

**2016 SYLLABUS**  
**PADM 590: ETHICS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

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**REQUIRED TEXTS**

J. Patrick Dobel, *Public Integrity*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.  
ISBN: 0-801-86916-1.

Sissela Bok, *LYING: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*. New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1978. ISBN 0-394-72804-1.

Rosemary O'Leary, *The Ethics of Dissent: Managing Guerrilla Government*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press 2006. ISBN: 1-933116-60-9

P.M. Forni, *Choosing Civility*. New York, St. Martin's Press, 2002.  
ISBN: 0-312-28118-8

Collected Readings: On UNM Learn

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course is designed to familiarize students with the ethical nature and dilemmas of public administration in American society. The most common approach to ethics in government focuses on avoiding impropriety and is taught by looking at criminal laws and sanctions. This is generally a negative, punitive and technical dimension stressing those ethical boundaries as determined by the law. Typical examples include conflicts of interest, misuse of public resources, whistle blowing, and resignation in protest. Though these matters are at times important, they arise so infrequently in relation to the daily dilemmas faced by decision makers, and seldom have implications beyond the career of the particularly affected administrator.

We will take a different approach in this class. We will focus on ethical dilemmas and concerns that arise from the daily exercise of discretionary authority. We will address positive and negative uses of administrative power, and discuss questions such as "How do I make 'right' or 'wise' decisions?" "What is a 'wise' decision?" "To

what and to whom do my ethical obligations extend?" "Should/do I have sufficient authority to make a decision?" "What values do I serve, and what are their priorities?" Obviously, most of these questions cannot be definitively answered, but public administrators must still ponder them if they are to perform their duties effectively and appropriately.

More specifically, this course will address:

- The nature and types of ethical obligations involved in American public administration;
- The integration and application of various types of moral judgment in administrative contexts;
- The relation of American constitutional and political theory to the ethical obligations and loyalties of public administrators;
- The character and ethical relation of administrative politics to electoral, judicial and pluralistic politics;
- Typical moral dilemmas in public sector decision making;
- The ways individual personality and thought processes may impact decision making.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course will be highly discursive (we will jump from topic to topic quickly and seemingly randomly) and exploratory. **Emphasis will be placed upon the joint contributions of students and the instructor.** Regular class attendance and participation in discussions is essential to the success of this class and will consequently be necessary to secure a satisfactory grade. The following requirements are intended to enhance the classroom experience and assist the student in participating in a meaningful manner.

1. Study questions: Each student must prepare answers to four (4) of the study questions (see attached list) by the date on which they are assigned for class discussion. No later than September 15, each student shall submit to the instructor (at the Comcast.net address) a list of the study questions the student intends to answer. If I do not receive your declaration by that date, I will make the assignment myself. **Each answer should NOT exceed two type-written pages** (they may be shorter, but must be answered completely).

You may consult with other students in preparing your answers. Discussion among students can be very helpful in learning the material **HOWEVER**, do not treat this as an excuse to skip your own reading of the material and independent thinking. Answering study questions will help you to organize and summarize the reading assignments in a manner that enhances the classroom experience. **Answers to the**

**study question will be turned in at the conclusion of the class for which they are assigned.**

2. Pro/Con Briefings: For select class sessions, students will prepare a 2-5 page briefing, addressing the argument for the assigned case-study (see master assignment schedule).

The pro/con briefing paper will be done individually. The instructor will also assign groups that will be responsible for presenting two (2) briefings according to the master class calendar. Each group will formulate the arguments for or against the proposition in the case study and present its arguments to the class. Groups may be faced with questions or comments from the instructor or the class. A portion of the class will be set aside for a brief group debate. Groups should be prepared to debate their assigned side of the issue.

Groups will be randomly designated and will submit their briefing papers and debate the case study on the assigned day (see master assignment schedule for more details)

3. Participation: Preparation and participation are key ingredients to successful completion of this class. I expect students to be prepared each evening and to participate in our class activities and discussion. Regular attendance, offering informed comments, raising relevant issues for class consideration, and providing real world ethical dilemmas will bolster your participation grade. We will typically begin each class session with a brief discussion of current events—brought in by students—demonstrating ethical challenges. (Sadly, there is no shortage of material).

