

PADP4200 Special Topics: Public Management (Spring 2026)

* Disclaimer: This syllabus is a general plan; the instructor may announce deviations on eLC

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Office hours: by appointment

(email me at least 24 hours in advance)

Course Description and Learning Objectives

This course introduces students to the knowledge and skills necessary for managing public organizations. While the primary disciplinary focus is on public administration, the course also incorporates insights from political science, sociology, and psychology.

Course Materials

Students will read various texts provided by the instructor through eLC (the full reading list can be found on page 4). There is no required textbook. Lecture slides will be made available prior to class. Please respect that these slides are the intellectual property of the instructor and are to be used strictly for educational purposes.

Class Schedule (no class on the dates indicated in bold)

Tuesday classes will be primarily lecture and discussion. Thursday classes will be student activities.

| <i>Week</i> | <i>Topic</i> | <i>Required reading before class (read in order)</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 (Jan 13, 15) | Introduction and brainstorming | |
| 2 (Jan 20, 22) | Public management: between politics and business | Wilson (1887), Rainey (2015) |
| 3 (Jan 27, 29) | Organizational performance and public values | Moore (1995) pt. 1 |
| 4 (Feb 3, 5) | Organizational strategies | Moore (1995) pt. 2 |
| 5 (Feb 10, 12) | Managing through measurement, and its dilemmas | Fisher and Downes (2008) |
| 6 (Feb 17, 19) | Assignment week | |
| 7 (Feb 24, 26) | Managing through rules, and its dilemmas | DeHart-Davis (2008) |
| 8 (Mar 3, 5) | Employees who manage themselves: Intrinsic and public service motivation | Moynihan (2010), Perry et al. (2009) |
| 9 (Mar 10, 12) | Spring break | |
| 10 (Mar 17, 19) | Groups that manage themselves: Mission-oriented culture | Schein (2010) pt. 1 |

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|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 11 (Mar 24, 26) | Interview preparation (comparative analysis) | |
| 12 (Mar 31, 2) | Leadership that leads employees to manage themselves | Schein (2010) pt. 2 |
| 13 (April 7, 9) | Client experience management | Herd and Moynihan (2018), Van de Walle (2017) |
| 14 (April 14, 16) | Organizational reputation management | Carpenter and Krause (2012), Hood (2011) |
| 15 (April 21, 23) | Instructor conference travel | |
| 16 (April 28, 30) | Field interview (comparative analysis) | |
| 17 (May 3, 5) | Presentation (optional) | |

Grading Policies

Demeanor

- i. Personal attacks or any form of demeaning comments are strictly prohibited during all in-person and email communications. Be respectful to other classmates and the instructor at all times. Violation of this rule may result in a reduction of your final grade tier (e.g., A → B) at the instructor's discretion, depending on the seriousness of the violation.

Academic Integrity

- i. Violation of the UGA's academic integrity policy may lead to sanctions depending on its severity, such as a "0" score on the assignment or a final grade of F.

Grading

- i. Late work after the due date will be accepted only by prior arrangement.
- ii. Once the assignments are graded, revise and resubmit will never be allowed.
- iii. Final grades may only be changed in the event of a clerical error (e.g., points summed incorrectly).
- iv. No "extra credit" beyond what is indicated on the syllabus will be assigned under any circumstances.
- v. A final grade of "Incomplete" will only be given under extraordinary circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor.
- vi. For privacy reasons, information pertaining to grades cannot be discussed via email. Meet me in person after class or set up a meeting if you have questions about your grade.

Evaluation and Assignments

Grading Scheme

| | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|------------|
| A | 100 – 93 (points) | C | 76.99 – 73 |
| A- | 92.99 – 90 | C- | 72.99 – 70 |
| B+ | 89.99 – 87 | D | 69.99 – 60 |

| | | | |
|----|------------|---|----------------|
| B | 86.99 – 83 | F | 59.99 or below |
| B- | 82.99 – 80 | | |
| C+ | 79.99 – 77 | | |

| | |
|-----|----------------------------|
| 35% | Weekly in-class activities |
| 10% | Reflection notes |
| 25% | AI adversary |
| 30% | Comparative analysis |
| 5% | Presentation (optional) |

In-class activities (35%)

In the second class of each week, you will participate in activity sessions. For each participation, you may earn up to 5% of the final grade based on your engagement and outcomes. There will be 10 activity sessions throughout the semester, and a maximum of 35% of the final grade is available from activities. The instructor may withhold points from students identified as free riders.

- * Extra credit may be awarded at the end of the semester to highly engaged students at the instructor's discretion. Therefore, stay engaged in class even if you have collected all 35 points.

Reflection notes (10%)

Discuss the specific comments, questions, or discussion points raised by a peer or the instructor during the class that challenged or advanced your thinking. You must quote or paraphrase the specific moments and illustrate in depth how they influenced you. You will submit three reflection notes throughout the semester, and may earn up to 3.5% of the final grade from each note.

- * 12font, single space, 350-word limit.

AI adversary (25%)

In this assignment, you will use Generative AI (ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini) as an “Intellectual Sparring Partner.” You will submit two AI adversary reports throughout the semester, each of which will contribute up to 12.5% of the final grade. Follow the steps below:

- i. Copy and paste the following prompt into the AI, filling in the brackets:

“I will play the role of the manager of [Your Public Organization], arguing for [Your Proposal]. You are to play the role of [Your Opponent (e.g., employees, politicians, interest groups, citizens, etc.)] opposing my proposal. This is an assignment for an MPA-level public management class. Therefore, the debate must focus on issues related to external or internal management of the organization. Rules you must follow:

- Do not be polite or passive. Be professional but firm, skeptical, and difficult to convince.
- Use specific arguments relevant to the external or internal management of public organizations.
- Keep your responses concise (approximately under 200 words).
- End every response with a challenging question that exposes a flaw in my logic.

