



## **Course Format and Grading:**

Classes will be seminar-based, with frequent use of small group discussion to explore scenarios or situations. To reflect the course emphasis on how organizations can promote or impede ethical decision-making, the largest portion of each student's grade will come from a group project regarding organizational ethics. Students will be responsible for the following components of their final grades:

- 50%: Group project to identify and propose solutions for an organizational ethical problem
- 35%: Research paper (10-15 pages) on an issue in public administration ethics
- 10%: Participation in class sessions, including attendance and contribution to discussions
- 5%: Personal vision and values statement

## **Accommodations:**

For most students, graduate studies compete with other real-life demands and obligations. While students who choose to enroll in this course are expected to attend every class and complete all assigned work on time, the instructor understands there may be occasional unavoidable conflicts due to illness, professional travel, or unexpected emergencies. If you anticipate an unavoidable conflict, please notify the instructor as far in advance as possible to see if alternate arrangements can be made. Failure to do so, other than in a true emergency, will result in a five-point reduction in the class participation grade for a missed class or a five-point reduction per day past the due date for any other graded work. Other than in exceptional circumstances, accommodations will not be made for elective travel or other conflicts.

If you need a physical or academic accommodation for a disability, please notify the instructor and the Disability Resource Center (703-993-2474) as soon as possible. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the Disability Resource Center.

## **Academic Integrity:**

Students are expected to adhere to the George Mason University Honor Code, which prohibits cheating, plagiarizing, stealing, and/or lying in any academic matter. Faculty in the Schar School have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty and will strictly enforce the Honor Code. For the full text of the Honor Code, including definitions of terms, visit [oai.gmu.edu](http://oai.gmu.edu). For the Schar School Policy on Plagiarism, see the Master's Programs Student Guide at [schar.gmu.edu/current-students/masters-student-services/academic-policies-forms/schar-student-guide](http://schar.gmu.edu/current-students/masters-student-services/academic-policies-forms/schar-student-guide).

## Required Resources:

Primary readings for each class session can be found in the following texts:

- Martinez, J. Michael. [\*Public Administration Ethics for the 21st Century\*](#). Praeger, 2009.
- Sandel, Michael J. [\*Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?\*](#) Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.
- GMU MPA Cohort 4; [\*The Ethical GPS: Navigating Everyday Dilemmas. A Local Government Guide\*](#), 2007
- Camus, Albert. [\*The Plague\*](#). Vintage, 1991.

Additional reading selections throughout the course will be provided by the instructor or available online.

## Course Outline:

Notes:

- As a capstone course, the curriculum will make frequent connections to the previous courses in the MPA program. Significant connections are noted on the outline below.
- Readings and other assignments are listed under the class session at which they are due.

### Part I: Foundations

- Class 1 (January 24): **Introduction to Ethics**

What ethics is and isn't, why it matters, and what gets in the way.

Reading: (None)

- Class 2 (January 31): **Theories of Ethics**

Nature of communities and societies, absolutism vs. relativism, major theories of normative ethics.

Assignment Due: Personal Vision and Values Statement

Reading: 

- Martinez - Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2
- Sandel - Chapter 2

- Class 3 (February 7): **Why Public Service is Different**

The Constitution and ethics in the public sector vs. private sector

*Connections: PUAD 502 (Administration in Public and Nonprofit Organizations)*

*PUAD 615 (Administrative Law)*

*PUAD 792 (Issues in Local Government Administration)*

- Reading:
- [Constitution of the United States](#) (Annotated by U.S. Senate) - Article IV, Article VI, Amendments 1-27
  - [Constitution of Virginia](#) - Article I, Article II, Article VII, Article VIII
  - Sandel - Chapter 5, Chapter 6

## Part II: Organizations

- Class 4 (February 14): **Creating an Ethical Culture**  
Crafting shared vision and values, feedback loops, codes of ethics, and accountability.  
*Connections:* PUAD 502 (Administration in Public and Nonprofit Organizations)  
PUAD 540 (Public Policy Process)  
PUAD 646 (Program Evaluation)  
PUAD 670 (Human Resource Management-Public Sector)  
PUAD 792 (Issues in Local Government Administration)

- Reading:
- Martinez - Chapter 5
  - Cohort 4 - Chapter I

- Class 5 (February 21): **Servant Leadership**  
Leadership philosophies, systems of administration, motivating people.  
*Connections:* PUAD 520 (Organizational Theory and Management Behavior)  
PUAD 670 (Human Resource Management-Public Sector)

- Reading:
- Martinez - Chapter 3, Chapter 4

- Class 6 (February 28): **Power vs. Authority**  
Where does government get its mandate? How should government wield power?  
*Connections:* PUAD 502 (Administration in Public and Nonprofit Organizations)  
PUAD 615 (Administrative Law)  
PUAD 792 (Issues in Local Government Administration)

- Reading:
- Camus - (Entire Book)
  - Zimbardo, Philip. "[When Good People Do Evil.](#)"  
Yale Alumni Magazine, 2007.

- Class 7 (March 7): **Corruption**  
Abuses of power, red flags, consequences.  
*Connections:* PUAD 520 (Organizational Theory and Management Behavior)  
PUAD 615 (Administrative Law)  
PUAD 646 (Program Evaluation)

- **Spring Recess** (March 14)

### Part III: Putting Ethics to the Test

- Class 8 (March 21): **Public Engagement and Perception**  
Involving stakeholders, reaching consensus, avoiding appearances of impropriety and conflicts of interest.

Connections: PUAD 646 (*Program Evaluation*)  
PUAD 703 (*Third Party Governance*)

Reading: (None)

- Class 9 (March 28): **Tragedy of the Commons**  
Allocating limited resources, individual vs. community interests.

Connections: PUAD 511 (*Problem Solving and Data Analysis I*)  
PUAD 540 (*Public Policy Process*)  
PUAD 663 (*State and Local Budgeting*)

Assignment Due: Research Paper

Reading: • [“The Tragedy of the Commons,”](#) Garrett Hardin, 1968  
• Sandel - Chapter 8

- Class 10 (April 4): **Transparency**  
How can public officials be effective while under a microscope?

Connections: PUAD 540 (*Public Policy Process*)  
PUAD 615 (*Administrative Law*)  
PUAD 792 (*Issues in Local Government Administration*)

Reading: • [Virginia Freedom of Information Act](#) - pp. 2-9, 41-43, 57-58

- Class 11 (April 11): **Courage**  
Making tough choices, taking responsibility, speaking up, apologizing.

Reading: • Cohort 4 - Chapter II

- Class 12 (April 18): **Group Project Presentations**
- Class 13 (April 25): **Group Project Presentations**
- Class 14 (May 2): **Group Project Presentations**
- Exam Period (May 9)