

# PADP 7200: Education Finance & Policy

Fall 2022, Section 45256

Classroom: Baldwin Hall 301

Thursdays 7:00PM-9:50PM

## INSTRUCTOR

**Dr. Alex Combs**

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**Office Location:** Baldwin Hall 278

**Office Hours:** Calendly link on eLC

"We should have aggressive and wild ambitions that are only anchored by plans, not by doubts."

- Stacey Abrams

"Plans are worthless, but planning is everything."

- Dwight D. Eisenhower

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The study of various policy topics in domestic K-12 and postsecondary education. Emphasis is placed on public finance in education, its determinants and implications, and issues of equality and equity. Topics are primarily considered through the policy analytic perspective. The course is designed to be useful for students interested in careers in education administration or policy. The course incorporates opportunities to work with education data for purposes of decision making on topics covered in the course.

# COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course develops skills in the following MPA program competencies: 1) To Participate in, and Contribute to, the Public Policy Process; 2) To Analyze, Synthesize, Think Critically, Solve Problems, and Make Evidence-Informed Decisions in a Complex and Dynamic Environment; and 3) To Communicate and Interact Productively and in Culturally Responsive Ways with a Diverse and Changing Workforce and Society at Large. By successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Interpret and persuasively communicate information regarding education policy alternatives through concise written documents;
2. Demonstrate understanding of the education budgetary process, important decision makers, and components of budget development;
3. Analyze education budget and policy alternatives using quantitative tools to evaluate decisions and explain potential ramifications for diverse constituencies;
4. Learn approaches to inform the public and other stakeholders about prospective policy alternatives or retrospective program evaluation through the presentation of data and research findings;
5. Recognize, consider, and respect differing points of view in administrative and policy decisions; and
6. Demonstrate an appreciation for diversity and work productively in teams by displaying composure, fostering dialogue, and utilizing effective communication skills.

# TOPICAL OUTLINE

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Potential impact and limitation of education finance & policy

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Public provision & returns to education

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Education finance: political & legal contexts

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State models of school funding

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Local factors & issues in education finance

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Student achievement

Desegregation, integration, and peer effects

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Accountability

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Market-based reforms to education

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Teacher effectiveness & labor markets

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Finance & governance of higher education

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Financial aid

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## COURSE MATERIALS

All required readings will be provided via eLC. In-class exercises will typically require the use of a laptop or tablet to visit relevant websites, keep a record of answers to prompts, and/or perform basic calculations or analyses using Microsoft Excel.

## PRE-REQUISITES

This course has no pre-requisites. Coverage of topics and assignments are designed so students can succeed regardless of prior coursework. Presumably, students who have completed Research Methods and/or Data Applications in Public Administration (PADP 7110 & 7120), Public Financial Administration (PADP 6930), and Foundations of Policy Analysis (PADP 6950) will find some course topics more familiar and some assignments more manageable. Competency in spreadsheet software such as Microsoft Excel is expected, but its use to complete coursework will be demonstrated in class regularly.

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## ASSIGNMENTS

### Final Grade

Your final grade will be based on the following assignments:

Assignment	Percent Weight
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In-class exercises	20
Quizzes (10)	20
Policy briefs (2)	30
Final written report and presentation	30

## Assignment Descriptions

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### In-Class Exercises

Most class meetings will include actively learning relevant topics through in-class exercises. Exercises may involve a series of guided prompts, questions, and/or discussion that will typically require the use of a computer or tablet. Students will be asked to complete exercises individually or with a group of classmates and upload a deliverable to eLC to document their participation. Exercises will be graded complete/incomplete. If you attend class and participate, you will receive full credit.

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### Quizzes

Students are expected to complete 10 online quizzes administered on eLC. Quizzes are intended to provide an incentive for students to stay current on required readings, arrive better prepared for class, and offer a low-stakes opportunity to assess their understanding of relevant topics. Quizzes should be completed prior to the class meeting they are listed beside on the [Course Schedule](/d2l/common/dialogs/quickLink/quickLink.d2l?ou=2645792&type=content&rcode=usgq-22262242) (/d2l/common/dialogs/quickLink/quickLink.d2l?ou=2645792&type=content&rcode=usgq-22262242).

Quizzes will open on the Sunday prior to the class meeting it is due. Each quiz will contain approximately 10 close-ended questions (e.g., multiple choice) pertaining to the required readings. Each quiz can be attempted twice. Students will be able to see the total score of their first attempt along with their answers to each question. If not satisfied

with their first attempt, students can review the readings again and identify which questions need corrected to improve their second attempt score. The second quiz attempt will be recorded for grading, not the highest score. I will drop the two lowest quiz scores when calculating each student's final grade.

