Course Syllabus: PUAD 561 Ethics in Public Administration

Professor:
Dr. Adam Brewer
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- Email: adam.brewer@umontana.edu
- Office Hours: Tuesday 1-2pm, Wednesday 1-2pm, Thursday 3-4pm (if remote, by appointment)
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Communication with Professor:
The professor can be reached via email from 8am-5pm (M-F) for course inquiries. Please allow for up to 24 hours for a response. Unless an emergency, student email inquiries sent over the weekend, will be addressed on Mondays.

Course Description:
As a public servant, you will face difficult ethical choices that may have to do with: relationships between elected officials and appointed officials; relationships to citizens and community groups; matters of conscience; matters of regulation; and the ethical ramifications of public policy recommendations. Understanding the ethical implications of your actions and resolving the dilemmas they pose are among the more difficult problems that you will face working in the public sector. In this class, we will examine a variety of ethical issues faced by those who work in public service. Some involve concerns that might arise in any organization - cases of lying, cheating, or stealing, or questions about what to do when you feel compelled to refuse an order from your boss. Others are more directly connected to the key values that underlie public service, involving the relationship between political leaders, career civil servants, and workers in non-profit agencies, or between competing demands for efficiency and responsiveness. In all cases, the issues will be bound to the moral context of public service.

Course Learning Objectives:
In completing this internship, students will be able to:

• To enhance understanding of the moral foundations of public service;
• To examine the relationship between democratic values and the practice of public administration, including issues of accountability and responsiveness;
• To develop an awareness of specific ethical issues and problems within non-profit agencies and the field of public administration;
• To build the capacity for ethical decision-making;
• To understand the values at play in the relationship between administrators and citizens;
• To develop a practical understanding of the constraints on and expectations of public servants;
• To develop skills in managing ethics within public organizations;
• To learn to apply ethical reasoning to the consideration of public policy issues.
Course Materials:

Course Assignments:

Readings (Preparation):
I have provided you with course reading material that I believe will enhance your understanding of the field of policy analysis and provide you with real experience dealing with the challenges of practicing human resource management. I expect you to complete ALL of the reading each week. It will be impossible to complete the assignments without completing the reading and it will be easy to tell who has completed the reading and who has not given the nature of the assignments. I suggest starting early to give yourself enough time.

Team Discussions:
Details for Discussion Leader: Each student will serve as the discussion leader once. As the discussion leader, you “add a new topic” and pose your question to your team based upon the readings by 11:59p.m. (MST) on Tuesday night. This means that for the week you are discussion leader, you will need to begin the reading material for that week earlier than normal. It is the student’s responsibility to post on time and failure to post your question(s) by 11:59p.m. on Tuesday will result in zero points and forfeit your obligation to serve as a discussion leader for the semester. Please plan accordingly. Additionally, as the discussion leader, you will be expected to take a much more active role in facilitating the discussion among your classmates. I will be there along with you facilitating the discussion. You should also participate as normal on other discussion threads during that week.

Details for Discussion Respondent: If you are not the assigned discussion leader (which is most of the time), you are the respondent. You are required to respond to all of the questions posed by the discussion leaders by Wednesday night 11:59p.m. (MST). This means that you must be completed with the reading materials and the weekly lecture before this deadline. After Wednesday and until Saturday night, students are expected to make multiple substantive posts to their classmates and carry on a discussion with them. While the class discussion board hours are open 24 hours, I require that students send comments early to provide ample time for the exchange of ideas. Thus, if you wait until 10p.m Saturday to finally post your replies, your grade will reflect this. It should be noted that I do not have a set number of discussion posts that you must write in order to successfully complete this assignment. Such stringent measures often stifle discussion. At the end of each week, I will look at your participation on the discussion board holistically. Your initial posts on Wednesday and multiple reply posts that you make subsequently during the week should be thoughtful and substantive. This is not to say that you can’t make posts that are less substantive but only that I should be able to see that you were an active participant throughout the week. Importantly, if someone comments on a post you previously made, you should respond as quickly as possible. One of the biggest issues I have seen on discussion boards in the past are students not replying back to comments made to them.
This is not how a discussion would work in the “real” world and it should not be how a discussion works in the “digital” world. A lack of participation will result in a loss of points for that week. For more detail on what I am looking for, see the team discussion rubric document posted in Week 3 on Moodle. Lastly, the discussion boards show me how much you engaged with the reading for the week. You should consistently reference the readings in your comments and connect them with your own ideas and thoughts. However, avoid writing such long posts that your classmates choose to overlook them (limit to 250 words each).

