

# PADP 6950: Foundations of Policy Analysis

## Spring 2022

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

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**Office Hours:** Mon 5:00pm - 7:00pm  $\implies$  (To be requested by Monday 10am by mail)

**Class Hours:** Mon 7:10pm - 9:45pm

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

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

**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 podcast 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. This are the current policies at the beginning of the semester, be attentive to university wide changes.

UGA adheres to guidance from the University System of Georgia and the recommendations from Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) related to quarantine and isolation. Since this may be updated periodically, we encourage you to review the latest guidance [here](#). The following information is based on guidance last updated on December 29, 2021.

- **Face Coverings**

Following guidance from the University System of Georgia, **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>.

- **How can I obtain the COVID-19 vaccine**

University Health Center is scheduling appointments for students through the [UHC Patient Portal](https://www.uhs.uga.edu/healthtopics/covid-vaccine). Learn more here – <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/healthtopics/covid-vaccine>. The Georgia Department of Health, pharmacy chains and local providers also offer the COVID-19 vaccine at no cost to you. To find a COVID-19 vaccination location near you, please go to: <https://georgia.gov/covid-vaccine>. In addition, the University System of Georgia has made COVID-19 vaccines available at 15 campuses statewide and you can locate one here: <https://www.usg.edu/vaccination>

- **What do I do if I have symptoms?**

Students showing COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate and get tested. You can schedule an appointment with the University Health Center by calling 706-542-1162 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5p.m.). **Please DO NOT walk-in.** For emergencies and after-hours care, see: <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>.

- **What do I do if I test positive for COVID-19? (Isolation guidance)** If you test positive for COVID-19 at any time, either through a PCR test, an Antigen test, or a home test kit, you are required to report it through the [DawgCheck Test Reporting Survey](#). Follow the instructions provided to you when you report your positive test result in DawgCheck. As of December 29, 2021, when an individual receive a positive COVID-19 test: Everyone, regardless of vaccination status, should:

- Stay home for 5 days.
- If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can leave your house and return to class.
- Continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.

- **What do I do if I have been exposed to COVID-19? (Quarantine guidance)** If you have been exposed (within 6 feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period – unmasked\*\*) to someone with COVID-19 or to someone with a positive COVID-19 test and you are:

- Boosted, or have become fully vaccinated within the last 6 months (Moderna or Pfizer vaccine) or within the last 2 months (JJ vaccine)
  - \* You do not need to quarantine at home and may come to class.
  - \* You should wear a mask around others for 10 days.
  - \* If possible, get tested on day 5.
  - \* If you develop symptoms, get tested and isolate at home until test results are received, then proceed in accordance with the test results.
- Unvaccinated, or became fully vaccinated more than 6 months ago (Moderna or Pfizer vaccine) or more than 2 months ago (JJ vaccine) and have not received a booster:
  - \* You must quarantine at home for 5 days. After that you may return to class but continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.
  - \* If possible, get tested on day 5.
  - \* If you develop symptoms, get tested and isolate at home until test results are received, then proceed in accordance with the test results.

- “**Masked-to-masked**” encounters are not currently considered an exposure; this type of interaction would not warrant quarantine.

You should report the need to quarantine on [DawgCheck](#), and communicate directly with your faculty to coordinate your coursework while in quarantine. If you need additional help, reach out to Student Care and Outreach ([sco@uga.edu](mailto:sco@uga.edu)) for assistance.

- **Monitoring conditions**

Note that the guidance referenced in this syllabus is subject to change based on recommendations from the Georgia Department of Public Health, the University System of Georgia, or the Governor’s Office. For the latest on UGA policy, you can visit [coronavirus.uga.edu](https://coronavirus.uga.edu).

## **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	15
Midterm Exam	30
Paper 1 - Explain a Puzzle	10
Paper 2 - Policy Memo	15
Final Exam	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### Weekly Homework Assignments

There will be weekly homework assignments, which will count for 10% of the course grade. These will be graded on a point scale (check plus, check and check minus, and in eLC they will appear as 1.2, 1 and 0.8, respectively). To obtain 100% grade you don't need ALL check pluses in your assignments but you need several, and they are not extra grade. No late assignments will be accepted, but your lowest grade will be dropped. Unless otherwise stated, assignments can be completed in groups of no more than 3 people. This is a group assignment nevertheless, so working in groups is highly recommended. Turn in only one assignment for the group, with everyone's names clearly listed.

**All assignments have to be turned in one and only one .pdf or .doc file, reading as a regular document.** As the semester advances it is expected that the students rely less in scanning and more in digitally produced outputs. After the midterm no check plus will be provided for scanned work.

### Two Exams

There will be two in-class exams, each counting for 30% 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 60% 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 400 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 15% of the course grade. The goal of the assignment is to provide a short (3 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 March 21; the final paper is due at the start of class on April 25 (via eLC). Late papers will lose 20 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
10-Jan	Introduction		Varian Ch. 1
17-Jan	<i>No Class - MLK Holiday</i>		
24-Jan	Consumer choice		GSL Ch. 4
31-Jan	Demand		GSL Ch. 5 (skip 5.3)
7-Feb	Surpluses		GSL Ch. 3 (3.1, 3.4, 3.5)
14-Feb	Intertemporal choice and uncertainty		GSL Ch. 14
21-Feb	Asymmetric information		GSL Ch. 16
28-Feb	Theory of the firm		GSL Ch. 6 (6.1-6.4)
7-Mar	<i>Spring Break</i>		
14-Mar	<i>Midterm Exam</i>		
21-Mar	Supply	Policy paper proposal due	GSL Ch. 7 (skip 7.6) & 8.1, 8.2
28-Mar	Perfect competition and monopoly		GSL Ch. 8.4, 9, 10.1-10.3
4-Apr	Game Theory		GSL Ch. 12.1-12.3
11-Apr	Welfare	Puzzle paper due	GSL Ch. 15 (skip 15.4, 15.5)
18-Apr	Externalities		GSL Ch. 17.1-17.3
25-Apr	Public goods	Policy paper due	GSL Ch. 17.4
2-May	Review		
9-May	<i>Final Exam (tentative date)</i>		