

CE 401, SPRING 2026, All Sections
Civil Engineering Senior Seminar Syllabus

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Civil Engineering Senior Seminar Syllabus

Instructor/Office: J. Richard Cheeks, PE JD; 369 OHR (Civil Engineering Building)

TEXT: A Civil Engineer's Risky Non-Technical Journey Through Ethics, Law, and Business by J. Richard Cheeks, PE JD, 2020, Sugar Creek Publishing

Email: ce-401@windstream.net

Office and Class Hours: Friday, 7:00 AM – 1:00 PM, and after 1 PM as required for CE-401

Course Description:

A discussion of the ethical and professional aspects of civil engineering practice, including ethical duties, ethical decision making, legal duties, professional liability, loss prevention and conflict resolution through small groups, video and oral presentations, and role playing.

Prerequisites:

Senior Classification and engineering standing.

Learning Outcomes:

After completing this course, the student will be able to:

- Identify the need for and the philosophical underpinnings of ethical standards
- Identify four valid theories of ethics
- Understand the Josephson Ethical Decision-Making model and its application to ethical dilemma common to Civil Engineering Practice
- Prepare an essay in which the Josephson Ethical Decision-Making model is applied to an engineering ethical dilemma.
- Understand the impact of engineering solutions in a global, economic, environmental, and societal context.

Required Materials:

Each week during the semester, the CANVAS system will provide assigned readings, videos, and discussion questions. CANVAS will release these assignments to students for the following week's activities on Saturday in preparation for the following Friday class session. **Each student should:**

- **complete the readings and viewings before posting responses to the discussion questions.**
- **post an initial response to the assigned discussion questions by noon on Wednesday of the week.**
- **Randomly assigned discussion group leaders should work with the group members to bring the group to a consensus on the question and post the consensus by 10 PM on Thursday of the week.**

Most weeks, beginning with week #2, there will also be quizzes administered in class at the beginning of the session, and each student must complete the quiz within the time allowed (by 8:15 or 11:15 am for a 10-minute quiz, for example), at which time class will proceed. If students require additional time for the quiz, please arrive earlier than the scheduled start time. There are 10 quizzes. Quizzes 1 and 10 are each worth 20 points (20 minutes allowed), and quizzes 2 through 9 are each worth 10

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points (10 minutes allowed), for a total of 120 points. The quiz questions are drawn from all **READING ASSIGNMENTS, VIDEOS, CLASS ACTIVITIES, and IN-CLASS DISCUSSIONS** prior to the quiz; however, while emphasis is given to the most recent material, some issues thread through the semester experience. **The last quiz of the semester will cover material discussed during the entire semester without temporal weighting.**

GRADING SYSTEM

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------|---|
| 1. Quizzes: | 120 points. | QUIZZES WILL BE IN CLASS ON PAPER. QUIZZES WILL BE TIMED. |
| 2. Discussions | 210 points | EACH WEEK, STUDENTS WILL PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS IN SMALL GROUPS USING CANVAS. COMPLETION OF THE ASSIGNED DISCUSSIONS EARNS MAXIMUM 15 POINTS FOR THAT WEEK. STUDENTS WILL LOSE POINTS FOR NO PARTICIPATION, LATE PARTICIPATION, NON-RESPONSIVE POSTINGS, OR FAILURE TO DEVELOP AND POST A CONSENSUS. |
| 3 Attendance: | 350 points. | STUDENTS WILL LOSE 25 POINTS FOR ANY UNEXCUSED ABSENCE, OR 10 POINTS FOR EACH TARDINESS OR EACH INSTANCE OF LEAVING CLASS EARLY. IF AN ABSENCE IS AN EXCUSED ABSENCE PER UNIVERSITY RULES, IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ESTABLISH THE EXCUSED ABSENCE STATUS WITH WRITTEN VERIFICATION OF THE BASIS FOR THE REQUESTED EXCUSED ABSENCE STATUS PRIOR TO CLASS WHEN POSSIBLE, AND NO LATER THAN PRIOR TO THE NEXT SCHEDULED CLASS SESSION FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE ABSENCE AS AN EXCUSED ABSENCE. |
| 4. CRW: | 120 points. | THIS WILL BE A TEAM PARTICIPATION GRADE. ALL MEMBERS OF A NEGOTIATING UNIT WILL RECEIVE THE SAME GRADE FOR THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION WORKSHOP BASED UPON THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT THAT THE NEGOTIATING UNIT ACHIEVES: 60 POINTS FOR ACHIEVING ANY SETTLEMENT, AND 60 POINTS ON A SLIDING SCALE BASED ON THE TERMS OF SETTLEMENT. NO SETTLEMENT = 0 POINTS. <u>IF YOU HAVE AN ABSENCE DURING THE 2 WEEK WORKSHOP, YOUR INDIVIDUAL TOTAL WORKSHOP PARTICIPATION GRADE WILL BE REDUCED BY 50 POINTS (25 POINTS FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES) FOR EACH SUCH ABSENCE.</u> A STUDENT MAY REGAIN UP TO 25 OF THE LOST POINTS BY COMPLETING A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT. |
| 5. Essay: | 200 points. | SEE ESSAY ASSIGNMENT FOR DETAILS |