**Case Write-Ups:**
These assignments (four in total) will provide you with the opportunity to apply your understanding of the theory to practice by simulating real world experiences with ethical dilemmas. You will be presented with four complex real ethics cases (provided in the O’Leary text) in the which you will be required to analyze and write about. The assignment directions are provided on Moodle (Weeks 4, 7, 11, 13). In conjunction with these written assignments, students will have the opportunity to meet with a group of other students and the instructor on Zoom before the write-ups are due to discuss the cases in more detail and share ideas. These Zoom meetings will take place earlier in the week at a convenient time for the student. The instructor will supply a sign-up sheet (google doc) at the beginning of the semester allowing students to choose a time that works for them. The meetings should not last longer than 45 minutes. If you are unable to attend a meeting due to a work commitment, vacation, illness, etc., please contact the instructor for an accommodation.

**Ethics Exercises:**
Keep in mind that one of the purposes of this class is to help you learn the practice of ethical decision making and translate it into tangible skills moving forward. These exercises (2 in total) will accomplish this goal. You will learn how to (1) write an organizational code of ethics and (2) write a personal code of ethics. You will find that all of these skills will promote learning and prepare you for work in the public/nonprofit sector. Directions for these assignments can be found on Moodle (Weeks 8 and 15).

**Student Presentations:**
For this assignment, you will act as if you are the head of your department. You have noticed that some of your employees are involved in minor ethics violations and that overall, there seems to be a relaxed culture in the department. None of your employees have taken an ethics course. You will select your organizational code of ethics OR your personal code of ethics that you drafted earlier in the semester and prepare a 5-minute presentation detailing their purpose for elevating ethical decision making in your department. The five minute presentation should utilize some sort of artifact (i.e. powerpoint presentation or handout). Presentations will be completed via Zoom during the last week of the semester with a group of 4-5 of your classmates. Please see Moodle (Week 16) for more specific expectations regarding this assignment.

**Book Club:**
In addition to your normal textbooks, you will be assigned to read “A Higher Loyalty” by James Comey, former director of the FBI. If you have participated in a book club before, then you know that this is an incredibly fun way to engage a captivating book while others in your club
James Comey is a polarizing figure in American politics with opponents on both sides of the political spectrum due to decisions made regarding investigations into former Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and President Donald Trump. In assigning this book, it is not the instructor’s goal to have students agree with Comey’s perspective on these respective events. Instead, Comey provides a perspective on ethics in public administration that should be considered and analyzed by students of ethics. Students will have the opportunity to learn about and determine whether Comey operated in an ethical manner or not. The way this assignment will work is as follows:

1. You should start reading the book around midterm.

2. By Week 11, you should post on your Book Club Corner discussion board (different from your team on the Team Discussions). One post should include your thoughts (including things you like and/or critiques) on the book so far and a couple of posts replying to your book club mates (you do not have to be done with the book at this point). Importantly, think about how the book connects with other theories and concepts we have studied so far.

3. At some point during Week 13, you will have a 45-minute synchronous meeting via Zoom with your book club group to discuss the book. You should arrive at the meeting having finished the book and with one question prepared that will promote thoughtful discussion with your book club mates.

4. After the book club meeting, you will submit a one-page analysis of the book and answer two short evaluation questions on your own preparedness/participation for the meeting (this form can be found on Moodle Week 13).

