



**School of Public &
International Affairs
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

**Course Syllabus
PADP 7360: Managing Government Performance, CRN 65619
Fall 2026**

**UGA Gwinnett Center
Thursdays, 6:15-9:00pm**

The University of Georgia
School of Public and International Affairs
Department of Public Administration & Policy
204 Baldwin Hall
Athens, GA 30602-1615

Prof. Dr. G. A. Brewer¹
272 Baldwin Hall
706 542-9660 (main office)
706 583-0610 (FAX)
Email: geneabrewer@uga.edu

Course Description and Objectives

Performance improvement has become a central concern in contemporary public administration in the United States and globally. This course examines the evolution of the performance movement and its implications for governance, with particular attention to the challenges of improving effectiveness while maintaining accountability, equity, and democratic values.

The course is organized around three core questions:

1. **Conceptualization** — What is “performance” in the public sector, and how should it be defined?
2. **Measurement and Management** — How can performance be measured, managed, and improved in complex political and administrative environments?
3. **Consequences and Trade-offs** — What are the intended and unintended effects of performance-oriented reforms?

Students will engage with both foundational and contemporary scholarship to develop a rigorous understanding of performance as an analytical, managerial, and normative construct. The course emphasizes the interplay between theory and empirical research, examining how political institutions, administrative systems, and organizational behavior shape performance outcomes.

Key topics include performance measurement, performance management, performance budgeting, strategic planning, benchmarking, and administrative reform. The course also

¹ Office hours are by appointment, but please feel free to drop by whenever I am in the office. Also feel free to contact me by telephone or email whenever necessary. Email usually works best.

addresses the limitations and risks of performance-oriented systems, including goal displacement, gaming, and other unintended consequences.

By the end of the course, students will be able to critically assess performance frameworks, interpret empirical research, and apply course concepts to real-world public organizations and policy contexts.

The following MPA core competencies will be imparted in the course:

Competency 1: To lead and manage in the public interest

Competency 2: To participate in, and contribute to, the public policy process

Competency 3: To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment

Competency 4: To articulate, apply, and advance a public service perspective

Competency 5: To communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large

Seminar Sessions

This course is conducted as a graduate seminar centered on critical discussion of assigned readings. Class sessions will combine brief instructor-led framing with student-led discussion and analysis. Students are expected to engage actively with the material and contribute substantively to class dialogue.

Small work groups will be assigned early in the semester. These groups will periodically lead discussions of the readings and facilitate collective analysis. This structure is intended to deepen understanding of the material while developing students' analytical and collaborative skills.

All students are expected to:

- Complete assigned readings prior to class
- Attend all sessions and arrive on time
- Contribute thoughtfully and consistently to discussions

The quality of participation will be evaluated based on the frequency, substance, and constructiveness of contributions, as well as preparedness and engagement with course materials.

Standards for Written Assignments

Students should strive to write papers that are high quality, cosmetically pleasing, and easy for readers to understand. These papers should be type-written in Times New Roman 12-point font and double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides. All pages should be numbered and collated into a single Microsoft Word document (no PDFs or links to cloud documents). The final paper should be submitted to the instructor by email. Format each paper, including in-text citations and references, according to the American Political Science Association Style Manual which is stored on the eLC course website. Grading will be based on adherence to instructions, quality of presentation, accuracy of

content, and evidence of course learning. Late penalties will apply on all course deliverables submitted late.²

Assignments and grades

Course grades are based upon the following components which will be discussed in more detail during the initial class session:

<u>Component</u>	<u>Percent of course grade</u>
Midterm examination	30%
Final examination	30%
Course paper	20%
Attendance and participation	<u>20%</u>
	100%

Midterm Examination

Students will complete a take-home midterm examination worth 30 percent of the course grade. This examination will involve crafting a 6–8-page essay on a set of questions distributed one week before the paper is due. The questions will focus on the theoretical and conceptual issues related to government performance such as the enduring obsession with performance over the years, the difficulty of defining and measuring performance, and the nature of New Public Management reforms that have been implemented in the United States and across the world in recent years to improve performance. Students may be asked to differentiate between important performance-related concepts such as performance measurement, performance management, and performance improvement reforms.