GRADING SCALE (No Curve Will Be Used; 899 POINTS IS A "B")

A	900-1000 POINTS	D	600-699 POINTS
B	800-899 POINTS	E	599 OR LESS POINTS
C	700-799 POINTS		

Each student is responsible for his/her grade and for tracking the point totals throughout the semester. Bring any question about posted point totals to my attention as soon as possible and **expressions of surprise about point totals at the end of the semester may be too late.**

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Final Exam Information

No Final Exam Is Scheduled for CE 401; however, Quiz 10 will be comprehensive and will occur on the next to last class session of the semester.

Mid-term Grade (for 100-500 level courses only)

The Registrar will receive a Midterm Evaluation for each undergraduate student by midterm of the semester based on course performance as reflected by the grades earned and the criteria in syllabus at the time of the midterm evaluation.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Attendance is important for this Seminar because the conversation that occurs is unique and builds throughout the semester. As such, attendance represents 35% of the total points available in this course to encourage compliance with the attendance policy. Please understand that both absence and tardiness from the Seminar results in a loss of points as described elsewhere in this syllabus. When an absence occurs, the absence is presumed unexcused, e.g. the absence is **not** an Excused Absence as defined by University Policy. An absence, whether excused or unexcused does **not** excuse completion of the readings, video viewing, discussion questions, and quiz for the week of the absence. Classes begin at 8:00 am and 11:00 am, not 8:02 am or 11:02 am.

Excused Absences

Students need to notify me of absences prior to class when possible. [Senate Rule](#) 5.2.5.2 defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences:

- (a) **Significant** illness for the student, or **Serious** Illness of a member of the student's household or immediate family (spouse, child, parent, grand parent, or sibling),
- (b) **Death** of immediate family member (spouse, child, parent, grand parent, or sibling),
- (c) University-related trips¹,
- (d) Major religious holidays, and
- (e) Post graduate employment interviews and post graduate school interviews²

An absence under this policy will be an excused absence only when the absence satisfies one of the five enumerated **University Excused Absences**, (a) through (e) above **AND** the student rebuts the unexcused absence presumption with written verification, as stated previously. **Students expecting an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying me in writing of expected absences due to their observance of such holidays at least 7 Calendar Days prior to the expected absence AND NO LATER THAN THE LAST DAY IN THE SEMESTER TO ADD A CLASS.** Not all personal or family illnesses are a "significant" or "serious" illnesses as defined by [Senate Rules](#). Field trips for

¹ Trips for members of student organizations sponsored by an educational unit, and trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events, including club sports registered with the university as well as varsity sports.

² This does not include absences for postgraduate entrance exams such as the LSAT or GRE.

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another class and outside work obligations are not “University-related trips.” Further, job interview trips that do not satisfy (e) above are not excused absences.

Students are expected to withdraw from the class if more than 20% of the classes scheduled (3 Classes for CE 401) for the semester are missed (excused or unexcused) per Senate Rule 5.2.5.2.3.1.1 Excused absences from required interactions. Since CE-401 only meets 14 times in a semester, three (3) absences, whether excused or unexcused, trigger application of this Rule.

Verification of Absences

[Senate Rule 5.2.4.2](#) states that faculty have the right to request “appropriate verification” when students claim an excused absence because of “significant personal illness,” or “serious illness” or “death” in the Immediate family. Appropriate notification and documentation of absences is also required prior to the absence for excused absence categories (c), (d), and (e).

Academic Integrity

Per university policy, students shall not plagiarize, cheat, falsify or misuse academic records. The University expects its students to adhere to this University policy on cheating and plagiarism in all courses. **This includes collaboration on the quizzes administered via CANVAS for CE 401.** The minimum penalty for a first offense is a zero on the assignment on which the offense occurred. If the offense is severe or the student has other academic offenses on their record, the University may impose more serious penalties, up to suspension from the university.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious breaches of academic conduct. Each student should become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students can find complete information at: <http://www.uky.edu/Ombud>. A plea of ignorance is not an acceptable defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. It is important that you review this information as all ideas borrowed from others need to be properly credited. **All submitted work must be the student’s own effort AND free of AI.**

Student Rights and Responsibilities (<http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html>) Part II states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about the question of plagiarism involving their own work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission.

When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording, or anything else from another source, **including AI**, without appropriate acknowledgement of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else’s work, whether it be a published article, chapter of a book, a paper from a friend or some file, or something like this. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work, which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be.

