Ethical Leadership for Instructors

Course Plan

Course Details

Description: The intent and purpose of this course is to provide State Fire Training (SFT) instructors with a foundational understanding of ethical awareness, professional standards, and ethical decision-making within the instructional environment.

This course provides the skills and knowledge needed for the State Fire Training Registered Instructor to safely, effectively, and competently describe ethical instructional behavior; define terms and identify distinctions; define and identify ethical norms and core values and how they affect behavior; describe policies, procedures, laws, standards, and commitments; describe proactive decision-making and communication, define ethical dilemmas, and describe ethical decision-making models; model proactive decision-making and communication, navigating ethical dilemmas, and using ethical decision-making models; and model reporting and documenting.

Designed For: Individuals seeking to teach State Fire Training (SFT) courses as Registered Instructors, as well as instructional personnel who seek to strengthen their understanding of ethical behavior, professional standards, and ethical decision-making within an instructional setting.

Prerequisites: Instructor 1: Instructional Methodology (2012) or (2019) (course completion)

Standard: Complete all activities.

Hours (Total): 8:00 hours

(4:25 lecture / 3:75 application)

Maximum Class Size: 30

Instructor Level: SFT Registered Instructor

Instructor/Student Ratio: 1:30

Restrictions: None

SFT Designation: FSTEP

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Required Resources

Instructor Resources

To teach this course, instructors need:

Online Instructor Resources

The following instructor resources are available online at https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/state-fire-training/fire-service-training-and-education-program

1. SFT Instructor Code of Ethics/Conduct (current)

- State Fire Training Procedures Manual
    - 4.5: Individual Integrity and Ethics (for reporting purposes)
- Sample Complex Ethical Dilemma Scenarios (in Activities Folder)
- The Williams Institute's *Ethical Awareness Inventory*
    - Digital: *Online Assessment: EAI* (2017) www.ethics-twi.org/products/onlineassessments/
    - Hard copy: *Ethics Awareness Inventory: A Guide to Personal Awareness of Your Ethical Perspective and Style* (2012) www.ethics-twi.org/product/1/
- Psychology Today: "How Ethical Are You?" https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/tests/personality/values-profile
- Brené Brown's *Dare to Lead* "Living into Our Values Exercise": https://brenebrown.com/resources/dare-to-lead-list-of-values/
- Values Cards (in Activities Folder)
- *Why Everyone Agrees to Bad Ideas — The Psychology of the Abilene Paradox:* https://youtu.be/a_F1-j1d6Do?si=p73MGN0JZGVAC-HD
- *Normalizing Deviance* (Brian Strobel): https://youtu.be/5UHj4Ekq3gY?si=gyvO2qXgPboFlwqz
- *Normalization of Deviance* (Mike Mullane): https://youtu.be/GN80sx3s4LA?si=eAsTSW6VaiDcS2Cl

Student Resources

To participate in this course, students need:

2. SFT Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics

- Digital access to the State Fire Training Procedures Manual
- Device with internet capability

Facilities, Equipment, and Personnel

Facilities

The following facilities are required to deliver this course:

- Standard learning environment or facility, which may include:
    - Writing board or paper easel chart
    - Markers, erasers

- Amplification devices
- Projector and screen
- Laptop or tablet with presentation or other viewing software
- Internet access with appropriate broadband capabilities

Timetable

Segment	Lecture	Application	Unit Total
Unit 1: Introduction			
Topic 1-1: Orientation and Administration	0.25	0.0	
Unit 1 Totals	**0.25**	**0.0**	**0.25**
Unit 2: Foundations of Ethical Practices			
Topic 2-1: Describing Ethical Instructional Behavior	0.50	0.50	
Topic 2-2: Defining Terms and Identifying Distinctions	0.50	0.00	
Topic 2-3: Defining and Identifying Ethical Norms and Core Values and How They Affect Behavior	1.0	1.0	
Unit 2 Totals	**2.0**	**1.5**	**3.5**
Unit 3: Ethics in Action			
Topic 3-1: Describing Policies, Procedures, Laws, Standards, and Commitments	0.75	0.50	
Topic 3-2: Describing Proactive Decision-Making and Communication, Defining Ethical Dilemmas, and Describing Ethical-Decision-Making Models	1.00	0.50	
Topic 3-3: Demonstrating Identifying Ethical Dilemmas and Applying an Ethical Decision-Making Model	0.25	0.75	
Topic 3-4: Describing Reporting and Documenting	0.25	0.25	
Unit 3 Totals	**2.25**	**2.0**	**4.25**
Course Totals	**4.5**	**3.5**	**8.0**

