



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

Course syllabus
PADP 7360: Managing Government Performance, CRN 64260
Spring 2023

302 Baldwin Hall, UGA main campus
Tuesday evenings, 7:00 - 9:50 p.m.

The University of Georgia
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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. While performance is frequently discussed in political and administrative discourse, surprisingly little attention has been devoted to studying the topic empirically and clarifying important theoretical and conceptual issues, at least until recently. Some burning questions include how performance should be defined and measured; how politics and the policy process shape our understanding of governance and our efforts to improve performance; what specific factors account for high or low performance in the public sector; how can we gauge the impact of administrative reforms and management practices that have been promoted in recent years to improve government performance—including their unintended consequences; and *does management matter (and if so, how)?* Fortunately, these concerns are now receiving increased attention, but the answers are proving elusive. One purpose of this course is to track these important developments in public administration theory and practice with an eye on making government work better and cost less. 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 the field of Public Administration, and an introduction to the government performance literature which is sprawling and somewhat incoherent. Different conceptions of performance are explored, and students are encouraged to develop an understanding of administrative and program performance in the broader context of democratic governance. Students will learn the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical issues involved in defining and measuring performance.

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.

Closely related topics include performance measurement, performance management, performance budgeting, pay for performance, report cards and scorecards, benchmarking, goal setting, strategic planning, and many other management practices, administrative reforms, and policy innovations aimed at improving different aspects of government performance. The course will focus intently on scientific research on these purported drivers of performance in several specific governmental domains, such as central governments, state or regional governments, and local governments. We will see that performance improvement efforts are prominent in most subfields of public administration, including public personnel administration, budgeting and financial management, social work, nonprofit administration, policy analysis, policy implementation, program evaluation, management information systems, etc.

This seminar is primarily for 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. Students will find that completing basic Masters-level courses in the above topics prior to taking this course will help them perform well and achieve good grades in this course.

The following MPA core competencies will be imparted in the course:

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.
5. To communicate with a diverse workforce and citizenry.

Seminar sessions

This class is a reading course and a working seminar. Students will be actively involved in the work at hand. In a typical class, the instructor will present material, pose questions for discussion, and lead the search for plausible answers. In addition, small groups of students will lead discussions in which they present, discuss, and critique assigned readings with the class. All students are expected to attend all class sessions, complete all readings on time, and participate in all class discussions and activities. As explained below, attendance and the level and quality of a student's participation in the course is an important grading factor.

Standards for written assignments

Students should write papers that are high quality, cosmetically pleasing, and easy to understand. These 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 be numbered and collated into a single Microsoft Word document (no PDFs or cloud documents) and submitted to the instructor by email. Format the paper and all references according to the American Political Science Association style manual, which is stored on the eLC course website. Grading will be based on quality of presentation, content, and evidence of learning from course readings and classroom discussions. Late penalties will apply.

Assignments and grades

Course 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> | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| | Masters students | Doctoral students |
| Midterm examination | 30% | - |
| Final examination | 30% | 30% |
| Course paper | 20% | 50% |
| Attendance and participation | <u>20%</u> | <u>20%</u> |
| | 100% | 100% |

Midterm examination

Master's students will complete a take-home mid-term examination, writing a 6-8 page essay on a set of questions distributed one week before the paper is due. This paper will count 30 percent of the course grade. The questions may include the 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 world. Students may also be asked to differentiate between several performance-related concepts such as performance measurement, performance management, and performance improvement.

Final examination

All students will take a comprehensive, open-book final examination worth approximately 30 percent of the final course grade. This take-home examination will consist of several essay type questions that focus on learnings from the course. The same standards set for the midterm examination will apply to the final examination. In this essay, students may be asked to cast a critical eye on the topics of performance measurement, performance management, and performance improvement, and to assess their potential for improving public governance in democratic political systems. Another important issue is cheating in performance management systems. Grading will be based on quality of presentation and content. Late penalties will apply.²

Course paper

Master's students will write a course paper on the performance management efforts of a specific public or nonprofit organization. This case study will give students the opportunity to apply knowledge gained from the course to a public organization they are familiar with or interested in, thus connecting theory to practice. Each student should send the instructor a brief email by midterm naming the organization they want to study and explaining their reasons for selecting it. The instructor will give feedback and must approve the proposal before substantial research begins. The paper should follow the standards for written assignments described earlier. There are no page limits, but most

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.

students write 15-18 pages inclusive (text and references). The paper will count approximately 20 percent of the final course grade. Grading will be based on quality of presentation, content, and evidence of learning from course readings and classroom discussions. Late penalties will apply.