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When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources of information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content, and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to ideas that are part of the public domain due to their general and free circulation (Section 6.3.1). **PLEASE NOTE: THE CE 401 ESSAY ASSIGNMENT IS NOT A RESEARCH PAPER.**

Engineering often requires teamwork, and many CE 401 assignments simulate this engineering teamwork environment. For example, reaching a group consensus on the weekly discussion questions, preparing the essay, and resolving the dispute in the conflict resolution workshop are team activities. In this regard, students should discuss these assignments among themselves. However, the activities and work product of these team activities must be the work of those students assigned to the specific teams.

Please note: We can check any assignment against an electronic database for plagiarism.

Accommodation Due to Disability

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodation, please either notify me of this status by email or see me as soon as possible during scheduled office hours. To receive accommodations in this course, you must provide a **Letter of Accommodation** from the Disability Resource Center (Room 2, Alumni Gym, 257-2754, email address: jkarnes@email.uky.edu) for coordination of campus disability services available to students with disabilities.

Classroom Behavior Policies: (VERY IMPORTANT-TAKE HEED)

Students should not use computers, laptops, cell phones, or any other form of electronic communication device in class at any time UNLESS THE ENTIRE CLASS MUST USE THEM TO ACCESS CANVAS IN CLASS OR SUCH USE IS PERMITTED OR DIRECTED BY THE PROFESSOR. Violation of this behavioral policy will result in 15-point attendance grade deduction for that class session without any further explanation or notification. THIS POLICY WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED. PLEASE NOTE: ACCESSING THE CE 401 READING MATERIALS WITH ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS WILL BE PERMITTED AND IS NOT THE BEHAVIOR TARGETED BY THIS POLICY.

Course Recordings

The University of Kentucky Code of Student Conduct defines Invasion of Privacy as using electronic or other devices to make a photographic, audio, or video record of any person without their prior knowledge or consent when such a recording is likely to cause injury or distress.

Meetings of this course may not be recorded for any purpose.

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Course Copyright

All original instructor-provided content for this course, which may include the text, handouts, assignments, and lectures, is the intellectual property of the instructor. Students enrolled in the course this academic term may use the original instructor-provided content for their learning and completion of course requirements this term, but such content must not be reproduced in any form or sold. Students enrolled in the course this academic term are hereby granted permission to use original instructor-provided content for reasonable educational and professional purposes extending beyond this course and term, such as studying for a comprehensive or qualifying examination in a degree program, preparing for a professional or certification examination, or to assist in fulfilling responsibilities at a job or internship; other uses of original instructor-provided content require written permission from the instructor(s) in advance.

Hard Copies of Handout Pages

Generally, you should not need printed copies of reading materials for in class use. However, there are some pages within the Readings that you should print prior to the class as noted below:

Session 4	2/7	Ethics, Introduction to Ethics	Values and Behavior Survey, 2 pages
Session 10	4/4	Cost of Litigation	Cost of Litigation Worksheet/Matrix, an excel file you will need ELECTRONIC access during class session, 1 page.

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Schedule of Classes

CE-401 Civil Engineering Seminar

Spring Semester 2025

Friday: Section 1 8:00 a.m.—9:50 a.m. F Paul Anderson Tower Rm.259

Friday: Section 2 11:00 a.m. – 12:50 p.m. F Paul Anderson Tower Rm.257

Instructor: J. Richard Cheeks; ce-401@windstream.net, Office 369; Hours Fridays 7:30 am- 1:00 pm

SESSION NUMBER	DATE	QUIZ NO.	TOPIC
1	1/16		Foreword and Chapter 1 Professional Issues, Ethics, “Incident at Morales”
2	1/23	1	Chapter 2 Ethics: Good Guys Finish Last
3	1/30	2	Chapter 3 Ethics, Failures, Standard of Care, and Hyatt Regency Kansas City
4	2/6	3	Chapter 4 Ethics, Introduction to Ethics and Ethical Decision Making
5	2/13	4	Chapter 5 Ethics, Trueteel Affair
6	2/20	5	Chapter 6 Ethics, Gilbane Gold
7	2/27	6	Chapter 7 Ethics, Testing Water ... and Ethics
8A	3/6		Ethics, Impact of engineering decisions in global, economic, environmental, and societal contexts
8	3/6	7	Chapter 8 The Law, Contracts, and Torts
9	3/13	8	Chapter 9 Frivolous Litigation and Professional Liability and <u>SUBMIT ESSAY</u>
10	3/27	9	Chapter 10 Cost of Litigation, ADR, Loss Prevention
11	4/3³		Chapter 11 Conflict Resolution Workshop Strategy and Negotiation Sess. 1
12	4/10		Chapter 12 Conflict Resolution Workshop Strategy and Negotiation Sess. 2
13	4/17	10	Chapter 13 Conflict Resolution Workshop Closing Statement and
14	4/24		Chapter 14 Construction Jobsite Safety Issues

³ Attendance and participation in the CRW are **VERY IMPORTANT!!!** Please avoid scheduling conflicts with these two class sessions and please note the significant loss of participation points (**in addition to lost attendance points**) that excused or unexcused absences produce during this two-week exercise. The Conflict Resolution Workshop (CRW) during sessions 11 and 12 will occur in rooms to be designated.