- Do not concede until I have addressed your core concerns effectively.
Let's begin. I'll start: [Your opening argument (under 200 words)]"

*** Example**

"I will play the role of the manager of **the Atlanta Police Department**, arguing for **measuring officer performance**. You are to play the role of **employees** opposing my proposal. ...

Let's begin. I'll start: **I believe measuring officer performance is crucial to enhance accountability and transparency in policing. We're funded by taxpayers, and we are obligated to show them how we are performing.**"

- Engage in a back-and-forth debate for at least 5 turns (interactions). Report the full URL or text transcript of your entire debate session.
- After the debate, type the following into the chat and report the output:

"STOP ROLEPLAY. Please provide honest, critical, and thorough feedback on my performance (approximately under 400 words), covering the points below:

- Strongest Argument: Which of my points was hardest for you to counter, and why?
- Weakest Argument: Which of my points was easiest for you to dismantle, and why?"

- Write a memo covering:
 - The AI's Strongest Point: What valid argument did the AI raise that caught you off guard or that you struggled to address effectively? Why was it difficult?
 - Your Strongest Point: Which of your arguments effectively forced the AI to concede or pivot? Why was that specific argument effective?
 - Conclusion: How did this exercise enhance your understanding of the topic? What did you learn from this exercise about the potential use (or limitations) of AI as a public manager's tool (e.g., for strategic planning, stakeholder opposition analysis)? What did you learn about the use of AI as a general tool for intellectual growth?

* Memo format: 12font, single space, 750-word limit.

Comparative analysis (30%)

Management is best understood through comparison. In this assignment, you will move beyond "textbook theory" and serve as a "management consultant" who assess how real public agencies handle the messiness of management.

- Select Your "Twin" Agencies
Pick two public organizations that operate in the same service area (e.g., Atlanta Police vs. NYC Police, or Fulton county public school vs. Gwinnett country public school).
- Evidence Collection

Find specific evidence from primary data sources (e.g., strategic plans, annual reports, statistics, agency website information, public hearing recordings, etc.) for both agencies on various dimensions of internal and external management. Secondary summaries (e.g., Wikipedia entries, AI output) are NOT acceptable as evidence.

iii. The Desktop Analysis

Conduct a comprehensive assessment of which of the two agencies you believe is managed better, based on the evidence you've collected. Be as rigorous as possible.

** 12font, single space, minimum 750 words (excluding the evidence)*

iv. "Triangulation" Interview (One Agency Only)

Conduct an informal interview (Phone/Zoom preferred) with a "street-level" employee from ONE of the agencies (min. 20 minutes). Ask questions that triangulate your desktop analysis and further uncover additional information or nuances not captured by publicly available evidence. You must audio-record the interview and report the transcript.

*** Safety & Ethics Interview Protocol (Mandatory)**

- Remote First: Conduct the interview via Phone or Zoom. If in-person, it must be in the employee's official office or building. NEVER meet in a private space or residence.
- Goal: Your goal is to understand the organization's management practices, NOT to catch fraud. Do not ask sensitive questions or put pressure on the interviewee in any manner.
- Anonymity: You MUST use a pseudonym for the employee in your paper (e.g., "Officer A").
- Verification: Submit a screenshot of the "Thank You" email you sent them after the interview (with their email address visible) to prove the interview occurred.

v. Concluding Memo

Write a memo that elaborates on your desktop analysis based on the interview. Discuss whether your initial conclusion was confirmed or refuted, and if so, how. Be as rigorous as possible.

** 12font, single space, minimum 500 words*

Presentation (5%, optional)

Up to 3 students may volunteer to present a policy reform idea and earn up to 5 bonus points (first-come, first-served). Presentations should elaborate on a policy idea aimed at addressing a problem in a public organization (in any country, at any level) and must justify the proposal using insights from lectures, readings, and activities. Avoid text-heavy slides; use figures, charts, and tables mainly, with minimal supporting text. Presentations are limited to 15 minutes.

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. Use of AI or word mixing software to write your

paper or disguise plagiarized work is considered unauthorized assistance in this course. Suspected unauthorized assistance, or other violations of UGA's "A Culture of Honesty," will be reported to the Office of Academic Honesty. The link to more detailed information about academic honesty can be found at: http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm.

UGA Student Honor Code: *"I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others."*

Preferred Names/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.

Prohibition of Recording Lectures

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.

Supports and Accommodations

Disability Resource Center

The Disability Resource Center (<https://drc.uga.edu>), works with students who have documented disabilities to access reasonable accommodations and academic supports. For more information or to speak with a coordinator, please call the Disability Resource Center at (706) 542-8719.

Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is important that

you be registered with the Disability Resource Center and notify the instructor of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements.

Religious Accommodations

UGA's religious accommodations policy, found at <https://eoo.uga.edu/definitions/religiousaccommodations>, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the Religious Holidays Attendance Policy, students can be allowed to make up work because of a religious observance provided that you notify the instructor. Please look over the course schedule and contact the instructor by the end of the second week of class if there are any classes you will miss due to a religious observance.

Preferred Names/Pronouns

Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I am eager to address you if you have a preferred name and/or pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources

UGA has several resources to aid in your mental and emotional health needs. You can take note of the following support 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 (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or 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 Mobile App.