Timetable Key

1. The Timetable documents the amount of time estimated to deliver the content included in the course plan.

2. Time is documented using the quarter system: 15 min. = .25 / 30 min. = .50 / 45 min. = .75 / 60 min. = 1.0.

3. The Course Totals do not reflect time for lunch (1 hour) or breaks (10 minutes per each 50 minutes of instruction or assessment). It is the instructor's responsibility to add this time based on the course delivery schedule.

4. Application (activities, skills exercises, and formative testing) time will vary depending on the number of students enrolled. The Application time documented is based on the maximum class size identified in the Course Details section.

5. Summative Assessments are determined and scheduled by the authority having jurisdiction. These are not the written or psychomotor State Fire Training certification exams. These are in-class assessments to evaluate student progress and calculate course grades.

Unit 1: Introduction

Topic 1-1: Orientation and Administration

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic, a student will be able to identify facility and classroom requirements and identify course objectives, events, requirements, assignments, activities, skills exercises, resources, evaluation methods, and participation requirements in the course syllabus.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Identify facility requirements
    - Restroom locations
    - Food locations
    - Emergency procedures
2. Identify classroom requirements
    - Start and end times
    - Breaks
    - Electronic device policies
    - Special needs and accommodation
    - Other requirements as applicable
3. Review course syllabus
    - Course objectives
    - Calendar of events
    - Course requirements
    - Student evaluation process
    - Assignments
    - Activities
    - Required student resources
    - Class participation requirements

Discussion Questions

1. Determined by instructor

Application

1. Determined by instructor

Unit 2: Foundations of Ethical Practices

Topic 2-1: Describing Ethical Instructional Behavior

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic a student, given information on Bloom's Taxonomy and ethical instructional considerations, will be able to describe ethical instructional behavior so that the value of ethical behavior is established.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Identify Bloom's Taxonomy
    - Cognitive, psychomotor, affective
2. Describe the affective domain
3. Describe how to protect your students, yourself, State Fire Training, and your organization(s)
    - Emotionally safe classroom environment
    - Cultural competence
    - Dealing with sensitive terms and content
    - Confidentiality
    - Physical safety
    - Risk management
    - Consistency
4. Identify ethical assessment
5. Identify incorporating personal ethics into instructional practice

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains in an instructional setting?
2. What is the instructor's role in mitigating the risks created by unethical practices in the instructional setting?
3. What are considerations for maintaining emotional versus physical safety in the instructional setting?
4. What does it mean to be a culturally competent instructor?

Application

1. Give students writing materials and either present them with an instructor-provided case study or have them work in groups to discuss unethical behavior they have witnessed in instructional settings and present lessons learned to the group.

Instructor Notes

1. The instructor must provide a disclaimer to students that the content of this course can be sensitive and provoke emotional reactions and that all interactions must be respectful, dignified, and professional.
2. The instructor should use high-quality academically appropriate case studies.

Topic 2-2: Defining Terms and Identifying Distinctions

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic a student, given key terms, will be able to define the terms and identify distinctions so that the terms can be used within the context of the fire service.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Identify the historical context of ethics
2. Ethics originated as a philosophical discipline in Ancient Greece
3. Shifted from mythology to a human-centered analysis pioneered by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.
4. Focuses on defining virtue, character, and moral duty.
5. Define key terms and identify distinctions within the context of the fire service

- Ethics
- Morals
- Values
- Principles
- Critical thinking
- Culture
- Character

Discussion Questions

1. What are the differences between the culture and characteristics of the fire service and public perception of these?
2. How do we uphold public perception in our decision-making processes?
3. How are ethics different from morals?
4. How are principles and values different? How do these impact your decision-making professionally and personally?

