



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

**Course Syllabus**  
**PADP 7360: Managing Government Performance, CRN 64260**  
**Spring 2024**

**102 Baldwin Hall, UGA main campus**  
**Mondays, 4:10 - 6:55 p.m.**

The University of Georgia  
School of Public and International Affairs  
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**Course description and objectives**

*Performance improvement* is a leading theme in modern-day Public Administration, both in the USA and worldwide. This course tracks the performance movement with an eye towards making government work better and cost less while avoiding the usual setbacks that can accompany such efforts. While performance and related reforms have long been a popular topic in political and administrative discourse, scholars have paid surprisingly little attention to the scientific and empirical aspects of the topic until recently. Some burning questions include: What is performance? How can we define and measure performance? How do politics and the policy process shape efforts to improve performance? What factors contribute to high or low performance? How can we gauge the impact of administrative reforms and management practices on performance — including their unintended consequences? And, *does management matter for performance; and if so, how do managers promote high performance?* Fortunately, these questions have received increased attention in recent years but the answers seem elusive.

This course provides an overview of the history of the performance movement, which has deep tap roots in modern-day Public Administration. Students will delve into the government performance literature, which is sprawling and somewhat incoherent, and explore different conceptions of performance. They will then gain an understanding of administrative and program performance in the broader context of democratic governance. Students will also explore the theoretical and empirical issues involved in performance research, and they will learn to anticipate the dark side of performance improvement efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> 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, organizational report cards, benchmarking, goal setting, strategic planning, administrative reforms, and policy innovations aimed at improving government performance. The course will focus on empirical efforts to identify the drivers of performance in various governmental domains, including central, intermediate, and local governments. Students will also see that performance improvement efforts are prominent in most subfields of public administration, including public personnel administration, budgeting and financial management, policy analysis and implementation, nonprofit administration, and management information systems.

This seminar is primarily for master's and doctoral level students who already possess a basic working knowledge of the political, administrative, and policy processes in government. Students should also have strong analytical skills and basic knowledge of empirical research techniques. Successful completion of core courses in the above topics will help students perform well 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 that will include open, lively discussions. 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, student work groups will lead discussions and present, hash out, 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, course attendance and the level and quality of a student's participation is an important grading factor in this course.

### **Standards for written assignments**

Students should strive to write papers that are high quality, cosmetically pleasing, and easy for readers 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. All pages should be numbered and collated into a single Microsoft Word document (no PDFs or cloud documents) that will be submitted to the instructor by email. Format the paper, including 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 course learning. Late penalties will apply.

### **Assignments and grades**

Course grades will include 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>	
	Master's 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 midterm examination which consists of writing a 6–8-page essay on a set of questions distributed one week before the paper is due. This paper will count approximately 30 percent of the course grade. The questions will focus on the theoretical and conceptual issues related to government performance such as the apparent obsession with performance over the years, the difficulty of defining and measuring performance, and the nature of New Public Management reforms that have been implemented in the United States and across the world in recent years to improve performance. Students should be able to differentiate between important performance-related concepts such as performance measurement, performance management, and performance improvement reforms.

### **Final examination**

All students will complete a take-home final examination worth approximately 30 percent of the final course grade. This examination will involve crafting answers to several questions that are distributed one week in advance. These questions cumulative and will assess mastery of course learnings. The same standards set for the midterm examination will apply to the final examination. Students will be asked to cast a critical eye on the topics of performance measurement, performance management, and performance improvement, and to assess the potential of performance-related reforms. Another concern is managing the unintended consequences of performance improvement reforms and performance management systems, which can include job stress and cheating. Grades will be based on quality of presentation, content, and evidence of course learnings. Late penalties will apply.<sup>2</sup>

### **Course paper**

Masters-level students will write a course paper on the performance management system of a specific public or nonprofit organization, which could be implementing multiple public policies; or the performance aspects of a specific public policy, which could be implemented by multiple public or nonprofit organizations. This case study will give students the opportunity to apply knowledge gained from the course to a public organization or public policy they are interested in, thus helping them connect theory to practice. Each student should send me a brief email proposal by midterm that names the public organization or public policy they want to study and explains their reasons for selecting it. Students should wait for my feedback and approval before commencing work

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

on the paper. The paper should follow the standards for written assignments described earlier. There are no strict page limit requirements, but most students write approximately 15 pages along with a title page and reference list. The paper will count approximately 20 percent of the final course grade. Grades will be based on the quality of presentation, content, and evidence of course learnings. A brief in-class presentation may also be scheduled if time permits. Late penalties will apply.

