PPPA 6000: Perspectives on Public Values
Fall 2023
Tuesday 11:10-1pm (section .10) TA: Daniela Roberts. droberts1@gwmail.gwu.edu
Tuesday 6:10-8pm (section .11) TA: Al-Batool Ibrahim. aibrahi@gwmail.gwu.edu

Instructor: Dr. Lori Brainard. brainard@gwu.edu
Student Hours: by appointment on Mondays & Tuesdays 3:30-5:00
Schedule meeting: **https://brainard.youcanbook.me/**

> "What might it mean to live our lives as if the lives of others truly mattered? One aspect of such a prospect would be our ability to take the stories of others seriously, not only as evocations of responsibility but as well as matters of "counsel." (R. I. Simon, 2000)

The Course:

Welcome to this different kind of course!

This intensive & participatory course focuses on values necessary for a functioning democratic society. Students will develop intellectual tools & habits of mind to seek out & understand other perspectives, practice productive civil discourse, & reflect on the values & experiences they bring to public service.

We will focus on the role of stories—particularly those that go unheard or misunderstood. We will aim to move beyond the "single story"—to better understand the complexity of human life, identity, values, & interactions. Nuanced understanding of oneself & others is necessary to effectively create, analyze, manage, critique, implement, & evaluate the policies & institutions that shape public life.

We will rely on literary fiction in this course. Science tells us that reading stories of this kind builds empathy. Empathy is necessary for meaningful conversation, which in turn is necessary for progress on important matters of policy & administration.

All of this will require humility, vulnerability, & empathy. We ask you to be open to making mistakes, receiving feedback, & sharing honestly with each other.

Bulletin Course Description:

This intensive course looks at the underpinnings & skills necessary for a functioning democratic society. Primary emphasis is placed on empathy & the ability to have civil discourse to create, analyze, pass, implement & evaluate policy & programs. Specific sub-topics may include privilege, diversity, inclusion, immigration, marketplace of ideas, etc. The course relies mainly on literary fiction.

What To Expect

There is a lot of weekly preparation for this course. Budget your time carefully, make a good cup of [insert preferred beverage here], & settle into a comfy chair. Expect to spend an average of 7.5 hours/week on this course. This includes roughly 2 hours per week in class & approximately 5.5 hours per week independently preparing for class & completing assignments.

Learning Objectives

This course will enable you to:

1. Seek out & understand the complexity & nuance of multiple perspectives, identities, & interactions;

2. Use empathy & discussion to understand & engage with perspectives different than your own;

3. Surface your own values, their sources, & their implications;

4. Understand concepts and frameworks underpinning the identification and understanding of multiple perspectives.

5. Create a sense of community among Trachtenberg School students to support continued appreciation of & engagement with complex, multiple perspectives in & outside of other courses.

Assessment

Your effort to address the learning objectives will be assessed through:

Participation (15 points):

Continuous engagement will help you get the most out of the course. Thinking aloud helps us to clarify our ideas and means that others can learn from you.

Your participation (comments, questions, articles, or items to share with the class) should demonstrate that you have engaged with the course's learning resources (readings, class discussion, in-class activities, outside activities, other students' engagement, etc.) in a thoughtful & reflective way. Your participation should be relevant & crafted to move along our thinking.

"Your Values" Assignment (20 points) – 3-4 pages:

A nuanced & evolving understanding of oneself is necessary to effectively participate in public life, especially as public service professionals. This assignment asks you to reflect on yourself.

(a) What are your top 3-4 values? Where do they come from?
(b) Identify a related issue position close to your heart. What do you feel about this issue? Why do you feel this way and do your feelings about this issue relate to your values? Do you have any conflicts about this?

Blackboard (Bb) comments (40 points total, 10 points per week):

> There are questions related to each week's readings (September 5, September 12, September 19, & September 26) on the Bb <<discussions>> page. Respond to the questions demonstrating that you have done the readings, thought about them, & considered the postings of classmates.

> These comments are due by 2pm on the Sunday before class.

Multiple Perspectives Plan Assignment (25 points):

> Finding diverse perspectives is crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of an issue. Similarly, the use of artificial intelligence is accelerating. This *iterative* assignment has two goals: (1) to prompt you to think intentionally about how you will seek out multiple perspectives in the future; & (2) think critically about how artificial intelligence might help us identify multiple perspectives & any limitations. After going through the steps of this assignment, you will have created a plan for seeking out multiple perspectives in the future.

