

Ethics & Policy / Public Service Ethics

Phil 450:501 || PS 538:501 / PS 538:700 (web)

Tues 5:30 – 8:15 p.m. / CH 0103

office: CH 322 / classroom: CH 0103
email: michael.seidler@wku.edu
office hours: mwf 12:30 – 1:00, and by indiv
appt (use email, Bb, or *Remind* to schedule)



QR code for connecting to the *Dept of Political Science* on social media
Poli-Sci office: CH 300 / 270-745-4559

EXPLANATION: The three sections (two graduate [in-class and online], one upper-level undergraduate [in-class]) will meet at the same time since they are essentially the same course. Phil 450 is a temporary number for this offering of the course under the 'Phil' rubric. PS 538 (in both versions) has been taught previously and functions in the MPA program as before.

DESCRIPTION: The course investigates various moral and political aspects of social policy, not only in its aims but also its creation and implementation. Each of the latter activities involves a wielding of 'power' from above, as it were, in pursuit of particular moral, social, political (and perhaps other) goals. Yet those involved in them play different roles, and there are various ways in which authority and responsibility may be shared and benefits distributed. All of this requires moral justification and political legitimation.

While social policy is usually generated by legislation (or judicial interpretation), it must always be further specified and 'applied' by a cohort of often 'unelected' public servants (administrators, bureaucrats, clerks, etc.) who face peculiar ethical challenges in mediating between the state and the citizens whom it supposedly serves. That is, policy implementation is situated somewhere between abstract legislation or politics on the one hand, and the concrete goals of public 'service' as such on the other.

Accordingly, it must constantly negotiate two interfaces – one with the legislative and the judicial powers that empower, justify, and legitimate it, and the other with the citizen-clients whose welfare supplies the underlying rationale for such authority in the first place. That is, bureaucrats, administrators, and other public servants are essentially Janus-faced (looking in opposite directions), and thus doubly and differentially obligated (i.e., 'caught in the middle'). As public servants, they are subject to and obligated by the state, but as service providers they must respond to individuals as deserving citizens and human beings. Indeed, toward the latter they *are* 'the state' which demands, grants, or denies them various things; and to the former they are executors, servants, or 'living tools' expected to take orders and play defined roles. Clearly, this creates multiple problems of conflicted agency.

Accordingly, the course straddles a divide between political science (and theory), moral philosophy, and public administration. It is a necessarily interdisciplinary offering that attempts to clarify the complex interactions among varying social functions or roles, including their ability to both facilitate and hinder one another in the pursuit of their respective obligations and ideals. It is a theoretical effort to clarify and resolve important moral conflicts in certain sectors of so-called public life.

NOTE: The course will be using the new **Blackboard Ultra** software, and so the online access site may look different from what you are used to. Please review the [Introduction to Blackboard Ultra](#) video. There are additional pedagogical videos in the course site at the bottom of the Contents page.

TEXTS

- ◇ Hartley DEAN, *Social Policy*, 3rd edition (Wiley, 2019)
- ◇ Rosemary O'LEARY, *The Ethics of Dissent: Managing Guerilla Government*, 3rd edition (Sage, 2019)
- ◇ Bernardo ZACKA, *When the State Meets the Street. Public Service & Moral Agency* (Belknap/Harvard, 2017)
- ◇ selections on Blackboard [Bb]

ASSIGNMENTS (more details on these tasks will be posted on Blackboard)