**Course Grading Contract:**

This course uses a form of grading called contract grading. There are no points or letter grades in this course, aside from the final letter grade you earn at the end. The premise of contract grading is that if you do the work required to earn a B, you will see enormous gains in your learning. Traditional grading systems encourage you to work for “points,” as if learning were a game whose goal was to get a certain grade. Contract grading provides you with reassurance that if you complete all of the assigned work, you will earn at least a B (which is all you need to be in good standing in our department). This can free you up to focus on your learning, not your grade. To put this system of grading in context, consider how your performance is evaluated in your own workplace. In most workplaces, you generally do not receive feedback in the form of a score on individual tasks, but instead are given qualitative feedback on tasks with a possible numerical value attached in a comprehensive review.

During the semester I will not assign grades or scores to individual assignments; instead I will provide written or verbal feedback on the assignments that you turn in. In my feedback I will identify the strong aspects of the assignment, point out information or concepts that were missing from your assignment, and/or suggest additional work (thinking, writing, reading, etc.) that you need to do in order to improve your understanding of the topic. Ideally this feedback will help
you deepen your understanding of the material and concepts. See below for descriptions of the grading criteria.

Earning a C (Not meeting expectations)
You will earn a C in this class if you miss any assignment, submit assignments late, lack adequate participation on the class discussions, submit writing that is not college level work, or fail to adequately follow the assignment directions in some way. These examples are considered “not meeting expectations”. If you submit an assignment that is not meeting expectations, I will afford you one opportunity to make revisions until the assignment meets expectations. You also risk earning a C if you are unable to keep up with the course materials and complete them in their entirety.

To Earn a B (Meeting expectations)
You will earn a B in the class if you complete all of the work in the class (including the reading) on time and with sincere effort. This means staying current with the reading each week, actively participating in each class discussion, submitting all assignments on time, and actively participating in your assigned team and during the final presentation meetings. To earn a B, I expect your writing to reflect college level work including the use of outside sources as support, the proper citation of those sources, and no spelling or grammatical errors. I will let you know that your work is at this level by telling you that your submission “meets expectations” in the assignment feedback. The average final grade for the class will be a B.

To Earn an A (Exceeding expectations)
You will earn an A in the class if you do all of what is required for a B and show excellence in your work. Some features I look for in A work include:

• Strong critical thinking, including the ability to understand and respond to other views
• Writing that shows critical reading and careful rereading
• Ideas that are uniquely your own, not just repeated from class discussions
• Taking risks in your writing (trying a new technique or a more challenging approach)
• Clear sentences, careful proofreading, and well-integrated quotes

In class discussions, I’ll look for evidence that you’re stretching beyond your usual ways of participating. If participating is hard for you, try to confront that fear with small steps such as asking questions. If participating is easy for you, try to hold back more and listen to others.

Mid Semester Check-In
Around Week 6 of the semester, I’ll ask you to complete a written self-assessment. In this evaluation, you’ll tell me how you are doing in the class in terms of your effort, completion of the course materials, and overall participation. You are also welcome to share any challenges you’re experiencing in the class and how you plan to overcome them. You will then be required to meet with me in my office to discuss your evaluation and how you can continue to meet the expectations of the course.

Final Check-In
During the last week of the semester, you will complete a final self-assessment that will allow you once again to account for your performance over the second half of the semester. I will contact you after you submit this to let you know if I agree with your assessment of your performance.

**Important Policies and Expectations**

**Time Commitment**
In higher education, the standard for work outside of class is this: for every credit hour taken, you should spend 2-3 hours outside of class per week. That means for a 3-credit course, you should end up spending about 6-9 hours outside of class each week on average. For an online course, time spent “in class” includes any activities involving other classmates (team discussions and team exercises) or watching the Mini Lectures. “Outside of class” includes readings and individual written assignments.

**Guidelines for Written Work**
All written assignments should meet the following criteria unless otherwise noted in the assignment instructions or the professor:

1. All work must be typed, single-spaced, utilize 12 point times new roman font, and have one-inch margins.

2. Citations should follow a proper style guidelines such as, but not limited to, MLA, Chicago, or APA (in-text citations and a reference page are necessary).

