting 15%. Not re-evaluable.
4. Exam. Written test. Minimum grade: 5. Weighting: 60%. Re-evaluable in the extraordinary call.

Extraordinary evaluation. Final Exam. Minimum grade: 5. Total content of the subject according to the syllabus explained and the texts specified for each topic in class. The revision of the evaluation tests will be carried out in accordance with the regulations of the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos.

Advanced sittings:

Provided that the student who requests the advanced sitting meets the requirements established in the URJC Learning Outcomes Assessment Regulations, he/she may request that the assessment of one of the two sittings, i.e. the ordinary sitting or the extraordinary sitting, be brought forward to the month of September. The assessment method to be used in the advanced call will be the same as the one established in general.

VII.B. Assessment of students with academic exemption from class attendance



Having Academic Exemption from Class Attendance (DAAC) does not imply that students are automatically exempt from participating in the continuous assessment activities or in the training activities of compulsory attendance as established in the teaching guide. Once the exemption has been granted, students must contact the subject's teaching staff, who will propose the adaptations he/she may consider relevant, as long as they guarantee the acquisition and adequate assessment of the learning goals established. Students must maintain adequate communication with the teaching staff so that they may provide information on the dates for training and assessment activities, if these are not established in the programme and available for students at the time of achieving the exemption.

Subject with possibility of academic exemption: Yes.

VII.C. Review of assessment activities

In accordance with the Regulation for the Assessment of Learning Outcomes of Rey Juan Carlos University.

VII.D.-Students with a disability or special educational needs

In order to guarantee equal opportunities, non-discrimination, universal accessibility and academic success, students with disabilities or especial education needs may request curricular adaptations to follow their studies. These adaptations will be provided by the Unit of Attention to People with Disabilities of Rey Juan Carlos University, in accordance with the regulation which regulates the service for the Attention of People with Disabilities at the University. This Unit will issue a report for curricular adaptations, so that students with disabilities or special education needs must contact the service (at e-mail discapacidad.programa@urjc.es) in order to provide relevant information for different educational alternatives.

VII.E.-Academic behaviour, academic integrity and honesty

Rey Juan Carlos University is fully committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty, so studying at the URJC means assuming and subscribing to the values of integrity and academic honesty set out in the University's Ethical Code. To support this process, the University has Rey Juan Carlos University's Academic Conduct Regulation as well as different tools (anti-plagiarism, supervision...) that offer a collective guarantee for the full development of these essential values.



VIII.-Teaching resources and materials

Basic bibliography

Henn, S. K. (2009). *Business Ethics: A Case Study Approach*. John Wiley and Sons.
 Sandel, Michael J. (2009). *Justice: What's the right thing to do?* Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
 Velásquez, Manuel G. (2012). *Business Ethics. Concepts and cases*. Pearson.

Consultation bibliography

Brenkert, Gerooge G. & Beachamp, Tom L. (eds.), (2009). *The Oxford Handbook of Business Ethics*. Oxford University Press.
 Felber, C. (2015). *Change everything! Creating an economy for the common good*. Zedbooks.
 Frederick, Robert E. (ed.), (1999). *A Companion to Business Ethics*. Blackwell Publishers.
 Moon, Jeremy (2014). *Corporate Social Responsibility: A Very Short Introduction*. OUP.
 Sandel, M. J. (2012). *What money can't buy: The moral limits of markets*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
 Sandel, M. (2021). *The Tyranny of Merit: What's Become of the Common Good?* Penguin.

Journals:

Journal of Business Ethics
Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management
Professional Ethics
Organization and Environment
Business Ethics Quarterly

Different updated materials -articles, news, studies- (via classroom or aula virtual) will be provided.

Satz, D. (2012). *Why some things should not be on sale. The moral limits of the market*. Oxford University Press.

Bloom, P. (2025). *Capitalism Reloaded: The Rise of the Authoritarian-Financial Complex*. Bristol University Press.

Bloom, P. (2017). *The Ethics of Neoliberalism: The Business of Making Capitalism Moral*. Routledge.

McLean, B. & Elkind, P. (2004). *The Smartest Guys in the Room: The Amazing Rise and Scandalous Fall of Enron*. Portfolio trade.

Johannessen, K. (2022). *Deep Ecology, Business Ethics and Personal Responsibility. Selected Papers (1988 – 2020)*. Peter Lang Group AG.

Clarke, T., Benn, C. and Edwards, M. (eds.) (2026). *Routledge Companion to Corporate Sustainability*. Routledge.

Harris, J. M. and Roach, B. (2026). *Environmental and Natural Resource Economics. A Contemporary Approach*. Routledge.

IX.-Professors

Name and surname	EVA PALOMO CERMEÑO
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Department	Estudios Históricos y Sociales, Lengua Española, Literatura, Filosofía Moral y Didácticas Específicas.
Campus	Madrid - Quintana
Category	Profesor/a Contratado/a Doctor/a
Academic degree	Doctor



Person responsible for the subject	Yes
Tutorial timetable	Para consultar las tutorías póngase en contacto con el/la profesor/a a través de correo electrónico
Number of quinquennia	1
Number of sexennia	1
No. of positive evaluations by Docentia	2