Application

1. Determined by instructor

Instructor Notes

1. The instructor may research information on public trust in the fire service.

Topic 2-3: Defining and Identifying Ethical Norms and Core Values and How They Affect Behavior

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic, a student, given information on ethical norms and values and an ethics-awareness inventory, will be able to define ethical norms and core values, identify how ethical norms influence core values, identify how ethical norms and core values affect behaviors, and identify personal core values so that they can describe how their own personal perspectives influence their behaviors.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Define "ethical norms"
2. Identify sources of ethical norms:
   - Personal (family, friends, coworkers, culture, community)
   - Professional (the law, career, employer, geographic location, affiliations)
   - Clubs and affiliations (Rotary, scouting, sports teams, etc.)
   - Religious or spiritual beliefs
   - Generational
   - Internet and social media
3. Describe how ethical norms lead to individual, group, and organizational behaviors
   - Implicit bias
   - Decision-making
   - Problem-solving
4. Define core values
   - Established early in life
   - Can be modified in response to significant emotional events
   - Often subconscious or not recognized
   - Can be in competition with each other
   - Cannot be taken from you (only you can change them)
5. Identify your personal core values
6. Identify your personal biases that may impact your behavior as an instructor

Discussion Questions

1. How does social media impact our ethical norms?
2. What are some common values within your organization?
3. What factors might contribute to the emergence of multiple sets of ethics within an organization or group?
4. What is the difference between problem-solving and decision-making?

Application

1. Give students materials for assessing their core values and have them complete the assessment.
2. Give students an ethics-awareness assessment and have them complete the assessment.

Instructor Notes

1. The instructor may choose to use info from Dr. Morris Massey's three periods of values imprinting (the Imprint Period, 0–7 years, the Modeling Period, 8–13 years, and the Socialization Period 13–21 years).
2. For the application, the instructor may use their own tools or choose from these:
   - Brené Brown's "Dare to Lead Core Values" Living into Our Values Exercise
   - An online game-based, interactive learning platform
   - The Williams Institute's *Ethical Awareness Inventory* (online or hard copy)
   - Psychology Today: "How Ethical Are You?"
   - Brené Brown's Dare to Lead "Living into Our Values Exercise"
   6. Values Cards (in Activities Folder)

Unit 3: Ethics in Action

Topic 3-1: Describing Policies, Procedures, Laws, and Standards

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic, a student, given the policies, procedures, laws, and standards of the AHJ, will be able to describe policies, procedures, laws, and standards governing the instructor's role and ethical duties so that local, state, and federal requirements are met.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Describe the instructor's role as an ambassador for State Fire Training
   - Perform duties with integrity
   - Serve as a role model
   - Adhere to the State Fire Training Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics
2. Identify applicable laws; federal, state, and local policies and procedures; and professional standards for instructors
   - Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)
   - Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (2008)
   - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 §504 and §508
   - Title IX
   - Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (1974)
   - NFPA standards, including:
     - NFPA 1020 Standard for Fire and Emergency Services Instructor, Fire Officer, and Emergency Medical Services Officer Professional Qualifications (2025)
   - California Code of Regulations (19 CCR § 1990.11)
   - California Health and Safety Code
     - HSC § 13159(d)
     - HSC § 13159.8(a)
   - State Fire Training Procedures Manual
   - Jurisdictional/organizational mission and values
3. Describe the commitments included in the State Fire Training Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics and the stated purpose for each:
   - The instructor's mission statement
   - Principle 1: The instructor's commitment to the student
   - Principle 2: The instructor's commitment to the training and education profession
   - Principle 3: The instructor's commitment to State Fire Training

Discussion Questions

1. How do your AHJ's policies and procedures align with the Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics?
2. Why do you think the Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics exists?
3. How can the Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics support you as an instructor?
4. What are reasonable accommodations protected by the ADAs and Section 504?

Application

1. Give students the State Fire Training Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics and have them engage in an instructor-moderated process of identifying, evaluating, and discussing at least seven standards spread across the three principles.

Instructor Notes

1. The instructor must call attention to the purpose statement paragraphs under the mission statement and principles in the State Fire Training Instructor Code of Conduct/Ethics and thoroughly go through each of the numbered standards.

