

PPS 116: POLICY CHOICE AS VALUE CONFLICT, Fall 2008

Duke University
Sanford Institute of Public Policy

Tuesday/Thursday 1:15 – 2:30PM, Room 03 Sanford

Wednesday discussions:
10:20 – 11:10AM; 1:30 – 2:20PM

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This semester, we will examine the ethical and moral complexities of public policy formation and implementation. You will become familiar with the work of several political and social theorists. In addition, we will consider a variety of rich case studies, which exemplify ethical dilemmas in historical and contemporary policy.

In this course, you will learn to: (1) examine and analyze the varied moral foundations of public policies; and (2) sharpen your capacity for ethical reasoning. Exercises in reading, writing, and discussion will give you the opportunity to reflect on important issues in ethics and public policy.

REQUIRED TEXTS

BOOKS

- Hinman, L. M. (2008). *Ethics: A Pluralistic Approach to Moral Theory* (4th edition). Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth.
- Gutmann, A., & Thompson, D. (2006). *Ethics & Politics: Cases & Comments* (4th edition). Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth.

These books are available for purchase at the University Store in the Bryan Center.

ARTICLES

All articles are available on the course Blackboard site or via a link to the Internet.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

THREE SHORT ESSAYS (40%): You will write three 1000-word (4-page) essays during the term. Each essay is due at the beginning of class on the date indicated in the syllabus. All essays must also be posted on Blackboard by class time in order to be evaluated. Essays that are submitted late will not be accepted.

MIDTERM EXAM (20%): The midterm will cover material from August 26 – October 8.

FINAL EXAM (20%): The final will cover material from October 16 – December 4.

BLOG (10%): Both discussion sections will have a blog on our course Blackboard site. Each week you are required to post a 1-2 paragraph entry, responding to the questions posed below. Blog entries may be informally written but should provide a thoughtful answer that makes reference to the readings. Blog entries are due by 7AM on Wednesdays. You are expected to read each other's blog entries by the beginning of your discussion section. Blogs will be graded as either credit (worth 1 point) or no credit (worth 0 points). If you do not post a blog entry or if you post your entry late, you will receive a grade of no credit.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION (10%): You must attend all lectures and discussion sections and take an active part in class discussions. Each of you will be responsible for organizing and leading one of the Wednesday discussion sections during the term.

GENERAL NOTES

We will cover many controversial issues in this course. At times, discussions may become heated. However, you must participate in a manner that displays fair-mindedness and mutual respect for your classmates.

Requests for grade changes for either essays or exams must be made in writing and submitted to Prof. Gassman-Pines no later than one week after the essay or exam is returned.

I expect you to conform to all aspects of Duke's Community Standard. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. For more information, please refer to: <http://www.integrity.duke.edu/ugrad/>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Tuesday, August 26 – Introduction to the course

Wednesday, August 27 – Discussion sections
NO blog question this week.

PART I: ETHICAL THEORIES AND CASE EXAMPLES

Thursday, August 28 – Utilitarianism

- Hinman, Chapter 5

Tuesday, September 2 – Utilitarianism case study: “The decision to use the atomic bomb/alternatives to the bomb”

- Gutmann & Thompson, pp. 6-27

Wednesday, September 3 – Discussion sections

Blog question: If you were going to use Utilitarianism to guide your actions, what part of that theory would be easiest to implement in your daily life? What part would be most difficult?

Thursday, September 4 – Deontology

- Hinman, Chapter 6

Tuesday, September 9 – Deontology case study: “Intervention in Somalia”

- Gutmann & Thompson, pp. 32-44

Wednesday, September 10 – Discussion sections

Blog question: With regards to the U.S. intervention in Somalia, how did predicted consequences and moral duty seem to conflict? How should the U.S. have resolved that conflict?

Thursday, September 11 – Ethics of Rights

- Hinman, Chapter 7
- United States Constitution, Bill of Rights, available at: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/constitution/constitution.billofrights.html>
- United Nations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, available at: <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/udhr.html>

Tuesday, September 16 – Ethics of Rights case study: “Interrogating detainees”

- Gutmann & Thompson, pp. 60-70

Wednesday, September 17 – Discussion sections

Blog question: What do you think should be included in a list of human rights? What criteria do you use to decide how limited or broad to make that list?

