PADP 6910: Public Administration & Democracy   **Spring 2026**

University of Georgia
School of Public and International Affairs
Department of Public Administration and Policy

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Office: Baldwin Hall 276
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Class Schedule: Thursdays 7:00-9:50pm
Class Location: Baldwin Hall 102

Office Hours: available by appointment

Course Description

Administrative organization, relations, and controls facing the contemporary public management in the United States. The institutional, political, and normative environment of the public manager in democratic society. Among the questions considered is the problem of reconciling bureaucratic government and democratic principles.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will become familiarized with the history of public administration in the United States, and how the history of this professional field matters for today's administrative state.

- Students will be able to identify and define myriad values that shape the work of public administrators, and they will identify strategies for resolving value conflicts in a manner appropriate for professionals in public service.

- Students will be able to define accountability, transparency, and ethical conduct in public service and they will reflect on how to maintain these values in their professional work. They will draft a personal statement of professionalism and accountability to guide their work in public service.

- Students will be able to apply theory and concepts from the field to analyze problems and prescribe action for managers and/or policy makers.

- Students will be able to develop written and oral communication skills through class exercises and assignments.

Outline of the Course

Statement on AI and Classwork: AI is becoming a key tool in schools and in the workplace. While AI is not prohibited to guide your work, there are some rules about how to ethically use AI that we will follow.

1) AI produces well-written content. Because of this, my ability to assess the quality of your writing will depend on:
   - The validity of your sources
   - The quality of your ideas

2) When using verbatim text generated from AI, you are expected to include AI in your works cited. You are also expected to include a statement as to why and how you used AI chatbots.

3) We will complement take-home assignments with in-class written assignments for data collection, brainstorming, exploratory writing, and synthesis. For ongoing assignments (e.g., policy briefs), should you decide to build on this content with support from AI, you may do so.

4) I want you to succeed in your profession. To stand out from other potential employees, we will work on exercises that promote higher-order thinking. Through this approach, you will use AI tools to not only generate sophisticated responses, but to:

   - articulate when and how you know that the AI chatbot is using reliable sources
   - verify or refute claims made by the AI chatbots
   - reflect on AI chatbot feedback and further prompts to consider how well the material generated suits your needs

Discussion: This class engages students in a discussion about public management in a professional administrative state and a democratic society, under the U.S. Constitution. Our discussions this semester explore the institutional, political, and normative environment of the public manager working in the context of a democracy. By reviewing the history and development of the field of public administration in the United States, we learn how concepts from management, law, and politics shape the work of public managers today.

About the readings: Readings will challenge us to define values central to public administration, while also understanding the role of public administrators in informing and resolving value conflict. We consider how managers can engage in professional and ethical conduct, serving the objectives of their organizations while acting under the law and the observation of the citizenry. These conversations are guided by the five core competencies for the University of Georgia's MPA program, and these competencies serve as a point of reflection for our work throughout the semester.

How will we approach these discussions?
Readings will provide an overview for each discussion, and we will explore historically important writings in the field. We will use ideas and concepts from our reading to think about applied exercises and case studies, framing decision scenarios for students to think through in class and through written assignments. Students will also be encouraged to think about their professional development and career goals and extend

their professional network by interviewing a professional in the field. Students will be challenged to develop clear communication skills in order to interact with peers and the general public. At the end of the semester, students will have a strong foundation in public administration and will be equipped with concepts to think about their personal definition of professionalism in public service.

Integration with MPA Competencies
Each week, the instructor will review an agenda for class and discuss how content relates to broader goals and competencies central to the MPA curriculum at the University of Georgia. Students must take great care to think about how content from classes across the curriculum supports and reinforces our five program competencies. Here are some examples of how this class will advance our consideration of the MPA program competencies.

To Lead and Manage in Public Governance: Our review of the field introduces students to our evolving understanding of management and leadership in public organizations from "orthodox" public administration to the contemporary era of governance. Students will be asked to reflect upon the evolving role of the professional manager in public service.