Topic 3-2: Describing Proactive Decision-Making and Communication, Defining Ethical Dilemmas, and Describing Ethical-Decision-Making Models

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic, a student, given ethical-decision-making models, will be able to describe proactive decision-making and communication, define and identify types of ethical dilemmas, and describe ethical-decision-making models so that proactively preventing dilemmas is described, ethical dilemmas are defined and differentiated, and ethical-decision-making models are described.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Define “ethical dilemma”
2. Identify different types of ethical dilemmas
   - Right vs. wrong
   - Right vs. right
   - Wrong vs. wrong
3. Describe the role of proactive decision-making in preventing ethical dilemmas
   - Applying applicable laws, policies, and procedures
   - Bias, equity, and fairness in the instructional setting
   - Personal and professional boundaries in the instructional setting
   - Valid and reliable formative and summative assessment
4. Describe the role of proactive communication in preventing ethical dilemmas
   - Syllabus and lesson plan requirements
   - Communicating boundaries, expectations, and policies
   - Positive classroom climate
   - Learner characteristics
5. Describe the psychology of decision-making
   - Normalization of deviance
   - The Abilene paradox
6. Describe ethical decision-making models
   - Universal ethics
   - Situational ethics
7. Identify the components of an ethical-decision-making model

Discussion Questions

1. What are examples of each type of ethical dilemma?
2. How do the syllabus requirements communicate course expectations and minimize ethical dilemmas?
3. What are hindrances to ethical decision-making?
4. What are components you feel are important to include in an ethical-decision-making model?
5. What is the difference between universal and situational ethics?

Application

1. Give students videos discussing the psychology of decision-making and have them relate the situations in the videos to situations that could arise in their instructional environments.

Instructor Notes

1. This topic lays the cognitive groundwork for teaching the application of the skills in Topic 3-3.
2. In *Situational Ethics*, Joseph Fletcher defines "ethical dilemma" as a complex situation where ethical principles and values are in conflict.
3. The instructor should consider conflict avoidance, complacency, social or group acceptance, and rationalization/justification when discussing hindrances to ethical decision-making.
4. For the "types of ethical dilemmas," the instructor should refer to the Rushworth Kidder model.
5. The instructor may choose to show *Why Everyone Agrees to Bad Ideas — The Psychology of the Abilene Paradox* and *Normalizing Deviance (Brian Strobel)* or find comparable videos.
6. Potential components of an ethical decision-making model would be:
    - Gather facts from all parties
        - Listen to rationale
        - Evaluate alignment between what is being said and what is occurring
    - Determine ethical issue
    - Identify your individual or group principles that impact the situation
    - List of alternatives
    - Compare alternatives
    - Consider consequences of each alternative
        - The greater the consequences the greater the need for careful decision-making
        - Questions to consider:
            - Could you or someone else suffer physical harm?
            - Could you or someone else suffer serious emotional pain?
            - Could the decision hurt your reputation, undermine your credibility, or damage important relationships?
            - Could the decision impede the achievement of any important goal?
    - Make decision
    - Implement and observe

Topic 3-3: Demonstrating Identifying Ethical Dilemmas and Applying an Ethical Decision-Making Model

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic, a student, given an ethical dilemma in an instructional scenario and an ethical decision-making model, will be able to demonstrate identifying ethical dilemmas and apply an ethical decision-making model, so that the dilemma is ethically navigated.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Demonstrate identifying ethical dilemmas
2. Apply an ethical decision-making model
   - Universal ethics
   - Situational ethics
3. Demonstrate navigating different levels of ethical dilemmas using an ethical decision-making model
   - Low-level intervention
   - Mitigating
   - Resolving

Discussion Questions

1. How can you determine when an ethical dilemma has arisen?
2. What is the difference between a policy violation, a legal issue, and an ethical dilemma?
3. How can you apply universal and situational ethics when making a decision?

Application

1. Give students complex ethical dilemma scenarios and have them break into small groups to identify the ethical dilemmas and apply an ethical-decision-making model to make decisions for each of the scenarios.

Instructor Notes

7. The instructor must include each of the following scenarios in the application: manipulating grades, student-instructor boundaries, artificial intelligence, hazing or harassment, adherence to course and curriculum requirements, being an ambassador of State Fire Training, and a situation involving multiple policy violations. There are samples that may be used in the Instructor Resources section.