### **GRADING CRITERIA**

1. Study Questions 35%
2. Pro/Con Briefings 25% (each briefing for a total of 50%)
3. Class participation 15%

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honourably acquired, developed and presented. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter,

with serious consequences attached thereto. All sources from which ideas and words are drawn should be fully acknowledged and cited.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My sincere thanks to the following individuals who graciously provided me with permission to use and appropriate their materials into this class:

Dr. Guy B. Adams	University of Missouri
Dr. Brian N Williams	University of Georgia
Dr. Jerrell D. Coggburn	North Carolina State University
Rick Green, Professor and MPA Director	University of Utah
Michael Harmon, Professor	George Washington University

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

**Aug. 22:** Review of Syllabus. Discussion: Defining Ethics and morality

**Theme: Types of Ethics:**

**READ:** COLLECTED READINGS: Briefing #1, "Types of Ethics".

**Theme: Types of Moral Judgments.**

**READ:** COLLECTED READINGS Briefing #2, "Common Types of Moral judgment.

**READ:** COLLECTED READINGS: Rohr, Chap 1-2

**Aug. 29:** **No Class: Instructor away on business.**

**Sept. 5:** **No Class: Labour Day**

**Sept. 12:** **Theme: Distinguishing Public from Private Ethics**

**READ:** COLLECTED READINGS: Briefing #3, "Public & Private Morality"; and excerpt from Morgan *et.al.*, *Administrative Responsibility & Ethics* pp.111-115.

**READ:** COLLECTED READINGS: Hecllo, Introduction & excerpts from chap. 2.

**Answer to Study Question #1 Due**

**Sept. 19:** **Theme: Viewing Civility as Ethics**

**READ:** Forni, Part One (pp. 3-32)

**Answer to Study Question #2 Due**

**Sept. 26:** **The First Ten Rules of Civility**

**READ:** Forni, Rules 1-10 (pp. 35-80)

**Answer to Study Question #3 Due**

**Oct. 3:           The Next 15 Rules of Civility**

**READ:** Forni, Rules 11-25 (pp. 81-157)

**Answer to Study Question #4 Due**

**PRO/CON BRIEFING #1: [Groups TBA]** Read case in O’Leary Chap. 2 “Guerrilla Government and the Nevada Wetlands: “Did the Nevada 4 act responsibly and appropriately?” **In-class debate: be prepared to argue assigned position.**

**Oct. 10:           Theme: Public Ethics and the Problem of Character**

**READ:** Dobel, chap. 7

**READ:** O’Leary, chap. 1

**Answer to Study Question #5 Due**

**Oct. 17:           Theme: Integrity and Public Moral Character. **READ:** Dobel chap. 1; O’Leary chap 4.**

**Answer to Study Question #6 Due.**

**Discussion:** What do you think of Claude Ferguson’s Character and actions?

**PRO/CON BRIEFING #2: [Case and Groups TBA]**

**In-class debate: be prepared to argue assigned position.**

**Oct. 24:           Theme: The Temptations of Power and the Problems of Compromise.**

**READ:** Dobel, chaps. 2-3

**Discussion:** The promise and problems of compromise

**Answer to Study Question #7 Due.**

**Oct. 31:           Theme: Ethical Practice and Lying. **READ:** Bok, chaps 1-7**

**Answers to Study Questions #8 and #9 Due.**

**DISCUSSION:** Are we naturally inclined to lie? How can we avoid telling lies when under pressure? Are there good professional reasons to tell lies? Should we never tell lies?

**PRO/CON BRIEFING #3: [Case and Groups TBA]**  
**In-class debate: be prepared to argue assigned position.**

**Nov. 7:** **Theme: Ethical Practice and Lying con't.** **READ:** Bok, chaps 8-15  
(Students interested in the philosophical analysis of lying should read the Appendix.)

