

# PADP 6950: Foundations of Policy Analysis

## Fall 2021

Department of Public Administration and Policy  
School of Public and International Affairs  
University of Georgia

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**Office Hours:** Thu 10:30am - 10:30 am  $\implies$

**Class Hours:** Thu 3:55pm - 6:45 pm

**Web:** [SPIA Profile](#)

**Course Cite:** [eLC Site](#)

(To be requested by Wed 5pm by mail)

**Class Room:** Baldwin H. 101D

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## Course Description

By what criteria is it acceptable for government (officials) to employ coercion, (hard or soft) or other incentives with the aim of changing the behavior of citizens? In most instances, policy analysts answer this question within the framework of welfare economics, the mechanics of markets and market failures.

Accordingly, this is a course in microeconomic analysis that provides broad exposure to the fundamental economic tools of policy analysis. While competitive markets are often efficient, there are many barriers to perfectly functioning markets that lead to the need for public policy. Ultimately, the goal of the course is to lead students to appreciate the economic method of thought - assuming rational agents respond predictably to incentives in order to allocate the scarce resources at their disposal as seems "best" to them - and how this method can be a widely useful tool for assessing the need for, and likely impact of, public policy.

Part of the goals for University of Georgia MPA students are that they understand the public policy process at the federal, state and local levels, including formulating, implementing and evaluating public policy. Within the context of this course, students should develop the ability to interpret and persuasively communicate information regarding policy alternatives through written materials. Additionally, students should analyze policy alternatives using quantitative and qualitative tools to evaluate decisions and explain potential ramifications for diverse constituencies.

Additionally, the MPA program at UGA teaches students to utilize various methods and analytical tools to gather, analyze and interpret data to provide effective reasoning for decision-making and policy creation. By the end of this course, students should learn to effectively inform the public and other stakeholders of decisions and initiatives through the presentation of data and research finding. Furthermore, they should learn to produce policy papers involving the synthesis of information, evaluation, and analysis of critical questions or problems currently facing the field of public administration and policy.

## Course Objectives

By the end of the course, student should understand:

1. Fundamental economic ideas of scarcity, opportunity cost, and rationality
2. Utility and consumer surplus
3. Production functions, marginal costs, supply functions and producer surplus
4. Markets and how they work
5. Market structures of perfect competition and monopoly
6. Market failures and policy solutions: the cases of externalities and public goods

## Pre-requisites/Co-requisites

Although there is not a formal prerequisite, this class uses high school algebra to understand microeconomics and policy concepts. **You are expected to be familiar with solving simple equations, inequalities, (Cartesian) Coordinates systems, and geometry.**

## Optional Textbooks

- *Intermediate Microeconomics: A Modern Approach* by Hal R. Varian (any edition)
- *Microeconomics* by Austan Goolsbee, Chad Syverson, and Steven Levitt (either edition)

There will be additional readings and prodcast distributed throughout the semester.

## Course Policies

### Coronavirus Information and Policies for the Class

We will follow an **in-person** methodology for this class without any restrictions. While class attendance is not mandatory, the likelihood of success without attending is substantially reduced.

- **Face Coverings**  
Face masks are encouraged while in class or in the College's common spaces. Students seeking an accommodation related to face coverings should contact Disability Services at <https://drc.uga.edu>.
- **DawgCheck**  
Please perform a quick symptom update on DawgCheck—on the UGA app or website in case you have symptoms or if you have a positive test. Inform DawgCheck as fast as you can. It will protect others, help keep the class safe and health providers monitor the health situation on campus: <https://dawgcheck.uga.edu>

- **What do I do if I have symptoms?** Students showing symptoms should self-isolate and schedule an appointment with the University Health Center by calling 706-542-1162 (Mon-Fri, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.). For emergencies and after-hours care, see: <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>.
- **How do I get a test?**

Students who are demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19 should call the University Health Center. UHC is offering testing by appointment for students; appointments may be booked by calling 706-542-1162. UGA will also be recruiting asymptomatic students to participate in surveillance tests. Students living in residence halls, Greek housing and off-campus apartment complexes are encouraged to participate.
- **What do I do if I test positive?**

Any student with a positive COVID-19 test is required to report the test in DawgCheck and should self-isolate immediately. Students should not attend classes in-person until the isolation period is completed. Once you report the positive test through DawgCheck, UGA Student Care and Outreach will follow up with you.

### **Attendance & Participation Policy**

In general, I will not be taking attendance for this class with the exception of classes in which we have scheduled students participation, such as discussions, presentations, debates or exams. **While class attendance is not mandatory, the likelihood of success without attending is substantially reduced.**

### **Preferred Name and Pronouns**

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I am eager to address you by your preferred name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

### **Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy**

"The University prohibits harassment of or discrimination against any person because of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity or national origin, religion, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status by any member of the University Community (as defined below) on campus, in connection with a University program or activity, or in a manner that creates a hostile environment for any member of the University Community. Incidents of harassment and discrimination will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or expulsion from the University." UGA Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy may be accessed at the [Equal Opportunity Office](#) web page. Any person who feels that he or she has been the subject of prohibited discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should contact the Equal Opportunity Office (EOO) at (706) 542- 7912, or via email at [ugaeoo@uga.edu](mailto:ugaeoo@uga.edu).

