

## **POLI 533: ADMINISTRATIVE ETHICS**

**Spring 2019**

**Tuesday, 6:00 pm – 8:40 pm**

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### **Course Description**

Ethics is a hard topic to teach and to learn. Public administrators, in particular, come across ethical dilemmas in their job daily and no one class can talk about every situation you may encounter in this diverse field. Instead of trying to find an answer for every ethical situation that you may come across, the purpose of this class is to give you the tools needed to deal with ethical situations. Through this class, we will explore various ethical problems which come up in public administration and different perspectives on how to manage these issues. We will also explore tools and tips on dealing with unique situations which will occur over the course of the student's professional career. At the end of this class, students will feel more confident in dealing with ethical dilemmas in the workplace.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

- To understand the complexities of ethical decision making.
- To have tools available so that students can understand how to make ethical decisions in complex situations.
- To explore the field of public administration ethics and the unique ethical dilemmas which public administrators face.

### **Competencies**

- To lead and manage in public governance: High
- To participate in and contribute to public policy: Low
- To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions: High
- To articulate and apply a public service perspective: High
- To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry: High

### **Course Materials:**

- Cooper, Terry L. (2012) *The Responsible Administrator: An Approach to Ethics for the Administrative Role, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition*, San Francisco: CA, Jossey-Bass
- Bowman, James S. & West, Jonathan P. (2015) *Public Service Ethics: Individual and Institutional Responsibilities*, Thousand Oaks: CA, CQ Press

### **The Good Place:**

To help explore ethics, this class will utilize the NBC show "The Good Place" seasons 1 & 2. We will be watching select episodes in class and discuss the ethical implications. Episodes and topics are available on the class schedule.

### **Course Requirements:**

- **Class Participation (15 points):** Ethics cannot be learned through lectures. Ethics is based around discussion and personal participation. Students are expected to not only be in class but be part of the class discussion.
- **Personal Ethical Dilemma (20 points):** Each student will write up a one to two-page single spaced summary of an ethical dilemma that you have actually faced. The structure of each paper must include a description of the situation, a statement of the ethical dilemma and a discussion of how the dilemma was resolved. The situation must be one that you personally have encountered. A grading rubric is available in Appendix A and on Blackboard. This will count for 20 percent of your grade. This will be due on February 26.
- **Contemporary Ethical Issues (20 points):** Each student will make a presentation on a contemporary ethical issue during the semester. Presentation topics must be a public service ethics issue or conflict. Students must give an overview of the topic and explain what is the ethical issue involved. Key concepts and theories from class must be incorporated into the presentation. Students must submit their proposed topic by the end of week (February 5) via e-mail. On the first day of class, each student will be able to sign up for a week to present. **All presentations must be submitted via Blackboard.** A grading rubric can be found in Appendix B. Presentations should be approximately 30 minutes, and should include discussion questions. If two people would like to write about the same issue, preference will be given to the student who e-mailed the professor first. Therefore, please submit at least THREE issues.
- **Code of Ethics Paper (20 points):** Each student will read and write about the code of ethics from the American Society of Public Administration, as well as a code of ethics for another organization. Everyone will write a paper on the ethical guidelines. The paper should answer the following questions:
  - Are these codes useful? If so, why? If not, what can be done to make the code useful?
  - How could you use these codes of ethics in your workplace?
  - Find another code of ethics. How do they compare to the ASPA code? Which do you find more useful? What would you add to the ASPA code?
 This paper is due on April 2. A grading rubric can be found in Appendix C.
- **Organizational Ethics Audit (25 points):** As a final project for this class, you will need to produce a paper – an organizational ethics audit. For this assignment you will need to pick a non-profit or governmental organization to study. When preparing this paper you should keep in mind that the purpose is to prove to the professor that you have understood the material discussed in class. You need to take the concepts discussed in the readings and in class and apply them to your organization. Because each organization is different, the format of each organizational ethics audit will be different. Topics that are likely to be included in the audit are: background information and context of the organization as it applies to ethics, relevant organizational structure and external controls, the role of leadership, potential conflicts of interest, and examples of prior ethical dilemmas. This list is not meant to be exhaustive but illustrative of how the concepts can be applied. This paper is due on the last day of class. A grading rubric can be found in Appendix D.

