



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

**Course Syllabus
PADP 6920: Public Personnel Administration, CRN 46481
Spring 2024
UGA main campus
Wednesdays 7:10 – 9:55pm**

The University of Georgia
School of Public and International Affairs
Department of Public Administration & Policy
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Course Description and Objectives

Public Personnel Administration is a dynamic, rapidly evolving field that is central to the study and practice of Public Administration. The people who work for government agencies and nonprofit organizations are valuable assets to those organizations and to society at large. Public employees are instruments of the state and can wield enormous power and influence. They are also constrained by dense rules and regulations that exist for accountability purposes. Public employees perform many important functions: they ensure public safety, deliver social services, regulate the economy, provide national security, and promote the public interest in countless other ways. Other people may also serve the public by working in nonprofit organizations with social service missions and in private sector firms that hold government contracts. These individuals also operate in public-facing roles and they work in the public square. They, too, are surrogates of the state and contributors to the common good, even though they may not work in government civil service systems that are based upon merit. Like government civil servants, their recruitment, selection, development, and retention are also key elements in governmental and organizational effectiveness, but their jobs are more vulnerable to political intrusion and management abuse.

This course surveys the field of Public Personnel Administration and emphasizes the historical events and reform movements that have shaped it. The unique political environment that public and nonprofit organizations operate in, and their strengths and weaknesses compared to private sector business firms, are also emphasized. The course will cover the major functions of

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 email or telephone whenever necessary. Email usually works best. Always send emails from your standard UGA email account – not through the eLC course website.

Public Personnel Administration including position classification, pay and benefits administration, motivating and training employees, resolving grievances, and conducting performance appraisals. The course also covers major issues that affect human resource management including employee rights and responsibilities, labor-management relations, equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, anti-discrimination laws, and promoting diversity in the workplace. Several other emerging trends will also be discussed, such as increased violence against public employees, use of information technology and social media, and deployment of artificial intelligence and robotics.

Finally, the course turns to the future of government civil service systems, which are the core of public employment. In the face of widespread concerns about a “quiet crisis” in which many veteran public employees might leave their jobs while many younger people are less willing to make the enormous sacrifices required to replace them, the future is an open question. What can be done to ensure the survival of a highly qualified, motivated and trained workforce to serve the public in future years?

Student Learning Outcomes

This course will help students understand human resource concepts and issues encountered in other graduate classes and ultimately in their careers. The course will also enable students to better understand the role of public administrators in implementing public policy and leading and managing people in public organizations. Students will gain knowledge on the principles and practices of public personnel administration, strengthen their public service ethic, and learn about strategies to enhance equity, diversity, and representativeness in the public workforce. The impact of effective personnel management on individual and organizational performance is emphasized. The course requires students to think rigorously about many issues facing contemporary public administrators. Students will have ample opportunities to demonstrate their newly acquired knowledge and skills in the course.

For MPA students, the following core competencies are imparted in the course:

Competency 1: To lead and manage in public governance

Competency 2: To participate in the public policy process

Competency 3: To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions

Competency 4: To articulate and apply a public service perspective

Competency 5: Communicating with a diverse workforce and citizenry

Seminar Sessions

The course will be taught in a traditional face-to-face format with weekly class meetings. The eLC course website will be utilized to share materials with the class and coordinate course activities. The website is accessible at: <https://uga.view.usg.edu/d21/login>. Most seminar sessions will include lectures and open discussions on planned topics. During these sessions, the instructor will present material, pose questions for discussion, help students search for answers, and aid in the process of critical inquiry. Students will lead discussions on specific issues and readings, complete homework-type assignments, and participate in small group exercises. Various forms of media will be utilized to enhance learning. Students are

encouraged to ask questions and raise important issues for discussion. All course deliverables should be submitted through standard university email – not through the eLC course website or private email accounts.

Assignments and Grades

Grades will be based on student performance on four key elements of the course: group work and group presentations (20 percent), a midterm and final examination (20 and 30 percent, respectively), a research paper (20 percent), and attendance and participation in the course (10 percent). These components are explained below, and they will be discussed in more detail during the introductory class session.

Note: PhD students will have additional readings and substantially different deliverables based on their individual needs as determined by the instructor.

Group Work and Group Presentations

Students will be assigned to permanent work groups early in the semester. These groups will lead class discussions of course readings and complete other assignments. The instructor will assess the quality of each group's work at semester's end and assign grades accordingly. These grades will count 20 percent of the final course grade. Students should rely on their group peers for support when needed. Students who miss a class should, for example, reach out to their group mates for details on what was missed and copies of any lecture notes or handouts.

The two main group deliverables are preparing abstracts of assigned readings and leading in-class discussions. Each group should prepare a written abstract of one page or less for each supplemental reading or case assigned to the group. The abstract should begin with a proper bibliographic reference, followed by a brief summary of the reading or case, plus any additional thoughts, questions, or discussion points. *These abstracts should be emailed to the instructor by noon on the day before the reading or case will be discussed.* Groups should prepare a brief set of PowerPoint slides to help structure their in-class discussions and focus attention on major points or discussion questions. The discussion for each reading or case should last for approximately 10 minutes. *Important note: all group members are collectively responsible for submitting high quality abstracts on time, preparing PowerPoint slides, and leading effective in-class discussions.* Always work together on these assignments.