> You will find below a process that the instructor generated (& then adapted) using Chat GPT to help you create a plan for identifying diverse perspectives in the future. Please do the following:

1. Read & think about the Chat GPT plan (below) for identifying multiple perspectives.
2. By responding to the questions & prompts in the process (& writing your answers), create your multiple perspectives plan.
3. Reread the Chat GPT instructions & your plan.
4. What are the limitations of the plan you created using the Chat GPT process? Is there anything left out? Has it included any unnecessary or undesirable steps? What should you change to ensure you are availing yourself of diverse set of perspectives in the future?
5. Amend your plan.
6. What obstacles might you encounter in implementing this plan as part of your life? How might you address or overcome these obstacles?

Here is the step-by-step process to guide you through completing this assignment:

Step 1. Read & think about the Chat GPT plan (below) for identifying multiple perspectives.

Step 2. Respond to the questions & prompt in writing. This will result in a *tentative* multiple perspectives plan.

Chat GPT's plan to identify multiple perspectives.

A. Identify a topic of importance to you.
B. What are your current news sources? Start by examining the news sources you currently rely on. What, if any are their biases? Do they provide a balanced representation of different perspectives? This self-assessment will help you understand the need for diversifying your news consumption.
C. What are your own biases? It's important to be aware of your own biases & preconceived notions. Understanding your own perspectives will allow you to approach news sources with a more open mind & seek out alternative viewpoints.

D. What are some additional sources on the issue that is important to you? Expand your sources: Look for outlets that represent a variety of political, cultural, & ideological viewpoints. Consider sources from different countries, regions, & demographics. Look for both mainstream & independent media organizations to get a broader range of perspectives. What do these sources add?

E. What fact-checking resources could you use when consuming information from these sources? These resources can help you evaluate the reliability of information & detect misinformation or bias.

F. Social media platforms can be valuable tools for finding diverse news perspectives, but they can also contribute to echo chambers. What pages & accounts can you follow that represent a variety of viewpoints, including those that differ from your own? Are the discussions civil & do they broaden your understanding?

G. What international sources might be useful? How will they contribute? What will they bring to the plan? Don't limit yourself to outlets based in your own country. International news sources can offer different perspectives & shed light on global events from a diverse range of viewpoints. Consider accessing news from different countries to gain a more comprehensive understanding of global issues.

H. Where might you find relevant opinion pieces & editorials? Opinion pieces can provide insights into different perspectives on specific topics. Look for respected columnists & commentators who offer diverse viewpoints, even if you may not always agree with them. This will help you develop a more well-rounded understanding of complex issues.

I. What online communities & forums can you join where people with diverse perspectives come together to discuss current events? This can expose you to a wide range of viewpoints & provide opportunities for meaningful dialogue & exchange of ideas.

J. What events & conferences might you attend to inform yourself & broaden your perspective? Keep an eye out for events & conferences that feature panels & discussions on current affairs. These gatherings often bring together experts, scholars, & journalists with diverse backgrounds & perspectives, allowing you to engage directly with different viewpoints.

K. How will you continue to develop your critical thinking about the topic of importance to you? Look for evidence, consider the credibility of sources, & question the underlying assumptions of the information presented to you. This will help you sift through biases & form informed opinions.

You now have your *tentative* multiple perspectives plan. Now please do the following:

3. Reread the Chat GPT instructions & your tentative plan.
4. What are the limitations of the plan you created using the Chat GPT process? Is there anything left out? Has it included any unnecessary or undesirable steps? What should you change to ensure you are availing yourself of diverse set of perspectives in the future? Write down your thoughts.
5. Now, *amend* your plan to include any changes suggested by steps 3 & 4. Congratulations, you now have a multiple perspectives plan!
6. What obstacles might you encounter in implementing this plan as part of your life? How might you address or overcome these obstacles?

Remember, finding diverse news perspectives requires active effort & an open mind. By following this plan & adapting it to your circumstances, you'll be better equipped to navigate the complex media landscape & gain a more comprehensive understanding of the world around you.

Turn in your work!

Course Grades

Lowest possible grade (no rounding) for A is 94.00; A- 90.00; B+ 87.00; B 83.00; B- 80.00; C+ 77.00; C 73.00; & C- 70.00.

Getting Started in This Course

1. Our course is on blackboard.gwu.edu. Click on the course & you should land right in it. You will see a couple of announcements that you should read right away. One is a welcome to the course.
2. After you read the announcements & syllabus, click on "Discussions" & then "Introductions" & then watch my video introduction of myself.
3. Please create & upload a video introduction of yourself: Go into the discussion board titled "introductions." You can use whatever video format you like. You will not be graded on this; it is merely to get to know each other so please do not spend a lot of time on it. It does not need to be polished. Do not do multiple "takes" to get it just right. The idea is to introduce yourself in a visual way & tell us a bit about you, including something unique. Students often like to show us their pet, talk about a recent trip, a professional aspiration, etc. Make your video memorable. To post your video:
   a. Create a video
   b. Click on "discussions"
   c. Click on "Introductions"
   d. Click on "Create Thread"
   e. Title the thread with your name
   f. Click inside the main text box to put your cursor in there.
   g. Click on "Attach a file"
   h. Browse your files & find your video
   i. Upload

Class Schedule

Topics & Dates	
The Context **8/29**	Reading Due: • Zaki, "Calls For Racial Justice Gained Steam With Empathy." Class Topics: • Value of multiple perspectives • Role of empathy • Catalysts & barriers to empathy In-Class: • Course Overview • Mini workshop on multiple perspectives • Adichie, "Danger of a Single Story."
	Assignment Due: • Respond to prompts on Bb.

