



**School of Public &
International Affairs**
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Course Syllabus
PADP 7360: Managing Government Performance
Spring Semester 2020

301 Baldwin Hall
Tuesday evenings, 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

The University of Georgia
School of Public and International Affairs
Department of Public Administration & Policy
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Course Description and Objectives

Performance improvement is a leading theme in the theory and practice of modern-day Public Administration, both in the USA and worldwide. Yet surprisingly little attention has been devoted to studying government performance carefully and clarifying important theoretical and conceptual issues related to the topic, such as how performance can be defined and measured; how politics and the policy process shape our understanding of performance and affect our efforts to improve it; the exact factors that drive performance in the public sector; and the impact of administrative reforms and management practices that have been advanced in recent years to improve government performance—paying attention to both their intended and unintended consequences. Fortunately, most of these concerns are now receiving increased attention, but the answers remain elusive. One purpose of this course is to track these important developments in public administration theory and practice. Another purpose is to learn how government performance can be improved without incurring the usual setbacks that often accompany such efforts.

This course will provide an overview of the history of the performance improvement movement, which has deep tap roots in Public Administration, and an introduction to the existing government performance literature. Different conceptions of performance will be explored and students will develop an understanding of administrative and program performance in the broader context of democratic governance. Students will be introduced to the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical issues involved in defining and measuring performance, and they will review and critique several recent attempts to model performance improvement in the public sector. One key question for public administration scholars and practitioners is “does management matter?” – and if so, *how*

¹ Office hours are by appointment, but please feel free to drop by whenever I am in the office. Also feel free to contact me by telephone or email whenever necessary. Email usually works best.

does it matter? In other words, what specific management practices in the public administrator's toolkit will improve government performance?

Closely related topics include performance measurement, performance management, and performance budgeting; pay for performance; report cards and scorecards; benchmarking; goal-setting; strategic planning; and many other administrative reforms, policy innovations, and management approaches for improving government performance. The latter part of the course will focus intently on empirical work for assessing the impact of these purported drivers of performance in several specific governmental domains; i.e., English local government studies, Danish central government studies, studies of federal, state, and local government agencies in the United States, and cross-country international comparisons. We will see that performance improvement efforts are prominent in almost all topical areas and management specialties in public administration, including public personnel administration; budgeting and financial management; social work and nonprofit administration; policy analysis, formulation and implementation; operations research; program evaluation; management information systems, etc.

This seminar is designed for advanced Master's and doctoral level students who have a good working knowledge of the political, administrative, and policy processes in government. Students should also have strong analytical skills and some knowledge of empirical research techniques.

Course readings, discussions, exercises, and major deliverables are designed to impart the following core competencies:

1. To lead and manage in public governance;
2. To participate in the public policy process;
3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions;
4. To articulate and apply a public service perspective; and
5. To communicate with a diverse workforce and citizenry

Seminar Sessions

This class is a reading course and working seminar in which students are actively involved in the work at hand. In a typical class, readings will be assigned and students will be given a set of focus questions to guide their study and help structure the subsequent discussion. The instructor will present material, pose additional questions for discussion, help the class focus on points of dispute, and aid in the process of critical inquiry. Seminar participants will present, discuss, and critique assigned readings. All participants are expected to attend all class sessions, complete all readings on time, and be prepared to comment on and assist in the analysis of the literature and other issues under discussion. As mentioned below, attendance and the level and quality of a student's participation in classroom work are a grading factor in the course.

Assignments and Grades

Grades will be based on the following components. These components will be discussed in more detail during the initial class session.

<u>Component</u>	<u>Percent of Course Grade</u>	
	Master's Students	Doctoral Students
Midterm Examination	30%	-
Final Examination	30%	30%
Course Paper	30%	60%
Attendance and Participation	<u>10%</u>	<u>10%</u>
	100%	100%

Midterm Examination

Master's students will complete a take-home mid-term examination consisting of 6-8 pages. The essay will try to answer a set of questions on conceptual and theoretical issues related to government performance such as the apparent obsession with performance improvement over the years, the difficulty of defining and measuring performance, and the scope of New Public Management reforms that have been implemented in the United States and across the globe. Students may also be asked to differentiate between several performance-related concepts such as performance measurement, management and improvement. The set of questions will be distributed one week before the paper is due.

