

PU EN AF 430: Seminar in Ethics and Public Action

Course 11272, Section 0800

Green Bay Campus

3 Credits

Fall 2019

Meets: Online, throughout week

**Instructor Contact Information**

Dr. Kerry Kuenzi, Assistant Professor

Department of Public and Environmental Affairs

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920-465-2077

Office hours: By Appointment Only

**Course Overview**

This class serves two purposes: (1) To introduce students to the concept of ethics and emphasize why an in-depth understanding of ethics is critical for individuals working in public action; while also (2) integrating and synthesizing concepts and material from other public affairs courses to give students experience in practical applications of their coursework as they prepare to complete their degree. Therefore, not only will you learn about the study of ethics and public service ethics specifically but you will also be asked to reflect on its application to course work within public affairs such as human resources, budgeting, analysis, management, policy decisions and analysis and others.

**Catalog Description**

A capstone course intended to introduce a range of ethical concerns in public affairs. Through theoretical and case study readings and applied projects, students deal with ethical issues and varied responses to them.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

* Train students to recognize and focus on ethical problems, to develop and refine appropriate methods of moral reasoning, and to be sensitive to the nuances and ambiguities of ethical situations in public action
* Encourage students to see public service as a noble calling and a public trust, deserving commitment to the highest standard of honor and personal integrity, to appreciate the ethical dimension in decision making (just as they appreciate the political and managerial dimensions), and to accept the multiple and sometimes conflicting obligations of public service
* Educate students in the democratic values implicit and explicit in U.S. Constitutional history, the role of public servants in dealing with conflicting social values, and the ethical and philosophical underpinnings of public policy debates
* Encourage students to identify the ethical aspects of other components of their public affairs education
* Synthesize learning across individual students’ educational careers to identify how classroom experiences contribute to professional development and prepare them for careers in public action

**Programmatic Learning Outcomes[[1]](#footnote-0)**

This course is nested within the Department of Public and Environmental Affairs. Therefore, it is also guided by our departmental learning outcomes:

1. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the process of policy-making.

*Policy-making is the act of creating rules or setting standards for public, non-profit, and for-profit organizations.*

1. The student will collect, manage, evaluate, and apply data to make decisions and solve problems.

*Data Literacy is the ability to read, understand, collect, organize, analyze, interpret, and present data in order to provide organizations with the information they need to do what they do efficiently and effectively.*

1. The student will demonstrate knowledge and application of ethical principles in everyday organizational and social situations.

*Ethics are moral principles and values that inform human behavior.*

1. The student will demonstrate social responsibility through intentional engagement in the community.

*Social responsibility is an ethical framework in which organizations and individuals engage in actions that promote quality of life in communities*

1. The student will explain how economic security, social equity, and/or environmental responsibility interact to sustain the quality of life of present and future generations.

*Sustainability is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

**Required Texts**

* Svara, J. (2015). The ethics primer for public administrators in government and nonprofit organizations (2nd ed.). Burlington, MA: Jones and Bartlett Learning.

Other assigned readings will be provided on the course Canvas site or made available electronically through the library.

**Course Format**

This class will be held entirely online. To help students identify what is expected of them each week, find assigned material, and find weekly learning goals the course is broken down into “Modules” with one module per week (except for Week 1 in which there are 2). Modules will run Monday through Sunday. Typically, a module will contain (1) learning goals for the week; (2) a lecture covering weekly material; (3) additional assigned readings (if any); (4) exams (if applicable); and (5) case studies (if assigned).

**Assignments**

*Midterm and Final Exam*

Students will complete two exams over the course of the semester: a midterm and final. The midterm will be 10 short-answer or essay questions and will reflect material covered at the beginning of the semester. The final exam will also be 10 short-answer or essay questions and will cover material from the second half of the semester (i.e. it will not be cumulative). During weeks with exams, students will not be responsible for assigned reading, lectures, or engaged discussions. More information on exams will be provided in class along with a review of materials the week prior to each. Exams will be worth 100 points each.

*Case Study Responses*

Five times through the semester, students will be assigned a case study that covers an ethical dilemma faced in public action and will need to use the course material covered so far to identify how they will respond to the dilemma. Students will complete case study reviews in assigned small groups and will need to engage their group members for this assignment. Essentially each student will:

1. Write an original threaded discussion post that identifies how they will respond (due Wednesday of week they are assigned); and
2. Write at response posts to their group member’s original response (due Sunday evening of the week in which they are assigned).

