

PUBLIC POLICY AND SOCIAL SERVICE (PPSS)

PPSS 2050 Ethical Decision Making (4 Credits)

Ethical decision making is essential for values-based leadership. Most decisions have ethical implications, but discerning the ethical dimension requires skill and an understanding of how ethical issues are shaped and informed by ethical theory. In this class students encounter theories from the field of ethics such as utilitarian, deontological, social contract, communitarian, and natural law. Students also interact with major philosophical concepts such as principles of non-maleficence; beneficence; justice and respect for persons; and virtues of care, compassion, integrity and courage. Through the use of case studies, students cultivate their capacity for ethical perception, learn to distinguish tough choices from genuine ethical dilemmas, and gain practice deliberating effectively about a variety of ethical issues drawn from both social and professional contexts.

PPSS 2100 Concepts of the Public Good (4 Credits)

All societies have to deal with natural and social inequalities, tension between individuality and community, and competing concepts of what constitutes the good society. What are the forces that create differing concepts of the public good and how are conflicts between competing visions settled? Case studies from cross-cultural research as well as historical and current examples from United States culture are used to explore the role of power, class, and group identification in shaping ideas of the public good. An important focus of this course is on understanding how concepts of the public good translate into structures that provide or limit the provision of social services.