

CE 401 SPRING 2026 Essay Assignment-January 2, 2026

Prepare a 1000 to 2000-word essay that addresses the issues and questions described below. You should base your essay upon information presented in CE 401 and your knowledge about values, ethics, and ethical decision-making. You must apply the three (3) Josephson Institute [JI] GKC Ethical Decision-Making Criteria described in Chapter 4 of the text. **While you could use other decision-making Criteria to analyze and resolve the ethical dilemma presented in this assignment, you must properly define and apply these three (3) Josephson GKC Criteria for this assignment.** If you do not understand the three (3) Josephson GKC Criteria for ethical decision making, it is your responsibility to ask for clarification before you write.

This essay assignment is a two-person team project. **I will not permit any solo writing.** I encourage you to form your own team by identifying the members in an email to ce-401@windstream.net before the beginning of the 2nd class meeting on January 23, 2026 with **“ESSAY TEAM REQUEST”** in the Subject line and with each team members’ email addresses in either the “From” or “CC” box so I can verify to each team member that I have received the team request and assigned a **TEAM NUMBER** with the “Reply All” Command. If you do not receive a **RETURN E-MAIL** verification, verify my email address and resend the email until you get the verification. If you do not establish a confirmed team before the beginning of the 2nd class meeting, I will randomly assign you to a team. If there are an odd number of students in the section, I will approve the first valid request for a 3-person team, but I will reject all subsequent requests for 3-person teams. **I will present the ESSAY TEAMS at the beginning of the second class meeting, which will be final unless you can demonstrate a valid reason that your timely “ESSAY TEAM REQUEST” email failed to reach me.**

You should begin the writing process as early as possible, while relevant readings and in-class discussion topics are fresh. **When you submit your essay, each co-writer certifies that he/she agrees with the final essay content, organization, grammar, spelling, and the overall impression the essay makes.** Each team must use Microsoft WORD to prepare and submit the essay as a Microsoft WORD document, attached to an email to ce-401@windstream.net with **“ESSAY (Team Number)”** in the subject line at any time prior to the beginning of class on **March 13, 2026.** **DO NOT REFERENCE CANVAS FOR AN ESSAY DUE DATE OR A SUBMITTAL PROCEDURE.** Each team member’s email address must appear either in the “From” or “CC” box, so I can use the “Reply All” Command to verify to each team member that I have received the Essay. I will grade the essays in Microsoft Word with the Track Changes turned “ON.” Upon completion of all essay grading, I will provide each team with a **GRADED** Essay file that contains my comments, suggestions, and edits together with the grade. I will post ALL Essay Grades at the CE-401 website when I return the graded papers. Each team member will receive the same grade for the essay.

The Assignment:

In the video, ***“Incident at Morales,”*** Fred Martinez was asked, “Can you find the moment at which you took the wrong path, when you made the mistake?” You must first identify this moment as “Fred’s point of no return.” You should demonstrate why the moment you select is the critical moment by explaining why Fred could modify his prior decisions without incurring personal liability but thereafter Fred would be liable for Ortega’s death, and/or the cost associated with later design and/or construction changes that could avert Ortega’s death, which would have been due to Fred’s failure to act ethically at the critical moment. **Before you write, STOP AND THINK to CLARIFY AND UNDERSTAND Fred’s GOALS.** Then, you should identify and analyze the specific decision that Fred faced at your selected critical moment by applying Josephson’s **three GKC Criteria for Ethical Decisions.** In this regard, be sure that your essay, at a minimum, demonstrates your understanding by addressing the following issues:

1. **RELEVANT FACTS:** Be sure to correctly state the **relevant** facts because the validity of your analysis depends upon a correct understanding of the **relevant** facts. **Do not clutter your essay with irrelevant facts, i.e., facts that do not affect your analysis of the ethical decision Fred faces at the critical moment you selected. If your analysis relies upon a fact, then the fact is relevant. If your analysis does not rely upon the fact, the fact is irrelevant.**
2. **FRED’S DECISION AT HIS CRITICAL MOMENT:** Be sure to identify the **SPECIFIC DECISION** Fred faced at Fred’s critical moment when Fred chose the wrong path. You must ascertain that this moment is the critical moment by demonstrating that even at this critical moment, Fred could still correct any prior error without incurring liability, but after this moment, Fred became personally accountable for Manuel Ortega’s death and/or other liabilities caused by this decision.
3. **JOSEPHSON’S EDM AND STAKEHOLDERS.** Be sure to define the EDM, special terms that define how the EDM functions, and a stakeholder as applied to the EDM.. Then identify the stakeholders to Fred’s critical decision.
4. **THREE ETHICALLY VIABLE OPTIONS:** Identify at least three ethically viable options, e.g., the range of actions Fred can consider at the critical moment. To show ethical viability, you should **“Pillarize”** an option to demonstrate the option does not violate an ethical principle to advance a non-ethical value. **MAJOR HINT: Do not analyze a decision or consider options not available to Fred at the critical moment you select, i.e. options only available at some other moment, either before or after the CRITICAL MOMENT, are not valid options for the decision point you selected.**
5. **PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES:** Discuss how each viable option will probably affect each stakeholder.
6. **DECIDE:** Identify which option Fred should take based upon **the three (3) Josephson GKC Criteria.**
 - a. Does your choice consider the interests and well-being of all stakeholders? (Crit. #1), i.e., it meets the Golden Rule
 - b. Does your choice violate an ethical value to advance a non-ethical value? (Crit. #2), i.e., it is Clearly Wrong
 - c. Does your choice produce the greatest balance of good over bad outcomes, and does your choice resolve an ethical dilemma with two or more core ethical values in conflict? (Crit. #3) i.e., it maximizes Good Outcomes and it resolves an ethical dilemma that exists at the critical moment
7. Before you finalize your essay, verify that your analysis is **NOT** distracted by **“RATIONALIZATIONS,”** and if it is, refine your analysis further prior to submitting your essay.

