

PADP 6920
Public Personnel Administration
Spring 2026

Tuesdays 3:55 – 6:45 pm
Baldwin Hall, Room 101D

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30 – 3:30 pm.
Other hours by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

This course focuses on selected topics in the study and practice of public personnel administration (also known as public personnel management or public sector human resources management). We will review how public employees are recruited, selected, compensated, and evaluated. A variety of class exercises and case analyses will supplement the assigned reading. The central objectives for the course are to enable students to:

1. Develop an appreciation for the dynamic political environment and the Constitutional restrictions that distinguish public personnel management from its counterpart in the private sector.
2. Understand the history of the civil service in the United States.
3. Define the concept of merit in public employment and be familiar with the evolution of merit systems.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of issues associated with recent civil service reform.
5. Understand equal employment opportunity law.
6. Describe recruitment, examination, and selection procedures.
7. Be familiar with public sector job evaluation techniques.
8. Know how compensation structures are constructed.
9. Understand systems of employee performance appraisal.
10. Be knowledgeable of the role of public employee unions and systems of collective bargaining.

The material covered in PADP 6920, Public Personnel Administration, and the class assignments/exercises are designed to promote student mastery of three of the five core competencies required for NASPAA accreditation of our MPA program.

Competency 1: To lead and Manage in the Public Interest

- Students will learn to work in groups and teams to make collaborative decisions, incorporate diverse viewpoints, and create a cohesive and professional product.

- Students will identify leadership and management demands across sectors, particularly in the public and non-profit sectors, including their similarities and differences as well as unique intergovernmental and inter-organizational challenges.
- Students will describe the implications of public service motivation for management in the public and non-profit sectors.

Competency 4: To Articulate, Apply, and Advance a Public Service Perspective

- Students will understand and appreciate the intellectual history of American public administration and compare the United States to other administrative systems around the globe.
- Students will analyze and explain tensions among competing public service values and identify strategies for the management and resolution of value conflict.
- Students will apply professional codes of ethics to decisions and value conflicts unique to the public sector, ensuring practices remain accountable and transparent.
- Students will analyze how the U.S. Constitution, law, and merit systems shape the work environment and public management.
- Students will demonstrate an appreciation of the complex political and fiscal environment of public management.

Competency 5: To Communicate and Interact Productively and in Culturally Responsive Ways with a Diverse and Changing Workforce and Society at Large

- Students will recognize, consider, and respect differing points of view in administrative and policy decisions.
- Students will execute specific strategies to enhance equity within and representatives of the public workforce to ensure all people within a government's jurisdiction are well served.
- Students will explain the contributions of a representative bureaucracy to an organization's work and performance.
- Students will demonstrate an appreciation for diversity and will be able to work productively in teams by displaying composure, fostering dialogue, and utilizing effective communication skills.

Reading Material:

All required reading assignments are available on the UGA eLC website.

Course Structure:

Attendance and Participation (10% of your final grade): Students are expected to attend class and actively participate. If you need to miss a class for a legitimate medical or other emergency, please notify the instructor as soon as possible. Your grade for participation will reflect your contributions to class activities/exercises, your participation in class discussion, and your attendance.

Student Presentations/Debates (20% of your final grade): Students will prepare and present summaries or debates on key public personnel management issues or court cases. These presentations/debates should be approximately 20 minutes in length and should make use of PowerPoint slides, videos, or other media. Students may work alone or with a partner. If you choose to make a *non-debate* presentation, think of it as a brief training seminar in which you inform your colleagues (and your instructor) of important aspects of the selected topic. If you would like to participate in a *debate* over an issue or court case, your (either alone or with a partner) will present the arguments on one side of the issue/case while another student or pair of students will present the other side. Members of the class should be prepared to ask questions of the presenters/debaters. Issues and cases available for presentation/debate are listed on this syllabus, but you may also present or debate other topics in which you have an interest. The instructor will be available to guide you and review your presentation/debate prior to the date you will deliver it in class.

Issue Papers (30% of your final grade; 10% for each paper): Three brief issue papers summarizing and assessing the primary arguments surrounding key issues affecting contemporary public personnel administration are required. The topics will be determined by the instructor. These papers should be 4 to 5 pages in length. They are assigned at strategic points during the semester and will be due one week later. These essays are intended to give you feedback on your understanding of the material as the semester progresses. They should be submitted in MS Word format to kellough@uga.edu by 4:00 pm on the dates they are due.

