

PUBLIC SERVICE AND DEMOCRACY

Public Affairs 8210
University of Missouri
Dr. Sarah Beth V. Kitch

Fall 2018
W 3-5:30pm
Middlebush 132

“Eclipse of sensitivity is the mark of our age. Callousness expands at the rate of nuclear energy, while moral sensitivity subsides.”

Abraham Heschel, in “The Patient as Person”

INTRODUCTION

Who is acting? What aims orient actors in the context of public service and democracy? What is public service? What is democracy? What resources for ethical decision-making are available to the acting person? What do we hope to accomplish in this course?

Welcome and introduction to the Course

PART I: TASKS AND CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC SERVICE

STATE

What is the state? What is the aim of the modern state? What images of power do different theories of the state offer? What are the advantages and harms of organizing power in the state?

Aristotle, [Nicomachean Ethics](#), I, II *

Aristotle, [Politics](#), III **

Hobbes, [Leviathan](#), XIII, XIV, XV, XVIII **

Thomas Aquinas, “Treatise on Law” in *Summa Theologica*, [Q 90-97](#) **

Locke, [Second Treatise](#), II, VII, VIII, IX **

[Declaration of Independence](#) **

Recommended:

Deuteronomy
Samuel
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, III-VI
Pope Leo XIII, [Rerum Novarum](#)

DEMOCRACY

What is democracy? What are the aims of democracy? What are the risks and rewards of democracy? What kind of citizenship does democracy require? What are the significant features of democracy in America?

Pericles, [Funeral Oration](#) **

Plato, [Apology of Socrates](#) **

Dana Villa, *Socratic Citizenship*, “Chapter 1: What is Socratic Citizenship?” (2001), pp. 1-58 **

Jane Addams, "Survivals of Militarism in City Government (1907)," pp. 147-162 **
[Preamble](#) to the U.S. Constitution of 1787 **

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835, 1840), "Introduction," pp. 3-15; "On the Principle Causes Tending to Maintain a Democratic Republic in the U.S.," 264-302; selections on Individualism and Materialism, 479-522; conclusion, 673-676 **

Frederick Douglass, [Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln](#) (1876) **

ETHICAL CASE STUDY: PUBLIC SERVICE AND IMMIGRATION

PERSONS

Who is human being? What are the significant features of the human condition? How does one's anthropology (theory of human being) shape one's aims and actions?

Abraham J. Heschel, *Who is Man?* (1965) *

AGENCY

What is the character of human action? What are the aims of human action? What are the conditions and limits of human action? What might compromise human action? How does the manner in which the modern state organizes power relate to human agency?

Aristotle, [Nicomachean Ethics](#), Books I-VI *

Hannah Arendt, "Action" in *The Human Condition* (1958), pp. 175-247 *

PUBLIC SERVICE

What is service? What are our authors' different conceptions of service? Which do you find more compelling? less compelling? What or who is the public? What are our authors' different conceptions of the public? How do our authors distinguish service to the public from other kinds of service?

Abraham Lincoln, [Young Men's Lyceum Address](#) **

Abraham Lincoln, [Second Inaugural](#) **

Jane Addams, [The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements \(1892\)](#) **

Jane Addams, *Filial Relations* (1902), pp. 303-308 **

Andrew Carnegie, *The Gospel of Wealth* (1889), pp. 730-737 **

Bill Gates, [Speech at Le Monde Philanthropy Event](#) (2016) **

John F. Kennedy, [Peace Corps Speech at Michigan](#) (1960) **

Joseph Lieberman, "The Roots of Public Life," in *In Praise of Public Service* (2000), 24-38 **

John McCain, [Liberty Medal Speech](#) (2017) **

ADMINISTRATIVE STATE AND ITS ASPIRATIONS

How do administrative bureaucracies develop? What is the relationship between the intent of a bureaucracy, its development, and the powers citizens attribute to it? What shapes a bureau and how persons use its powers?