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This essay is worth 200 points, 20% of the 1000 pts for the semester. Based on prior experience, the essay grade often determines the final letter grade in CE-401. For this reason, you should take the essay assignment seriously. Remember, the essay you submit will clearly demonstrate the seriousness of your effort.

I will grade the essays based on how well your writing demonstrates (1) your understanding of the relevant facts in this case, (2) your understanding and application of **Josephson's three (3) GKC Criteria for Ethical Decisions** to those relevant facts, and (3) the clarity with which you communicate your ideas. **The grading components include the content of the essay, the organization of the material, the grammar, the spelling, and my subjective opinion of your essay, each as described in more detail below.**

Those who employ engineers say they can purchase technical skill, but they have difficulty finding engineers who communicate effectively. I expect your best effort on this essay. **My grading of your writing and analysis will be thorough and critical based on my high expectations. If you expect anything less, then you do not understand the importance I place on the essay.** Of necessity, grading essays is a subjective process. **All grading decisions reflect my subjective conclusions and opinions, and as such are final.**

ESSAY GRADING CRITERIA

I will grade your essay based upon the following criteria.

80 Pts Content of Essay: Does the essay adequately address the specific issues described briefly above in the 7 enumerated items on page 1? Does the essay identify the relevant facts and omit irrelevant facts? Does the essay define important special terminology you use in the essay, such as "Stakeholder," "Ethical Dilemma," "ethical values," and "non-ethical values?" Does the essay define and properly apply the three (3) Josephson GKC criteria, or does the essay only mention GKC near the end as an afterthought to check off a box? Are your names on the essay?

50 Pts Organization of Material: Does the presentation of the essay flow logically with smooth transitions between major ideas, or does the essay jump from random thought to random thought? Are paragraphs well developed around focused topic sentences or are paragraphs long and unwieldy? Does the organization reflect a writing process that included topic and sentence outlines followed by multiple drafts? Does the essay make effective use of headings and subheading to identify the major topics? Does the essay utilize formatting techniques that can guide and help the reader understand the message? Does the essay title give the reader insight about the essay's prevailing message? Are the pages sequentially numbered?

40 Pts Grammar: Does the essay comply with generally accepted standards of grammar, e.g., subject/verb relationships, verb tense consistency, singular/plural consistency, noun form consistency, use of pronouns with correct antecedent nouns, punctuation, etc. **Have you authored the essay in the active voice rather than the passive voice? This Active/Passive Voice will be a Point of Grading Emphasis and you should eliminate the passive voice from the essay whenever possible.**

10 Pts Spelling: This should be self-explanatory; however, prior essays have demonstrated a lack of attention to this detail on words like "engineer." I will deduct one point for each misspelling found in the essay, even if it is the same word multiple times except the deduction for misspelled proper names will be 2 points only on the first such occurrence for each specific proper name misspelled in the essay. I will also deduct one point for each wrong word usage, even if the wrong word is correctly spelled, e.g., to/too/two; effect/affect; weather/whether; or their/there, and many other uncited wrong word occurrences.

20 Pts Overall Impression of Instructor: My impression of your essay will be based upon my subjective perceptions of readability, coherence of the arguments offered, and the level of effort evidenced by the overall presentation. This component will be my subjective assessment about the relative strength of the essay when I finish reading and grading the essay.

Additional Factors:

This assignment is an essay, not a research paper. Be sure to understand the difference between these two types of papers and write accordingly. **I am not interested in what others have said, only in what you think and how well you communicate it.**

If the WORD for Windows "Word Count" exceeds 2,000 words or is less than 1,000 words, I will deduct 20 Organization points from the final grade **after I have completed all other grading.** This could result in less than 0 points for Organization!

If you submit your essay late, e.g., after the beginning of class on the due date, I will deduct 20 Content points from the final grade **after I have completed all other grading.** This could result in less than 0 points for Content!

The essay **must be double-spaced in 12-point New Times Roman with 1-inch margins.** If you deviate from this format, I will deduct 10 Organization points from your final grade **after I have completed all other grading.** This could result in less than 0 points for Organization!

WARNING!!! CREATE AND EDIT YOUR DOCUMENT IN WORD ONLY. DO NOT USE GOOGLE DOCUMENTS FOR THIS PURPOSE AS DOCUMENTS CREATED IN GOOGLE DOCUMENTS CANNOT UTILIZE ALL OF WORD'S TRACK CHANGES FEATURES.

WARNING!!! IF YOUR TEAM USES TRACK CHANGES DURING YOUR WRITING PROCESS, ELIMINATE ALL OF YOUR EDIT HISTORY AND SUBMIT A CLEAN, FINAL VERSION OF YOUR ESSAY.