3. Assignments are due on the date/time listed in the course schedule; late assignments will not be accepted.

4. All assignments must be turned in electronically via Microsoft Word (not as a PDF). If the instructor cannot open the document, the student will not receive a grade. Submission of assignments via e-mail will not be accepted unless specific arrangements have been made.

5. Written work will be evaluated both in terms of content, following instructions, organization, and writing/grammar.

6. Student collusion is not allowed for individual assignments (unless working in an approved team) and will be treated as an act of plagiarism.

**Note on Technology**
No “technology problem” excuses will be accepted in this class. That is, you cannot blame your failure to complete an assignment on time on “computer/internet/Moodle issues” (unless it was one that affected the whole class, in which case we will address the issue on a class-wide basis). Make sure to back up your work, perhaps using Microsoft OneDrive on your computers or UMBox/Dropbox.
Note on Late Work
Late assignments are not accepted. Extensions are only provided for two circumstances. (1) If an emergency situation arises and you inform me BEFORE the due date, then I will consider your circumstances and make a decision; (2) If you have a disability AND have sent me an accommodation letter from Disability Services. The best way to prevent the possibility of submitting an assignment late is to plan ahead.

Note on Debate Ethics
Some of the issues we discuss in this class are controversial with multiple, and sometimes divisive points of view. Although you may already have an established opinion on a particular topic, you are encouraged to consider other points of view and the strengths/weaknesses of your own. Additionally, as we discuss controversial topics, you are expected to respect the points of view of your fellow students. Respect is shown in the manner you address other students and the words you use to carry your point across. In an increasingly uncivil political environment in the U.S., civility will be maintained in this class so as to elevate the educational experience of all present.

Note on Academic Honesty
Students must follow the University’s policies for academic dishonesty. All work submitted must be your own; no duplicate work (work completed for another class) will not be accepted. Acts of cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Moreover, acts of plagiarism will also be reported to the Academic Court. To avoid acts of plagiarism, cite each reference or source you use and give proper credit for the ideas, opinions, and findings of others. When you are using the exact words of others, you must use quotation marks and include the page number where you found the quote in your citation. For help on avoiding plagiarism, see the following resources from the UM Writing and Public Speaking Center.

Note on Sexual Misconduct
UM prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in its education programs or activities. Prohibited sex discrimination includes incidents of sexual harassment (including sexual violence), dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (collectively “sexual misconduct”). As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. University policy requires that I report all incidents of sexual misconduct that come to my attention. If you encounter sexual misconduct, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at (406)243-5710. Additional information about sexual misconduct and available resources can be found on the UM Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action website.

Note on Student Disability Related Needs
The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you have a disability that adversely affects your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or
406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

**Cultural Leave Policy**
UM has a Cultural and Ceremonial Leave Policy: “Cultural or ceremonial leave allows excused absences for cultural, religious, and ceremonial purposes to meet the student’s customs and traditions or to participate in related activities. To receive an authorized absence for a cultural, religious or ceremonial event the student or their advisor (proxy) must submit a formal written request to the instructor. This must include a brief description (with inclusive dates) of the cultural event or ceremony and the importance of the student’s attendance or participation. Authorization for the absence is subject to approval by the instructor. Appeals may be made to the Chair, Dean or Provost. The excused absence or leave may not exceed five academic calendar days (not including weekends or holidays). Students remain responsible for completion or make-up of assignments as defined in the syllabus, at the discretion of the instructor.”

**Land Statement**
The University of Montana acknowledges that we are in the aboriginal territories of the Salish and Kalispel people.