Richard L. Rubenstein, *The Cunning of History* (1975) *
99 Percent Invisible, [Curb Cuts](#) ##

ADMINISTRATION AND ETHICAL IMAGINATION

What is the fundamental conflict of Wendell Berry's short story "Fidelity"? What actors are in conflict, what are their interests, and what are their ultimate aims? What kinds of resolution are possible?

Wendell Berry, "Fidelity" (1992) *

ETHICAL CASE STUDY: EVALUATE AN AGENCY

Environmental Protection Agency, Food and Drug Administration, Social Security Administration

PART II: ETHICAL ACTION

MORAL LITERACY

What is moral literacy? How might moral literacy inform human action?

Nancy Tuana, "Conceptualizing Moral Literacy" **

ETHICAL REASONING SKILLS

How do actors arrive at ethical decisions? What skills can actors draw on to come to ethical conclusions?

Nancy Tuana, "An Ethical Leadership Developmental Framework" **

THINKING AND ACTING ETHICALLY

What informs moral development? What do our authors' different ways of thinking about moral development offer? What might we gain by engaging moral development theory?

Case studies TBA

CASE STUDIES

What would it look like to apply moral literacy frameworks and ethical reasoning skills to instances in which an actor must decide on a course of action? Let's find out.

Case studies for student practice TBA

CONCLUSIONS

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COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

This course examines some of the challenges of public service in a liberal democracy. It addresses basic questions about the design of institutions through which public power is exercised and about the ethical and administrative obligations of people who work within those institutions. The aim of the course is to provide students with tools for thinking about such questions, and practice addressing them.

More specifically, this course addresses the challenge of public service in light of the nature of the state and of persons as actors. What is the state, and what are its tendencies? What are the possibilities of human action? What is the meaning of public service? What are the obstacles to public service and how might we overcome them? The aim of this course is to help students achieve an understanding of the meaning of public service and democracy. Within that context, we will focus on ethical decision-making.

The essential themes of our topic include power, personhood, equality, agency and the challenge of freedom, sources of obligation, and ethical imagination. Some significant contributions from politics, philosophy, and art will guide our survey. Importantly, this course takes a theoretical approach in order to gather resources for the practical questions we will find in our case studies and beyond this course.

The first part of our course begins with a study of the state. Next, in response, we investigate democratic institutions, visions of the human person, affirmations of agency, and exemplars of public service. We then attend to the administrative state and its aspirations. An interlude on our syllabus directs our attention to a novel in which we witness persons who face the tensions of administration and ethical imagination. The second part of our course focuses on ethical action. We move from the basics of moral literacy to ethical reasoning skills. Our course culminates in a series of case studies. The work of addressing ethical questions is valuable not least because it is practical: one builds reasoning skills by thinking and writing toward ethical resolution.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In each seminar, we will give attention to a set of readings. You can expect that in my evaluation I will place emphasis on careful reading, imaginative analysis, and thoughtful interpretation of these texts. During the semester, students will be responsible for preparing two short case studies. The first essay is a response to an ethical quandary; the second essay evaluates an existing American regulatory agency. In each 3-to-5-page essay, your aim is to develop a thoughtful, professionally written response to a prompt that I will provide. You will submit this essay to me via Canvas by 3pm *Tuesday* in the week the assignment is due.

In addition, you have a choice between a final examination essay or a final research project. The final exam will ask a broad analytical question on the texts and themes of the course. The final research project will address a topic relating to the course, pending my approval. The exam essay or research project is due, via Canvas, at 3pm, Wednesday, December 12.

These assignments will be factored into my evaluation of your class performance in this way:

Case Study 1	30%
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Grading Scale

A+ = 97-100
A = 93-96
A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89
B = 83-86
B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79
C = 73-76
C- = 70-72
F = <70

Case Study 2	30%
Final Exam Essay or Final Exam Research Project	40%

MU has a plus/minus grading scale for final course grades. Your course grade is based two case studies (30% each) and a final exam *or* research project (40%). Expect penalties for late material.

Auditors: See professor for an outline of your responsibilities in the course.

Note: The use of phones is not allowed in class.