- ◆ **JOURNALS** (10 of 14 = 30 pts) – There are fourteen possible entries, out of which you must do at least ten (10) in order to qualify for full credit. The four ‘extra’ weeks are a buffer, to give you flexibility in your submission schedule.
- ◆ **DISCUSSION BOARD** (10 of 14 = 20 pts) – As in the case of the Journals, there are fourteen possible entries, of which you must do ten (10) to qualify for full credit. Each entry consists of two parts: (a) your own submission and (b) a response to another person’s submission. (These may be posted at different times.)
- ◆ **JOINT PRESENTATIONS** (on O’Leary / 15 pts) . These will be partnered activities lasting some 30 minutes. Presenters should submit an outline (2-3 pp.) before class indicating main points, open questions, problematic claims or assumptions, and presenter reactions.
- ◆ **TOPICAL PAPER** (15 pts) - This project (ca. 6-8 pp.) will focus on topics of interest to individual students. MPA students are encouraged to consider an ethical issue in their actual or anticipated fields, while those in Philosophy may wish to engage in a more theoretical analysis. You may begin work on this assignment any time after the first three weeks, by submitting self-generated proposals to which I will respond. Completed papers may be turned in any time after the Fall Break but must be received before the Thanksgiving Break. There is a research/source requirement of at least four books and six articles, using the university research tools, as well as three (approved) websites. (Use of AI programs is prohibited.)
- ◆ **FINAL REPORT** (5-7 pp. / 20 pts) – This will be a formal encounter between Zacka and O’Leary (which we are covering jointly during the second half of the course). That is, compare and contrast the two positions, asking what one might say to the other, noting where they agree and disagree, how their problem resolution strategies differ, which of them you favor and why.
- ◆ **PARTICIPATION** (→ 5 pts) – These are ‘extra’ points that can be earned. Unexcused absences as well as consistently distracted ‘attendance’ will lessen your point total, while active and informed participation will enhance it.
- ◆ **ATTENDANCE:** Since this course meets only once per week, it is important that everyone attend each class. Still, I will allow one absence without excuse, and one more with an excuse. Additional absences and their effects will need to be negotiated individually. ◆ Also, it is expected that students attend the whole class each week, meaning that anyone who leaves at mid-point without prior or subsequent clearance will be counted absent for the whole session. The length of actual class sessions may vary depending on the material, discussion, etc. However, we will always conclude by 8:15 p.m. ◆ Since the course has online sections, students attending in-person may wish to participate virtually as well while present in class. However, those signed up for in-person sections may not simply (i.e., without prior permission) ‘go virtual’, or not show up. ◆ All other course materials such as syllabus, extra readings, notes, etc. will be available on Blackboard as well. ◆ Finally, those attending online (must have their video on so that they are visible to the rest of the class.

MEETINGS	SCHEDULE & READINGS
Week 01 (A 20)	Introduction to course.
Week 02 (A 27)	TRANTAFILLOU_ <i>governmentality</i> [Bb] / JANSEN_ <i>soft law – an historical introduction</i> [Bb] / EMERSON_ <i>administrative guidance & non-binding law</i> [Bb]
Week 03 (S 03)	HARDY_ <i>bureaucracy vs. professionalism</i> [Bb] / BOWMAN_ <i>ethics & elected officials</i> [Bb] / BOWMAN_ <i>perspectives on ethics – macro, meso, micro</i> [Bb]
Week 04 (S 10)	DEAN (1-12, 13-25) - <i>What is social policy? / Where did it come from?</i> BOCHELL_ <i>the policy process</i> [Bb] case: Cohen: immigration [Bb]
Week 05 (S 17)	DEAN (26-42, 43-60) - <i>Why does it matter? / What does human well-being entail?</i> MANNING_ <i>social needs, problems, welfare, well-being</i> [Bb] case: Wolff: the future of work [Bb]
Week 06 (S 24)	DEAN (61-71, 72-85) - <i>Who gets what? / Who's in control?</i> BOVENS_ <i>the politics of policy evaluation</i> [Bb] / KARLSSON_ <i>legitimacy</i> [Bb] case: Cohen: education and 'intelligent design' [Bb]
Week 07 (O 01)	DEAN (86-100, 101-112) - <i>What's the trouble with human society? / Can social policy solve social problems?</i> WEBER_ <i>philosophy & public policy prioritization</i> [Bb] / Howard_ <i>the public role of ethics & public policy</i> [Bb] case: Wolff: risky new technologies [Bb]
Week 08 (O 08)	FALL BREAK (no class <u>meeting</u>) DEAN (113-125, 126-136) - <i>Changing times? / Where is social policy going?</i> LAMBERT_ <i>feminist governance in practice</i> [Bb] / KELLY_ <i>feminist organizational principles</i> [Bb] case: Cohen: women & the family [Bb]
Week 09 (O 15)	ZACKA (1-15, 16-32) - <i>Introduction</i> O'LEARY (1-30)_ <i>Guerilla what?</i>
Week 10 (O 22)	ZACKA (33-48, 49-65) - <i>Street-level discretion</i> O'LEARY (31-50)_ <i>Rogue Twitter accounts & Nevada wetlands</i>
Week 11 (O 29)	ZACKA (66-89, 90-110) - <i>Three pathologies: indifference, enforcement, care-giving</i> O'LEARY (51-72)_ <i>NIH (medicine) & EPA (environment)</i>
Week 12 (N 05)	ZACKA (111-27, 128-51) - <i>Gymnastic of the self – coping with everyday pressures</i> O'LEARY (73-96)_ <i>County planning & Forest Service</i>
Week 13 (N 12)	ZACKA (152-76, 177-99) - <i>When the rules run out</i> O'LEARY (97-116)_ <i>CIA & Wikileaks</i>
Week 14 (N 19)	ZACKA (200-21, 222-39) - <i>Impossible situations</i> O'LEARY (117-138)_ <i>NSA, Snowden, & Wright</i>
Week 15 (N 26)	THANKSGIVING (no class <u>meeting</u>) ZACKA (240-59) – <i>Conclusion</i> O'LEARY (139-76)_ <i>The reality principles, advice, lessons</i>
Week 16 (D 02-05)	FINALS WEEK

