

# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PADP 7540**

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

Spring 2026

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Time: Tuesdays, 3:55 pm - 6:55 pm  
Classroom: Park Hall 115

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Instructor: Matt Colvin  
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Office Hours: By Appointment; Virtual/Phone/Before Class (no campus office)

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***This syllabus is a general plan for the course.  
Adjustments may be made during the semester and will be announced to the class.***

## **COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES**

This course provides an overview of the economic development policies and practices of states and localities within the United States from both theoretical and applied perspectives. In this course, we will use academic literature, discussions with practitioners in the field, and a strong emphasis on group interaction to explore the major rationales for undertaking economic development programs, the commonly used tools in such efforts, and some of the major strategic issues confronting state and local public officials in their attempts to promote economic development within their jurisdictions.

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand the rationale for and importance of community and economic development programs implemented by state and local governments.
- Identify and understand various tools used in the public sector for fostering and promoting community and economic development.
- Identify and understand various challenges and strategic issues commonly faced by public officials in developing community and economic development programs.
- Draw comparisons between community development and economic development and analyze and assess the practical applications of community and economic development policies at the state and local levels.

Student progress on these learning objectives will be measured through written assignments, class discussions, and group projects.

## REQUIRED READINGS

Readings for each class will be assigned and posted on eLC.

## OPTIONAL TEXTBOOKS

1. Koven, S.G., & Lyons, T.S. (2nd Ed.) (2016). *Economic Development: Strategies for State and Local Practice*. ICMA Press.
2. Phillips, R., & Pittman, R.H. (editors) (2nd Ed.). (2015). *An Introduction to Community Development*. Routledge.

## COURSE METHODOLOGY

This will not be a lecture driven class. This class is intended to be discussion based and highly interactive. Class meetings will be a combination of presentations and discussion of readings, engaged discussion with guest speakers, and group work. Because of the course design, students will get out of this class as much as they put into it and will also have opportunities to pursue the subtopics commensurate with their own personal interests and inquiries.

My hope is that all students enrolled in this class want to learn as much as possible about the topic and students will be self-motivated to do so. The expectation is for students to be prepared for every class session by completing assigned readings, readily participating in class discussions, fully engaging with guest speakers, and preparing thoughtful and insightful questions for guest speakers and for the benefit of the class.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Attendance/Class Participation (20% of final grade)

- This course will be heavily focused on in-class discussion, group exercises, guest speakers, and overall engagement. Attendance, advanced preparation, and active class engagement will be a major part of each students' final grade as the bulk of the experience in class will contribute to students' overall understanding of the principles of economic development.

### County SWOT Analysis (5% of final grade)

- For this assignment, students will select a county and do a basic SWOT analysis (2 single-spaced pages) of its perceived strengths and challenges. This is an exercise primarily designed to begin thinking critically about communities and develop a sense of understanding about how they can be perceived.
- **This assignment is due January 29 (Week 3) by start of class.**

*Much of the semester will be utilizing an actual case study from a recent economic development project and assignments will be focused on specific elements of the project process throughout its lifespan, playing various roles from site selection consultant, state project manager, local economic developer, and company official. Students will be collaborating in pairs or in groups during these exercises.*

### Site Selection Report/Recommendations (15% of final grade)

- For this assignment, students will work with a partner and be given a Request for Information (RFI) from a confidential company looking to locate a new facility in the state with jobs and capital investment. Based on the project parameters, students will utilize online site selection tools to generate a portfolio of possible sites for the company to consider. Students will then write a short (five double-spaced pages) brief of their recommended top four to five sites from the perspective of a site selection consultant advising the company.
- **This assignment will be due February 19 (Week 6)**

### Site Visit Presentation/Briefing (40% of final grade)

- Following the site recommendation submission, students will be updated on the sites that were selected by the company from the initial search. Working in groups, students will assume the role of one of the local counties that was selected and prepare a report on why they feel their community is the best location for the company, based on the parameters provided. Students will consider multiple aspects, including the site, workforce, quality of life, healthcare, education system, etc. to make a compelling case to the company as to why their community would be most successful in supporting their operations.
- For this assignment, groups will be asked to compose a paper (10-12 double-spaced pages) summarizing their pitch and be prepared to make a 20-minute presentation to the class to “pitch” their community to “company representatives” visiting for the day.
- **All papers will be due on April 2 (Week 12). Presentations will take place on April 2 (Week 12) and April 9 (Week 13).**

