

EMPA U6025

Public Sector Ethics

Course Objectives

In this course, we inquire about ethics in the context of the public good. Decisions having an impact on the public are discussed from the standpoint of justice—“what is due” both in human society and from public officers and any others whose action affects the public good. A number of fundamental cross-cultural, cross-national ethics are delineated, both in their personal or private form and in their corresponding public form.

Attention is given to individual character and organizational structure, particularly the manifestations of each that are susceptible of ethical evaluation. Ethical failings and their relationship to basic social institutions are discussed, and the emergence of alternative, advanced social institutions aimed at remedying those failings, is addressed. Guidelines for ethical public policymaking and checkpoints for the ethical evaluation of public sector activity are indicated. The typical grounds of ethical argument and their limitations are identified, as are several core residual dilemmas, which the policymaker can hardly avoid.

Course Materials

The readings assigned are of three kinds: (1) cases from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, indicated on the syllabus by “KSG”; (2) excerpts from books, a few of them classical but most contemporary; and (3) journal articles. The cases can be purchased online at www.ksgcase.harvard.edu. (The number of each case is indicated in the body of the syllabus.) The book excerpts and journal articles have been placed electronically on reserve by Lehman Library. If you choose to purchase any of the books, they are generally available in the university bookstore. All materials are also on reserve in hardcopy at Lehman Library. From time to time, brief additional readings, particularly news articles, may be assigned with the aim of highlighting course themes and questions.

Course Schedule

Class #	Topics and Readings
1	<p>Introduction: Fundamental Definitions of Ethics</p> <p>I. The Place of Character: What Can Be Seen of Character?</p>
2	<p>A. Self-Control and the Regulatory Ethic</p> <p>KSG, “Privacy and Publicity: The Senate Confirmation of Justice Clarence Thomas” (C16-92-1118.0) and Sequel (C16-92-1118.1).</p> <p>Dennis F. Thompson, <u>Political Ethics and Public Office</u>, Ch. 5, “The Private Lives of Public Officials” (Harvard, 1987).</p> <p>James Q Wilson, <u>The Moral Sense</u>, Ch. 8, “Gender” (Free Press, 1993).</p> <p>Plato, <u>Republic</u>, 543c-576d: Fathers, Mothers, Sons, and Behavior. (380’s B.C.)</p>
3	<p>B. Self-Realization and the Constitutional Ethic</p> <p>KSG, “Jesse Helms v. Harvey Gantt: Race, Culture, and Campaign Strategy in the 1990 Senate Battle” (C16-91-1099.0) and Sequel (C16-91-1099.1).</p> <p>William Miller, <u>Lincoln’s Virtues: An Ethical Biography</u>, Ch. 5, “Was This Man a Politician?” (Vintage, 2003).</p> <p>John Rawls, <u>A Theory of Justice</u>, Secs. 3-4, 24, 63-68, On Justice as Fairness, the Original Position, and Goodness as Rationality (Harvard, 1971).</p> <p>Aristotle, <u>Politics</u>, Bk. V.2-4, 10-11: Motive and Strategy. (330’s B.C.)</p>
4	<p>C. Social Liberation and the Revolutionary Ethic</p> <p>KSG, “Bringing Terror to Justice: The Extra-territorial Arrest of Fawaz Yunis” (C16-90-960.0).</p>

Bruce Ackerman, Social Justice in the Liberal State, Ch. 3, “Citizenship” (Yale, 1980).

John Dunn, The Cunning of Unreason: Making Sense of Politics, Ch. 7, “Crisis, Routine and Political Intelligibility” (Basic Books, 2000).

Kant, Perpetual Peace, Sec. I; App. I and II: The Moral Politician, the Political Moralist, and Method. (1795)

5 D. Social Reformation and the Nationalistic Ethic

KSG, “Terrorism in the Cour d’Assises: The U.S. v. France v. Georges Ibrahim Abdallah” (C16-89-904.0).

Jonathan Glover, Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century, Pt. 5, “Belief and Terror: Stalin and His Heirs” (Yale, 1999).

James T. Kloppenberg, The Virtues of Liberalism, Ch. 3, “Knowledge and Belief in American Public Life” (Oxford, 1998).

Machiavelli, The Prince, Chs. 15-19: Praise, Blame, and Purpose. (1513)

II. The Place of Structure: What Can Be Seen of Structure?

6 A. Philosophy and the Ethic of Academic Freedom

KSG, “Morley Affair” (C14-76-064).

Frank Sulloway, Born to Rebel, Ch. 12, “Political Trends” Ch. 13, “The French Revolution” (Vintage, 1996).

Thomas L. Pangle, The Ennobling of Democracy, Pt. IV, “Education: Civic and Liberal” (Johns Hopkins, 1992).

David C. Paris, “Moral Education and the ‘Tie that Binds’ in Liberal Political Theory” (APSR, September 1991).

7 B. Prudence and the Ethic of Accountability

KSG, “Two Oaths of Richard Helms” (C14-83-525).

John Dunn, Interpreting Political Responsibility, Ch. 3, “Trust and Political Agency” (Princeton, 1990).

Dennis F. Thompson, Political Ethics and Public Office, Ch. 2, “The Moral Responsibility of Many Hands” (Harvard, 1987).

Thompson, “Mediated Corruption: The Case of the Keating Five” (APSR, June 1993).

