

Ethical Decision Making in Civil Engineering

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Course description: What does it mean to act ethically as a scientist? Is there any relationship between your personal ethics and the ethics you practice at work? Is being personally ethical enough to acting ethically? This session examines the relationship between personal and professional ethics, how to identify ethical dilemmas, and how to engage in ethical decision making.

Goals

- * Describe what it means to be an ethical manager
- * Assess the role of personal values at work
- * Understand the difference between work and personal values
- * How to identify an ethical dilemma
- * Explore how to engage in ethical decision making

I. What does it mean to be an ethical employee/manager in the public sector?

- A. What are the traits of a person you consider to be ethical?
- B. What are the traits of a public sector employee/manager you consider to be ethical?
- C. What are the traits of an ethical person in engineering?

II. Why did they do it?

- A. Pay to Play in NYC
- B. Bloomington Engineer

III. The relationship between personal and workplace ethics

- A. Are the ethics of the workplace the same as our personal ethics?
- B. Machiavelli's challenge
 1. Are the ethics of the politics, government and the workplace different from personal ethics?
 2. Is it important to have the right virtues or only appear to have them?
- C. Can you be the head of a tobacco company and be ethical?

IV. What is an Ethical dilemma?

- A. Defining a dilemma?
 1. *Antigone's* saga
 - a. A conflict of competing (ethical) duties?
 - b. Competing personal and public values?
- B. What is distinctive about ethics?
 1. Four types of decisions
 - a. Legal

- b. Ethical
 - c. Etiquette (manners)
 - d. Stupidity
 - 2. John Boatright, *Ethics and the Conduct of Business*
 - a. Impartial
 - b. Rational
 - c. Adjudicative
- C. Are ethics and professional rules of conduct the same as “liking chocolate ice cream?”

V. The Ethics of Engineering

- A. What are the ethical values of engineering?

VI. The Elements of Moral Reasoning

- A. How do individuals engage in moral reasoning?
- B. Formal ethical models
 - 1. Outcome-based theories (utilitarianism)
 - 2. Rule-based models (Kant)
- C. Informal models
 - 1. Mirror model
 - 2. Jane Vanderpool model
 - 3. 10 PM news model
 - 4. Sleep model
 - 5. Marilyn Fischer model
 - a. Mission
 - b. Relationships
 - c. Sense of personal integrity

VII. Conclusion: The postmodern world of work

- A. What do we do when public/private lives converge?
- B. How are personal and professional ethics connected?
- C. Do we all think about ethics in the same way?