

University of Georgia
Office hours:
Course home page:

Andy Whitford (<http://andrewwhitford.com>)
Tuesday 1-3, or by appointment
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412 Baldwin

PADP 8850 – Public Decision Making
Spring 2022

Learning Objectives I will help you better understand key concepts in decision making. You will learn how decision-making methods help us overcome cognitive biases.

This course contributes to our MPA program's Competency 3: To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions.

“Students in the Master of Public Administration program at The University of Georgia will utilize various methods and analytical tools to analyze and interpret data to provide effective reasoning for decision-making and policy creation. Students will learn to effectively and concisely inform the public and other stakeholders of decisions and initiatives through the presentation of data and research findings. Furthermore, they will 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.”

There is one primary learning objective for this course:

- “Students will use various methods and analytical tools to analyze and interpret data to provide effective reasoning for decision making and policy creation.”
- “Students will 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.”

Given that this is writing-intensive course, this course will not concentrate on the following learning objective that supports Competency 3.

- “Students will concisely inform the public and other stakeholders of decisions and initiatives through the presentation of data and research findings.”

Teaching Approach I will help you identify the key concepts discussed in the material. Students often learn best in small study groups, so you will also work in groups.

This is a writing intensive course. I will distribute details online.

- You will write 2 short policy memos based on the templates provided in class. I will pick the topic. You will write these memos in teams. You will also peer review other teams' memos.
- You will guide the class interaction for one major case. You will provide this leadership in teams.
- You will work in groups to understand and discuss course materials.
- You will write a major policy memo. You will make a short presentation of your findings.
- You will attend a meeting of a county, city, town, state, nonprofit, or other policy-setting body. You will write a summary that includes details of the meeting along with your

observations. Include a copy of the agenda. You may not attend a meeting held at UGA. (I will discuss modes of attendance later.)

- You will interview a public official about their work. You may not interview a UGA official.

Text and Materials:

- Required:
 - Medina. 2014. Brain Rules. Updated and Expanded Edition. Pear Press. ISBN: 9780983263371.
 - Duke. 2020. How to Decide. Portfolio/Penguin Press. ISBN: 9780593418482.
- I will distribute other readings online at the course home page.

Evaluation

30% Two short policy briefs. Due dates listed below.

40% Policy memo and presentation due last day of class.

10% Meeting summary and email interview.

20% Class presentations and participation, including peer edits.

An A will be given to anyone with 93 or more points, an A- to those with 90-92 points, a B+ to those with 87-89 points, a B to those with 83-86 points, a B- to those with 80-82 points, a C+ to those with 77-79 points, a C to those with 73-76 points, a C- to those with 70-72 points, a D to those with 60 to 69 points, and an F to anyone receiving fewer than 60 points in the course.

Instructor Availability If you would like to speak with me outside of class, feel free to email me to arrange a meeting. Occasionally I have meetings during the day and may be unavailable. To ensure that I am available on a given day, email me at least 24 hours in advance to set a specific time to meet.

Class Attendance/Participation Students are expected to participate through asking questions and answering inquiries raised in class. Keep in mind that it is difficult to participate without being physically present. This term I will teach this course assuming in-person attendance. I will not provide hybrid or remote instruction facilities or material.

To adequately prepare for class, all assigned readings should be completed by the dates indicated on the course schedule. Not all assigned readings may be discussed in class; nonetheless you are responsible for familiarizing yourself with them.

Prohibition on Recording In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course. Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal

study.

- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

Special Needs and Academic Honesty Students with special needs that require accommodation should notify the Office for Disability Services and me as soon as possible so the appropriate arrangements can be made. All information as well as documentation is considered confidential. All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found at: http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm.

Religious Holidays Students who are absent from academic or social activities because of religious observances will not be penalized. If you desire to be excused from class to observe a religious holiday, notify me in advance. You are still responsible for any material covered during the excused absence but will be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up any work missed. If an event is scheduled during the class at which you are excused for a religious observance, you should make arrangements with me as soon as possible for an alternate time or be given a comparable assignment.

Miscellaneous No “extra credit” will be assigned in this course under any circumstances. Keep in mind that final grades may only be changed in the event of a clerical error (e.g., points summed incorrectly). Also, for privacy reasons, information pertaining to course grades cannot be discussed over the telephone or via email. A final grade of “Incomplete” will only be given in this course under extraordinary circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. Please silence devices while in class. Devices and laptops may only be used in-class with my permission. I accept late work after the due date only by prior arrangement. You must type any grade appeals and attach supplemental information as appropriate.