Doctoral students will write a more in-depth research paper on a topic related to government performance improvement. 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 50 percent of the final course grade. Late penalties will apply.

Attendance and participation

Attendance and participation are required and count approximately 20 percent of the final grade. Students who miss more than one class, or who arrive late or leave early, should expect to receive a lowered grade in the course. Note that attendance is a prerequisite for participation. Regarding participation, I consider how frequent, valuable, and constructive a student's contributions are to the class. I also differentiate between required and voluntary participation. The latter is especially valuable.

Students will be assigned to small work groups early in the semester. These groups will lead class discussions on assigned readings. Given the collaborative nature of public management, this group work will help students hone essential skills needed for managing in the public sector. Group contributions also factor into each student's attendance and participation grade.

Note: As a professional courtesy, please notify me in advance if you anticipate missing class or submitting a deliverable late.

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 try to make any reasonable accommodations. If you plan to request accommodations, please register with the Disability Resource Center. It can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by navigating to <https://drc.uga.edu>.

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 work through 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.

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. *All written assignments should be completed individually – not collaboratively – unless otherwise stated.*

Prohibition on recording lectures

Students are not allowed to make visual or audio recordings of any aspect of this course unless they have written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, which has specific terms and conditions. Violation of this policy may result in discipline under the Student Code of Conduct and liability under copyright laws.

Coronavirus information for students

Information on how the Coronavirus Pandemic affects students attending classes is posted on various USG and UGA websites. Please heed this information throughout the semester.

FERPA notice

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar’s explanation at <https://reg.uga.edu/generalinformation/ferpa/>. FERPA allows disclosure of directory information (including name, address, telephone number, email, date of birth, place of birth, major, activities, degrees, awards, and prior schools), unless requested in a written letter to the registrar.

Required readings

Required readings for the course include the following (in whole or part):

- Brewer, Gene A., 2000. *Administrative Reform and Organization Change in the Public Sector*. Democracy Project AP 24/2000. Copenhagen, Denmark: University of Copenhagen Press.
- Lotte B. Andersen, Gene A. Brewer, Christian B. Jacobsen, Eva Knies, Peter Leisink, and Wouter Vandenabeele (eds.), 2021. *Managing for Public Service Performance: How People and Values Make a Difference*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Geert Bouckaert and John Halligan, 2008. *Managing Performance: International Comparisons*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Donald F. Kettl, 2005. *The Global Public Management Revolution: A Report on the Transformation of Governance*, 2d ed. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

- Paul C. Light, 2002. *Government's Greatest Achievements: From Civil Rights to Homeland Security*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Donald P. Moynihan, 2008. *The Dynamics of Performance Management: Constructing Information and Reform*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- The following online 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>
- Beryl Radin, 2006. *Challenging the Performance Management Movement: Accountability, Complexity, and Democratic Values*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Colin Talbot, 2010. *Theories of Performance: Organizational and Service Improvement in the Public Domain*. Oxford and New York: Oxford 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.

Supplemental readings (not required)

- David N. Ammons, 2019. *Performance Measurement for Managing Local Government: Getting It Right*. Irvine, CA: Melvin & Leigh Publishers.
- Kathleen Barrett and Richard Green, 2019. *Making Government Work: The Promises and Pitfalls of Performance-informed Management*, Vol. 1. Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers.
- *Government Executive*, an online journal at <https://www.govexec.com>
- B. Guy Peters, 2021. *American Public Policy: Promise and Performance*, 12th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press, Sage Publications.
- Wouter van Dooren, Geert Bouckaert, and John Halligan, 2015. *Performance Management in the Public Sector*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Woodrow Wilson, 1887. "The Study of Administration." *Political Science Quarterly* 2, 2: 197-222.

Additional readings may be assigned during the semester. The books listed above are available at the UGA and off-campus bookstores, and from the respective publishers. Some readings may also be made available online or through the eLC course website.

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 may require more attention. Any changes in the syllabus or course schedule will be announced in advance when possible.