Topic 3-4: Describing Reporting and Documentation

Terminal Learning Objective

At the end of this topic, a student, given a complex ethical dilemma scenario and policies, procedures, and federal, state, and local laws, will be able to describe reporting and documenting harmful or negative course-delivery dynamics, noncompliant behaviors, and associated events so that applicable policies, procedures, and laws are applied and the dilemma is properly reported and documented.

Enabling Learning Objectives

1. Identify situations requiring reporting
2. Identify to whom situations must be reported (AHJ, state)
3. Describe the appropriate reporting and documentation methods

Discussion Questions

1. When do dynamics, behaviors, and events need to be reported to the state?
2. How will implementation of your decisions and the results reflect on you as an instructor?

Application

1. Give students the various ethical dilemma scenarios from Topic 3-3 and have them work with their small groups to describe how to properly report and document one of the scenarios.

Instructor Notes

1. The instructor should provide the contact information or a template for reporting problems to the state.
2. The student groups can work with the same scenario they had in Topic 3-3, or the instructor may assign them a different one.

How to Read a Course Plan

A course plan identifies the details, logistics, resources, and training and education content for an individual course. Whenever possible, course content is directly tied to a national or state standard. SFT uses the course plan as the training and education standard for an individual course. Individuals at fire agencies, academies, and community colleges use course plans to obtain their institution's consent to offer courses and provide credit for their completion. Instructors use course plans to develop syllabi and lesson plans for course delivery.

Course Details
The Course Details segment identifies the logistical information required for planning, scheduling, and delivering a course.

Required Resources
The Required Resources segment identifies the resources, equipment, facilities, and personnel required to deliver the course.

Unit
Each Unit represents a collection of aligned topics. Unit 1 is the same for all SFT courses. An instructor is not required to repeat Unit 1 when teaching multiple courses within a single instructional period or academy.

Topics
Each Topic documents a single Terminal Learning Objective and the instructional activities that support it.

Terminal Learning Objective
A Terminal Learning Objective (TLO) states the instructor's expectations of student performance at the end of a specific lesson or unit. Each TLO includes a task (what the student must be able to do), a condition (the setting and supplies needed), and a standard (how well or to whose specifications the task must be performed). TLOs target the performance required when students are evaluated, not what they will do as part of the course.

Enabling Learning Objectives
The Enabling Learning Objectives (ELO) specify a detailed sequence of student activities that make up the instructional content of a lesson plan. ELOs cover the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills students must master to complete the TLO.

Discussion Questions
The Discussion Questions are designed to guide students into a topic or to enhance their understanding of a topic. Instructors may add to or adjust the questions to suit their students.

Application
The Application segment documents experiences that enable students to apply lecture content through cognitive and psychomotor activities, skills exercises, and formative testing. Application experiences included in the course plan are required. Instructors may add additional application experiences to suit their student population if time permits.

Instructor Notes
The Instructor Notes segment documents suggestions and resources to enhance an instructor's ability to teach a specific topic.

CTS Guide Reference
The CTS Guide Reference segment documents the standard(s) from the corresponding Certification Training Standard Guide upon which each topic within the course is based. This segment is eliminated if the course is not based on a standard.

Skill Sheet
The Skill Sheet segment documents the skill sheet that tests the content contained within the topic. This segment is eliminated if the course does not have skill sheets.

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Director, CAL FIRE

Daniel Berlant
State Fire Marshal

Vickie Sakamoto
Assistant State Fire Marshal

Chris Fowler
Chief, State Fire Training

Mike Richwine
Chair, STEAC

Cadre Leadership

Chris Fowler
Cadre Lead
Chief, State Fire Training

Caryn Petty
Cadre Lead
Deputy State Fire Marshall III (Specialist), State Fire Training

Katy Luetke-Porter
Cadre Lead Trainee
Deputy State Fire Marshal, State Fire Training

Allison L. Shaw
Cadre Editor
California State University, Sacramento

Laura Garwood
Cadre Editor
California State University, Sacramento

Cadre Participants

Brian Hammond
Captain II/Paramedic, Los Angeles City Fire Department

Shawn Tukua
Battalion Chief, Los Angeles City Fire Department
Training Office South, CalChiefs

Darren Hall
Captain (ret.), City of Coronado
Fire Technology Director, San Diego Miramar College

Markus Reagan
Battalion Chief, Sacramento Fire Department

Brett Fucillo
Battalion Chief, CAL FIRE

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