**Answers to Study Questions #10 and #11 Due.**

**Nov. 14:** **Theme: Bureaucratic Responsibility and Managing Guerilla Government.**

**READ:** O'Leary chap. 4-5

**Answer to Study Question #12 Due**

**PRO/CON BRIEFING #4: [Case and Groups TBA]**  
**In-class debate: be prepared to argue assigned position.**

**Nov. 21:** **Theme: Patriotism, Honour and Humility in Public Life.**

**READ:** Dobel, Chaps. 5-6;

**Answer to Study Question #13 Due.**

**Discussion:** What does it mean to have honour? How can bureaucratic life enervate honour?

**Nov. 28:** **Theme: Privacy and Prudence**

**READ:** Dobel, chap. 9-10

**Answer to Study Questions #14 and 15 Due.**

**Dec. 5:** **"Do the Right Thing"**

**Dec. 7:** **FINAL EXAM:**

**PRO/CON BRIEFINGS #5-8: [Cases and Groups TBA]**  
**In-class debate: be prepared to argue assigned position.**

## ETHICS IN ADMINISTRATIVE LAW STUDY QUESTIONS

1. According to Rohr, why do professional statements or codes tend to be self serving, and what problem does this pose for public administration as a profession?
2. According to Hecl, what does it mean to “think institutionally”, and why is it difficult to think this way in the current era?
3. Chose a “rule” from one of Forni’s first 10 rules of considerate conduct and discuss how this rule has played a part in either your personal or professional life.
4. Chose a “rule” from rules 11-25 of Forni’s rules of considerate conduct and discuss how this rule has played a part in either your personal or professional life.
5. According to Dobel, Chap. 7, what are three types of “sleaze” in public office?
6. Per Dobel, chap 1, what is public integrity? Briefly summarize the different models of public integrity and explain why he weaves them into a “triangle” model of public responsibility and commitment.
7. Per Dobel, chaps. 2-3, how can the “pressures of exercising power wear down obligations, commitments and capacities of public officials”? Use an example from chap. 3 to illustrate (or a recent real-live event).
8. Per Bok, chap 3, summarize the arguments for never telling lies.
9. What is Bok’s approach (chap. 7) to justification of lies?
10. Explain Bok’s approach to “lies in crisis” and to “lies for the public good.”
11. Summarize the problems, according to Bok, with lying to protect peers and clients.
12. Put yourself in Claude Ferguson’s shoes. How do you know you are right? Did you do the right thing. Why?
13. According to Dobel, what are the reasons for staying in office, and those for getting out?



14. Why has privacy among public officials eroded over the years (Dobel ch 9) and is there an antidote out there?
15. Professor O'Leary received the following e-mail from a government employee: *"Your work on guerrilla government really upsets me. A public servant has a duty to obey all orders given by superior. If one disagrees with those orders, the proper thing to do is to quit and find another job. Guerrilla activity is always wrong."* (O'Leary p. 122) Craft a response to this person based on insights you have gained in this course.

## COLLECTED READINGS

1. Briefing #1: "Types of Ethics" (Richard T. Green)
2. Briefing #2: "Common Types of Moral Judgment" (Richard T. Green)
3. Briefing #3: "Public & Private Morality" (Richard T. Green)
4. Douglas Morgan, Richard Green, Craig Shinn, Kent Robinson. Chapter 5 "Administrative Ethics and Responsibility." *Foundations of Public Service* Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, May 2008.
5. Case excerpts from James S. Bowman, Jonathon P. West, Marcia A. Beck. *Achieving Competencies in Public Service: The Professional Edge*. 2d ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2010 pp 119-129; 147-173.
6. Hecló, Chapter 1 "Introduction" and excerpts from Chapter 2: "Our Modern Impasse," in Hugh Hecló, *On Thinking Institutionally*. Boulder. CO: Paradigm Publishers 2008.
7. Payne, Bruce. "Richard Helms and the Foreign Relations Committee" *HBS Case Services*, Harvard Business School, Boston, MA. 1981.
8. John Schaar, "The Case for Patriotism," *American Review*, no. 17, (May 1973).
9. Cooper, Terry L. "Citizenship and Professionalism in Public Administration," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 44, Special Issue (March 19894).
10. Scenario: Law Enforcement and Civic Engagement. (Richard T. Green).
11. Douglas Morgan, Richard Green, Craig Shinn, Kent Robinson, "The Case of the Angry Library Patron." in *The Foundations of Public Service*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2008.
12. James Pfiffner, "Torture and Public Policy," *Public Integrity*, Vol. 7, no.4: 313-330.