8 C. Principle and the Ethic of Conscientious Objection

KSG, “Mayor Steve Judy of Coeur d’Alene, Idaho and the Parade Permit Request by Neo-Nazis” (C15-00-1574.0).

John Kane, The Politics of Moral Capital, Pt. 1, “Moral Capital” (Cambridge, 2001).

Tom Chappell, The Soul of a Business: Managing for Profit and The Common Good, Pt. III, “Integrating Values, Beliefs, and Business” (Bantam, 1993).

Shelley Burt, “The Politics of Virtue Today: A Critique and a Proposal” (APSR, June 1993).

9 D. Ingenuity and the Ethic of Professional Expertise

KSG, “The Contemptuous Administrators: Radionuclides Regulation and the Clean Air Act” (CR1-96-1335.0).

Arthur Applbaum, Ethics for Adversaries, Ch. 2, “Professional Detachment: The Executioner of Paris” (Princeton, 1999).

Max Weber, The Methodology of the Social Sciences, Essay I, “The Meaning of ‘Ethical Neutrality’ in Sociology and Economics”, pp. 1-27. (1917)

William A. Galston, “Liberal Virtues” (APSR, December 1988).

III. Grounds in Ethical Arguments: Positioning and Posturing

10 A. Intellectual Variations: Virtue, Conscience, Custom, Utility, Ideology and Pragmatism.

KSG, “Ethical Problems in Public Careers: Lying” (C15-80-548.0) and Teaching Note (C15-80-548.T).

Staff of “The Washington Post”, The Starr Report, “Grounds for an Impeachment” (Public Affairs, 1998).

Jerome Kagan, The Nature of the Child, Ch. 4, “Establishing a Morality” (Basic Books, 1984).

Plutarch, Makers of Rome, Ch. 8, “Brutus”, pp. 223-241. (100 A.D.)

- 11 B. Practical Variations: Status, Tenet, Precedent, Preference, Platform and Budget.

KSG, “Telling the Boss He’s Wrong: George Shultz and Iran/Contra” (C16-94-1254.0).

Robert A. Caro, The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York, Ch. 10, “The Best Bill Drafter in Albany”, Ch. 29, ““And When the Last Law Was Down”” (Vintage, 1974).

Ronald Beiner, What’s the Matter with Liberalism? Ch. 3, “Moral Vocabularies” (Univ. of Calif., 1992).

Bentham, Handbook of Political Fallacies, Intro., Pt. 5, II-IV, On Causes of Fallacies. (1824)

IV. The Trouble with Politics: Three Core Problems

- 12 A. The Element of Knowledge: Beclouded by Self-Interest

KSG, “Politics of a Covert Action: The U.S., the Mujahideen, and the Stinger Missile” (C15-99-1546.0).

Craig Unger, House of Bush, House of Saud, Ch. 14, “9/11”; Ch. 15, “Print the Legend” (Scribner, 2004).

Samantha Power, A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, Ch. 14, “Conclusion” (Basic Books, 2002).

Andrew Stark, “Beyond Quid Pro Quo: What’s Wrong with Private Gain from Public Office?” (APSR, March 1997).

- 13 B. The Element of Sufficiency: Undone by Shortfalls

KSG, "Seeking Neighborhood Revitalization in Philadelphia: Using Tax Credits to Link the Private and Nonprofit Sectors" (C16-00-1578.0).

Susan Rose-Ackerman, Corruption and Government, Ch. 11, "Domestic Conditions for Reform", Ch. 12, "Conclusions" (Cambridge, 1999).

Michael Taylor, "When Rationality Fails", in Jeffrey Friedman, ed., The Rational Choice Controversy (Yale, 1996).

Laura Stoker, "Interests and Ethics in Politics" (APSR, June 1992).

14 C. The Element of Voluntariness: Muddied by Dirty Hands.

KSG, "Twisting in the Wind? Ambassador April Glaspie and the Persian Gulf Crisis", Pts. A (C16-91-1056.0), B (C16-91-1057.0), and Update (C16-92-1057.1).

Alasdair MacIntyre, After Virtue, Ch. 14, "The Nature of the Virtues" (Notre Dame, 1984).

Jean-Paul Sartre, No Exit. (1940)

Sir Thomas Malory, Le Morte Darthur, Pt. II, "Arthur's War Against the Emperor Lucius"; Pt. VIII, "The Death of Arthur". (1470)

Course Requirements

1. Preparation, attendance and participation. Although our class is much larger than a seminar would be, you are encouraged to offer comments and raise questions. As you prepare for class, try to discern and assess the relevant intersections of the various readings. You should draw upon course readings, current events and independent observation, experience and study, as you discuss the day's topic.

2. Two sets of definitions and commentaries on course materials. On two occasions in the semester, specific terms and other references from the readings will be given. They should be identified and explained (out of class) and subsequently submitted. These assignments will take the place of quizzes and exams.

3. Draft of an analytical paper. You may choose a topic from personal knowledge, outside material, or course readings. An ethical evaluation of the public issue(s) upon which you choose to focus should be presented in rough form. Your draft should be accompanied by an indication of the sources of your research and should be 5-7 pages long.

4. Final version of the paper. Only about two pages should be devoted to the actual facts of the case you choose to discuss. The remainder of the paper should be devoted to an ethical analysis of the case, including any policy recommendations or models you might offer. Comments on the draft should be taken into account as you revise and complete your work. The final version of your paper should be approximately 15 pages long.