Values & their Sources **9/5**	Readings Due: • Jennifer Haigh, *Heat & Light* (first ½) Class Topics: • Paradox of American public life? • "Deep stories"
From the Individual to Society & Back Again **9/12**	Assignment Due: • *Your Values* Assignment • Respond to prompts on Bb. Readings Due: • Jennifer Haigh, *Heat & Light* (second ½) Class Topics: • Micro-Macro issue • Social capital: bridging & bonding
Cues and Codes **9/19**	Assignment Due: • Respond to prompts on Bb. Readings Due: • Toni Morrison, *Recitatif* Class Topics: • Metaphors, & moral receptors • Identifying multiple perspectives
Applications **9/26**	Assignment Due: • Respond to prompts on Bb. Reading Due: • Colson Whitehead, *The Intuitionist* (entire) Class Topics: • Empathy, Neutrality, Impartiality, Objectivity • Workplace applications
10/1	Final Assignment Due

Course Materials

- Haigh, Jennifer. (2016). *Heat & Light: A Novel.* Ecco.
- Morrison, Toni (2022). *Recitatife: A Story.* Knopf.
- Whitehead, Colson. (2000). *The Intuitionist: A Novel.* Anchor Books.

Rubric for Paper Assignments

	Superior/Exceeds Expectations (A - A- = 22.5-25 points)	Good/Fully Meets Expectations (B+ - B- = 20-21.75 points) If your assignment satisfactorily meets requirements & expectations, you can except to fall here.	Borderline/Meets *minimal* expectations (C+ - C- = 19.25-17.5 points)	Unacceptable (F = 0) 0 points.
Required Components	Includes all components & exceeds all requirements. Each component is addressed thoroughly. Student has gone *above & beyond* the requirements for the assignment.	**Includes all components & meets all requirements. Each component is addressed thoroughly.**	Assignment is missing some components &/or does not fully meet the requirements. Some parts of the assignment are not addressed or are vague or are incomplete.	Assignment excludes components or does not address requirements. Parts of assignment are addressed minimally, inadequately, or not at all.

The Fine Print

It's often said (in jest of course) that public administrators love fine print…

Without prior approval, late work cannot be accepted for full credit. Grades will be discounted by one half grade (e.g., A becomes A-, A- becomes B+, etc.) for every three days (or portion thereof) that assignments are late. I do not change grades except in cases of mathematical error. If you wish to contest a grade you must submit a brief, professional memo stating the grade you believe is merited & justifying the case for a changed grade with examples from your work & referencing professor feedback.

Students wishing to contest a grade are required to write a professional memo stating the grade they believe is merited & outlining & justifying their case for a changed grade. Student must use examples from her/his work, referencing professor feedback.

University Policy on Religious Holidays

In accordance with University policy, students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. For details & policy, see "Religious Holidays" at provost.gwu.edu/policies-procedures-&-guidelines

Support for Students Outside the Classroom

Mental Health Services 202-994-5300
> The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance & referral to address students' personal, social, career, & study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis & emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual & small group), & referrals. counselingcenter.gwu.edu/

Academic Integrity Code
> Academic Integrity is an integral part of the educational process, & GW takes these matters very seriously. Violations of academic integrity occur when students fail to cite research sources properly, engage in unauthorized collaboration, falsify data, & in other ways outlined in the Code of Academic Integrity. Students accused of academic integrity violations should contact the Office of Academic Integrity to learn more about their rights & options in the process. Outcomes can range from failure of assignment to expulsion from the University, including a transcript notation. The Office of Academic Integrity maintains a permanent record of the violation.
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> More information is available from the Office of Academic Integrity at studentconduct.gwu.edu/academic-integrity. The University's "Guide of Academic Integrity in Online Learning Environments" is available at studentconduct.gwu.edu/guide-academic-integrity-online-learning-environments. Contact information: rights@gwu.edu or 202-994-6757.

A full range of academic support is offered virtually in fall 2020. See coronavirus.gwu.edu/top-faqs for updates.

