

# Policy, Ethics, and Public Leadership

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(Example Lecture Course Syllabus)

Instructor: Dr. Angela F. McCarthy

Virtual (Zoom) Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 8:30 am – 3:00; by appointment

Office Hours Scheduling: [Link](#)

Email: [angelamccarthy@ufl.edu](mailto:angelamccarthy@ufl.edu)

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"Lead me, follow me, or get out of my way."

George Patton

"Men make history and not the other way around. In periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better."

Harry S. Truman

## Course Description

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Do leaders make ethical policy decisions? What are the factors that influence corruption and scandal? Are political policies *ethical*? This course introduces students to public policy, ethics, and leadership. The first part of the course takes a philosophical approach where we discuss the relationship between public policy and morality—focusing on the criteria to assess policies. We will also discuss whether political policies satisfy moral standards. The second half of the course focuses on public leadership and the role of ethics in political decision-making. We will explore corruption and scandal, leadership, political power, and ethics in the legislative process. Throughout the semester, we will "bring philosophical reasoning to bear on a series of highly important policy areas" (Wolff 2020, 6).

## Course Objectives

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- address a framework to assess contemporary public policies including benefit, effectiveness, fairness, fidelity, and legitimacy (Welch 2014)
- discuss unethical conduct, corruption, and scandal
- focus on how leadership decisions influence policymaking
- examine the "unrealistic and contradictory expectations from the public about how politicians should behave" (Medvic 2013)

## Basic Course Communication Information

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*Communication:* The best way for us to communicate is through Canvas messages or by email. For questions regarding graded work or course assignments, the safest way to communicate is through Canvas messages.

*Office Hours:* I am (almost) always available for students to inquire about their grades, discuss weekly assignments, or chat about policy, ethics, and leadership. I am available Tuesdays from 8:30 am until 3:00 pm, or by appointment. If the scheduled office hours do not fit your schedule, then let us make an appointment. I am happy to accommodate your scheduling needs.

*Email Response:* If I do not respond to your email inquiry within 24 hours, you should email me again. You are not "bugging" me with a follow-up email. I should respond to ALL emails within 24 hours. If you email me during scheduled office hours, then I will email you within the hour. This is my commitment to you.

## Required Texts

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1. Ethics Left and Right: The Moral Issues That Divide Us (Bob Fischer)
2. A Guide to Ethics and Public Policy: Finding Our Way (D. Don Welch)
3. The Powers to Lead (Joseph S. Nye Jr.)
4. In Defense of Politicians: The Expectations Trap and Its Threat to Democracy (Stephen Medvic)

## Course Requirements

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1. Writing Assignments: 50%
2. Quality Check: 40%
3. Discussion: 10%

## Graded Work Description

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1. Writing Assignments: 50%. There are ten writing assignments. Collectively, the writing assignments are worth 50% of your final grade in the course. These assignments are critical thinking assignments where you will address/answer a writing prompt. You must engage with the course materials and critically analyze the content. Writing assignments are 1-page and single-spaced.
2. Quality Check Assignments: 40%. There are four quality check assignments. These assignments are similar to the writing assignment with one major exception: quality check assignments are 2-pages and single-spaced.
3. Attendance and Participation: 10%. Discussion requirements are twofold: (1) discussion participation and (2) "meeting minutes" file upload to Canvas/ Discussion Groups. You are expected to participate in class discussions. Discussions will be on Fridays during the scheduled course time. Before starting the discussion, I will provide groups with a critical thinking prompt/question that you will answer. During/after the discussion, you will upload a discussion summary or meeting minutes to Canvas. Overall, you should demonstrate that you have participated in the discussion by reviewing the discussion talking points and/or questions that your group addressed.

Attendance: Class attendance is required and expected. You will need to fulfill your commitment and obligation to be in class and on time every day that class is held. Excused absences are subject to my discretion and are based on university criteria of excused absences.

Participation: Consistent, informed, thoughtful, and considerate class participation is expected. Participation grades are based on your overall contribution to the class. The participation portion of your grade for this class will be calculated based on your attendance and your participation during scheduled course times/ activities. When virtual classes are necessary: You will satisfy this requirement through your participation through video and audio presence on Zoom. In certain instances, you may also fulfill this requirement through written comments in chat and discussion assignments in Canvas [if audio and visual participation is problematic]. Please inform me immediately if you cannot participate via audio/visual mechanisms during class discussion. I will work with you to come up with a solution.

