This Mason Core Seminar Course will acquaint undergraduate students with the impact of business on the contemporary western social, economic, and physical environment. Business in American Society is a multidisciplinary course that provides students a broad foundation of the nature and history of business enterprise, the social context of business, and the interactions of individuals with it. The course will develop students’ critical thinking and writing skills through analyzing the role of business in American society. Students will gain an understanding of the cultural traditions that have contributed to the growth of the business enterprise in the US, analyze the factors that contribute to cultural and social norms as related to business, and evaluate the extent to which business influences society, and vice versa. The course will provide students with a foundation for understanding the role of business in society by exploring the nature and history of business enterprise, the social context of business, and the interaction of individuals with business by selecting current events in business, and analyzing their content and impact.

Additionally, using quantitative and qualitative information, the analysis of empirical observations in relation to theory, and deductive and inductive reasoning, students will be expected to discuss, debate, and discern the ethical and practical impacts of various events and the value of business in society.

As this course explores the relationship between business and society, the focus is on examination of the development of the social benefits and costs of contemporary business practice, business ethics, business institutions, and business regulation, including concerns for globalization.

**Course Learning Objectives:**
Through successful completion of the course, students will learn about the societal context of business and will be able to express in both writing and speaking their perspectives and articulate opinions on the following:

- Business’ influence on society and how social and cultural values shape business
- The various institutions that play a role in regulating the business enterprise in various areas
- Defining stakeholders in the relationship between business and society
-Identifying individual and organizational ethics and responsibilities

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
- Students will explain how individuals, groups, and institutions are influenced by business
- Students will be able to identify important current events in business and discuss, debate, and critique the impact of these events on American society
- Students will be able to identify key features of American culture and how those cultural attributes contribute to and conflict with features of the business enterprise historically and currently
- Students will be able to describe the role of business in the development of American society
- Students will be able to uncover and assess the social costs and benefits of free enterprise both domestically and internationally
- Students will be able to identify and explain the role of regulation in business practice
- Students will be able to define stakeholder groups in business and society and critique stakeholder positions
- Students will be able to identify, analyze, and critique individual and organizational ethics and responsibilities
- Students will use appropriate methods and resources to apply social and behavioral concepts, terminology, and theories in the analysis of the role of business in American society

**Student Preparation:**
You are asked to come to class prepared. This means you should have done the reading, any homework assignments, and viewed the PPT assigned before class so that class time may be used to explore and discuss course content and current events. Class time will also be used for reading, writing, critical thinking, and presentation skills building.

**Text:**
Students should buy or rent the printed version (not e-book version) of the following text: *Business and Society: Stakeholders, Ethics, Public Policy*
Anne T. Lawrence, James Weber, and James E. Post, 2014
Publisher: McGraw-Hill
ISBN: 0078029473

***Other readings will be assigned throughout the semester and posted on Blackboard

**Periodicals and News Sources:**

**Assessment:**
Class Participation 30% (Blackboard quizzes 10%, Blog Entries 10%, Attendance 10%)
Case study group presentation 15%
Case study paper 25% (Summary and Biblio 2%, Outline 3%, Draft 5%, Final Draft 15%)
Final 30%

**Grading Scale:**
- A+= 98+  A = 97-93  A- = 92-90  B+= 89-87  B= 86-83  B- = 82-80
- C+= 79-77  C = 76-73  C- = 70-72  D= 69.1-59  F= 58-0

**Grading Policies:**
This is a graded course. All assignments are graded on a 100-point scale with letter grades assigned. Rubrics will outline specific grading criteria. Please consult before submitting an assignment. Each student is encouraged to keep in mind that all grades in this course are earned, not awarded. Any grade received is the product of a student’s own efforts and time spent – not arbitrarily assigned. If you have any questions about grading, you should visit me during office hours. I will not discuss grades before or after class. My general grading standards are:

- **A:** Awarded for outstanding achievement. Fulfills assignment criteria with ingenuity and flexibility, presents materials in a fresh and exciting way; participation in course dialogue moves discussion in a new and elevated direction.
- **B:** Awarded for above-average achievement. Assignment fulfills requirements of the assignment. Student exhibits a desire to participate and frequently offers interesting points in conversation.
- **C:** Awarded for average achievement. Student is competent and completes assignments while meeting all requirements. Completes a generally acceptable quality of work and participates occasionally in classroom discussion.
- **D:** Awarded for below-average achievement. Student does not complete assignments satisfactorily or the student’s work quality is highly uneven.
- **F:** Awarded for little to no achievement. Student does not complete assignments at all or to the level required by the course.

**Major course components:**

--**Video/PPT:** After each class, you should view a short video and/or Power Point Presentation created by me that explains the activities and assignments you will be asked to do in the next class. Please contact me with questions or concerns after viewing.

--**Blackboard quizzes:** You will be asked to complete a quick comprehension quiz on Blackboard after completing each reading assignment.

