

## **Ethical Challenges in Public Affairs (20:834:515) [3 credits]**

### **Course Description**

The primary goals of this course are to: (a) introduce students to the role that ethics should play in the lives of public sector leaders, and (b) provide tools and strategies for addressing ethical issues in professional life. Throughout the course students will learn about public sector principles and values and their relevance in creating ethical environments. They will also explore ethical dilemmas, studying different ethical decision-making tools and their application; and analyze case studies of scandal, corruption, and run-of-the-mill unethical behavior, to process an understanding of different problem-solving strategies to address them.

### **Learning Objectives**

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- identify and describe ethical challenges
- design and apply ways to address ethical issues and dilemmas
- think critically and make ethical decisions from a public service perspective

### **Requirements**

Requirements will vary by instructor and may include:

- Class sessions and discussions: Students will actively engage in class discussions, based on required readings.
- Oral presentations: Students will make an oral presentation using the material discussed in class, as well as their own additional research.
- Final paper: Students will write a paper on a specific ethics related topic, first discussed with the instructor.

### **Schedule / Outline of Topics**

- Week 1: Introduction and Overview
- Week 2: Key notions
- Week 3: Ethical aspects of public service
- Week 4: Ethical aspects of the training of public servants
- Week 5: Challenges of responsibility
- Week 6: Issue of administrative evil
- Week 7: Issue of moral passivity
- Week 8: Prudence and leadership
- Week 9: Accountability
- Week 11: Corruption
- Week 12: Conflict of norms
- Week 13: Challenges of diversity management
- Week 14: Final

### **Texts / Materials / Resources**

The selection of textbooks and readings will vary by instructor. Listed below are some of the possible textbooks, materials, and resources an instructor may select for this course:

- Bowman, James S., and Jonathon P. West (2022). *Public Service Ethics; Individual and Institutional Responsibilities*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group New York

- Journal articles, case studies and other course content are available in the learning management system.
- US Office of Government Ethics - <https://www.oge.gov/>;  
<https://www.federalregister.gov/agencies/government-ethics-office> (Federal Register)
- New Jersey State Ethics Commission - <https://www.nj.gov/ethics/>
- New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics – <https://www.ny.gov/agencies/joint-commission-public-ethics>
- Ethics and Compliance Initiative - <https://www.ethics.org/>
- Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer – Fourteen Principles of Ethical Conduct for Federal Employees - <https://www.energy.gov/hc/services/benefits/new-employee-orientation/ethics-fourteen-principles-ethical-conduct-federal>
- National Institutes of Ethics - Principles of Ethical Conduct for Government Officers and Employees - <https://ethics.od.nih.gov/principl.htm>