Examinations (40% of your final grade; 20% for each exam): There will be a mid-term and a final examination. The mid-term examination is scheduled for **March 3** and will be completed in class. It will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions covering selected topics. The final examination will be a take-home exam distributed on **April 21** and due in MS Word format by 4:00 pm on **April 28** to kellough@uga.edu. The final examination will have the same format as the mid-term exam but will address only the material covered in class after the mid-term. Each examination is designed to test your ability to understand and critically evaluate the reading, lecture, and discussion material addressed in the course.

Grading: All grades will conform to the following scale:

A	93 – 100%	C-	70 – 72%
A-	90 – 92%	D+	67 – 69%
B+	87 – 89%	D	63 – 66%
B	83 – 86%	D-	60 – 62%
B-	80 – 82%	F	Below 60%
C+	79 – 77%		
C	73 – 76%		

Final Letter Grades will be based upon elements of the class weighted in the following manner:

<u>Course Component</u>	<u>Weight</u>
1. Attendance and Participation	10%
2. Presentations/Debates	20%
3. Quality of the Issue Papers	30%
4. Midterm Exam	20%
5. Final Exam	<u>20%</u>
	100%

Academic Honesty: Students must abide by the University of Georgia policy regarding academic honesty. All academic work must be performed without any form of cheating, lying, stealing, or receiving assistance from any other person or using any source of information not appropriately authorized or attributed. The University policy on academic honesty may be accessed at <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>.

Note: The use of artificial intelligence software such as Generative AI to write your papers or exams for this class is not permitted.

Computers, Cell Phones, and other Electronic Devices: You may bring a laptop computer to class, and you are encouraged to do so. You may, of course, also bring your cell phone, iPad, or other similar device. Please make sure that your phone is silenced during class time.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability and would like to request specific accommodations, please contact your instructor. If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the UGA Disability Resource Center, 114 Clark Howell Hall, Athens, GA 30602. Phone: 706-542-8719, Email: drc@uga.edu.

Prohibition on Recording Lectures: In compliance with University of Georgia guidance, students may not make visual or audio recordings of any aspect of this course, unless they have written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

1. Will use authorized recordings only for personal academic purposes during the specific course.

2. Understand that faculty members have copyright interests in their class lectures and agree not to infringe on these rights in any way.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
6. 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.

Preferred Name and Pronouns: Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I am eager to address you by your preferred name. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester.

Safe Space for Discussion: Our classroom will provide a safe environment in which we may engage the material through thoughtful and respectful discussion and acknowledgement of historical context. The goal is to promote understanding, and where warranted, recognition of multiple points of view.

CLASS SCHEDULE

January 13: INTRODUCTION

A review of course requirements...general discussion of the field of public personnel administration/management.

January 20: FOUNDATIONS OF THE FIELD

A look at the development of public personnel administration/management in the United States...Issues in strategic human resource management.

Kellough, J. Edward. 2025. *The Fragility of Merit: Presidential Power and the Civil Service Under Trump*. (New York: Routledge), Chapter 1, pp. 1-10.

January 27: UNDERSTANDING MERIT IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

Consideration of the civil service reform movement of the late nineteenth century and the triumph of the merit principle.

Van Riper, Paul P., *History of the United States Civil Service* (Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson, and Company, 1958), Chapter 5: “Americanizing a Foreign Invention: The Pendleton Act of 1883.”

The Pendleton Act

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=48&page=transcript>

February 3: MERIT, MANAGEMENT, AND POLITICS

Analysis of more recent reform efforts...The struggle to balance political responsiveness and neutral competence in the public service.

Brewer, Gene and J. Edward Kellough. 2016. “Administrative Values and Public Personnel Management: Reflections on Civil Service Reform in the United States,” *Public Personnel Management*, 45(2): 171-189.

Hale, Janet, J. Edward Kellough, Peter Levine, Ellen Tunstall, and David Walker. March 2021. *Elevating Human Capital: Reframing the U.S. Office of Personnel Management’s Leadership Imperative*. (Washington D.C.: National Academy of Public Administration). Read the Executive Summary, pages 1 – 6.

First Issue Paper Assigned

Cases and Topics for Presentation/Debate:

Branti v. Finkel, 445 U.S. 507 (1980) – Dismissal for Political Patronage Purposes.

Rankin v. McPherson, 483 U.S. 378 (1987) – Dismissal for Political Speech.