--**Discussion Case:** The text provides many interesting case studies in order to illuminate the concepts from each chapter. Where noted on the syllabus, we will work in small groups to answer the discussion case questions and then discuss these cases in class. Please read each case, and think about possible answers to the discussion questions in the
text. Some Discussion Cases listed on the syllabus do not come from the book. I will provide background information for these and we will work on them together in class.

--Class participation: You will be assessed on the contributions you make to our classroom activities. Please see the Class Participation Rubric.

--Reflection blogs: You will be asked to write a 250-300 word reflection in the form of a blog in our Blackboard site after many classes. You will then be asked to read at least two blog entries written by your classmates, and provide one comment for each blog you have read (you are of course welcome to read more than two blogs!). You will then have the opportunity to work in small groups to address the comments/questions posted about your blog. Please refer to the Weekly Reflection Blog assignment sheet and rubric for more detailed information.

--Textbook Case Study Group presentation: You will work in small groups to present to the rest of the class one of the case studies in the back section of the textbook. You should provide an overview of the case, its key events, the various stakeholders, and outcomes. You should provide discussion questions for the group, and lead a discussion of the case. Please see refer to the Textbook Case Study presentation assignment sheet and rubric for more detailed information.

--Case Study Paper: You will write a short 4-5 page case study outlining the significance of a current topic in the business world, how it relates to the topics in our course, and your future plans in the business world. This assignment will have a few parts: you will submit a summary of the case with a research questions and brief annotated bibliography, an outline, write a first draft based on your outline in class and a revised final draft based on my feedback. More detailed instructions for this assignment will be posted on Blackboard. Please see the Case Study Rubric.

--Final Exam: You will have a final exam that asks you to synthesize the material you have learned throughout the semester. You will be asked to identify terms, define concepts, and write brief essays in response to more extensive questions. You will also be asked to read a short case study and analyze it based on the terms and concepts we have learned throughout the semester.

School of Business Standards of Behavior:

The mission of the School of Business at George Mason University is to create and deliver high-quality educational programs and research. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni who participate in these educational programs contribute to the well-being of society. High-quality educational programs require an environment of trust and mutual respect, free expression and inquiry, and a commitment to truth, excellence, and lifelong learning. Students, program participants, faculty, staff, and alumni accept these principles when they join the School of Business community. In doing so, they agree to abide by the following standards of behavior:
--Respect for the rights, differences, and dignity of others

--Honesty and integrity in dealing with all members of the community

--Accountability for personal behavior

Integrity is an essential ingredient of a successful learning community. Ethical standards of behavior help promote a safe and productive community environment, and ensure every member the opportunity to pursue excellence. School of Business can and should be a living model of these behavioral standards. To this end, community members have a personal responsibility to integrate these standards into every aspect of their experience at the School of Business. Through our personal commitment to these Community Standards of Behavior, we can create an environment in which all can achieve their full potential.

**Honor Code and Academic Honesty:**
By choosing to take this course, you agree to uphold the George Mason University Honor Code, which is discussed at length in your other coursework and in the George Mason University student handbook. All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. Should a student cheat, lie, steal, or plagiarize after this discussion of academic honesty, in keeping with the University’s Honor Code, any work considered being in violation of the Code due to integrity issues will be reported to the University Honor Committee. Please refer to academicintegrity.gmu.edu for further details.

**Writing Guidelines:**
Unless otherwise specified, all writing assignments should be formatted as follows: double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins. To cite and reference professional or academic sources, please use APA style. Specific instructions for in-text citations and referencing are found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition or at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/.

George Mason University has a writing center that can help you improve your English writing skills. More information is available at http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/

**SafeAssign:**
In order to develop writing skills and teach students more about academic honesty, SafeAssign, a plagiarism checking feature of Blackboard, will be used in this class for certain assignments. SafeAssign is ONE tool to use to check for instances of plagiarism, but you should not rely on it exclusively to find referencing errors or plagiarism for you.

**Email policy:**
I am happy to correspond with you via email, but please make sure to do the following before emailing me:
1. Reread the syllabus and assignment sheet/rubric before submitting a question about procedures.
3. Please use a formal greeting and closing if you do need to email me.
4. Please include your full name and class name.
5. Please consider whether speaking face-to-face might be more fostering of a professional relationship, and request a meeting during office hours.

Special Accommodations:
Disability: Students needing special accommodations must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at George Mason University. The mission of the ODS is to facilitate equal access for students with disabilities to university programs, events, and services. The ODS is committed to upholding the legal, ethical, and philosophical principles of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 by providing reasonable accommodations and services that will help ensure that students with disabilities have equal opportunities to achieve their full human potential. The ODS is located in Student Union Building 1, Room 4205, and the phone number is (703) 993-2474. Consult the ODS web site at http://ods.gmu.edu/. Students requiring special accommodations should contact ODS and inform the lecturer and their lab professor of their needs as soon as possible. Accommodations for an assignment cannot be made after the assignment due date.

Religion: Students who will miss class for religious reasons should inform me of anticipated absences by the second class of the semester.