### Policy Briefing (20% of final grade)

- For this last portion of the case study assignment, students will choose a state or local policy topic that they feel positively or negatively impacts the community’s chances for winning this project and prepare a briefing (8-10 double-spaced spaces, summarizing the policy, addressing its support or hindrance of the practice, and make any recommendations on enhancing, changing, or removing the policy to better serve the state for this or for future economic development opportunities. More information about the assignment will be discussed in class.
- **A one-page proposal for the project will be due March 26 (Week 11) by start of class**
- **Completed assignment will be due Sunday, May 3 (Week 17) by 11:59pm**

## **COURSE GRADING**

The plus/minus letter grading system (i.e. A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F) is the official grading system approved by the Board of Regents and the only grading system approved for the University of Georgia. There is no numerical grading scale assigned to each letter grade at the

University level. The assignment of letter grades in a course is the responsibility and discretion of the instructor.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY AND STUDENT HONOR CODE**

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:

***"I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others."***

A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at [honesty.uga.edu](http://honesty.uga.edu)

Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation, and failure to adhere to the policy could result in failure of the course and additional academic discipline. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to your instructor.

## **COURSE WEBSITE**

We will use eLearning Commons (eLC) for materials used in this class. The URL for this web portal is <http://www.elc.uga.edu>. You will need to log in with your standard UGA username and password. The website will contain any PowerPoint presentations used for lectures, assignments, required and optional readings, and any other course materials. You will submit the assignments via eLC except when directed to do otherwise.

## **POLICY FOR ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Your experience in this class is important to me. If you have approved accommodations from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at the University of Georgia, please contact me as soon as possible to communicate those accommodations and discuss your needs in this course. If you anticipate the need for accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, please visit the DRC to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations. For more information on the Disability Resource Center and how to contact them, please visit <https://drc.uga.edu/>.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

PADP 7540 is developed as a very interactive course with engagement with guest speakers and fellow students, making regular attendance essential for learning. Students are strongly encouraged to attend class sessions, which will contribute to your participation grade. However, there are always circumstances whether in or outside of our control that can affect our ability to attend class. Several examples are below, but are not exhaustive of all potential excused absences:

### Absence Due to Religious Holidays

- You will not be penalized because of your religious beliefs and observances. Whenever possible, you will be given reasonable time to make up any academic assignment that is

missed due to a religious obligation or observance. Please inform me in advance so that appropriate arrangements may be made.

### Absence Due to Illness

- The University of Georgia has no higher priority than the health and safety of members of our community. SPIA, in turn, also holds the health and safety of SPIA and UGA students as a top priority. As such, the attendance policy will be amended to accommodate the need to miss class without penalty because of illness. Should you need to employ such a measure, please contact me directly by phone or email to plan accordingly.

Absences due to reasons not considered valid and unavoidable may lead to loss of participation points. Please make every effort to contact me if there is a need to miss class for any valid reason and create an individualized plan for making up missed material.

### **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS 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: [healthcenter.uga.edu](https://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)
- Accessibility and Testing: [accessibility.uga.edu](https://accessibility.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>.

### **ANTICIPATED COURSE SCHEDULE**

Date	Topic/Readings/Speakers/Assignments
<u>Week 1</u> Jan 15	<u>Topic:</u> Introductions/Overview  <u>Readings:</u> No Assigned Readings
<u>Week 2</u> Jan 22	<u>Topic:</u> The Economic Development Landscape  <u>Readings (eLC):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 2026 State of the States Article</li><li>○ 2026 Site Selectors Survey</li></ul>