Final Examination

Students will complete a take-home final examination worth 30 percent of the final course grade. This examination will involve crafting answers to several questions that are distributed one week in advance. These questions are cumulative in nature and will assess the student's mastery of course learnings. Students will be asked to cast a critical eye on the topics of performance measurement, performance management, and performance improvement, and to assess the potential of recent performance improvement reforms. Another concern is managing the unintended consequences of specific reforms and of performance management systems on the whole, which can include increased job stress, distorted decision-making, and cheating.

Course Paper

Students will write a course paper on the performance management system of a specific public organization (which may implement multiple public policies simultaneously); or the performance aspects of a specific public policy (which may be implemented by multiple organizations). This case study will give students the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in the course to a public organization or public policy they are interested in, thus connecting theory to practice. Each student should send me a brief

² The late penalty for each partial or whole day late is one grade-notch on the standard grading scale of A, A- B+, B, B-, etc.

email proposal before midterm that names the public organization or public policy they want to study and explains their personal reasons for selecting it. Students should wait for my feedback and approval before commencing work on the paper. The paper should follow the standards for written assignments described earlier. There is no strict page limit but students often write approximately 15 pages plus a title page and reference list. The paper will count 20 percent of the final course grade. A brief in-class presentation may also be scheduled if time permits.

Note: Doctoral students may have substantially different deliverables, including more intensive readings and a semester-length research paper aimed for publication. The instructor will tailor these assignments for each student based upon their individual interests and needs.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are required in this course and will count 20 percent of the final grade. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to arrive on time. Avoid late arrivals and early departures because they are disruptive to the class and will count as partial absences. I will circulate an attendance roll at the beginning of each class meeting which each student should initial. This roll will serve as the official record of attendance for the course. Anyone who arrives late should notify me promptly to avoid incurring a full absence. Students who miss excessive time (more than two classes), or who frequently arrive late or leave early, should expect to receive a lowered grade in the course, regardless of their performance on graded assignments. With respect to participation, I first consider the student's attendance since being present is a prerequisite for class participation; then I consider how frequent, valuable, and constructive the student's contributions have been to the class, and how responsive the student has been to course assignments and my specific requests during the semester. Finally, I differentiate between required and voluntary participation. The latter is especially valuable and earns more credit.

Note: As a professional courtesy, please send me an email in advance if you will miss a class, arrive late or leave early, or submit a late course deliverable.

Small work groups will be formed early in the semester. These groups will lead class discussions on assigned readings and complete other assignments throughout the semester. These work groups serve dual purposes: they are important vehicles for course learning, and students gain valuable experience from working closely with others and honing their collaboration skills which are essential in contemporary public management. Contributions to group work are part of each student's attendance and participation grade.

Reasonable Accommodations

Students with disabilities that could affect their ability to perform well in the course should see me early in the semester. I am receptive to these situations and will make any reasonable accommodations. If you plan to request accommodations, 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 navigating to <https://drc.uga.edu>.

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
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.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>.

Academic Honesty

The ethical bar is set very high for aspiring public administrators and a strong work ethic is expected in this course. Students should familiarize themselves with the University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy, particularly as it relates to plagiarism and related concerns. All academic work must meet the standards contained in *A Culture of Honesty*. The UGA Student Honor Code states: “I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.” The University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty can be found at <https://ovpi.uga.edu>. Students should review these standards before submitting any written work.

In addition, all written assignments in this course should be completed individually – not collaboratively – unless otherwise stated by the instructor.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In accordance with UGA policy, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in this course is restricted. All graded work must reflect the student’s own analysis, writing, and intellectual effort.

AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, or similar systems) may be used only for limited preparatory purposes, such as:

- generating initial ideas or research questions
- identifying general topics or potential sources to consult

AI tools may not be used at any stage of producing submitted work, including:

- drafting, revising, or editing written assignments
- paraphrasing or summarizing sources
- generating arguments, outlines, or structured responses to assignment prompts

Students are expected to rely on their own skills in reading, analysis, and writing. Any use of AI beyond the limited preparatory purposes described above will be treated as a violation of the University's Academic Honesty Policy. If you are uncertain whether a particular use of AI is permissible, you should consult the instructor in advance.