Counseling center: George Mason University has a counseling center that can provide assistance if you find yourself overwhelmed by life, want training in academic or life skills, or the like. More information is available at http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdc/

Inclement weather & campus emergencies:
Information regarding weather related changes in the University’s schedule (e.g., closing or late opening) will be provided on the GMU website and via MasonAlert. Students sign up for the Mason Alert system to provide emergency information of various sorts at https://alert.gmu.edu.

An emergency poster exists in each classroom explaining what to do in the event of crises and that give further information about emergency procedures http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert.

Other course policies:
-Class is meant for you! Use the time wisely to engage with me and your classmates. In order to be engaged, you must be present and prepared. To that end, you are expected to attend all class sessions.
-The use of electronic devices is not needed, or allowed, during class sessions, unless specifically requested by me. You will need to use that technology in preparing for class, but class time is meant for interaction and discussion.
-Please show me and your classmates respect. If you are unsure of American higher education classroom etiquette, please ask. We will discuss it together.
-Please use your official George Mason University email for all correspondence. I won’t be able to respond to messages from other email accounts.
-Please speak with me at any time. If you are confused or are having problems with an assignment, please speak with me well ahead of the assignment due date.
-Generally, late work is not accepted.
**Course Schedule/Topics:**
This schedule is subject to change. You will be notified if changes are made.

**Key:**
PPT- Power Point Presentation including information, homework, videos, and discussion questions to view for most classes.  
PRB- Personal Reflection Blog and 2 comments.  
BB- Blackboard  
RQ- Reading quiz. Found in Blackboard, and due before class.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic/Guiding question</th>
<th>Reading Due for Class</th>
<th>To Be Done BEFORE Class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 6/29</td>
<td>Why Business in American Society?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 7/1</td>
<td>What is a corporation and what is its value?</td>
<td>Ch. 1 Discussion Case: Mickey</td>
<td>PPT RQ</td>
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<td>What is social responsibility and do we need it?</td>
<td>Ch. 3 Discussion Case: Timberland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mo 7/6</td>
<td>What are ethics and do businesses need them?</td>
<td>Ch. 4: Discussion Case: Chiquita</td>
<td>PPT PRB RQ</td>
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<td>What is globalization and what are its costs and benefits?</td>
<td>Ch. 6: Discussion Case: T-shirts</td>
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<td>Wed 7/9</td>
<td>How have labor systems developed in the US South?</td>
<td>P. Rivoli, “The Travels of a T-shirt” p. 9-23 and 92-104 (found in BB)</td>
<td>PPT RQ in class</td>
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<td>What is the race to the bottom and do we need it?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 7/11</td>
<td>NO CLASS! How has the relationship between employers and employees changed over time?</td>
<td>Watch “Triangle Fire” (Link found in BB) Read “US Labor Timeline” (link found in BB)</td>
<td>--Case Study Paper summary, research question, and annotated bibliography uploaded to BB by class time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 7/13</td>
<td>What is the role of advocacy and disaster</td>
<td>P. Rivoli, “The Travels of a T-shirt” p. 105-139</td>
<td>PPT PRB</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Instructions</td>
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<td>Wed 7/15</td>
<td>What is the relationship between employees and employers and do workers need rights?</td>
<td>(found in BB) Ch 7: Discussion Case: Apple</td>
<td>RQ in class and on BB</td>
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<td>What global environmental challenges exist and what is sustainable development?</td>
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<td>Ch 16: Discussion Case Smoking</td>
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<td>PPT RQ</td>
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<td>Ch 10: Discussion Case Greenwashing (not in textbook)</td>
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<td>--Case study paper outline submitted to BB before class time</td>
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<td>Fri 7/17</td>
<td>How can sustainability lead to a competitive advantage?</td>
<td>Ch 11: Discussion Case: Gold</td>
<td>PPT PRB RQ</td>
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<td>Textbook Case Study Group Presentation Work day</td>
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<td>Mon 7/20</td>
<td>In-class writing of Case Study Paper Draft 1</td>
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<td>-bring printout of outline to class</td>
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<td>Wed 7/22</td>
<td>Peer Review of Draft 1 Textbook Case Study Group Presentation Work day</td>
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<td>-bring (2) printouts of draft one to class</td>
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<td>Fri 7/24</td>
<td>What is the role of regulation?</td>
<td>Ch 8: Discussion Case JP Morgan Chase</td>
<td>RQ PRB</td>
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<td>How business-like is politics and how political are businesses?</td>
<td>Ch 9: Discussion Case: Online Piracy</td>
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<td>Mon 7/27</td>
<td>Textbook Case Study Presentations</td>
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<td>-upload presentation slides to BB</td>
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| Wed 7/29 | What is the history of consumerism and protection?  
What is the relationship between a corporation and the community? | Ch 15: Discussion Case: Big Fat Liability  
Ch 18 Discussion Case: Fidelity | PPT RQ  
--Case Study Paper Final version- upload to BB by start of class |

Final Exam: 3:45pm-6:45pm Friday 7/31 in our usual classroom