Your response should be based off material that is covered in class, not just your opinion. Consider what the lectures and readings cover as you draft your response. Each is worth 20 points total. An assignment description including more specific requirements can be found on the course Canvas site.

*e-Portfolio*

Students will complete an e-Portfolio that not only documents their commitment to ethical decisions but also reflects the relationship between ethics and other courses they have taken throughout their tenure within their degree program. Initial drafts of each component will be due throughout the semester with feedback provided by me to ensure that your final, publicized version best reflects you and your time on campus. Your final draft will be due near the end of the semester and will include a reflection piece (turned in on Canvas to me) regarding the process of putting together your portfolio. Further instructions, an assignment description, and examples will be provided on the course Canvas page. This will be worth 150 points total.

This will be a collection of your work (in electronic format) that showcases your learning over your time at UWGB. You will be able to utilize your portfolio once you leave the university, so consider this an opportunity to create a product not only for class but also one that is public-facing and could enhance your ability to market yourself to your classmates, current and future colleagues, and potential employers. The Association of American Colleges & Universities found that more than 4 in 5 employers identify e-portfolios as a useful tool for ensuring that job applicants have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their organization. You are allowed (and encouraged) to add additional materials to the portfolio not required for this class that reflect you, your skills, and your personal body of work

**Assignment Submission**

All assignments will typically be turned on the course Canvas Page. Hard copies or emails will not be accepted unless otherwise stated.

Late assignments will be accepted up to one week past the due date provided prior approval from the instructor and will be assessed a 10% reduction in grade per day. After one week, missing assignments will receive a 0.

*Assignment Formatting*

All assignments should be completed using the following parameters:

* Times New Roman, size 12 Font
* APA citation style (both in-text and References)
* One-inch margins
* Double Spaced
* Page Numbers
* Page headers that include author’s last name

Page lengths/word counts do not include cover pages, abstracts, or reference pages. The writing center at Purdue has a free and comprehensive APA reference guide at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10>.

Failure to submit assignments according to these parameters may result in a grade deduction.

Because effective communication is essential to public action, I have very high expectations in terms of writing quality and analysis. This being said, I understand that there are some students who may need help in this area. The school has a writing center that can aid students with the technical aspects of their writing. Further, I am happy to go through drafts of your assignments to let you know if you are meeting the expectations of the assignment and to provide suggestions for improving. I also suggest reviewing the assignment description sheets, as they outline the expectations that I have for each.

A few other hints for professional/academic/formal writing:

* Avoid writing in the first person unless it is appropriate/you have been told you can (i.e. using I, we, you, I think, etc.
* Avoid secondary citations. The APA suggests that secondary sources should be used sparingly, especially when the full-text of the original source is available. However, there are instances in which the original source is out of print, unavailable through the usual sources, or not available in these instances. If this is the case, be sure to use the secondary citation formatting conventions of APA citation styles.
* Be sure to have an introduction section and conclusion to your writing. The conventional wisdom in this area is “Tell them what you are going to tell them; tell them; tell them what you told them.” It helps the reader (me) to understand and follow your writing.
* Make sure you are sequencing between ideas within paragraphs and then transitioning between paragraphs.
* Make sure that you synthesize material – academic writing (and particularly literature reviews) does not review individual pieces of literature, but rather, speaks to the state of the literature as a whole.
* Any information obtained from a source, when not considered “common knowledge” needs to be attributed to that source. If multiple sources are used to derive a point, students should be attributing credit to all sources. For example: While the use of networks has increased, little is known is how networks themselves are governed and how variances in governance relate to network outcomes (Milward & Provan, 2000; Page; 2003; Herranz, Jr., 2007; Provan, Fish, & Sydow, 2007; Rethemeyer & Hatmaker; 2007). See the Academic Honesty and Integrity section for further information on plagiarism.
* Paraphrase whenever possible (with appropriate citations). Student’s papers should not have excessive quoting. A general rule for this class is one quote per paragraph and one block quote per paper, maximum. Also keep in mind that quotes need to be introduced and explained.