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## **Policy Briefs**

Students are expected to write two policy briefs. Students will receive a prompt related to a policy issue and additional instructions several weeks prior to when the brief is due. Policy briefs will ask students to prepare a statement of the policy issue, background on the issue, a review and analysis of relevant evidence, and a policy recommendation. Policy briefs will be assessed according to the relevancy of the information with respect to the policy issue, the accuracy of the information provided, consistency between the analysis and recommendation, and clarity of writing.

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## **Final Report & Presentation**

Students are expected to prepare a final written report on a topic of their choosing related to education finance and/or policy and present their work to the class. Students will need to develop a question their report intends to answer for an audience of their choosing (e.g., general public, internal/external stakeholders of a specific agency or organization, elected officials). The report should provide a brief introduction and background on the topic or issue to which the question pertains. The majority of the report should include an analysis of data that answers the question. Depending on the question, the analysis can be descriptive or inferential. The report should conclude with a brief summary of the findings, any limitations of the analysis, and any implications or recommendations based on the findings the intended audience would find relevant. In addition to the written report, students will need to provide supporting documentation that enables others to replicate their analysis.

## **Grading Scale**

**Letter Grade**

**Percentage**

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A	93.00-100
A-	90.00-92.99
B+	87.00-89.99
B	84.00-86.99
B-	80.00-83.99
C+	77.00-79.99
C	73.00-76.99
C-	70.00-72.99
D	65.00-69.99
F	64.99 and below
I	Incomplete

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# COURSE POLICIES

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## **Syllabus Disclaimer**

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

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## **Attendance**

I do not enforce a formal attendance policy. Attendance is encouraged but not required. Students' grades will not be penalized directly for missing class. However, missing an in-class exercise may result in a proportional deduction.

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## **Late Work**

Assignment deadlines will be enforced. Late work without an acceptable excuse provided prior to a deadline will receive no credit unless circumstances made advanced notice unreasonable. If circumstances arise that prevent you from completing work on time, let me know as soon as possible, and I will work with you to arrive at a solution that is as fair to you, me, and other students as possible.

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## **Class Participation**

Students are asked to adhere to the following when participating in class:

- Please use laptops, tablets, and phones for class purposes only.
- Policy and its analysis involves values and opinions influenced by many factors. Relevant expression of personal values and opinions is encouraged. Respect others' rights to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from your own. Criticize ideas, not individuals. Civil discourse and/or disagreement is expected.
- Listen carefully to what others are saying even when you disagree with what is being said. Comments that you make (asking for clarification, sharing critiques, expanding on a point, etc.) should reflect that you have paid attention to the speaker's comments.
- Support your statements. Use evidence and provide a rationale for your points.
- Be courteous. Don't interrupt or engage in private conversations while others are speaking.
- Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
- Allow everyone the chance to speak. If you have much to say, try to hold back a bit; if you are hesitant to speak, look for opportunities to contribute to the discussion.
- Avoid assumptions about any member of the class or generalizations about social groups. Do not ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group.

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## **Academic Honesty**

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found [here](http://honesty.uga.edu/) (<http://honesty.uga.edu/>). The Academic Honesty Policy can be found [here](https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/) (<https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/>).

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## Accommodations Due to Disability

Students who seek special accommodations due to a disability should contact me during the first week of the semester or as soon as the need for the accommodation is discovered. I will work with the Disability Resource Center (706-542-8719, <http://drc.uga.edu/> (<http://drc.uga.edu/>)) to provide appropriate accommodations.

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## 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> (<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) (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or [crisis support](https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies) (<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) (<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.

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## FERPA Notice

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar's explanation [here](https://osas.franklin.uga.edu/ferpa-and-privacy) (<https://osas.franklin.uga.edu/ferpa-and-privacy>). FERPA allows disclosure of directory information (name, address, telephone, email, date of birth, place of birth, major, activities, degrees, awards, prior schools), unless the following [form](https://reg.uga.edu/_resources/documents/imported/FERPARequestForRestriction.pdf) ([https://reg.uga.edu/\\_resources/documents/imported/FERPARequestForRestriction.pdf](https://reg.uga.edu/_resources/documents/imported/FERPARequestForRestriction.pdf)) is submitted to the Registrar's Office.

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## Inclusion and Identity

This class strives to promote a sense of community and a welcoming space for a diversity of ideas, perspectives, and experiences. All members of our classroom community, including all students and the instructor, should strive to respect one another's differences of identity, e.g., religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender. UGA's educational platform provides a roster of legal student names for the instructor. Students are encouraged to reach out to the instructor early in the semester if they wish to be addressed by an alternate name or gender pronoun.

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## **Prohibition on Recording Lectures**

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.
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## **Coronavirus Information**

Students should follow the latest guidance found [here](https://ovpi.uga.edu/_resources/documents/Syllabi-Info-for-Students-Spring-2022.pdf) (https://ovpi.uga.edu/\_resources/documents/Syllabi-Info-for-Students-Spring-2022.pdf) and/or [here](https://coronavirus.uga.edu) (https://coronavirus.uga.edu).

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