## Classroom Policies

- **Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. I will strictly enforce all University policies regarding academic honesty and student conduct. Please see me with any questions about citations or sources. I will provide you with handouts (posted to the BB) on how to avoid plagiarism. BSU's academic honesty policy can be found here: <http://catalog.bridgew.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=970>.
- **Accommodations:** Any students in need of accommodations for their coursework should contact both Disability Resources and me immediately upon entering the course, so that we can work together to ensure the student's needs are met.
- **Conduct:** To best debate the ideas in the course and learn from the materials and each other, it is crucial that we maintain civility within the classroom. This includes not speaking out of turn; using respectful language; acknowledging differences in both backgrounds and opinions; and listening to each other's unique insights. We as a class will not tolerate any speech or actions that degrade any of our fellow scholars.
- **Technology:** Cell phones, tablets, and laptops can pose a distraction to yourself and others, even when used strictly for note-taking. I ask that you come prepared to take notes by hand. Cell phones should remain in silent mode and stowed away (off the desk) during class. Failure to properly adhere to the technology policy can negatively affect that day's participation grade.
- **Submitting Work:** All work is to be submitted via Blackboard. No papers which are handed in or e-mailed will be accepted.
- **Penalty for Late Work:** I expect all required assignments to be completed by the time they are due. For any written work, the penalty for a late turn-in is 1 point per day. If you experience a health issue that prevents you from submitting work on time or attending class, please make sure to contact me and provide me with documentation. Make-ups for exams and assignments will not be allowed unless there is a documented reason for absence. Please contact me with any problems or issues before your work is affected; it is always easier to make arrangements before a deadline than after one!
- **Discussing Grades:** If you would like your grade changed, please e-mail me a one-page memo discussing why you feel your grade should be changed. When I agree to review a paper, please note that your grade may go either up, down, or stay the same based on a second reading.
- **Contacting Me:** I am excited to get to know each and every one of you during this semester, so please stop by my office hours with any questions, or just to chat! Feel free to email me with any questions – I will respond by the next business day (M-F) unless a holiday or travel plans cause delays. When emailing, please remember to practice professional communication and include a proper subject, salutation, and message. Additionally, please note that I will only discuss your course performance in office hours to protect your privacy. Regardless of my posted office hours, you may always ask for an appointment at another time, and I will do my very best to find a mutually convenient meeting time. If you would like to meet during office hours, please e-mail me beforehand so with what you would like to discuss so I can make sure we can focus on your needs during our meeting.
- **Syllabus as Course Rules:** Your enrollment in the course is your acceptance of the terms laid out in this syllabus; if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. I may alter or adjust assignments or due dates throughout the semester, but only with advance notice to the class.

**Course Schedule and Assignments:**

Date & Topic	Reading	Good Place Episode	Presenter
January 29: Introduction to Ethics		Season 1, Episode 1: Everything is Fine	NO PRESENTATION
February 5: Studying Administrative Ethics	Cooper, Chapter 1 Svara, J.H. (2013) “Who Are the Keepers of the Code? Articulating and Upholding Ethical Standards in the Field of Public Administration.”	Season 1, Episode 5: Category 55 Emergency Doomsday Crisis	NO PRESENTATION
February 12: Ethical Decision-making	Cooper, Chapter 2 Bowman & West, Chapters 1 & 2	Season 1, Episode 7: The Eternal Shriek	
February 19: Ethical Decisions in Context	Cooper, Chapter 3 Bowman & West, Chapter 3	Season 1, Episode 11: What’s My Motivation?	
February 26: Administrative Responsibility & Individual-Centered Approaches	Cooper, Chapter 4 Bowman & West, Chapters 4 & 5 <b>Personal Ethical Dilemma Due</b>	Season 1, Episode 13: Michael’s Gambit	
March 5: Conflicts of Responsibility	Cooper, Chapter 5 Bowman & West, Chapters 6 & 7	Season 2, Episode 3: Team Cockroach	
<b>March 12: Spring Break. No Class</b>			
March 19: Ethics in Organizations	Cooper, Chapter 7 Bowman & West, Chapters 9 & 11	Season 2, Episode 5: The Trolley Problem	
March 26: Topical Issues in Public Sector Ethics	Cooper, Chapter 8 Bowman & West, Chapters 12 & 14	Season 2, Episode 6: Janet and Michael	
April 2: Applying the Design Approach	Cooper, Chapters 9 & 10 <b>Code of Ethics Paper Due</b>	Season 2, Episode 7: Derek	
April 9: Whistleblowing & Leaks	Bowman & West, Chapter 10	Season 2, Episode 9: Best Self	
April 16: Ethical Philanthropy and Nonprofitness	Singer, P. (1972) “Famine, Affluence, and Morality” <i>Philosophy and</i>	Season 2, Episode 12: The Burrito	