The Public Policy Process: Students will develop an understanding of the role of public managers and policy analysts in the policymaking process, while also exploring how governance has evolved to more directly engage the public and societal groups.

Analyze/Synthesize to Solve Problems and Make Decisions: Our reading and discussions will highlight challenges in organizational decision making and the evolution of the policy analysis and evaluation in public affairs. Students will apply concepts from class to explain their decision-making process in case study reflections and in-class exercises.

The Public Service Perspective: By surveying the historical development of public administration, we will review debates and the values central to the field. We will consider how public managers and policymakers weigh value trade-offs in the decision-making process. Students will also reflect upon the centrality of transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct in public service. Students will draft a personal statement of professionalism and accountability in public service.

Communicating with a Diverse Workforce and Citizenry: This class explores the relationship between public administration and democracy, including various strategies for citizen engagement and communication. Understanding the role of the public in democracy is central to our discussions this semester. Moreover, public and non-profit managers must prepare to engage a diverse workforce. We will discuss foundational concepts in public sector diversity management.

Required Book
Students are required to have access to the following book (below) for class this semester. Bookstores and publishers provide a variety of options to access texts,

including book and ebook rental. Please consider the option that works best for you for the semester and for your long-term mastery of public administration.

NOTE: The UGA library has made primary textbook (Essentials of Public Service) available as a course reserve online, which you can access through eLC.

Guy, Mary E. and Todd L. Ely. 2018. *Essentials of Public Service: An Introduction to Contemporary Public Administration.* Irvine, CA: Melvin & Leigh Publishers. ISBN: 978-1-03-204289-3

eLearning Commons and Online Resources

In addition to the required textbooks, additional reading is posted in a folder in the eLearning Commons (eLC). Students can access online information about our class at http://elc.uga.edu.

Assignments and Grading

Assignments will be evaluated using a point system, with 100 points possible for the class. Note, the grade "A" indicates "outstanding" achievement. The following scale will be used to assign letter grades in this class:

100 – 94 points A	86.9 – 83 points B	75.9 – 70 points C
93.9 – 90 points A-	82.9 – 80 points B-	69.9 – 60 points D
89.9 – 87 points B+	79.9 – 76 points C+	59.9 – 0 points F

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Values & Accountability Statement	January 30	10
Case Study Memo 1	February 28	15
Take-Home Exam 1 (required)	March 6	40
Case Study Memo 2	March 27	25
Public Service Career Presentation	April 17	10
Take-Home Exam 2 (optional)	May 5	(40)

Public Service Values & Accountability Statement: As part of our efforts to reflect upon public service values and professionalism in public service, students will write a personal statement on professionalism and accountability, no more than 800 words in length. The assignment information sheet provides students with additional guidance regarding formatting and required citations to the public administration and policy literature. This is a credit/no-credit exercise contributing 10 points to the final grade. Students may think of this exercise as a document that contributes to a professional portfolio, illustrating their expertise in the field. Students are encouraged to maintain

this as a working document, revising the content through the semester as new ideas are encountered. The statement is to be uploaded to **eLC by 11:59 PM EDT on Friday, January 30.**

Case Study Memos: Memos are written by public managers to analyze problems and to recommend courses of action for public service organizations. These short writing exercises challenge students to offer concise reflection on a problem. Students will refine their memo writing skills in this class by completing three case study reaction memos. Details for the assignments are summarized in an assignment information sheet found in the eLC. The assignment information sheet contains the rubric that will be used to evaluate all three memos. We will review memo writing strategies and resources to guide professional memo writing in class. The memos are to be uploaded to **eLC by 11:59 PM EDT on the dates specified in the table above.**

Public Service Career Presentation: In order to foster our thinking about the role of public service in American democracy, students will conduct an interview with an experienced manager in the public or non-profit sector. Students will create a short presentation for their colleagues in class to introduce the manager and share insights on public service. The interview questions and presentation are structured around key MPA program competencies. The assignment information sheet on eLC contains additional instructions and the evaluation rubric for the presentation. The presentation will be delivered through a recorded PowerPoint presentation and uploaded to **eLC by 11:59 PM EST on Friday, April 17.**

Take-Home Exams: There are two essay examinations that comprise 40% of your final grade. The exams are designed to assess your command of the material and concepts we cover therein. Foundational knowledge about the field of public administration, its change over time, and current challenges you will encounter as a professional in the field are all critical to your success in public service provision.