Thursday, September 18 – Justice

- Hinman, Chapter 8.

Tuesday, September 23 – Justice case study: “Defunding organ transplants in Arizona”

- Gutmann & Thompson, pp. 315-332

Wednesday, September 24 – Discussion sections

Blog question: Choose a scarce resource and compare the just distribution of organs for transplant to the just distribution of that resource.

Thursday, September 25 – Guest lecture: Julian Savulescu, Crown Lecturer in Ethics

- Savulescu, J. (2002). Deaf lesbians, “designer disability,” and the future of medicine. *British Medical Journal*.
- Persson, I. & Savulescu, J. (forthcoming). *Reproduction and embryo research: Bringing embryos into existence for different purposes, or not at all*.
- Devolder, K. & Savulescu, J. (2006). The moral imperative to conduct embryonic stem cell and cloning research. *Cambridge Quarterly of Healthcare Ethics*.
- Savulescu, J. (2007). Autonomy, the good life, and controversial choices. In *The Blackwell Guide to Medical Ethics*.

You are encouraged to attend Dr. Savulescu’s public lecture this evening from 5:30PM to 7PM in the Sanford Institute’s Fleishman Commons.

*** **PAPER #1 DUE DATE**

Tuesday, September 30 – NO CLASS (Rosh Hashanah)

Wednesday, October 1 – Discussion sections

NO blog question this week.

Thursday, October 2 -- Ethics of diversity: Gender

- Hinman, Chapter 10

Tuesday, October 7 – Gender case study: “Parental leave”

- Winston, K. I. & Bane, M. J. (1993), *Gender & Public Policy, Cases & Comments*, pp. 228-246

Wednesday, October 8 – Discussion sections

Blog question: Do you agree that women have a distinct moral voice? How much of people’s own moral voices are driven by their gender?

Thursday, October 9 – **MIDTERM EXAM**

Friday, October 10, 10 – 11:15AM – Midterm exam alternate date/time (room TBA).

-- FALL BREAK --

Wednesday, October 15 – NO discussion sections

Thursday, October 16 – Ethics of diversity: Race, ethnicity & multiculturalism

- Hinman, Chapters 2 and 11

Tuesday, October 21 – Race, ethnicity and multiculturalism case study: “Affirmative action at the Michigan Law School”

- Gutmann & Thompson, pp. 397-407

Wednesday, October 22 – Discussion sections

Blog question: How do you know when to take an absolute moral stance, rather than deferring to cultural differences?

PART II: CURRENT DEBATES IN ETHICS AND PUBLIC POLICY

Thursday, October 23 – Poverty policy: Who are the poor?

- Blank, R. M. (1997). *It Takes a Nation*, pp. 9 – 30.
- Rector, R. E. & Johnson, K. A. (2004). *Understanding Poverty in America*.
- Edin, K. & Lein, L. (1997). Making ends meet on a welfare check. In *Making Ends Meet*.
- Boo, K. (2 April, 2001). After welfare. *The New Yorker*.

Tuesday, October 28 – Poverty policy: What should be done to help the poor?

- Ellwood, D. (1988). Values and the helping conundrums. In *Poor Support: Poverty in the American Family*.
- Blank, R. (2003). Selecting among anti-poverty policies: Can an economist be both critical and caring? *Review of Social Economy*.

- Meyers, M., Gornick, J. & Peck, L. (2001). Packaging support for low-income families: Policy variation across the United States. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*.
- Berlin, G. L. (2007). Rewarding the work of individuals: A counterintuitive approach to reducing poverty and strengthening families. *Future of Children*.

Wednesday, October 29 – Discussion sections

Blog question: Pick one of the people described in the readings for October 23 and discuss what you think is the most ethical way to change poverty policy in order to help that person.