## Grading Policies and Grading Scale

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Grading in this class is consistent with UF policies available at [Grades and Grading Policies](#)

*Policy on Late and Make-up Work:* Late work is not accepted. If you find yourself unable to complete your assignments on time, email me *before* the assignment is due. I reserve the right to make an exception, provided there is valid documentation. Of course, students can make up assignments due to a university obligation, illness, death of a family member, or civic duty. Students who miss an assignment and have a valid excuse are given two days after the missed assignment to arrange a makeup. Otherwise, you are not allowed to make up the assignment. Late assignments are automatically deducted 1 letter grade. Without a valid excuse, you are not allowed to make up assignments.

*Grade Return Timing:* I grade student work on Saturdays. All assignments in this class are due on Fridays at midnight. Thus, you will have your graded work back to you within 48 hours (barring natural disaster, illness, or internet communication issues).

*Point Range for this Class:*

Letter Grade	Range:	
A	100 %	to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0 %	to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0 %	to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 %	to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 %	to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0 %	to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 %	to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 %	to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0 %	to 61.0%
F	< 61.0 %	to 0.0%

## UF Policies Shaping This Course

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Contact Hours: "Contact Hours" refers to the hours per week in which students are in contact with the instructor, excluding office hours or other voluntary contact. The number of contact hours in this course equals the number of credits the course offers (3).

Workload: As a Carnegie I, research-intensive university, UF is required by federal law to assign at least 2 hours of work outside of class for every contact hour. Work done in these hours may include reading/viewing assigned material and doing explicitly assigned individual or group work, as well as reviewing notes from class, synthesizing information in advance of exams or papers, and other self-determined study tasks.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). This class supports the needs of different learners; it is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Statement regarding Evaluations: Evaluations are part of our course. Students are expected to provide professional feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [GatorEvals Public Data](#).

## Additional Course Policies and Information

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*UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.*

### University Police

[UF Police](#) (392-111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies)

### Career Connections Center

[Career Connections Center](#) (352-392-1601 | [CareerCenterMarketing@ufsa.ufl.edu](mailto:CareerCenterMarketing@ufsa.ufl.edu)) connects job seekers with employers and offers guidance to enrich your collegiate experience and prepare you for life after graduation.

### COUNSELING AND WELLNESS CENTER

[Counseling and Wellness Center](#) (352-392-1575) provides counseling and support as well as crisis and wellness services, including a [variety of workshops](#) throughout the semester (e.g., Yappy Hour, Relaxation and Resilience).

## DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE

[Dean of Students Office](#) (352-392-1261) provides a variety of services to students and families, including [Field and Fork](#) (UF's food pantry) and [New Student and Family programs](#)

## DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

[Disability Resource Center](#) ([DRCaccessUF@ufsa.ufl.edu](mailto:DRCaccessUF@ufsa.ufl.edu) | 352-392-8565) helps to provide an accessible learning environment for all by providing support services and facilitating accommodations, which may vary from course to course. Once registered with DRC, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

## MULTICULTURAL AND DIVERSITY AFFAIRS

[Multicultural and Diversity Affairs](#) (352-294-7850) celebrates and empowers diverse communities and advocates for an inclusive campus.

## OFFICE OF STUDENT VETERAN SERVICES

[Office of Student Veteran Services](#) (352-294-2948 | [vacounselor@ufl.edu](mailto:vacounselor@ufl.edu)) assists student military veterans with access to benefits.

## ONE.UF

[ONE.UF](#) is the home of all the student self-service applications, including access to:

- [Advising](#)
- [Bursar](#) (352-392-0181)
- [Financial Aid](#) (352-392-1275)
- [Registrar](#) (352-392-1374)

## OFFICIAL SOURCES OF RULES AND REGULATIONS

The official source of rules and regulations for UF students is the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) and [Graduate Catalog](#). Quick links to other information have also been provided below.

- [Student Handbook](#)
- [Student Responsibilities](#), including academic honesty and student conduct code
- [e-Learning Supported Services Policies](#) includes links to relevant policies including Acceptable Use, Privacy, and many more
- [Accessibility](#), including the Electronic Information Technology Accessibility Policy and ADA Compliance
- [Student Computing Requirements](#), including minimum and recommended technology requirements and competencies

## UNIVERSITY CALENDAR

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January 11	Classes Begin
January 18	No Class: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
February 24	No Class: Mental Health and Wellness Day
March 24	No Class: Mental Health and Wellness Day
April 21	Last Class
April 22 & 23	Reading Days

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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### **WEEK 1**      **Course Introduction**

1-11:	Syllabus
1-13:	Welch: Chapter 1/Introduction Fischer: Introduction
1-15:	cont'd.