Exam One will include one required question, and students will select two additional questions from a set of three, focusing on material covered up to that point in the semester. The written response should be two-three pages double-spaced for each question. With note taking and class participation throughout the semester, students should need no more than three hours to complete the final exam. Exam One is due on **eLC by 9:50pm EDT on March 6**. NOTE: you **MUST** take this exam to be eligible to take Exam Two (should you wish to improve your grade after Exam One).

Exam Two will be comprehensive, but optional and you will receive two weeks to complete the exam. Please email me two weeks before the final exam is provided to indicate that you will take the optional final exam. If there are any extenuating circumstances regarding the exam dates and times, please email me at your earliest convenience. Again, the written response should be two-three pages double-spaced for each question. Exam Two is due on **eLC by 9:50pm EDT on Wednesday, May 5.**

Expectations and Guidelines

Assignment Submission and Grades: Assignments—unless completed as part of an in-class exercise—will be submitted on eLC by the set deadline.

Class Preparation and Discussion: Students are to complete the reading assigned before each class meeting and be prepared for discussion. Together, we want to make sure everyone has an opportunity for input, so please understand if I ask for brevity or a conclusion to a chain of discussion. Your dedication each week will be necessary for gaining the knowledge and tools necessary for the writing assignments and presentation. Finally, you are expected to practice professional decorum and respect in the classroom.

Lecture Protocols: Recording or distribution of class sessions (video or audio) is prohibited. If a student wishes to record, they must first gain approval from the instructor and other students that may be included in the recording. Students that require recording for purposes of special accommodation must have relevant written accommodations from the UGA Disability Resource Center. Please see the DRC guidelines for more information: https://accessibility.uga.edu/assistive-listening-devices/

Freedom of expression is welcome, but decorum must be professional and respectful. In accordance with UGA, expressive activities must not disrupt the class. More information can be found here: https://policy.uga.edu/policies#/programs/Sk0TFZNl0?bc=true&bcCurrent=Freedom %20of%20Expression%20and%20Assembly&bcGroup=Freedom%20of%20Expression %20%26%20Assembly&bcItemType=programs

Preferred Name and Pronouns: Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I am eager to address you by your preferred name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

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: https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/

Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

Plagiarism: Our capacity to learn and synthesize knowledge within the public administration profession depends upon our ability to build on the foundation of existing knowledge and research. Recognizing and documenting the work of others is critical for all students, but especially for graduate students. When writing, students must take great care in how they reference ideas and information sources. **Never use**

someone else's words or ideas in your writing without proper attribution.
Serious penalties exist for academic misconduct and plagiarism. Students should read and be familiar with the following resources:

o UGA Academic Honesty Policy: Plagiarism
https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Prohibited_Conduct/

o UGA Libraries Research Guide: Writing and Citing
https://www.libs.uga.edu/undergraduates/writing

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 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 at
https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga
or crisis support at
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.

Electronic Devices: Silence all phones and other electronic noise-making devices while you are in the classroom. Save text messages and emails for the break or after class. Laptop computers or tablets may be used for taking notes, but students must refrain from participating in any online activities during class. Before using electronic devices with online access in class, students should be aware of the learning distractions associated with these technologies in the classroom (e.g., http://tinyurl.com/q7pdtgc).