Thursday, October 30 – Marriage: The public policy issue

- Nock, S. L. (2005). Marriage as a public issue. *Future of Children*.
- Urban Institute (2004). Marriages made in political heaven. Available at: <http://www.urban.org/publications/900712.html>
- Minow, M. (1991). Redefining families: Who's in and who's out? In *Families in the U.S.*

Tuesday, November 4 – Marriage: Government interventions

- Dion, M. R. (2005). Health marriage programs: Learning what works. *Future of Children*.
- Amato, P. & Furstenberg, F. (2007). Point/Counterpoint: Should government promote marriage? *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*.
- *Marriage and Same-Sex Unions*, Chapter 1, pp. 3-32.
- Gutmann & Thompson, "Making marriage gay," pp. 442-458.

Wednesday, November 5 – Discussion sections

Blog question: How important do you think marriage is to the well-being of our society? Do you think marriage should be a public policy issue?

Thursday, November 6 – Education: The role of public schools

- McCluskey, N. (2007). Why we fight. How public schools cause social conflict, pp. 1-16. *Cato Institute Policy Analysis*.
- Center on Education Policy (2007). *Why we still need public schools. Education for the common good.*

*** **PAPER #2 DUE DATE.**

Tuesday, November 11 – Education: Strategies for improving public schools

- Gutmann & Thompson, "The Vouchers that made Milwaukee famous," pp. 409-419.
- U.S. Department of Education (2002). *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.
- Bifulco, R. and Ladd, H. (2006). Charter Schools in North Carolina. In *Charter School Outcomes*.

Wednesday, November 12 – Discussion sections

Blog question: Of the three strategies for improving public schools that we considered, which one do you think is the most morally defensible?

Thursday, November 13 – Immigration: Background

- Lowenstein, R. (9 July, 2006). The Immigration Equation. *New York Times Magazine*.
- Shipler, D. K. (2004). Harvest of Shame. In *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*.

Thursday, November 18 – Immigration: Policy choices

- National Immigration Project (2006). *Comparison of immigration proposals*.
- Federation for American Immigration Reform. *An immigration reform agenda for the 110th congress*. Available at: http://www.fairus.org/site/PageServer?pagename=leg_110_reform_agenda
- National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (2008). *Over-raided and under siege*.
- Ruhs, M. & Chang, H.-J. (2004). The ethics of labor immigration policy. *International Organization*.

Wednesday, November 19 – Discussion sections

Blog question: Which of the differing views of immigration are closest to your own? What difficulties would you expect if you were to craft a new immigration policy based on your views?

Thursday, November 20 – Death penalty: The ethical issues

- Van Den Haag, E. (1986). The ultimate punishment: A defense of capital punishment. *Harvard Law Review*. Available at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/angel/procon/haagarticle.html>
- Bedau, H. A. *Capital punishment*.
- Turow, S. (6 January, 2003). To kill or not to kill: Coming to terms with capital punishment. *The New Yorker*, available at: http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2003/01/06/030106fa_fact

Tuesday, November 25 – Death penalty: Racial disparities in sentencing

- Unah, I. & Boger, J. C. (2001). *Race and the death penalty in North Carolina*.
- Deiter, R. C. (1998). *The death penalty in black and white: Who lives, who dies, who decides. Executive summary*. Washington, DC: Death Penalty Information Center. Available at: <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/article.php?scid=45&did=539#Executive%20Summary>

-- THANKSGIVING BREAK --

Tuesday, December 2 – Global warming: Environmental ethics

- *Environmental Ethics*, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, available at: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-environmental/>
- Jamieson, D. (1992). Ethics, public policy, and global warming. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*.

Wednesday, December 3 – Discussion sections

NO blog question.

Thursday, December 4 – Global warming: The debate

- Kolbert, E. (9 May, 2005). The climate of man – III: What can be done? *The New Yorker*.
- Gore, A. (2007). Nobel prize acceptance speech. Available at: http://blog.algore.com/2007/12/nobel_prize_acceptance_speech.html
- Lindzen, R. S. (2 July, 2006). Don't believe the hype. *Opinion Journal*. Available at: <http://www.opinionjournal.com/extra/?id=110008597>

*** **PAPER #3 DUE DATE.**

Wednesday, December 10, 2 – 5PM – **FINAL EXAM**