REQUIRED TEXTS/COURSE PACKET

Texts marked above with a double asterisk (**) are available on Canvas. Texts marked above with a single asterisk (*) are available on Amazon and other outlets, and in the Mizzou Bookstore.

Purchase these books:

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Pearson
ISBN 978-0023895302

Abraham Heschel, *Who is Man?*, Stanford University Press
ISBN 978-0804702669

Richard L. Rubenstein, *The Cunning of History*, Harper
ISBN 978-0061320682

Wendell Berry, *Fidelity*, Pantheon
ISBN 978-0679748311

Also required reading, but with option to purchase:

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd edn, Chicago
ISBN 978-0226025988

CANVAS

Login to Canvas to access certain course materials as well as your grades.

PRESENCE, INTEGRITY, READING

Your success in this class depends upon your presence. The point of University is to think about what matters and about who you want to be. Those are difficult tasks, but tasks more than worth the effort. University life invites us to prepare, to think, and to be present. Presence is about more than simply showing up to class. It is about sharing in the task of understanding and analysis. That said, showing up to class is an important prerequisite for success.

Before each class period, you should read the assigned materials and thoughtfully consider their significance for our study. You will find a **weekly reading schedule** attached to this syllabus. Our task

is to read sympathetically in order to read critically—that is, to understand what each author is asking and arguing, and then to thoughtfully evaluate the work. Of course, you should bring your copy of the text to class.

In University, all you have is your integrity. All forms of cheating, including plagiarism and turning in work not your own, diminish what we are here to do. Each of us needs integrity to accomplish the work at hand. If you fail to act with integrity, you will have to face yourself. You may also meet additional appropriate consequences. Persons representing the University of Missouri have promulgated a Code of Student Conduct (https://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/programs/ch200/200.010_standard_of_conduct).

RESOURCES

Office Hours. Come to discuss questions about the course, graduate school, etc., during advertised hours, or email to arrange a time.

University Writing Center. For tutoring in writing, schedule an appointment at: <https://writingcenter.missouri.edu/>. The writing service can help writers of all levels.

Students with Disabilities. If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible. If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please establish an accommodation plan with the Disability Center (disabilitycenter.missouri.edu), S5 Memorial Union, 573- 882-4696. Next, notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, see "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

COMPETENCIES

The Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) is the organization that accredits the Truman School of Public Affairs. That organization looks at three areas of interest: competencies, knowledge areas, and skill areas. NASPAA requires of the Truman School that “All of the core courses, taken together, should cover all competencies, knowledge areas, and skill areas.” This course highlights the following:

Universal Required Competencies

1. Participate in and contribute to the policy process
2. Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions
3. Incorporate public values into decisions
4. Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry

Mission Specific Competency

- Work effectively within a multi-sector public service at the intersection of policy and management

You will find a chart suggesting the ways in which this course addresses particular competencies on the following page.

Competency	Knowledge / Skill Area(s)	Learning Activity	Assessment
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Participate in and contribute to the policy process	Stages of the policy process (agenda setting, policy formulation and adoption, implementation, and evaluation)	Lecture, assigned readings, case studies	Class discussion, case study, final exam project
Analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions	<p>Synthesis of existing research to draw policy decisions</p> <p>Methods for evidence-based decision-making</p> <p>Advise policy makers</p>	Lecture, assigned readings, case studies	Class discussion, case study, final exam project
Incorporate public values into decisions	<p>Nature of public values and their role in democratic governance</p> <p>Ethical principles for leadership and frameworks for decision-making</p> <p>Think critically about problems, generate and evaluate options, and determine effective courses of action</p> <p>Review and synthesize literature and communicate effectively with public officials, policymakers, and others</p> <p>Analyze policy initiatives</p>	Lecture, assigned readings, case studies	Class discussion, case studies, final exam project
Communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry	<p>Nature of and barriers to effective communication</p> <p>Group dynamics in the workplace</p> <p>Nature of conflict and approaches to conflict management</p> <p>Manage difficult situations and apply principles of conflict management</p>	Lecture, assigned readings, case studies	Class discussion, case studies, final exam project