Midterm and Final Examinations

Students will take comprehensive, open-book midterm and final examinations worth approximately 20 and 30 percent of the final course grade, respectively. Each examination will consist of several essay type questions that focus on major issues covered in the course. Students are expected to craft thoughtful, well-informed responses to these questions; and to write coherent answers that are stylistically and grammatically correct. Light referencing is required. Students should cite the sources of direct quotations and expert knowledge discussed in the paper. The papers should be type-written in a conventional 10- to 12-point font and double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides. All pages should be numbered and collated into a single Microsoft Word document (no PDFs or cloud files). Email this document

to the instructor by the respective due date. For grading purposes, the main emphasis is on content, but quality of composition and evidence of course learning are also considered. The due dates for these “take-home examinations” are shown on the tentative course schedule (see below).² Late penalties will apply.³

Research Paper

Students will prepare a research paper on a topic closely related to public personnel administration. This is an open-ended assignment worth approximately 20 percent of the final course grade. Students will develop a topic and write a paper that furthers their personal and professional interests in the field. Some ways to fulfill this requirement include: write an in-depth case study on the human resource management system of a real-life public or nonprofit organization; conduct structured interviews of several public personnel officers and write a research report on the topics covered; read an important book on public personnel administration and write an in-depth book review that goes beyond a standard book report and provides a critical analysis of the book; identify a topic that deserves more coverage in the course, research the topic, and write an in-depth report; or select a controversial topic in public human resource management, research both sides of the issue, and write a position paper on the side you most disagree with. There are many other ways to satisfy the research paper requirement, but importantly, *each student’s topic and research plan must be approved in advance by the instructor*. A short paragraph-length paper proposal is due at midterm and the final paper is due at semester’s end. A brief in-class presentation may also be scheduled if time permits.

Students should strive for papers that are high quality, well-organized, easy to read, and stylistically and grammatically correct. There is no strict page limit, but the suggested length is 15 pages plus the title page and reference list. Format the paper according to the American Political Science Association style manual which is stored on the eLC course website. The paper should be type-written in a conventional 10- to 12-point font and double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides. Include a title, abstract, main body with section headers, and reference list. All pages should be numbered and collated into a single Microsoft Word document (no PDFs or cloud files). Submit this document to the instructor by email. The paper will be graded based on content, quality of presentation, and evidence of learning. The due date is shown on the tentative course schedule (see below). Late penalties will apply.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are required in this course and will count approximately 10 percent towards the final grade. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and be on time. Those who miss excessive class time should expect to receive a lowered grade in the

² Note: 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 at a different time.

³ The late penalty for each whole or partial day late is one grade-notch on the standard grading scale of A, A- B+, B, B-, etc.

course, regardless of their performance on graded assignments. With respect to participation, I first consider attendance because it is a prerequisite for class participation; then I consider how frequent, valuable, and constructive the student's contributions have been to the class, and how responsive they have been to course assignments and my specific requests during the semester. Finally, I differentiate between assigned or prompted participation and spontaneous contributions. High-quality, spontaneous participation receives the most credit of all.

Note: As a professional courtesy, please email me in advance if you anticipate missing a class, arriving late or leaving early, or submitting a late course deliverable.

Reasonable Accommodations

Students with disabilities that could affect their ability to perform well in the course should see me early in the semester. I am receptive to these situations and will make any reasonable accommodations. If you plan to request accommodations, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They 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>.

UGA Well-being Resources

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community. Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity. UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.uga.edu

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>.

Academic Honesty

The ethical bar is set very high for aspiring public administrators and a strong work ethic is expected in this course. Students should familiarize themselves 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*. The UGA Student Honor Code states: “I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.” The University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty can be found at <https://ovpi.uga.edu>. Students should review these standards before submitting any written work. Note: *All written assignments in this course 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 includes specific terms and conditions. Violation of this policy may result in discipline under the Student Code of Conduct and liability under copyright laws.

FERPA Notice

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights (see <https://reg.uga.edu/generalinformation/ferpa/>). FERPA allows disclosure of directory information (name, address, telephone, email, date of birth, place of birth, major, activities, degrees, awards, and prior schools), unless withholding is requested by writing a letter to the registrar.

Course Readings

Textbooks:

- Lloyd G. Nigro and J. Edward Kellough, 2014. *The New Public Personnel Administration*, 7th ed. Boston, Massachusetts: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. ISBN-13: 978-1133734284.
- Richard C. Kearney and Jerrell D. Cogburn, 2016. *Public Human Resource Management: Problems and Prospects*, 6th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press, Sage Publications. ISBN-13: 978-1483393452. (Note: this book is available online through the UGA library website.)
- T. Zane Reeves, 2005. *Cases in Public Human Resource Management*, 2nd ed. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing, Cengage Learning. ISBN-13: 978-0534602406.
- Other readings as assigned.

Books are available at the UGA main campus bookstore and other retail outlets in the area. They can also be ordered online in different formats and at different prices. Contact the bookstore, publishers, or online retailers for details. A few copies may be available for temporary use from the main library, departmental library, or directly from the instructor. Any additional readings will be stored on the eLC course website for student access.

Tentative Course Schedule

Assignments are shown on the tentative course schedule (attached). Students should complete all readings and written assignments before the applicable class period. This schedule will serve as a guide but not a rigid constraint throughout the semester. Some topics may take less than the allotted time, while others may require more attention. Any significant changes to the

syllabus or course schedule will be announced in advance when possible. Students should check their UGA email inbox daily for updates and other course information.