

Ethics in Context

(First Draft Due in Moodle for Feedback by May 3; Final Draft Due in Moodle for Grading by May 10)

Overview

For this assignment, you will be asked to write a short paper on ethical issues arising out of civil engineering processes, concepts, or devices. You will need to discuss an ethical dilemma that is inherent in civil engineering practices and place yourself within said dilemma. Once there, you will need to outline how you would deal with said dilemma, how you understand your own personal ethics in relation to civil engineering processes (et al), and what you would do to ensure such an ethical dilemma doesn't arise again.

It's important to understand our ethical stance within situational contexts. We are shaped by what we do and what is done to us. In addition, as civil engineers, you are in immensely powerful positions, and it may fall on you one day to call attention to a serious ethical disinvestment. Similarly, we must be ethical in our writing and use our skills appropriately.

Guiding Questions

Here are some questions for you to consider as you write this paper:

- What are the ethical details guiding a process, concept, or device in context of civil engineering?
- What ethical lapses have happened in your field before?
- What are the main ethical constructs of the process in relation to your own ethical ideal?
- What is the ethical importance of this process, concept, or device?
- How does this process, concept, or device work and how can it be unethically corrupted?
- In what contexts do corporate ethics override personal ethics? (And vice versa)

These questions are not proscriptive; they are only guides to help you think through your ethical space as civil engineers, writers, and humans. This is a collaborative assignment, so you must partner with a classmate. (I suggest a writing partner in the same lab time as you.)

Details

The general requirements of this writing assignment include the following:

- Length: 2-3 pages. (I'm serious: 3 pages max; 2 pages are ideal. Not including a Works Cited page—if applicable.)
- Format: 12 point Calibri font and 1.0 line spacing; Margins should be one-inch all around; Headings and sub-headings should be used.
- File Naming: You should name your file clearly. For example, "kaysandjohnsone3402ethics.doc." This will help you and me keep your work organized through the revision process.

- Works Cited: In-text citations and bibliography (in APA style) are required if source material is used. (For example: You may want to cite your professional organizations code of ethics. Most have them.)

Evaluation Criteria

- Does your writing use coherent language and flow smoothly?
- Does your writing reflect careful thought and planning?
- Does your writing include details? Do those details clearly and cogently support your ethical framework?
- Do you discuss ethical content in the context through which it arose?
- Does the tone of your writing and style employed fit your audience?
- Does your writing adhere to standard written English?
- Will your peers understand the ethical ramifications of the process, concept, or device you've discussed?
- Did you format your Works Cited properly (if applicable)?

Resources

Here are some resources to which you can refer should you need a little extra help:

- "The Writing Process," from the University of Toronto's Engineering Communication Program: <http://j.mp/TQa139>.
- "Understanding Genre," from the University of Toronto's Engineering Communication Program: <http://j.mp/UzkwG0>.
- "Designing Documents," from University of Maryland University College Technical Writing: <http://j.mp/WuvfSy>.
- "Code of Ethics," from the American Society of Civil Engineers: <http://j.mp/Z59bA2>.
- "Ethical Principles," from the Society for Technical Communication: <http://j.mp/Z59pHc>.
- "Applied Ethics," from Wikipedia: <http://j.mp/174XjpM>.

Contact Info

If you have questions or concerns about this assignment, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am available to help, and I am more than happy to talk with you via email, text, or on the phone.

Onward!