Course Description: This course is designed to help provide a framework for understanding why and under what types of circumstances you will encounter ethical issues and decisions in your career and how you might respond to them. As you will discover, if you have not already realized this, ethical choices and dilemmas can occur in every facet of public administration – budgeting and accounting, human resources, information collection and use, data interpretation and analysis, policy formulation and evaluation, etc. Moreover, public and non-profit administrators operate in environments where laws and regulations, professional standards, organizational cultures and routines, and personal values of colleagues all come into play. This course offers an opportunity to examine and understand how these differing values, perspectives, goals and purposes interact, as well as how you might incorporate this perspective into your daily worklife and your long-term career.

Class Sessions: This is a seminar course with each class session devoted to discussing the assigned readings and seriously considering the issues, concepts, and theoretical ideas raised in the readings. Even more so than in other areas of study, ethics does not provide only one “right” answer; indeed, this may be thought of as the “grayest” of the gray areas. Because of this, it is critical first that everyone respect the ideas of others and second that everyone strive to be systematic and clear in their reasoning. Class participation is essential and the course is organized so that all will have opportunities and responsibilities to participate.

In each class session, both academic articles and case studies be assigned so that we can connect the theories to the reality. Additionally, for each class a team of two students will be responsible for presenting a current occurrence in public/non-profit administration involving ethical issues. Students may find these in the popular media, in governance/public administration blogs, magazines or newsletters, or in academic publications. Students, individually, will submit a 2 page overview of the issue and identification, with some analysis, of the ethical issue.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:
Issue Presentation and Issue 10%
Reflective Papers 20% (each)
Participation 15%
Ethical Case Analysis and Presentation 35%

**Academic Integrity:** Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work. In practice, this entails:

1. Quizzes, tests and examinations. No help may be given or received by students when taking quizzes, tests, or examinations, whatever the type or wherever taken, unless the professor specifically permits deviation from this standard.

2. Course Requirements: All work submitted to fulfill course requirements is to be solely the product of the individual(s) whose name(s) appears on it. Except with permission of the professor, no recourse is to be had to projects, papers, lab reports or any other written work previously prepared by another student, and except with permission of the professor no paper or work of any type submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of another course may be used a second time to satisfy a requirement of any other course. No assistance is to be obtained from commercial organizations, which sell or lease research help or written papers. With respect to all written work as appropriate, proper footnotes and attribution are required.

For further information on Academic Integrity at George Mason University, including the process for Honor Code violations see: [http://oai.gmu.edu/](http://oai.gmu.edu/)

**Students with Disabilities:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

**Enrollment Responsibilities:**
1. Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class.
2. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes: see: [http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/spring-2016/](http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/spring-2016/)
3. **Last Day to Add** is January 26
4. **Last Day to Drop** with 33% tuition penalty is February 2
5. **Final Drop Deadline** with 67% tuition penalty is February 19

**Course Materials:** There is one required book for this course, which is available in the Campus Bookstore as well as from various online bookstores.


All other readings will be available through the George Mason University library, on Blackboard, or online.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Jan. 19  Introduction and Overview

Waldo’s Map: Ethical Obligations of a Public Servant (p. 18 in O’Leary)

Discussion of Case of Kim Davis, County Clerk for Rowan County, KY and issuance of marriage licenses for same sex couples:
- identification of ethical issues
- examination of larger political context
- analysis of media coverage

Please scan a number of news stories and analyses before class and be attentive to the media source and possible bias.

Jan. 26  Ethical Approaches – Historical Philosophical Traditions

- Relativism
- Teleology/Utilitarianism
- Deontology
- Intuitionism
- Virtue Theory

Readings:
From Peter Singer, Ethics. Available on Blackboard.

Feb. 2  Professional Codes

Other Readings:


First Reflective Paper – first iteration
Due Feb 2nd

Paper Topic – What are the three to five ethical principles or guidelines taken from philosophical writing and/or professional codes that you believe are most important – and why? Please rank them in order of their importance to you. Evaluate how helpful you believe each is likely to be in real-world situations – and why. (4-6 page paper)

Feb. 9 Reality of Bureaucratic Politics and Organizational Management

Readings:


O’Leary, Chapter 1 “Guerilla What?” and Chapter 2 “Guerrilla Government and the Nevada Wetlands”

First Reflective Paper – second iteration
Due Feb 9th

Feb. 16 Bureaucratic Ethos and Democratic Ethos

Readings:


O’Leary, Chapter 3 “Guerrilla Government in the EPA’s Seattle Regional Field Office”

Feb. 23  Public Administration Ethics and National Security: Decisions to Leak Critical Information

In class, we will watch Citizenfour, pausing to discuss.

Readings:

March 1  Public Administrative Ethics and National Security (cont’d)

Readings:

March 8 – Spring Break

March 15  Everyday Workplace Ethical Scenarios – Situational Ethics: Corruption, Bribery, Free Cup of Coffee, Undue Pressure?

Readings:

O’Leary, Chapter 4 “A Government Guerrilla Sues His Own Agency: Off Road Vehicles in the Hoosier National Forest”

**Second Reflective Paper**
*First Iteration Due*
*March 15*

**March 22**  **Managing Everyday Ethics: How to Respond?**

**Readings:**


**Second Reflective Paper**
*Second Iteration Due*
*March 22*

**March 29**  **Ethics in Nonprofit Organizations – Similarities and Differences**

**Readings:**


April 5    Big Data – Organizational Use of Information It Can’t Always Understand

Readings:

April 12    Global Perspectives on Public Administration Ethics

Readings:
Louis Gawthrop. 2006. “Public Administration in a Global Mode with Sympathy and Compassion,” *Public Integrity* 7

April 19    Revisiting First Principles – How to Construct for 21st Century PA – Restoring Trust in Government

Readings:
O’Leary, Chapter 6 “Managing Guerilla Government: Ethical Crusaders or Insubordinate Renegades?”

April 26    Presentations

April 28    Presentations