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Office hours: Thursday 2-4 PM, or by appointment
Course page: At ELC: <https://uga.view.usg.edu>

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412 Baldwin

PADP 8850 – PUBLIC DECISION-MAKING

Spring 2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will help you develop an understanding of techniques for decision-making in both theory and practice, with special emphasis on public sector settings.

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."

TEACHING APPROACH

I will help you identify the key concepts discussed in the material. While this course has a seminar format, which centers on extended discussions of readings, I also will use lectures to provide deeper insight into each topic.

This course centers on readings, lectures, and extensive seminar discussions. In some sessions, I will lead the discussion of our readings, posing questions and facilitating critical inquiry. **All students are expected to be proactively engage in all seminar activities.**

It is imperative that you attend class, complete all readings, and contribute to group discussions.

TEXT AND MATERIALS

Required:

Pinker, Steven. 2021. Rationality. ISBN-13: 978-0-525-56199-6. Ebook allowed.

I will distribute all other readings online at the course home page.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation: Students are expected to participate through asking questions and answering inquiries raised in class. You cannot participate if you are not physically present. 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. Please notify me as soon as possible if you must miss class for a medical or other emergency. In addition to attendance, your participation grade will reflect your contributions to class, including class discussion and any activities/exercises.

For each set of readings, you will bring a typed page with two questions for guiding our discussion of that day's readings. You may "opt out" from this requirement on three days. Other details about this will be distributed via ELC.

In-Class Presentation: Students will present, explain, critique, and interrogate one decision-making study or problem from the master list on ELC. You may work alone or with a partner; of course, more is expected from a team than a person working solo. You will have around 20 minutes for your presentation. Use a slide deck, videos, or other media. Bring a written summary of your presentation for everyone in the class; include information about background sources. Members of the class will question the presenters. Your presentation is an opportunity to inform us of the important aspects of the selected study or problem, so be creative. You will have an opportunity to sign up for specific topics. Other details about this will be distributed via ELC.

Policy Briefs: You will write 2 short policy memos based on the templates provided in class. I will choose the topic. You will write these memos in teams. You will also peer review other teams' memos; I will grade peer review as participation. Other details about this will be distributed via ELC.

Interview/Meeting Summary: 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 meeting agenda. You may not attend a meeting held at UGA; I will discuss modes of attendance later. Also, you will interview a public official about their work. You may not interview a UGA official. Other details about this will be distributed via ELC.

Decision Evaluation Paper and Presentation: Each student will write a paper in which they evaluate the decision-making process in a specific, real-world case in a Georgia community. Your choice of case is subject to my approval. You may work with another student or solo; of course, more is expected from a team than a person working solo. You will present the case and analysis during the **last two weeks of class**. Other details about this paper will be distributed via ELC. The paper is due **May 7** via ELC.

EVALUATION

Your final evaluation is based on the components listed above, given the following weights:

<u>Component</u>	<u>Weight</u>
1. Participation	15%
2. In-Class Presentation	15%
3. Two Policy Briefs	30%
4. Interview/Meeting Summary	10%
5. Paper and Presentation	30%

An A will be awarded to anyone with 93 or more points, an A- to those with 90-92.99 points, a B+ to those with 87-89.99 points, a B to those with 83-86.99 points, a B- to those with 80-82.99 points, a C+ to those with 77-79.99 points, a C to those with 73-76.99 points, a C- to those with 70-72.99

points, a D to those with 60 to 69.99 points, and an F to anyone receiving fewer than 60 points in the course.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

See ELC at <https://uga.view.usg.edu>

COURSE POLICIES AND OTHER INFORMATION

Instructor Availability If you would like to speak with me outside of class, feel free to stop by my office during scheduled office hours. 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.

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 want to be excused from class to observe a religious holiday, notify me in advance. You are responsible for any material covered during the excused absence but will be given reasonable 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 arrange 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.

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