

🎬 Snowden – CULTure Case Study

Course: Business Ethics | University of New Haven
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🧭 Why CULTure in the Classroom

Ethics is not just about knowing the rules — it is about having the courage to act when principles and pressure collide. I use the CULTure framework to help students explore how leaders and individuals **Connect, Understand, Lead, and Transform** in moments where decisions have lasting ethical, cultural, and societal consequences.
Through the lens of *Snowden*, students examine the tension between personal values and organizational loyalty, the cost of whistleblowing, and the role of cultural intelligence in navigating global, legal, and political implications.

🌍 The CULTure Framework

Connect	Understand	Lead	Transform
Build trust & credibility	Decode context, law, and culture	Model ethical courage	Change systems & legacy

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🕵️ Why I Use This Film in Business Ethics

Snowden tells the story of Edward Snowden, a former NSA contractor who exposed classified information about global surveillance programs. The film raises critical questions about transparency, privacy, and responsibility, making it a rich case study for ethical decision-making in business and government.
We use this film to explore:

- How personal ethics can conflict with organizational directives
- The role of transparency, trust, and accountability in public institutions
- How individuals weigh personal risk against public good
- The ripple effects of ethical choices on global culture and policy

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💡 Teaching Prompts & Discussion

- How does Snowden balance personal risk with public responsibility?
- Where is the line between loyalty to employer and duty to society?
- How should leaders respond when faced with ethically questionable directives?
- How can cultural intelligence shape global perceptions of whistleblowing?

✍️ Student Reflections – Business Ethics Class

- “Snowden made me realize that ethics is rarely black and white — it’s about making the best choice you can live with.”
- “Doing what’s right often means risking what’s comfortable.”
- “The film showed me that cultural and legal perspectives can shape whether someone is seen as a hero or a traitor.”