**Course Calendar:**

**Week 1: Introduction to Ethics (Jan 12-18)**
- **Preparation:**
  1. Read Svara Ch. 1
  2. Read Hijal-Moghrabi & Sabharwal
  3. Watch Mini Lecture
  4. Attend Course Orientation on Zoom
- **Due:**
  1. Beginning of semester questionnaire due Sat 11:59pm

**Week 2: Administrative Ethics (Jan 19-25)**
- **Preparation:**
  1. Read Svara Ch. 2
  2. Read Stewart
  3. Read Vigoda-Gadot
  4. Watch Mini Lecture
- **Due:**
  1. None

**Week 3: Responsibilities of Public Administrators (Jan 26-Feb 1)**
- **Preparation:**
  1. Read Svara Ch. 3
  2. Read Plant
  3. Watch Mini Lecture
- **Due:**
1. Team Discussion: Initial posts due Wed 11:59pm. Reply posts due Sat 11:59pm

**Week 4: Large Case #1- The Nevada Wetlands (Feb 2-8)**
- **Preparation:**
  1. O’Leary Ch. 1-2
  2. Attend Case Discussion on Zoom
- **Due:**
  1. Large Case 1 Write-Up due Sat 11:59pm

**Week 5: Ethical Behavior and the Ethics Triangle (Feb 9-15)**
- **Preparation:**
  1. Read Svara Ch. 4
  2. Read Claude & Zamor
  3. Watch Mini Lecture
- **Due:**
  1. None

**Week 6: Organizational Codes of Ethics (Feb 16-22)**
- **Preparation:**
  1. Read Svara Ch. 5
  2. Read Blake et al.
  3. Watch Mini Lecture
- **Due:**
  1. Midterm Self-Assessment

**Week 7: Large Case #2 Seattle EPA Regional Office (Feb 23-29)**
- **Preparation:**
  1. Read O’Leary First Interlude and Ch. 3
  2. Attend Case Discussion on Zoom
- **Due:**
  2. Large Case 2 Write-Up due Sat 11:59pm

**Week 8: Challenges to Ethical Behavior (Mar 1-7)**
- **Preparation:**
  1. Read Ch. 6 Svara
  2. Read Perryer & Jordan
  3. Read Van Der Wal et al.
  4. Watch Mini Lecture
- **Due:**
  1. Ethics Exercise: Organizational Code of Ethics
Week 9: Ethical Analysis and Problem Solving (Mar 8-14)
- Preparation:
  1. Read Ch. 7 Svara
  2. Watch Mini Lecture
- Due:
  1. Team Discussion: Initial posts due Wed 11:59pm. Reply posts due Sat 11:59pm

Week 10: Spring Break (Mar 15-21/ No Class)

Week 11: Large Case #3 Hoosier National Forest (Mar 22-28)
- Preparation:
  1. Read O’Leary Second Interlude and Ch. 4
- Due:
  1. Large Case 3 Write-Up due Sat 11:59pm
  2. Post on Book Club Corner discussion board

Week 12: Responsible Whistleblowing (Mar 29-Apr 4)
- Preparation:
  1. Read Svara Ch. 8
  2. Read Dworkin and Brown
  3. Watch Mini Lecture
- Due:
  1. None

Week 13: Elevating Ethical Behavior in your organization (Apr 5-11)
- Preparation:
  1. Read Svara Ch. 9
  2. Watch Mini Lecture
  3. Attend Book Club meeting on Zoom
- Due:
  1. Submit one-page analysis of the book

Week 14: Large Case #4 The World’s Largest Security Breach (Apr 12-18)
- Preparation:
  1. Read O’Leary Third Interlude and Ch. 5
- Due:
  1. Large Case 4 Write-Up due Sat 11:59pm

Week 15: External Measures to Promote Ethics (Apr 19-25)
- Preparation:
  1. Read Svara Ch. 10-11, O’Leary Ch. 6
  2. Watch Mini Lecture
- Due:
1. Team Discussion: Initial posts due Wed 11:59pm. Reply posts due Sat 11:59pm
2. Ethics Exercise: Personal Code of Ethics

Week 16: Student Presentations (Apr 26-May 2)

- **Preparation:**
  1. Be ready to give a five minute presentation in class (see directions above)
- **Due:**
  1. Final Self-Assessment due Sat 11:59pm