This essay will count approximately 30 percent of the final course grade. Students should strive for papers that are high quality, cosmetically pleasing, and easy for readers to follow. The papers should be type-written in a conventional 10- to 12-point font and double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides. The pages should also be numbered. Students should collate everything into one Microsoft Word document (no PDFs please) and submit the papers as a single file attachment via email. The papers should be formatted according to the American Political Science Association (APSA) style manual. Both the complete guide and brief versions are widely available on the internet. Grading will be based on quality of presentation and content. Late penalties will apply.

Final Examination

All students will take a comprehensive, open-book final examination worth approximately 30 percent of the final course grade. This examination will consist of several essay type questions that focus on what has been learned from the course as a whole. Students may be asked to cast a critical eye on the topics of performance measurement, performance management, and performance improvement, and assess their potential for improving public governance in democratic political systems. Another issue is cheating in performance management systems. The same standards set for the midterm examination will apply to the final examination. For grading purposes, the main emphasis will be on quality of presentation and content. Late penalties will apply.²

Course Paper

Master's students will write a case study of performance improvement efforts in a public or nonprofit organization. The student should select an organization of interest and seek the instructor's approval by midterm. The purpose of the paper is to provide students an

² University policy provides that any student with three final examinations scheduled on the same calendar day or two examinations at the same time may petition an instructor to reschedule one exam at a different time.

opportunity to apply the knowledge they have gained from the course to an organization they are familiar with, thus applying theory to practice. This paper should be 12-15 pages in length and follow the same standards set out for the midterm examination. The paper will count approximately 30 percent of the final course grade. Grading will be based on quality of presentation and content, and late penalties will apply.

Doctoral students will write a more in-depth research paper consisting of 20-30 pages on a topic related to government performance improvement. This paper can be a multiple-book review, field essay, theoretical exploration, empirical study, or other type of scholarly inquiry or exposition on an appropriate topic. The express goal is to produce a high-quality paper that is suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. This paper will count approximately 60 percent of the final course grade for doctoral students. Late penalties will apply.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are required in this course and will count approximately 10 percent toward the final grade. Students who miss multiple classes, or who frequently arrive late or leave early, should expect to receive a lowered grade in the course. With respect to participation, I consider how frequent, valuable, and constructive a student's contribution is to class discussions and group work. I also differentiate between required participation (e.g., answering questions and leading discussions, as required in the course) and spontaneous participation (e.g., asking questions and joining in on discussions). This component also includes participation in group exercises and completion of several short homework-type assignments during the semester.

Reasonable Accommodations

Students with disabilities that could affect their ability to participate or perform well in the course should see me early in the semester. I am receptive to these situations and will make any reasonable accommodations.

Academic Honesty

Please familiarize yourself with the University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy, particularly as it relates to plagiarism and related concerns. All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." For details see <https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/>. Students should inform themselves about these standards before performing any academic work.

Please be mindful that students should complete all written assignments individually – not collaboratively – unless otherwise instructed.

Required Readings

The required readings for the course are as follows:

- Wilson, Woodrow, 1887. "The Study of Administration." *Political Science Quarterly* 2, 2: 197-222.

- Brewer, Gene A., 2000. *Administrative Reform and Organization Change in the Public Sector*. Democracy Project AP 24/2000. Copenhagen, Denmark: University of Copenhagen Press.
- Donald F. Kettl, 2005. *The Global Public Management Revolution: A Report on the Transformation of Governance*, 2d ed. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- The following online or printed readings about the National Performance Review:
 1. Brief History of the National Performance Review
<https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/npr/library/papers/bkgrd/brief.html> (February 1997)
 2. From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less (September 1993)
<https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/npr/library/nprprt/annrpt/redtpe93/index.html>
- Paul C. Light, 2002. *Government's Greatest Achievements: From Civil Rights to Homeland Security*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Colin Talbot, 2010. *Theories of Performance: Organizational and Service Improvement in the Public Domain*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Donald P. Moynihan, 2008. *The Dynamics of Performance Management: Constructing Information and Reform*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Richard M. Walker, George A. Boyne and Gene A. Brewer, 2012. *Public Management and Performance: Research Directions*. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Geert Bouckaert and John Halligan, 2008. *Managing Performance: International Comparisons*. London and New York: Routledge.

Additional readings may be assigned during the semester.

The books listed above are available at the UGA and off-campus bookstores. Limited copies may also be available for temporary use from the main library, departmental library, or directly from the instructor. Other readings will be made available online or provided by the instructor.

Tentative Course Schedule

Required readings are listed below under the appropriate heading. This schedule will serve as a guide but not a rigid constraint throughout the semester. Some topics will likely take less than the allotted time, while others will require more attention. Any changes in the syllabus or course schedule will be announced in advance when possible.