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 (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).
- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/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.

Campus resources: There are many resources on campus that offer support during your time here at UGA. They are here for you, so please take advantage of them.

Academic support

- The Division of Academic Enhancement Academic Coaching:
 - <https://dae.uga.edu/services/academic-coaching/>
- The Presentation Collaboratory:
 - https://dae.uga.edu/services/presentation_collaboratory/
- Student Success Workshops:
 - <https://dae.uga.edu/services/student-success-workshops/>
- Tutoring through the Academic Resource Center:
 - <https://dae.uga.edu/services/tutoring/>
- Resources for academic success at UGA:
 - https://dae.uga.edu/resources/academic_success_resources/
- First Generation Student Resources:
 - https://dae.uga.edu/resources/first_generation_student_resources/
- International Student Resources:
 - <https://dae.uga.edu/resources/international-student-resources/>
- Intensive English Program
 - <https://dae.uga.edu/iep/intensive-english-program/>

Technology support

- If new to campus:
 - https://eits.uga.edu/support/new_to_campus/
- Mobile App Warehouse
 - <https://dae.uga.edu/resources/mobile-app-warehouse/>
- Enterprise Information Technology Services
 - <https://eits.uga.edu>
- EITS Support
 - <https://eits.uga.edu/support/>
- Site-licensed Software
 - https://eits.uga.edu/hardware_and_software/
- Vlab
 - <https://eits.uga.edu/support/vlab/>
- Printing Kiosks
 - https://eits.uga.edu/support/printing_kiosks/
- Accessibility Group
 - http://www.amacusg.gatech.edu/wag/Main_Page

Personal support

- Graduate Student Financial Aid
 - <https://dae.uga.edu/iep/intensive-english-program/>
- Aid for Student Veterans and Military-Connected Students
 - https://osfa.uga.edu/types-of-aid/DoD_tuition_assistance/
- Student Veterans Resource Center
 - <https://svrc.uga.edu>
- Dean of Students
 - <https://dos.uga.edu>
- Counseling Center
 - <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/caps/welcome>
- Disability Resource Center
 - <https://drc.uga.edu/site>
- Financial Hardships Support Gateway
 - https://financialhardship.uga.edu/content_page/uga-resources-funding-and-employment
- Women's Resource Center
 - <https://women.uga.edu>
- LGBT Resource Center
 - <https://lgbtcenter.uga.edu>
- Student Care and Outreach
 - <https://sco.uga.edu>
- UGA Police
 - <https://www.police.uga.edu>
 - 911 or 706-542-2000

Coronavirus Information for Students

Because the situation is changing rapidly, I will adhere to the guidance given by the Office of the Vice Provost for Instruction. You can find this guidance here:

<https://ovpi.uga.edu/resources/documents/Syllabi-Info-for-Students-Spring-2022.pdf>

Schedule of Topics:

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>DUE</u>
1 (1.11)	Introduction and Course Overview		
2 (1.18)	Intro to Decision Making and Policy Writing	See ELC	
3 (1.25)	Brain Rules 1	Medina 1-6	
4 (2.1)	Brain Rules 2	Medina 7-12	
5 (2.8)	How to Decide 1	Duke TBA*	
6 (2.15)	How to Decide 2	Duke TBA*	Memo 1 Peer review
7 (2.22)	How to Decide 3	Duke TBA*	Memo 1 Due
8 (3.1)	How to Decide 4	Duke TBA*	
9 (3.8)	Spring Break		
10 (3.15)	Love Canal Day		
11 (3.22)	Whitford at a conference. We will not meet. Material rescheduled.		
12 (3.29)	Nudging and Libertarian Paternalism 1	See ELC	Memo 2 Peer Review
13 (4.5)	Nudging and Libertarian Paternalism 2	See ELC	Memo 2 Due
14 (4.12)	Wisdom of Crowds	See ELC	
15 (4.19)	Forecasting	See ELC	
16 (4.26)	Design Thinking	See ELC	
17 (5.3)	Presentations		All Deliverables Due

*We will read Duke in the classroom. Bring your book.