## University Honor Code & Academic Honesty Policy

UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others."

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "[A Culture of Honesty](#)." All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. All students are expected to abide by the University Honor Code as found in A Culture of Honesty, which includes the following statement: "The University of Georgia seeks to promote and ensure academic honesty and personal integrity among students and other members of the University community. A policy on academic honesty (and procedural guidelines for adjudication of alleged violations of academic honesty) has been developed to serve these goals. Academic honesty means performing all academic work without plagiarizing, cheating, lying, tampering, stealing, receiving assistance from any other person or using any source of information that is not common knowledge (unless that assistance or use is authorized by the person responsible for supervising that academic work or fairly attributed to the source of assistance or information)."

Further details can be found at the following UGA site: (<https://honesty.uga.edu/>).

Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic policy should be directed to the instructor. Any violation will be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs.

## Accommodations for Disabilities

Students who require accommodations to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the course instructor during regular office hours, by email or by appointment. To request academic accommodations due to a special need, you can also contact the Disability Resource Center, 114 Clark Howell Hall, 706-542-8719 voice, 706-542-7719 fax, or 706-542-8778. If you have a letter from Disability Services indicating you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me as early as possible so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for class. If we do not meet in person to review the form (which can be found at <http://drc.uga.edu>) two weeks prior to a major assignment you will not be assigned any accommodation for the assignment.

## Mental Health and Wellness Resources

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at (706) 542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu/>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.
- UGA has several resources for a student seeking:
  - [mental health services](#)
  - [crisis support](#)
- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit [BeWellUGA](#) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.
- Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

## Course Structure

### Grading Policy

Class attendance is not required, though there is little prospect of success without it. The grade will count the assessments using the following proportions:

Assignments	Total Points
Weekly Homeworks	20
Midterm Exam	25
Paper 1 - Explain a Puzzle	10
Paper 2 - Policy Memo	20
Final Exam	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### Weekly Homeworks

There will be weekly homework assignments, which will count for 20% of the course grade. These will be graded on a 3 point scale (check plus, check and check minus). No late assignments will be accepted, but your lowest grade will be dropped. Unless otherwise stated, homeworks can be completed in groups of no more than 3 people. Turn in only one assignment for the group, with everyone's names clearly listed.

### Two Exams

There will be two in-class exams, each counting for 25% of the course grade. Any known scheduling problems should be brought to my attention as soon as possible. If you miss the midterm exam without a pre-approved excuse or medical emergency, you will receive a zero. If you have an approved absence, then the final exam will count for 50% of the course grade. No make-up exam will be given.

### Two Papers

1. **Explain a puzzle:** This paper will count for 10% of the course grade. This paper should be no more than 300 words (one page). Your assignment is to use a principle, or principles, discussed in the course to explain some puzzling pattern of events or behavior that you personally have observed. Do not use complex terminology. Imagine yourself talking to a relative who has never had a course in economics. Do not use any algebra or graphs. You can include a few citations, but you need not include a bibliography. You are not expected to do a lot of research in support of your argument, although a relevant fact or two might help persuade you that your argument is correct. Your topic need not be important, but try to make it interesting. Your puzzle paper will be graded based on whether the puzzle is actually puzzling (paragraph 1), whether the economic reasoning is sound (paragraph 2), and on the clarity of the writing overall.

2. **Policy memo:** This paper will count for 20% of the course grade. The goal of the assignment is to provide a short (4 pages, single-spaced) economic evaluation of some existing or proposed policy. More detailed information on the assignment will be provided separately. An initial paper proposal will be due at the start of class on November 5; the final paper is due at the start of class on November 26 (via eLC). Late papers will lose 10 percentage points for every day that they are late.

## Class Schedule

Disclaimer: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Date	Topic	Due	Material
19-Aug	Introduction		Varian Ch. 1
26-Aug	Consumer choice		GSL Ch. 4
2-Sep	Demand		GSL Ch. 5 (skip 5.3)
9-Sep	Surpluses		GSL Ch. 3 (3.1, 3.4, 3.5)
16-Sep	Intertemporal choice and uncertainty		GSL Ch. 14
23-Sep	Asymmetric information		GSL Ch. 16
30-Sep	<i>Midterm Exam</i>		
7-Oct	Theory of the firm		GSL Ch. 6 (6.1-6.4)
14-Oct	Supply		GSL Ch. 7 (skip 7.6) & 8.1, 8.2
21-Oct	Perfect competition and monopoly		GSL Ch. 8.4, 9, 10.1-10.3
28-Oct	Game Theory		GSL Ch. 12.1-12.3
4-Nov	Welfare	Policy paper proposal due	GSL Ch. 15 (skip 15.4, 15.5)
11-Nov	Externalities	Puzzle paper due	
18-Nov	Public goods		GSL Ch. 17.1-17.3
25-Nov	Thanksgiving Break - cancelled	Policy paper due	GSL Ch. 17.4
2-Dec	Review		
9-Dec	<i>Final Exam (tentative)</i>		