<u>Week 3</u> Jan 29	<p><u>Topic:</u> Business Recruitment</p> <p><u>Readings (eLC)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Georgia's Target Industries</li> <li>o The Georgia Advantage</li> </ul> <p><u>Speaker:</u> Charlie Moseley, Director of Statewide Business Recruitment, Georgia Power</p> <p><b><u>Assignment Due:</u> County SWOT Analysis</b></p>
<u>Week 4</u> Feb 5	<p><u>Topic:</u> Workforce Development</p> <p><u>Readings (eLC):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Cherokee Workforce Collaborate Case Study</li> <li>o Georgia High Demand Career Initiative Report</li> <li>o 2025 Georgia Pipeline Snapshot</li> <li>o NGA Report</li> <li>o Georgia Power Workforce Planning Guide</li> </ul> <p><u>Speakers:</u> Becca Hunt, UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government</p>
<u>Week 5</u> Feb 12	<p><u>Topic:</u> International/National Economic Development</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> TBD</p> <p><u>Speakers:</u> Virginia Sengewald, Georgia Department of Economic Development; Ashley Varnum, Georgia Power</p>
<u>Week 6</u> Feb 19	<p><u>Topic:</u> Local Economic Development – Business Retention and Expansion</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Business Retention Plan Case Studies (eLC)</li> </ul> <p><u>Speaker:</u> Breezy Straton, Elevate Douglas</p>
<u>Week 7</u> Feb 26	<p><u>Topic:</u> Local Economic Development – Incentives and Deal Financing/Regional Strategies</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o IEDC Chapter on Financing (posted to eLC)</li> <li>o IEDC Chapter on Local ED (posted to eLC)</li> </ul> <p><u>Speakers:</u> Serra P. Hall, Executive Director, Newton County Industrial Development Authority</p>
<u>Week 8</u> Mar 5	<p>Local Economic Development – Municipal/County Collaborations</p> <p><u>Speakers:</u> Hasco Craver IV, Assistant City Manager, City of Newnan</p> <p><b><u>Assignments Due:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Site Selection Report/Recommendations</li> </ul>
<u>Week 9</u> Mar 12	<b>NO CLASS (Spring Break)</b>
<u>Week 10</u> Mar 19	<p><u>Topic:</u> Local Economic Development – Branding and Marketing</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> Examples of local branding strategies (eLC)</p> <p><u>Speaker:</u> Ilka McConnell, Director, Athens-Clarke County Unified Government Economic Development</p>
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<u>Week 11</u> Mar 26	<p><u>Topic:</u> Housing</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Workforce Housing Case Study and accompanying materials from speaker (eLC)</li> </ul> <p><u>Speakers:</u> Nick Autorina, President &amp; CEO, WFN Consulting, LLC; Matt Forshee, Georgia Power</p> <p><b><u>Assignments Due:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o One-Page Policy Proposal</li> </ul>
<u>Week 12</u> Apr 2	<p><u>Topic:</u> Site Visit Presentations</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> No Assigned Readings</p> <p><b><u>Assignments Due:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Site Visit – Written Briefing (All)</li> <li>o Site Visit Presentations (Heat 1)</li> </ul>
<u>Week 13</u> Apr 9	<p><u>Topic:</u> Site Visit Presentations</p> <p><u>Readings:</u> No Assigned Readings</p> <p><b><u>Assignments Due:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Site Visit Presentations (Heat 2)</li> </ul>
<u>Week 14</u> Apr 16	<p><u>Topic:</u> Retail/Downtown Development</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Community Retail Snapshots (eLC)</li> </ul> <p><u>Speakers:</u> Mill Graves, Retail Strategies</p>
<u>Week 15</u> Apr 23	<p><u>Topic:</u> Local Redevelopment (off-Site Meeting at Wire Park; Watkinsville)</p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Case Studies of Redevelopment Projects (eLC)</li> </ul> <p><u>Speakers:</u> Brian Brodrick, Mayor, City of Watkinsville; Kate Patterson, City of Watkinsville DDA; Jordan Price, Business Development Director, Gibbs Capital</p>
<u>Week 16</u> Apr 30	<b><u>NO CLASS - FINALS WEEK</u></b>
<u>Week 17</u>	<p><b><u>Assignments Due:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Policy Recommendations (due Sunday May 3 by 11:59pm)</li> </ul>