### **WEEK 2 Ethical Discourse: Public Policy**

1-18:	No Class
1-20:	Welch: Chapter 2: Ethical Discourse and Public Policy Fischer: Chapter 1: Introduction to the Left and Right
1-22:	cont'd. Writing Assignment # 1

### **WEEK 3**      **Ethical Discourse: Benefit**

1-25:	Welch: Chapter 3: Defining the Good: Benefit
1-27:	Fischer: Chapter 2: America First Fischer: Chapter 11: Political Correctness
1-29:	Discussion Group Quality Check # 1

### **WEEK 4**      **Ethical Discourse: Effectiveness**

2-1:	Welch: Chapter 4: Stewardship of Resources: Effectiveness
2-3:	Fischer: Chapter 10: Abortion Fischer: Chapter 13: "Bathroom Bills"
2-5:	Discussion Group Writing Assignment #2

### **WEEK 5**      **Ethical Discourse: Fairness**

2-8:	Welch: Chapter 5: Serving Justice: Fairness
2-10:	Fischer: Chapter 5: Religious Tests Fischer: Chapter 12: Religious Exemption
2-12:	Discussion Group Writing Assignment #3

- WEEK 6**                    **Ethical Discourse: Fidelity**  
2-15:                    Welch: Chapter 6: Honoring Commitments: Fidelity  
2-17:                    Fischer: Chapter 3: Foreign Aid  
                              Fischer: Chapter 20: Military Spending  
2-19:                    Discussion Group  
                              Writing Assignment #4
- WEEK 7**                    **Ethical Discourse: Legitimacy**  
2-22:                    Welch: Chapter 7: Ownership of Problems: Legitimacy  
2-24:                    No Class  
2-26:                    Fischer: Chapter 6: Taxation  
                              Fischer: Chapter 7: Minimum Wage  
                              Writing Assignment #5
- WEEK 8**                    **Ethical Discourse: Summary**  
3-1:                    Welch: Chapter 8: Benchmarks and Moral Discernment  
                              Fischer: Chapter 14: Privilege  
3-3:                    Fischer: Chapter 21: Voting Ethics  
3-5                    Discussion Group  
                              Quality Check #2
- WEEK 9**                    **Leadership**  
3-8:                    Nye: Chapter 1: Leadership  
3-10:                    Nye: Chapter 2: Leadership and Power  
                              Fischer: Chapter 4: Immigration  
3-12:                    Discussion Group  
                              Writing Assignment #6
- WEEK 10**                    **Leadership**  
3-15:                    Nye: Chapter 3: Types and Skills  
3-17:                    Nye: Chapter 4: Contextual Intelligence  
                              Fischer: Chapter 15: Feminism  
3-19:                    Discussion Group  
                              Writing Assignment #7
- WEEK 11**                    **Leadership**  
3-22:                    Nye: Chapter 5: Good and Bad Leaders  
                              Nye: Appendix: Leadership: A Dozen Quick Take-Aways  
3-24:                    No Class  
3-26:                    Fischer: Chapter 19: Guns  
                              Quality Check #3
- WEEK 12**                    **Defending Politicians**  
3-29:                    Medvic: Chapter 1: The Problem  
3-31:                    Fischer: Chapter 9: Right to Health Care  
                              Fischer: Chapter 17: Affirmative Action  
4-2:                    Discussion Group  
                              Writing Assignment #8

**WEEK 13****Defending Politicians**

- 4-5: Medvic: Chapter 2: The Source of Anti-Politician Sentiment  
Medvic: Chapter 3: The Public Lives of Politicians: Do Politicians Pander?
- 4-7: Fischer: Chapter 16: Removing Historical Monuments  
Fischer: Chapter 18: Racial Profiling
- 4-9: Discussion Group  
Writing Assignment #9

**WEEK 14****Defending Politicians**

- 4-12: Medvic: Chapter 4: The Public Lives of Politicians: Election (or Ideology, or Party) Above All Else?  
Medvic Chapter 6: The Private Lives of Politicians: Ambition and Hypocrisy
- 4-14: Fischer: Chapter: 8: Environmental Regulation
- 4-16: Discussion Group  
Writing Assignment #10

**WEEK 15****Review**

- 4-19: Medvic: Chapter 7: The Private Lives of Politicians: Dishonesty  
Medvic: Chapter 8: Rebuilding Trust in Politicians
- 4-21: Quality Check #4
- 4-23: Reading Days