UNIVERSITY-MANDATED SYLLABUS ADDITIONS

- **ADA ACCOMMODATION:** In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.
- **PREGNANT & PARENTING STUDENTS:** Western Kentucky University does not discriminate against any student or exclude any student from its educational programs or activities, including classes or extracurricular activities, on the basis of pregnancy and/or pregnancy-related conditions such as, but not limited to, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom. Students who seek pregnancy or pregnancy-related accommodations should make their requests as soon as possible via WKU's Title IX Website at www.wku.edu/titleix/ under the heading, "Pregnancy or Pregnancy-Related Conditions." Students can also contact the Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, via email at ena.demir@wku.edu or by phone at (270) 745-6867 to request accommodations or seek assistance. We encourage students and faculty to work together to establish a plan that allows the student to complete the class and coursework without jeopardizing academic integrity and course standards. The Title IX Coordinator can help facilitate conversations between students and faculty regarding appropriate and reasonable accommodations.

If you are a WKU student and believe that you have experienced an incident(s) of discrimination or harassment based on pregnancy (or pregnancy related conditions or issues), please report it to the Title IX Coordinator via email at ena.demir@wku.edu or by phone at (270) 745-6867. Additional resources for pregnant and parenting students can be found on WKU's Title IX Website at www.wku.edu/titleix/.

- **TITLE IX / DISCRIMINATION & HARRASSMENT:** Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's [Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#) (#0.070) and [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#) (#0.2040). Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Executive Director, Office of Institutional Equity/Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir, 270-745-6867 or Title IX Investigators or Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's [Counseling and Testing Center](#) at 270-745-3159.
- **INCLUSION STATEMENT:** Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to ensuring all members of our campus community have access to equitable and inclusive learning, working, and living environments. At the heart of our mission, we seek to provide holistic education and employment experiences that prepare students, faculty, and staff to become effective scholars, contributors, and leaders in our diverse and evolving communities. Consistent with our campus purpose statement and creed, this classroom will be a respectful space, welcoming all sexes, races, ages, national origins, ethnicities, gender identities/labels/expressions, intellectual and physical abilities, sexual orientations, faith/non-faith perspectives, income levels and socio-economic classes, political ideologies, educational backgrounds, primary languages, family statuses, military experiences, cognitive styles, and communication styles. If at any time during this course you are excluded or feel a sense of alienation from the course content, feel free to contact me privately without fear of reprisal.
- **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT:** The history of our community and land gives us the opportunity to recognize, respect, and appreciate our place within that history. Western Kentucky University (WKU) honors and acknowledges the Indigenous peoples' land on which this University was built. All land in the state of Kentucky was once Indigenous territory, which is why it is our duty to acknowledge that WKU exists on Native land. This particular region of Kentucky was home to both the Shawnee (Shawandasse Tula) and Cherokee East (GWJᎠᎵᎠᎿ Tsalaguwetiyi) tribes.