**Grades**

| **Grading Scale** | | |  | **Assignment Summary** | Points |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total points** | **Percent** | **Letter grade** |  | Midterm | 100 |
| 465-500 | 93-100% | A |  | Final | 100 |
| 440-464 | 88-92% | AB |  | Book Review | 50 |
| 415-439 | 83-87% | B |  | e-Portfolio | 150 |
| 390-414 | 78-82% | BC |  | Case Study Responses | 100 |
| 365-389 | 73-77% | C |  | **Total** | **500** |
| 340-364 | 68-72% | D |  |  |  |
| Below 340 | Below 68% | F |  |  |  |

Your final grade is permanent and final. Extra credit is not offered. If you become concerned about your performance, please speak to me about early as possible and before the last week of class begins.

Incompletes are reserved solely for documented emergencies situations. If you find yourself unable to complete the course, please speak with me as soon as possible to discuss options.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

The UW System sets principles regarding academic honesty and integrity, stating the students are responsible for:

* the honest completion and representation of their work,
* for the appropriate citation of sources,
* and for the respect of others’ academic endeavors

Honesty is the essence of the intellectual life of the University. Students who copy the work of another on an assignment, paper, quiz, or examination are guilty of cheating. The misrepresentation of another’s work as your own, copying material from books, magazines, or other resources without acknowledgement and identification of those sources is plagiarism. If a student is guilty of either cheating or plagiarizing, or of assisting other students in cheating or plagiarizing on an assignment, paper, quiz, or examination, the student may receive a grade of “F” for the course and be suspended, dismissed from the University, or other disciplinary sanctions.

*Statement on Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is the representation of another person’s words, ideas, and creative work in general as one’s own. This misrepresentation is a breach of ethics that seriously compromises a person’s reputation. Professional careers have been ruined by revelations of plagiarism. To avoid plagiarism, researchers and professionals in public, private, or nonprofit organizations must scrupulously give credit whenever they use another person’s idea, opinion, theory, written or spoken words, as well as any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings- any pieces of information- that are not common knowledge. The following rules should be observed to make sure that the distinction between one’s own words, ideas or work, and those of others us justly maintained.

Put in quotations everything that comes directly from the text of another’s work, especially when taking notes.

Alternatively, you can paraphrase another person’s work, but be sure you are not just rearranging or replacing a few words. A good strategy is to (1) read over what you want to paraphrase carefully, (2) cover up the text with your hand, (3) write out the idea in your own words without peeking, and (4) check your paraphrase against the original text to be sure you have not accidentally used the same phrases or words, and that the information is accurate.

Whether you quote, paraphrase or otherwise borrow another’s work, always cite or indicate the source of the information, and provide references following one of the many accepted styles or formats.

Common knowledge such as George Washington’s date of birth or meaning of OLS regression need not be quoted, cited, or referenced. However, borrowing another’s original or creative presentation of common knowledge should follow the above mentioned rules. When in doubt, follow the rules.

Of course, submitting a paper that is completely the work of another person is plagiarism in its most extreme form. It should be kept in mind that, although it is not as egregious an offense as copying someone else’s work, the extensive copying of a paper that one has prepared for one course for subsequent use and submission in another course is inappropriate. See <https://www.uwgb.edu/UWGBCMS/media/writing-center/files/Plagiarism-Handout-Writing-Center.pdf> for further examples, an explanation for why we credit sources, as well as tips for citations.

**Communication**

Please feel free to email questions or concerns at any time: [kuenzik@uwgb.edu](mailto:kuenzik@uwgb.edu) I will endeavor to reply within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours over the weekend. If the matter is particularly complicated or sensitive, I may request that we set up a time to speak in person or over the phone. I am also available during my office hours and by appointment throughout the semester. Please email to set up an appointment at any time.

If you are experiencing a problem, please do not wait to speak with me until after you miss a class or assignment deadline. If you are unable to turn in work on time due to unexpected circumstances, you must make prior arrangements with me.

**How to be successful in this course**

*Actively contribute to the learning activities in class*

This course is designed to integrate theory and practice on ethics in public serving organizations. To this end, the teaching method used in this course is based on an active learning model. This model requires that you prepare by completing all assigned readings and participating in threaded discussions or other activities.