Attendance and Accommodations: Attendance is not required, but it is necessary to receive credit for in-class discussion. You are responsible for staying up to date on class content. If you fall ill, please communicate with the instructor so that we can make appropriate accommodations. If health concerns develop and you require an accommodation, please reach out to the instructor and/or the Disability Resource Center (DRC) on campus, as appropriate. The DRC can be reached at drc@uga.edu or 706.542.8719.

Late Assignments: Deadlines have been structured so that the instructor can provide regular and periodic feedback on your understanding and application of the course material. For late submissions, 1 point will be deducted from the final grade of the assignment for each day it is late. **No late material will be accepted after May 5, 2026.**

Communication with the Instructor: Throughout the semester, you can reach me by email, and can expect me to return correspondence in a timely manner (at most 48 hours, not including weekends). I am also available to talk during office hours. If the available time slot does not align with your schedule, contact me by email so that we can identify a good meeting time.

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
- Accessibility & Testing: accessibility.uga.edu

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

Disabilities and Accommodations: If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, 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 visiting http://drc.uga.edu.

Student Success Resources: The Office for Student Success and Achievement (OSSA) empowers students to achieve success throughout their academic journey. Through free peer tutoring, academic coaching, UNIV student success courses, Bulldog Basics, and first-generation student support, we promote well-being, student learning, and community building. To connect with OSSA, email *ossa@uga.edu*, call (706) 542-0163, or visit Milledge Hall (near Reed Hall and Sanford Stadium).

Disclaimer for Syllabus and Schedule Changes: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. The instructor will communicate changes in writing through your UGA email account.

Other Logistics:
- Please go to the following link to learn more information on the confidentiality of student records: https://reg.uga.edu/general-information/ferpa/

- Requests for incompletes (I) and withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with university policies. For information on incompletes, please go here: https://osfa.uga.edu/resources/policies/enrollment-financial-aid/grade-changes-incomplete-grades/
- For withdrawals go here: https://osfa.uga.edu/resources/policies/enrollment-financial-aid/dropping-courses-vs-withdrawing/

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 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 at caps.uga.edu or you can find CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273. Other sites with UGA resources include the following for
- Mental health: https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga
- 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.

Schedule

Our class meets once per week on Mondays from 6:15pm to 9:00pm. Students are expected to complete the assigned readings *before* the class. We will then cover the lecture and students will engage in discussion and exercises relating to weekly content. Any questions about the schedule can be directed to evbell@uga.edu.

Week 1 (January 15): Approaching the Study of Public Administration

Rosenbloom, D. H. (1983). Public administrative theory and the separation of powers. *Public Administration Review*, 219-227.

Lewis, C. W. 2006. In pursuit of the public interest. *Public Administration Review* 66 (5): 694-701.

Week 2 (January 22): History & Foundations

Essentials of Public Service – Chapter 1

Wilson, W. (1886). The Study of Public Administration.

Cook, S. A. and W.E. Klay. (2015). George Washington's precedents: The institutional legacy of the American Republic's founding public administrator. *Administration & Society* 47 (1): 75-95.

Stivers, C., & McDonald, B. (2023). Teaching public administration historically. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, *29*(3), 275-279.

Week 3 (January 29): Public Administration as a Project of Reform

Note: there are a lot of readings this week, but some of which are 1-3 pages long (not that much in total!).

Shafritz, Jay M., E.W. Russell, Christopher P. Borick, and Alberty C. Hyde. 2023. *Introducing Public Administration,* 10th edition. New York: Routledge. – Chapter 2

Gulick, L. (1937). Notes on the Theory of Organization. *Classics of organization theory*, *3*, 1-11.

Allison, G. T. (1980). *Public and private management: are they fundamentally alike in all unimportant respects?* (pp. 283-298). Cambridge, MA: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Gore, A. (1993). *From red tape to results: Creating a government that works better & costs less: Report.* The National Performance Review.

Nye, J. S. (1999). Information technology and democratic governance. *Governance.com: Democracy in the Information Age*. 1-16.