We also honor and acknowledge the former residents of Jonesville. According to the [Jonesville History Project](#), "Jonesville was a predominantly African American community in Bowling Green, Kentucky, that was demolished in the 1960s to make way for the expansion of the WKU campus. This incident echoed a pattern across the country where the power of eminent domain was utilized to seize property from minority communities for large public works projects under the guise of urban revitalization."

➤ **CHAT GPT / GENERATIVE AI STATEMENT:** AI ('artificial intelligence') tools are prohibited in this class and any work generated by relying on them will not be counted. This includes exams, papers, journal entries, and discussion posts. All of these should be genuinely your own (including both their construction and formulation), based on *your* reading of the assigned materials, *your* class attendance, and *your* participation (which includes simply paying attention, vs. playing with gadgets) in the course. Thus, the professor retains the prerogative to challenge and discount any suspected AI-generated submissions, based either on oral interrogation and/or discrepancies between such products and a student's other work. Anyone who uses such tools (unless specifically preapproved) will be considered academically dishonest and in violation of the [WKU Student Code of Conduct](#). If you have further questions about this policy or its application, feel free to ask; you will not be penalized or suspected for initiating a discussion.

➤ **REGULAR & SUBSTANTIVE INTERACTION (ONLINE COURSES)** -- The U.S. Department of Education requires that distance education courses must include *regular and substantive interaction* between students and faculty. For more information about Regular and Substantive Interaction at WKU, visit the [Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning webpage](#). In this course, regular & substantive interaction will take place as follows:

- weekly synchronous sessions involving 'live' or 'current' contact among instructor and students (as in a 'hybrid' course, the in-class and online sections meet 'together' using Blackboard and whiteboard technologies, during both lecture and discussion segments of the class
- weekly journal posts by students ahead of the class, which are preparatory in nature
- weekly faculty-student and student-student interaction on the Discussion Board, following each class by way of reflection and afterthought
- individually tailored paper assignments for students at the graduate or undergraduate levels, taking into account personal academic and professional interests; these papers will be planned in consultation with the professor, who will provide guidance and individual feedback, as well as comments at the end
- final course response: a wrap-up assignment making use of the weekly journal submissions of each student

➤ **ALSO SEE :**

→ ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY: <https://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-dishonesty.php>

→ STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT : <https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/student-code-of-conduct.php>

→ STUDENT RESOURCE PORTAL: <https://www.wku.edu/online/srp> (a good site to know about)

Journals are *antecedent* assignments (i.e., they should be posted before the class session each week), and Discussions are *consequent* assignments, meaning that they follow the class session each week. Also, Journal entries deal with the *Sunstein / Zacks* material, while the Discussions constitute a sort of follow-up to the weekly class discussions of *Wolfe* and other readings. As well, the former are more theoretical or philosophical in nature, while the latter have to do mainly with policy and practice. Both Journals and Discussions will have a short (5-day) 'late' submission allowance, albeit with a minor (.5 or .4) loss of credit in order to discourage this. That is, if you submit late, you can get at most 2.5 pts that week. After that, you'll have to use one of your two allowances. I will subtract these penalties (if any) from the assignment totals at the very end of the course. Details re both Journal and Discussion assignments will be posted in the appropriate sections of Blackboard.

By my count, we have twelve more weeks in the semester, beginning next week (officially), 'Wk 03' on the syllabus. So the 'first' journal entry, and the 'first' discussion posts, will be over the materials of Wk 3. Since I am a bit late in getting these instructions to you, I will allow 'late' posts for Wk3 without assignation of any penalties. I.e., ideally, you would post by Tuesday's class; however, you can post as late as the following Saturday. However, after next week the rules above will apply.