While I understand that many students enroll in online classes because of their convenience and flexibility, distance education is interactive and instructor paced. Students in distance learning classrooms often have expectations closer to those of a correspondence structured course. They expect learning to be self-paced and instructor-centered, with limited interaction. In contrast, distance learning courses such as this one are more interactive resulting in a quasi-face-to-face face environment through discussion boards, email, weekly assignments, etc. In other words, while correspondence education is static, distance learning is fluid and dynamic. This allows student the opportunity to not only learn from reading and materials, but also from peer interaction.

Therefore, while the course itself has some degree of flexibility, the expectation of student interaction requires that aspects of the course be completed in a timely manner in which they are assigned. You are expected to log in multiple times every week to access course announcements, articles and cases for your weekly preparation, and to participate in the online discussion threads. Because this course is entirely online, a key aspect of demonstrating competence with course concepts and learning objectives is participation.

*Be prepared*

Complete your assigned readings and watch lecture videos. These will enhance your ability to engage with your classmates and make connections to material from other courses.

A general rule for study/preparatory time required for any college course is two to three times the amount of class time. This means that if you have class time for three hours a week, you should be prepared to spend 6-9 hours a week outside of class reading and studying for this course. While we don’t have a scheduled course time, traditional courses are generally around three hours per week. This means that you could need to dedicate the same amount of time (9-12 hours a week) on this course. While I do not anticipate the assignments and course material to take this much time per week, students should be prepared to dedicate time to the course and its components.

*Time Commitment*

A general rule for the amount of study/preparatory time required for any college course is two to three times that amount of class time. This means that if you have class time for three hours a week, you should be prepared to spend 6-9 hours a week outside of class reading and studying for this course.

*Be respectful of others*

Students come to this class with a wide range of understanding, training, and abilities. While the material covered within class may be review to some students, other students are learning the material for the first time. Therefore, I expect all students to be respectful the learning environment including being outwardly disruptive or being distracting to the learning process of others.

Any student that is disrespectful or disruptive of the learning environment may be reported to university administration if they are in violation of the university’s civility& inclusivity or harassment and discrimination policies.

The classroom is a place for civil discourse and engagement of different ideas that encourages learning and freedom of expression. Maintaining these rights requires classroom conditions that encourage the learning process and individual’s rights to feel physically, verbally, and emotionally safe. Responsibility, civility, and integrity mean that individuals show respect for others and avoid disruptive behaviors that inhibits others’ ability to learn and teach. Civility is an expectation of public servants and is a critical component of good and democratic governance. Classroom actions considered uncivil or disruptive include but are not limited to:

* Physical threats, harassment, or speech considered threatening by classroom participants
* Refusal to comply with an instructor’s response for appropriate behavior
* Disrespectful actions or speech directed toward class members or instructor, such as personal insults or inflammatory remarks in oral or online discussion
* Inability to listen to constructive criticism

You are welcome to your own opinion and encouraged to express it, but you must do so in a mature and sincere manner. You must also make sure your opinions are informed and well-supported – this is not your personal soapbox. You may find it helpful to review the UWGB guidelines for online etiquette, located at <http://online.uwc.edu/technology/etiquette>.

**Instructor’s Responsibility**

* Evaluate all fairly and equally
* Be respectful of all students
* Create and facilitate meaningful learning activities
* Behave according to University codes of conduct
* Give timely feedback

**Student Resources[[2]](#footnote-1)**

*Student Accessibility Services*

Consistent with federal laws and the policies of the University of Wisconsin, it is the policy of UW-Green Bay to provide appropriate and necessary accommodations to students with disabilities. If you are require any academic accommodations, please contact the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) Director (phone: 920-465-2841; email: [sas@uwgb.edu](mailto:sas@uwgb.edu); website: [www.uwgb.edu/sas](http://www.uwgb.edu/sas)) to register and/or request services. If you have already established accommodations through the ACCESS program through the SAS Office, please communicate your approved accommodations with me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

*Phoenix Cares*

Phoenix Cares is your place to go to share a concern about another student or if you need assistance yourself including resources for academic support, crisis and mental health resources, financial resources, food resources, sexual assault and personal safety. You can find more information about Phoenix Cares at <https://www.uwgb.edu/phoenix-cares/>.