Doctoral students will write a more in-depth research paper on a performance-related topic. The express goal is to produce a high-quality paper that is suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed journal or other top research outlet. 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 course grade. Students who miss more than one class, or who arrive late or leave early occasionally, should expect to receive a lowered grade in the course. Note that attendance is a prerequisite for participation: students must attend class in order to participate. When assessing participation, I consider how frequent, valuable, and constructive a student's contributions are to the class. I also differentiate between assigned and spontaneous participation. The latter is especially valuable and earns more credit.

Small work groups will be formed early in the semester. These groups will lead class discussions on assigned readings and complete other assignments throughout the semester. These work groups serve dual purposes: they organize and host weekly discussions of assigned readings, and group members gain valuable experience from working with others and honing the essential skills needed for collaborative management in the public sector. Contributions to group work are part of each student's attendance and participation grade.

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 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>.

### **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](https://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](https://well-being.uga.edu)
- Student Care and Outreach: [sco.uga.edu](https://sco.uga.edu)
- University Health Center: [www.healthcenter.uga.edu](https://www.healthcenter.uga.edu)
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: [caps.uga.edu](https://caps.uga.edu) or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: [healthpromotion.uga.edu](https://healthpromotion.uga.edu)
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: [drc.uga.edu](https://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**

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 familiarize themselves with these standards before performing any academic 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 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 withholding is requested by writing a letter to the registrar.

### **Required readings (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. ISBN-13: 9788773934487

- 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. ISBN-13: 978-0192893420
- Geert Bouckaert and John Halligan, 2008. *Managing Performance: International Comparisons*. London and New York: Routledge. ISBN-13: 9780415423953
- Donald F. Kettl, 2005. *The Global Public Management Revolution: A Report on the Transformation of Governance*, 2d ed. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press. ISBN 978-0815749196
- Paul C. Light, 2002. *Government's Greatest Achievements: From Civil Rights to Homeland Security*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. ISBN-13: 978-0815706045
- Donald P. Moynihan, 2008. *The Dynamics of Performance Management: Constructing Information and Reform*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. ISBN-13: 978-1589011946
- 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/nprpt/annrpt/redtpe93/index.html>  
 ISBN-13: 978-1589635715
- Beryl Radin, 2006. *Challenging the Performance Management Movement: Accountability, Complexity, and Democratic Values*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. ISBN-13: 978-1589010918
- Colin Talbot, 2010. *Theories of Performance: Organizational and Service Improvement in the Public Domain*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0199575954
- 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. ISBN-13: 978-1107411678
- Woodrow Wilson, 1887. "The Study of Administration." *Political Science Quarterly* 2, 2: 197-222.

#### **Supplemental readings (recommended but not required)**

- David N. Ammons, 2019. *Performance Measurement for Managing Local Government: Getting It Right*. Irvine, CA: Melvin & Leigh Publishers. ISBN-13: 978-1733934411

- 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. ISBN-13: 978-1538125670
- B. Guy Peters, 2021. *American Public Policy: Promise and Performance*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press, Sage Publications. ISBN-13: 978-1071809167
- Wouter van Dooren, Geert Bouckaert, and John Halligan, 2015. *Performance Management in the Public Sector*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London and New York: Routledge. ISBN-13: 9780415738101

Additional readings may be assigned during the semester. The books listed above are available in various formats from normal suppliers, including the UGA and off-campus bookstores, and the respective publishers. Some readings are also available online through the UGA library, and some will be posted on the eLC course website. A few physical copies may be available for temporary use from the main library, departmental library, or directly from the instructor.

### **Tentative course schedule**

Required readings are listed below under the appropriate headings. 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 in 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.