	<p><i>Public Affairs</i> 1(3), 229-243  Dionne, K.Y. (2018)  “Conclusion”  <i>Doomed Interventions: The Failure of Global Responses to AIDS in Africa</i>, 160-168  Choi, K.J. &amp; Mirabella, R.M.  “Mutuality, Equality and Participation: Practicing Critical Ethics in Philanthropy” in Eikenberry, A.M., Mirabella, R.M., &amp; Sandberg, B. (2019)  <i>Reframing Nonprofit Organizations: Democracy, Inclusion, and Social Change</i></p>		
April 23: Technical Rationality	Bowman & West, Chapter 15	Season 2, Episode 13: Somewhere Else	
April 30: Organizational Ethics Audit	<b>Organizational Ethics Audit Due</b>		NO PRESENTATION

**APPENDIX A: PERSONAL ETHICAL DILEMMA PAPER (20 points)**  
**DUE FEBRUARY 26**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
Identification of ethical dilemma	1 point: The student mentioned briefly what the ethical dilemma is.	3 points: The student identified an ethical dilemma but did not talk about how this dilemma came to be.	5 points: The student clearly identified an ethical dilemma, including why it was an ethical dilemma and what events led to this dilemma.
Options which were available to the student	1 point: The student mentioned only what they did.	3 points: The student identified one or two actions they could have done.	5 points: The student discussed the options which were available, as well as the positive and negative aspects of both sides.
How the student made the decision	1 point: The student only mentioned what they did.	3 points: The student talked about what led them to the decision.	5 points: The student clearly identified the decision and why they chose this particular course of action.
What, if anything, could have been done differently	1 point: The student does not consider what could have been done differently.	3 points: The student mentions briefly that something could have been done briefly.	5 points: The student either discusses at least one other course of action that, in hindsight, might have been good or justifies why no other course of action would have been appropriate.
Spelling and grammar	1 point: There were many errors in spelling and grammar.	3 points: There were some errors in spelling and grammar.	5 points: There were some errors in grammar and no spelling errors.

**APPENDIX B: CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL ISSUES (20 points)**  
**E-MAIL DR. MEYER YOUR ETHICAL ISSUE BY FEBRUARY 5**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
Student identified a contemporary issue	1 point: Student mentioned an issue.	3 points: Student talks about what the issue is.	5 points: The student clearly identified what the issue is and why it is important.
Student presents, at minimum, two sides to the contemporary issue	1 point: Student only presents one side of the issue.	3 points: The student briefly mentions multiple sides of the issue.	5 points: Student explains the multiple perspectives of the issue and why some people may feel one way or another.
Student included concepts from the class	1 point: The student did not mention a concept from class.	3 points: The student mentions a concept discussed in class.	5 points: The student applies at least one concept discussed or mentioned in class.
Student presents thoughtful discussion questions	1 point: The student does not have discussion questions.	3 points: The student presents one discussion question.	5 points: The student presents discussion questions that provide context and force students to see multiple sides of an argument.

**APPENDIX C: CODE OF ETHICS PAPER (20 points)**  
DUE APRIL 2

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
Student analyzed the ASPA code of ethics.	1 points: The student talks about the code of ethics.	3 points: The student discusses the points of the code of ethics.	5 points: The student discussed the ASPA code of ethics and explored the positive and negative aspects of this code.
Students compare the ASPA code of ethics with another code of ethic.	1 points: The student presents a second code of ethics.	3 points: The student describes and critiques another code of ethics.	5 points: The student presents another code of ethics, explains the code and how it is or is not useful, and compares it to the ASPA code of ethics, including what can be added or deleted from ASPA based on this code.
Students discuss the application of the codes of ethics.	1 points: The student does not consider how to utilize the code of ethics from ASPA.	3 points: The student discusses the usefulness of the code of ethics but does not suggest any improvements.	5 points: The student explains how they can or cannot use the code of ethics and how it can be improved to make it more useful.
Spelling and grammar.	1 point: There were many errors in spelling and grammar.	3 points: There were some errors in spelling and grammar.	5 points: There were some errors in grammar and no spelling errors.



**APPENDIX D: ORGANIZATION ETHICS AUDIT (25 points)**  
DUE APRIL 30

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
Organizational background and context	0 points: No organizational background or context was provided.	1 point: Provided a short organizational background.	2.5 points: The student explained the organizational background and showed how it impacted the ethical audit.
Ethical Topic 1	1 point: The student discussed quickly one topic from class that impacts the organization.	2.5 points: The student discussed topics from class and applied it to the organization but did not provide any insight into how the organization can improve itself.	5 points: The student chose topics from the class and applied them to the organization. They identified ways in which these issues impact the organization and improvements that can be made.
Ethical Topic 2			
Ethical Topic 3			
Ethical Topic 4			
Spelling and grammar.	0 points: There were many errors in spelling and grammar.	1 point: There were some errors in spelling and grammar.	2.5 points: There were some errors in grammar and no spelling errors.