*Writing Center*

The UWGB writing center helps students with all aspects of writing and on different types of assignments including essays, research projects, personal statements, graduate school applications, and more. You can find more information at <https://www.uwgb.edu/writing-center/>.

**Course Schedule**

| **Week of (#):** | Topic | Assigned Readings |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1/28 (1) | Hello and Welcome | Svara – Chapter 1 |
| 2/4 (2) | Introduction to ethics | Svara – Chapter 2 |
| 2/11 (3) | What are our responsibilities as public servants? | Svara – Chapter 3  Denhardt & Denhardt (2000) – available on Canvas |
| 2/18 (4) | Complexity of ethical decision-making | Svara – Chapter 4 |
| 2/25 (5) | Ethical Dilemmas of Public Action | Richter & Burke (2007) – available on Canvas |
| 3/4 (6) | Ethical Dilemmas (Part II) | Svara – Chapter 6 |
| 3/11 (7) | *Midterm Exam* | |
| 3/18 (8) | No Class - Break | |
| 3/25 (9) | Research Ethics | Watch “5 Psychology Experiments You Couldn't Do Today” on Canvas |
| 4/1 (10) | Ethical decision making – ensuring ethics are part of our decisions | Svara – Chapter 7 |
| 4/8 (11) | Whistleblowing | Svara – Chapter 8 |
| 4/15  (12) | Dissent and Strategies for Making Dissent Constructive | O’Leary (entire book) |
| 4/22  (13) | Encouraging Ethics – Organizational Strategies | Svara – Chapter 9 |
| 4/29  (14) | Encouraging Ethics in Organizations – Ethics Codes | Svara – Chapter 5 |
| 5/6  (15) | External Pressure to Promote Ethics & Wrap-Up | Svara – Chapter 10 & 11 |
| 5/13  (16) | *Final Exam* | |

\*Note: The weekly schedule and all aspects of the course (including assignments) are tentative and may change at the instructor’s discretion.

**Due Date Checklist**

* February 3 by 11:59pm (Central) – Personal Ethics Code (Component 1 of e-Portfolio) turned in on Canvas
* February 6 by 11:59pm (Central) – Original Response to Case Study 1 completed on Canvas
* February 10 by 11:59pm (Central) – Peer Responses to Case Study 3 completed on Canvas
* February 17 by 11:59pm (Central) – Personal Statement of Public Service Due (Component 2 of e-Portfolio) turned in on Canvas
* February 27 by 11:59pm (Central) - Original Response to Case Study 2 completed on Canvas
* March 3 by 11:59pm (Central) – Peer Responses to Case Study 2 completed on Canvas
* March 6 by 11:59pm (Central) – Original Response to Case Study 3 completed on Canvas
* March 10 by 11:59pm (Central) – Peer Responses to Case Study 3 completed on Canvas
* March 17 by 11:59pm (Central) – Midterm Exam completed on Canvas
* March 31 – Institutional Review Board Certificate (Component 3 of e-Portfolio) turned in on Canvas
* Aril 3 by 11:59pm (Central) – Original Response to Case Study 4 completed on Canvas
* April 7 by 11:59pm (Central) – Peer Responses to Case Study 4 completed on Canvas
* April 14 by 11:59pm (Central) – Book Review turned in on Canvas
* April 17 by 11:59pm (Central) – Original Response to Case Study 5 completed on Canvas
* April 21 by 11:59pm (Central) – Peer Responses to Case Study 5 completed on Canvas
* April 28 by 11:59pm (Central) – Synthesis Essay (Component 4 of e-Portfolio) turned in on Canvas
* May 5 by 11:59pm (Central) – Managerial/Organizational Plan for Encouraging Ethics (Component 5 of e-Portfolio) turned in on Canvas
* May 12 by 11:59pm (Central) – Final Portfolio Submission and Essay turned in on Canvas
* May 16 by 11:59pm (Central) – Final Exam completed on Canvas

1. This class also aligns with the institutional learning outcomes of UW Green Bay which can be found at: https://www.uwgb.edu/provost/accreditation/institutional-learning-outcomes.asp [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. More university resources can be found on the course Canvas page under the “Resources” module [↑](#footnote-ref-1)