I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

A strong democracy requires public officials with the ability to lead in an ethical manner. Although the media focuses public attention on ethics violations and failures in leadership at the highest and most visible levels of government and nonprofit organizations, the effectiveness of the vast majority of public and nonprofit sector activity relies on the responsible exercise of discretion by public administrators at every level. Another premise of this course is that ethical leadership is the responsibility of not just elected or formally appointed public leaders, but every public servant and citizen. Examining your own ethical dilemmas can raise awareness of the challenges of being an ethical public servant.

Students will receive a firm grounding in general ethics and leadership theory, but will also study more specifically how these theories apply to the government and nonprofit setting. Specifically, ethical leadership in government and nonprofit agencies requires an understanding of the shared nature of power and the multiple sources of responsibility in the public arena. Case studies, biographies of exemplary public administrators, film, and personal reflection will be used to build awareness and understanding.

II. REQUIRED TEXTS


Required articles will also be assigned during the semester.
III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Contribution to Class (15%)

Dialogue and participation are central features of this course. You are expected to contribute to class discussion by expressing opinions, asking questions, and challenging each other in a respectful manner. This course will challenge you to engage in authentic dialogue; that is, to be open about your beliefs and the basis for them. You are expected to come to class fully prepared to discuss readings and present any assignments.

Specifically, every student will be required each class to share the following two items for each set of reading assignments:

- The single most important word, sentence or passage from the readings.
- One key question from the readings.

Since it is not possible to contribute to class without being there, attendance is required. If you anticipate missing more than one class or parts of classes (e.g., coming late or leaving early), you should either drop the class or expect a low grade on this component of the course. You should understand that earning an “A” in this class will require more than merely A’s on papers and exams.

B. Journal (15%)

You must keep a personal journal during the course. Consistent with the purpose of the class, the journal is meant to stimulate personal reflection over class readings and discussion, as well as relevant events experienced in your daily life or in the world. The purpose is to raise awareness of ethical leadership by continuous dialogue.

A guideline for keeping a journal is attached to this syllabus. The journal may be handwritten; it is required that a standard 8.5” X 11” bound and lined notebook be used to keep the entries together. Each entry must be a minimum of four handwritten pages (single spaced). If typed, each entry should be two pages (single-spaced). Entries begin the first week of class. You will exchange your journal with other students or the instructor for comments every two weeks. The subsequent class will begin with a discussion of your reactions to the journal you have read. Note that journals are graded on effort – a poor grade will result from either superficial entries, entries less than four pages, or lateness.

C. Personal Ethical Case Study (15%)

You must write and present a three page analysis (typed, double spaced) of a real ethical dilemma you have either personally experienced or observed. The Cooper decision making model discussed in class (Chapter 1) must be used. Students will be asked to share their personal cases with the class during the course of the semester. A one page outline must be handed out to the class. ***Due June 16***
D. Exemplars Paper (15%)

You must write and present a ten page paper (typed, double-spaced) describing a public official (either current or historical) whose career demonstrates at least five of the ethical leadership concepts discussed in class. The paper must be based on a biography or autobiography of the official. A framework for the paper will be distributed in class. Student presentations will be scheduled throughout the second half of the semester. A one page summary of the five concepts highlighted must be handed out to class. Since this assignment will require reading a book on a chosen public figure, you will be expected to identify a subject for study by the second class (May 26). More than one student cannot do the same public figure, so subjects must be approved by the instructor on a first-come, first-served basis. ***Papers and handout for presentation due on July 21.***

E. Mid-Term Exams (20%)

An in-class short answer/essay style exam will be given on June 16 to test knowledge of course material in the Cooper text and the ability to apply concepts.

F. Ethics & Politics Case Analyses (20%)

Two page analyses of assigned cases from Ethics & Politics casebook must be prepared for each class according to the attached schedule.

IV. CLASS SCHEDULE

May 19  Introduction and Course Expectations  
Cooper. Preface and Chapter 1  
Film Clip: “Primary Colors”

**PART I: THE RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC SERVANT**

May 26  Contemporary Ethics and Objective/Subjective Responsibility  
Cooper, Chapters 2 & 3  
Film Clip: “The Contender”

***Note: Exemplar Subject Due***

June 2  Common Conflicts and Fostering Ethical Organizations  
Cooper, Chapters 4 & 5  
Film Clip: “The Green Mile”

***Note: Journal Entries 1-2 Due***
June 9  Integrating Ethics and Safeguarding Individual Autonomy  
Cooper, Chapters 6 & 7  
Film Clip: “Patch Adams”  
Journals returned

June 16  Midterm Exam on Cooper and Presentations on Personal Case  

***Note: Personal Case Paper and Handout Due***

PART 2: ETHICS & POLITICS

June 23  Violence  
Readings: See Ethics & Politics attachment  

***Note: Journal Entries 3-4 Due***

June 30  Privacy/Manipulation/Official Disobedience  
Readings: See Ethics & Politics attachment  
Journals returned

July 7  Policy Analysis/Distributive Justice/Equal Opportunity  
Readings: See Ethics & Politics attachment

July 14  Liberty and Morality/Life  
Readings: See Ethics & Politics attachment  

***Note: Journal Entries 5-6 Due***

July 21  Student Presentations on Exemplars  
Journals returned  

***Note: Papers and Handout Due***