Tutoring & course review sessions are offered through Academic Commons in an online format. See
> academiccommons.gwu.edu/tutoring

Writing & research consultations are available online. See academiccommons.gwu.edu/writing-research-help

Coaching, offered through the Office of Student Success, is available in a virtual format. See
> studentsuccess.gwu.edu/academic-program-support

Academic Commons offers several short videos addressing different virtual learning strategies for the unique circumstances
> of the fall 2020 semester. See academiccommons.gwu.edu/study-skills. They also offer a variety of live virtual
> workshops to equip students with the tools they need to succeed in a virtual environment. See tinyurl.com/gw-virtual-learning

Writing Center GW's Writing Center cultivates confident writers in the University community by facilitating collaborative,
> critical, & inclusive conversations at all stages of the writing process. Working alongside peer mentors, writers
> develop strategies to write independently in academic & public settings. Appointments can be booked online. See
> gwu.mywconline.

Academic Commons provides tutoring & other academic support resources to students in many courses. Students can
> schedule virtual one-on-one appointments or attend virtual drop-in sessions. Students may schedule an
> appointment, review the tutoring schedule, access other academic support resources, or obtain assistance
> at academiccommons.gwu.edu.

Disability Support Services (DSS) 202-994-8250 Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential
> impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services to establish eligibility & to coordinate reasonable
> accommodations. disabilitysupport.gwu.edu

Counseling & Psychological Services 202-994-5300 GW's Colonial Health Center offers counseling & psychological services,
> supporting mental health & personal development by collaborating directly with students to overcome challenges
> & difficulties that may interfere with academic, emotional, & personal success. healthcenter.gwu.edu/counseling-&-psychological-services

Safety & Security
- In an emergency: call GWPD 202-994-6111 or 911
- For situation-specific actions: review the Emergency Response Handbook at safety.gwu.edu/emergency-response-handbook
- In an active violence situation: Get Out, Hide Out, or Take Out. See go.gwu.edu/shooterpret
- Stay informed: safety.gwu.edu/stay-informed

Policies in Public Administration & Public Policy Courses

Incompletes
> A student must consult with the instructor to obtain a grade of I (incomplete) no later than the last day of classes in a semester. At that time, the student & instructor will both sign the CCAS contract for incompletes & submit a copy to the School Director. Please consult the TSPPPA Student Handbook or visit https://tspppa.gwu.edu/documents-&-forms for the complete CCAS policy on incompletes.

Submission of Written Work Products Outside of the Classroom
> It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an instructor receives each written assignment. Students can submit written work electronically only with the express permission of the instructor.

Submission of Written Work Products after Due Date: Policy on Late Work
> All work must be turned in by the due date in order to receive full credit for assignments, unless the instructor expressly makes an exception. [Note: Professor Brainard's policy is that without prior approval, late work is reduced by one-half grade for every three days (or parts thereof) that it is late].

Academic Honesty
> Please consult the "policies" section of the GW student handbook for the university code of academic integrity. Note the definition of plagiarism: "intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information." All examinations, papers, & other graded work products & assignments are to be completed in conformance with the George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE CODE & TO FOLLOW IT.

Changing Grades After Completion of Course
> Grade changes **cannot** be made after conclusion of the semester, other than in case of clerical error.

The Syllabus
> This syllabus is a guide to the course for the student. Sound educational practice requires flexibility & the instructor may therefore, at their discretion, change content & requirements during semester.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
> In order to receive accommodations on the basis of disability, a student must give notice & provide proper documentation to the Office of Disability Support Services, 202-994-8250. Accommodations will be made based upon the recommendations of the DSS Office.

Letter grading is based on a four-point scale as follows:
> **3.7-4.0 A:** Excellent & exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is *unusually* thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, & well written. Work is of *exceptional* professional quality.
> **3.6-3.69 A-:** Very Good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Shows signs of creativity & strong understanding of appropriate analytical approaches, is thorough, well-reasoned, meets professional standards.
> **3.3-3.59 B+: Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned & thorough, without serious analytical shortcomings. This grade indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of this graduate course**.
> **3.0-3.29 B:** Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student with some evident weaknesses. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but the understanding or application of some important issues is less than complete.
> **2.7-2.9 B-:** Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student but meets minimal expectations in the course. Understanding of key issues is incomplete. (A B- average in all courses is not sufficient to sustain graduate status in good standing.)
> **2.3-2.6 C+:** Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; rarely meets minimal expectations for the course. Work is poorly developed or flawed by numerous errors & misunderstandings.

2.0-2.29 C: Deficient – see above

1.7-1.9 C-: Deficient – see above

Less than 1.7 F: Unacceptable: Work fails to meet minimal expectations or course credit for a graduate student. Performance has consistently failed to meet minimum course requirements. Weaknesses & limitations are pervasive.