Scandal Management, Ethics, and Public Policy

Instructor: David M. Anderson, Ph.D.
Johns Hopkins University, Advanced Academic Programs
Center for Governance Studies
Washington, D.C.
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Course Meeting Time

Monday: 5:45 – 8:00 pm (9/9 – 12/9)

Course Description

This is a course for graduate students who are pursuing Masters Degrees in either Government or Nonprofit Management. Our topic is “ethics” for “public management.” “Public management” is typically contrasted with “private management,” namely management in the private sector. Our focus is on management in the public sector, which refers to both the government and nonprofit sectors. We will give primary emphasis to public management in the United States, but themes about globalization and international relations more broadly will be integrated throughout the course.

Throughout the course we will also examine ethical problems that arise in the context of scandal management, since so many of the problems generate public scandals. These ethical problems will be addressed through cases that concern privacy, safety, race and affirmative action, pornography and cybersecurity, and downsizing in the public sector, among other topics. Ethical problems will be considered from the ethical perspective, the public relations perspective, and the perspective of “you” the public manager.

We will study the fundamental features of four philosophical ethical theories (utilitarianism, Kantianism, virtue ethics and feminist care ethics), and we will apply these four theories to practical cases in the world of public management. The chief text for our course, Practical Ethics in Public Administration, which is written by a philosopher and political scientist, provides systematic treatment of three of these philosophical theories (utilitarianism, Kantianism, and virtue theory) and applies the theories to practical cases. We will use other readings to study feminist care ethics. We will also consider the “unified ethic” as advanced by the co-authors of Practical Ethics in Public Administration.

The course will also explore the notion of leadership, which is frequently discussed in conjunction with the concept of management. We will give special attention to ethical dimensions in leadership in the public sphere. We will discuss some central debates in the leadership literature, including those concerning transformational leadership, Madisonian themes about leadership in our constitutional republic, the role of charisma and emotion in leadership, and several revisionist readings of Abraham Lincoln’s leadership style.

We will also treat a set of issues concerning organizational theory and reform in government and the ethical topics that arise for hybrid organizations, which involve public-private partnerships. Here we will be critically examining ethical questions about the nature and scope of government responsibility in the private sector. In the final meeting of the course we will explore some wide ranging themes about the nature of Information Age capitalism and its
relationship to democratic politics in the Western World. These themes include Max Weber’s thesis about the Protestant Ethic and the rise of modern Western industrial capitalism, Daniel Bell’s position on the contradictions of capitalism, the instructor’s views about the dominant role of the concept of “leverage” in the world today, and Parag Khanna’s views on international affairs and “hybrid reality.” Thus the course will close with some reflections about core ethical issues driving the development of American society.

Each class meeting will be a combination of lecture and interaction. As a rule, I will lecture no more than one-third of each class meeting. We will have discussions and debates about the material we are learning. In short, the class meetings overall will be highly interactive.

The readings for each week are divided into the “primary readings” and the “second readings.” The secondary readings are required, but it is understood that primary attention in the classes will be given to the primary readings. Students should therefore give considerably more attention to the primary readings prior to our class meetings.

Course Readings

The course has three required books, which are listed below. There are also a number of required articles and book chapters, which are listed in the Course Readings and Schedule below and are available on e-reserves.


Course Requirements and Grading

Students are expected to come to class and to do the reading prior to class. If a student is absent three times, then the student’s grade will be reduced by one notch (e.g., A to A- or B+ to B). With each absence following the third absence the student’s grade will continue to be reduced an additional notch. Exceptions will be made in the case of extraordinary circumstances.

Each student will write three papers, two 4-5 page papers and one 8-10 page paper. Each of the two 4-5 page papers will count toward 20% of the student’s final grade, and the 8-10 page paper will count toward 40% of the student’s grade. Class participation will count toward 20% of the student’s grade.

Plagiarism

Students are expected to adhere to principles of academic integrity in their work. The JHU Advanced Academic Programs website includes a “Notice on Plagiarism,” which students should read and uphold.

http://advanced.jhu.edu/current-students/current-students-resources/policies/notice-on-plagiarism-2/
Course Readings and Schedule

**Night 1: Sept. 9**

*(Note: Primary readings appear first. Secondary reading, if they are assigned for a particular week, appear separately and below the primary readings.)*


**Night 2: Sept. 16**

EDRW: “Utilitarianism” (continued).
PEPA, Chpt. 3, “What is Ethics Anyway?” pp. 43-67


**Night 3: Sept. 23**

PEPA: “Raising the Right Questions: Ethical Approaches to Important Cases,” pp. 71-96. (continued)

Night 4: Sept. 30


Peter Berkowitz, “The Liberal Spirit in America,” Policy Review Online
http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/7229


Night 5: Oct. 7 Guest Lecturer

Night 6: Oct. 14


Night 7: Oct. 21


Night 8: Oct. 28


Night 9: Nov. 4


EHL: E. Hollander, “Ethical Challenges in the Leader-Follower Relationship,” pp. 47-58

Night 10: Nov. 11


Night 11: Nov. 18


Night 12: Nov. 25


Night 13: Dec. 2


**Night 14: Dec. 9**


**Contact Information for Instructor:**

David M. Anderson, Ph.D.  
Senior Vice President, Government & Strategic Initiatives  
The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars  
David.Anderson@twc.edu