POSC 3373/MLPOS 5373 Public Administration Ethics  
Spring 2017

Dr. Jon R. Taylor  
Meeting Time: 8:10am – 9:35am TTH Malloy Hall, Room 022  
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Office Hours: MW: 7:00am – 8:00am; 9:00am – 5:00pm; TTH: 7:00am – 8:00am and 9:30am – 3:00pm; F: 7:00am – 8:00am; 9:00am – 12:00pm

Required Text:

None – All course materials will be placed onto a flash drive. Supplemental websites with additional lecture materials and/or readings will be provided in class.

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the ethical dimensions of public service in the United States, with particular attention focused on the role, duties, and responsibilities of the public administrator. Additionally, the course seeks to help students develop the awareness, skills, and values to act ethically in their public service management roles.

Course Learning Objectives:

• To acquire an awareness of the discretionary power of the public administrator and understand the ethical implications of such discretion.  
• To develop an understanding of the ethical standards, values, and virtues associated with the art and practice of public administration as a profession.  
• To expand one’s moral imagination and ethical reasoning capabilities in order to deal effectively with ethical dilemmas that may arise in carrying out one’s public service duties.  
• To cultivate an attitude of moral obligation and personal responsibility in pursuing a career in the public service.

Exams and Research Requirements:

There will be two exams – a mid-term and a final exam – which will cover the approaches and ideas covered in class. There will also be a required research paper. The following is the grading breakdown for the course:

• Mid-term exam: 20%  
• Research paper: 25%  
• Attendance and participation: 20%
Final exam: 35%

Students are expected to prepare thoroughly for each class session, to submit written materials on time, and to participate actively and constructively in class. Attendance is critical. All written work is expected to be of high quality. That is, it should be logically organized, complete, and lead the reader to a conclusion. Spelling, grammar, punctuation, proper referencing, and organization will be graded as well as content and presentation. All quotations and significant paraphrases should be properly cited.

Research Paper:

A major research paper is required. A short summary of the research paper topic and partial bibliography will be due by February 9, 2017. The completed research paper is due on May 2, 2017.

Research paper expectations: All work submitted must be typewritten and double spaced, using a 12-point font, with 1 inch margins on all four sides and properly footnoted. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade. The grading of the paper will be based on:

- Your ability to provide an analytical viewpoint on the topic to back up your opinions provided with research materials
- Clarity and organization of the paper
- Appropriate citations and reference throughout the paper (footnotes, bibliography, etc)
- Correct grammar, spelling and form
- Unexcused late papers will be reduced by one-half a grade per day
- Undergraduate students: The research paper should be between 15 – 18 pages or more in length
- Graduate students: The research paper should between 22 – 25 pages or more in length of conference quality

Class Rules:

- Attendance and participation is strongly encouraged
- Arriving late is strongly discouraged
- Reading course assignments is expected
- Showing respect to other students and the professor is expected
- Make up work will be limited to special circumstances (and with prior notification only)
- Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will result in a failing grade

Attendance and Miscellaneous:

I rarely take roll in class. That does not mean I fail to notice the lack of your presence in the classroom. On the contrary. With such intimate classes as offered at the
University of St. Thomas, your absence is quite noticeable. I like to have you in class. I value your input. But I make the presumption that since you are in college that you are a reasonably responsible adult. It bothers me very little if you have found someone or something better than attending my class. Of course, it bothers me very little to flunk you as result of your finding that someone/something better. If you don’t show up for class and/or blow-off or do extraordinarily poor on the homework assignments, exams, and the article review, you may be looking at crime or a job in the fast food industry as a succinct alternative to the stresses of higher education.

**Academic Integrity:**

“It would have been better if he had never been born” – Mark 14:21.

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper attribution) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy and reported to the University’s Academic Misconduct Committee.

As stated in the Academic Misconduct Code for the University of St. Thomas, academic misconduct includes: (a) cheating (using an authorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement; (b) assisting others in any such act; or (c) attempting to engage in such acts.

Plagiarism is using the work or another person and claiming it as your own. The most common types of plagiarism include:

Using a paper or portion of a paper prepared by someone else; Quoting someone else’s language or words without proper quotation or citation; and Paraphrasing someone else’s ideas, framework, or insights without giving credit to the original author in a citation.

Academic misconduct in any form is unacceptable and suspected violations will be pursued aggressively.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students will need to contact Counseling and Disability Services in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-2169 or 6953. If you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please contact me to discuss your needs. Additionally, you will need to register with the Counseling and Disability Services Office in Crooker Center. This office can be reached at (713) 525-2169 or 6953.
Course Schedule (Readings will be assigned on a weekly basis in class):

PART I:
- Introduction
- Why Study Administrative Ethics?
- The Moral Responsibility of Individuals in Public Sector Organizations
- The Possibility of Administrative Ethics
- Why Good Managers Make Bad Ethical Choices
- Types and Levels of Public Morality

Research Paper Topic due February 9th
- Public and Private Moral Character as part of Public Ethics
- Moral Character and the Dilemma of Modern Professionalism
- Bureaucratic Responsibility
- The Problem of Discretion and Democratic Governance
- Making Moral Judgments
- Ethical Practice and Lying

Midterm Examination March 7th

PART II:
- An Ethical Self-Evaluation
- Ethical Managers Make Their Own Rules?

Spring Break March 13th – 17th
- An Ethical Framework for Human Resource Decision Making
- Hard Choices: Justifying Bureaucratic Decisions
- Professional Ethics: The ASPA Code of Ethics and Implementation Guidelines

Holy Week Break April 13th – 14th
- The Ethics of Individual Rights and Common Good in State and Society
- Administrative Responsibility in a Democratic Society

Research Paper due May 9th
Final Examination May 9th 8:30am – 11:00am