Rutan v. Republican Party of Illinois, 497 U. S. 62 (1990) – Limits on Transfer, Promotion, Recall, and other Actions for Political Purposes.

February 10: THE LAW OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Discussion of the development of equal employment opportunity policy.

Nigro, Lloyd G. and J. Edward Kellough, *The New Public Personnel Administration*, seventh edition, (Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2014), Chapter 9.

First Issue Paper Due

Case and Topics for Presentation/Debate:

Griggs et al. v. Duke Power Company, 401 U.S. 424 (1971) – Discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.

Laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

February 17: RECRUITMENT, EXAMINATION, AND SELECTION

A discussion of recruitment and examination methods in public personnel administration...consideration of legal constraints on selection processes...employee training and development.

Johnson, Tim and Gregory B. Lewis. 2020. “Inspecting the Merit System’s “Pivotal Idea”: Does Competitive Examination Increase the Qualifications and Quality of the U.S. Federal Service? *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 202-221

Case and Topic for Presentation/Debate:

Ricci v. DeStefano 557 U.S. 557 (2009).

Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection, 29 CFR Part 1607 (1978).

February 24: EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

A review of issues associated with employee training and development programs.

Riccucci, Norma M. and Katherine C. Naff. 2008. *Personnel Management in Government: Politics and Process*, sixth edition. (CRC Press: Boca Raton, Florida). Chapter 8, “Training and Development,” pp. 329-365.

March 3: MID-TERM EXAM

March 10: SPRING BREAK

March 17: JOB ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

Consideration of job analysis techniques...methods of classifying jobs or positions.

Persson, Leonard N., *The Handbook of Job Evaluations and Job Pricing*, (Madison, Connecticut: Business and Legal Reports, Inc., 1989), Chapter 1.

Second Issue Paper Assigned

In-class exercise: Job Evaluation using a version of the FES

March 24: JOB PRICING AND EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION

Analysis of the process of building a compensation structure.

Persson, Leonard N., *The Handbook of Job Evaluations and Job Pricing*, (Madison, Connecticut: Business and Legal Reports, Inc., 1989), Chapter 2.

Second Issue Paper Due

Case for Presentation/Debate:

AFSCME v. State of Washington, 770 F.2d 1401 (1985).

March 31: EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL AND MERIT PAY

Discussion of issues associated with measuring employee performance in public organizations. Consideration of pay-for-performance systems.

Lin, Yu Chun and J. Edward Kellough, 2019. "Performance Appraisal Problems in the Public Sector: Examining Supervisors' Perceptions," *Public Personnel Management*, Vol. 48, No. 2, pp. 179-202.

Topics for Presentation/Debate:

Pros and Cons of Pay-for-Performance Systems.

April 7: PUBLIC EMPLOYEE UNIONS AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Analysis of public sector labor relations and collective bargaining practices.

Federman, Peter Stanley, Shilpa Viswanath, and Norma Riccucci. 2024. "Public Sector Collective Bargaining: A Meta Review," *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X231216946>

Rodriguez-Plesa, Evelyn, Mohamad G. Alkadry, and Ana-Maria Dimand. 2024. "Gender Pay Disparities in Public Organizations: The Equalizing Externality of Union Membership," *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X241298701>

Third Issue Paper Assigned

Topics for Presentation/Debate:

Pros and Cons of the right to strike by public employees
Summary of state laws on public sector collective bargaining

April 14: STATUTORY AND CONSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS

A review of additional federal statutes regulating public sector human resources management including the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and others. . . A discussion of Constitutional limitations on public personnel management including consideration of employee rights under the 1st, 4th, 5th, and 14th Amendments.

Nigro, Lloyd G. and J. Edward Kellough, *The New Public Personnel Administration*, seventh edition, (Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2014), Chapter 8.

United States Constitution, Amendments 1, 4, 5, and 14.

Third Issue Paper Due

Case and Topics for Presentation:

Cleveland v. Loudermill, 470 U.S. 532 (1985)
Family and Medical Leave Act.

April 21: WHITHER PUBLIC PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION?

Consideration of the future of the field of Public Personnel Administration and the fragility of merit.

Kellough, J. Edward. 2025. *The Fragility of Merit: Presidential Power and the Civil Service Under Trump*. (New York: Routledge), Chapters 2 and 8.

Final Exam Distributed

April 28: FINAL EXAM DUE by 7:00 pm kellough@uga.edu. Submit your exam only as an MS Word document.