Prohibition on Recording Lectures

Students are not allowed to make visual or audio recordings of any aspect of this course unless they have written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, which will include specific terms and conditions. Violation of this policy may result in discipline under the Student Code of Conduct and liability under copyright laws.

FERPA Notice

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights (see <https://reg.uga.edu/generalinformation/ferpa/>). FERPA allows disclosure of directory information (name, address, telephone, email, date of birth, place of birth, major, activities, degrees, awards, and prior schools), unless withholding is requested by writing a letter to the registrar.

Required Readings (in whole or part)

- Ammons, David N., 2019. *Performance Measurement for Managing Local Government: Getting It Right*. Irvine, CA: Melvin & Leigh Publishers. ISBN-13: 978-1733934411
- Andersen, Lotte B., Gene A. Brewer, Christian B. Jacobsen, Eva Knies, Peter Leisink, and Wouter Vandenabeele (eds.), 2021. *Managing for Public Service Performance: How People and Values Make a Difference*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0192893420
- Barrett, Kathleen, and Richard Green, 2019. *Making Government Work: The Promises and Pitfalls of Performance-informed Management*, Vol. 1. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. ISBN-13: 978-1538125670
- Bouckaert, Geert, and John Halligan, 2008. *Managing Performance: International Comparisons*. London and New York: Routledge. ISBN-13: 9780415423953

- Brewer, Gene A., 2000. *Administrative Reform and Organization Change in the Public Sector*. Democracy Project AP 24/2000. Copenhagen, Denmark: University of Copenhagen Press. ISBN-13: 9788773934487
- Kettl, Donald F., 2005. *The Global Public Management Revolution: A Report on the Transformation of Governance*, 2d ed. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press. ISBN 978-0815749196
- Light, Paul C., 2002. *Government's Greatest Achievements: From Civil Rights to Homeland Security*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. ISBN-13: 978-0815706045
- Moynihan, Donald P., 2008. *The Dynamics of Performance Management: Constructing Information and Reform*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. ISBN-13: 978-1589011946
- National Performance Review online readings:
 1. *Brief History of the National Performance Review*
<https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/npr/library/papers/bkgrd/brief.html> (February 1997)
 2. *From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government that Works Better and Costs Less* (September 1993)
<https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/npr/library/nprprt/annrpt/redtpe93/index.html>
 ISBN-13: 978-1589635715
- Peters, B. Guy, 2021. *American Public Policy: Promise and Performance*, 12th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press, Sage Publications. ISBN-13: 978-1071809167
- Radin, Beryl, 2006. *Challenging the Performance Management Movement: Accountability, Complexity, and Democratic Values*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. ISBN-13: 978-1589010918
- Talbot, Colin, 2010. *Theories of Performance: Organizational and Service Improvement in the Public Domain*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0199575954
- van Dooren, Wouter, Geert Bouckaert, and John Halligan, 2015. *Performance Management in the Public Sector*, 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge. ISBN-13: 9780415738101
- Walker, Richard M., George A. Boyne, and Gene A. Brewer, 2012. *Public Management and Performance: Research Directions*. Cambridge, UK, and New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN-13: 978-1107411678
- Wilson, Woodrow, 1887. "The Study of Administration." *Political Science Quarterly* 2, 2: 197-222.

Additional readings may be assigned during the semester. The books listed above are available in various formats from normal suppliers, including the UGA and off-campus bookstores, and the respective publishers. Some readings are also available online

through the UGA library, and some will be posted on the eLC course website. A few physical copies may be available for temporary use from the main library, departmental library, or directly from the instructor.

Tentative Course Schedule

Weekly assignments are shown on the tentative course schedule which, along with a group roster, will be distributed once the semester is underway. Students should complete all readings and written assignments before the applicable class period. This schedule will serve as a guide but not a rigid constraint throughout the semester. Some topics may take less than the allotted time, while others may require more attention. Some minor rescheduling may also occur. Any changes to the syllabus or course schedule will be announced in advance when possible. Students should check their UGA email inbox daily for updates and other information pertinent to the course.