Ventriss, Curtis, James L. Perry, Tina Nabatchi, H. Brinton Milward, and Jocelyn M. Johnston. (2019). Democracy, public administration, and public values in an era of estrangement. *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance* 2 (4): 275-282.

Week 4 (February 5): The Public & Public Service

Essentials of Public Service – Chapter 2

Kaufman, H. (1969). Administrative decentralization and political power. *Public administration review*, *29*(1), 3-15.

Bovaird, T. (2007). Beyond engagement and participation: User and community coproduction of public services. *Public Administration Review* 67 (5): 846-860.

Week 5 (February 12): Information Technology & Governance

Introducing Public Administration – Chapter 9

Mergel, Ines, Noella Edelmann, and Nathalie Haug. 2019. Defining digital transformation: Results from expert interviews. Government Information Quarterly 36 (4): 101385.

Isabelle Fest, Mirko Schäfer, José van Dijck & Albert Meijer (2023) Understanding data professionals in the police: a qualitative study of system-level bureaucrats, Public Management Review, 25:9, 1664-1684, DOI: 10.1080/14719037.2023.2222734

Week 6 (February 19): Decision Making

Essentials of Public Service – Chapter 3, pp. 83-89

Lindblom, C. E. (1959). The science of" muddling through". *Public administration review*, 79-88.

Cairney, P. (2012). Rationality and Incrementalism. In *Understanding Public Policy* (pp. 94-108). Palgrave MacMillan.

Rivlin, A. M. (2015). *Systematic thinking for social action*. Brookings Institution Press.

Case Study Discussion: The Case of the South Park Bridge
Note: Use this case to write case study memo #1

Week 7 (February 27): The Public Sector Workforce

Introducing Public Administration – Chapter 11

Krislov, S. (1974). Representative bureaucracy. *New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs*.

Week 8 (March 5): Exam One

Week 9 (March 12): SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (March 19): Ethics

Essentials of Public Service – Chapter 13

Mosher, F. C. (1974). Watergate: implications for responsible government.

O'Leary, R. (2019). *The ethics of dissent: Managing guerrilla government*. CQ Press.

In-Class Exercise: Review of ICMA and ASPA Ethics Codes

Case Study: Another Cheating Scandal—But This Time It's Not the Students
Note: Access through eLC, use this case for memo #2

Week 11 (March 26): Transparency

Essentials of Public Service – Chapter 10

Porumbescu, G. A. (2015). Using transparency to enhance responsiveness and trust in local government: can it work? *State and Local Government Review, 47*(3), 205-213.

Ellington, T. C. (2019). Transparency under Trump: Policy and prospects. *Public Integrity,* 21 (2): 127-140.

Week 12 (April 2): Federalism, Governance, and Contract Management

Essentials of Public Service – Chapter 11

Derthick, M. (1987). American federalism: Madison's middle ground in the 1980s. *Public Administration Review*, 66-74.

Agranoff, R. (2006). Inside collaborative networks: Ten lessons for public managers. *Public Administration Review, 66*, 56-65.

Week 13 (April 9): Equity and the Distributional Consequences of Public Service

Introducing Public Administration – Chapter 3

Moynihan, D., P. Herd, and H. Harvey. (2015). Administrative burden: Learning, psychological and compliance costs in citizen-state interactions. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 25 (1): 43-69.

Note: Public service career presentation due on eLC by 11:59pm EDT on Friday, April 17, 2026.

Week 14 (April 16): Public Administration and the Policy Process

Essentials of Public Service – Chapter 8

Dror, Y. (1967). Policy analysts: A new professional role in government service. *Public Administration Review*, 197-203.

Kingdon, J. W. (1984). The Policy Window and Joining the Streams. In Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies. Boston: Little Brown.

Note: Public service career presentation due on eLC by 11:59pm EDT on Friday, April 17, 2026.

Week 15 (April 23): Exam Two

Available 7:00pm EDT on April 23, 2026 on eLC
Due by 9:50pm EDT on May 5, 2026 on eLC