



# Public Policy & Administration

**Course:** PPPA 6001. Introduction to Public Service and Public Administration

**Semester:** Fall 2023      **Time/Place:** Tuesdays, 6:10-8:00 p.m., Phillips Hall 348

**Instructor:** Professor Jennifer Brinkerhoff  
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## Why are you here?

Welcome to our MPA program! You are here because you want to make a contribution in the world. We are here to try to help you do that. You will need a professional toolbox that contains more than technical skills. You will need to be skilled in perception, responsive adaptation, critical thinking, questioning assumptions, navigating ambiguity, and practical reasoning. You will need to be persuasive, verbally and in writing. You will need a basis for problem-solving and a way of sharing your reasoning about those solutions with others. You will also need a way to seek out what you don't know you don't know so you can continue to develop your professional thinking long after this course is over. Finally, you will need a way to think about your own place in the field. This course will help you with all of the above.

As a discipline, Public Administration has a standard canon: a generally agreed upon collection of writings that outlines the field. We will use that—along with materials that challenge, counter, and contest it—to consider, understand, and make and communicate decisions around public problems. You will do this individually and in teams.

There is very little black and white in public service. This course addresses how we can begin to make some sense of the grey and take informed and justifiable decisions and actions within what Heidi Schreck calls the penumbra—the only partially illuminated spaces surrounding the Constitution, and by extension, our formal mandates as public servants.

## What will you get from this course?

We designed this course to socialize you into the profession of public service and its oath, sometimes implicit, to uphold democratic values (and the governance system that supports these); and to strive for efficiency, effectiveness, and citizen responsiveness. This course will also begin to prepare you for a public service career with impact.

My aspirational goals for you in this course are that you will:

- gain a sophisticated understanding of and think strategically about how to navigate the complex contexts of public service and public administration;

- appreciate the importance of human behavior, identity, and relationships in creating impactful and sustainable public service outcomes;
- think beyond obvious and technical solutions to focus on interventions that are feasible and sustainable; and
- develop the baseline skills for successful professional careers: professional writing and working in teams.

## What will you learn?

As a result of completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe the primary frameworks that define the roles and objectives of public administration in a democratic society.
2. Select and apply the appropriate guiding frameworks to understand the contextual opportunities and constraints you face in a particular public administration challenge, including those related to the broader governance system, organization structure and policies, and human behavior.
3. Appreciate how citizens' expectations and values, and public administrators' assumptions about human nature influence service delivery.
4. Recognize the powerful contributions all individuals can make, and the particular value of those contributions that may be unique to one's identity and experience.
5. Commit to and effectively work in a team, including providing effective feedback.
6. Write effectively in a professional style, succinctly making and supporting arguments.

## What should you expect?

I organized this course with a variety of learning formats, including mini-lectures, discussions, case applications, a group project, and feedback and peer review. Our class time and every activity are designed to give you opportunities to practice applying what you are learning. I will be providing feedback on your work so that you can continue to learn and improve your application of the frameworks and ideas we will learn together, your professional writing skills, and also your critical and strategic *thinking*. You will also provide feedback to each other, both to help each other learn, and to learn how to provide feedback effectively.

You should be prepared to have homework every week, beyond pre-class assignments (reading, listening, and/or viewing assigned materials). You will have written assignments both as part of a team and independently. You should expect to spend about 112 hours on this course. This includes, on average, about two hours per week in class sessions (about 30 hours total) and approximately six hours per week on average (about 83 hours total) on out-of-class activities, including but not limited to reading, group work, and class preparation and assignments.

## How will we learn together?

I hope we will create a fruitful and welcoming learning community. To do so we need a rigorous and lively exchange of ideas, where you all have an opportunity to speak freely and know that you will be heard and respected, even if others may not agree with you. This means we need to approach each other with empathy and intentional listening, even if we may share different ideas, politics, and identities.

For a variety of reasons, some of you may be more comfortable speaking out than others. We need to make sure we all recognize and value the potential and contributions of each one of us and create the space and comfort for all to contribute. We need to respect each other as individuals and approach each other with wonder and curiosity rather than assumptions and biases.

If we work towards these ends, we will, together, learn more about our public administration course subject matter as well as further develop the skills and relationships crucial to an effective and meaningful public service career.

## How will I know you are learning?

I will ask you to complete assignments both as a team and individually. I designed these assignments to emphasize practical reasoning, writing skills, and peer review/feedback. I briefly introduce the assignments below. You can find detailed assignment descriptions and rubrics on Blackboard under the “Assignments” and “Writing Lab” tabs.

Each week I will expect you to prepare for our class session by reading, listening, and/or viewing assigned materials. I will also ask you to complete the following:

- two papers as a team, based on in-class exercises;
- an individual analytic paper building from your team’s investigation of a real-world program and your deliberations about and application of course concepts to that program;
- two individual written reflections; and
- peer review and feedback exercises.

These assignments build from in-class exercises, discussions, and teamwork. If you are absent from class, it will be more difficult for you to successfully complete the assignments. Beyond these requirements, the course includes a practitioner speaker component, also described below.

You will see that I have intentionally front-loaded a lot of the work for this course, and it will be a fast pace of work, especially at the beginning. This ensures you will have more time to reflect on and practice what you are learning throughout the semester, and modify your work products accordingly.

### Participation (10%)

Participation is the glue that holds together and supports all of our learning objectives, both for you to learn and for others to do so. It includes preparing for class (reading/listening/watching as assigned) and participating fully in all class discussions and activities. For all of our sakes, you need to attend all class meetings, including at least one session that will be delivered virtually.

I want to ensure that you understand the material at each step so that you can master what comes next, so I will also ask you to submit reflections on the readings (concept clarification requests, questions, and/or points of interest) **in advance of class meetings**.

I want us to create a strong foundation for our learning together from the very beginning of our class. For our second session, when you will be reading some foundational pieces, I will ask you to submit some reflections **by noon the day before class**. This exercise will help me to understand what you have learned and how you are engaging with the reading. I will ask you to:

- Name **3** things you learned from the reading that you did not know before;
- Name **2** things you found interesting in the readings; and
- Name **1** thing you would like to learn more about.

Other times during the semester (see schedule below), I will ask you to simply submit (by noon the day before class) one or two sentences about the reading that could be concept clarification requests, questions, and/or points of interest. I will use these submissions to inform what we will do in class that week.

### Team Component (5% beyond writing lab, for a total of 35%)

I designed this team component because public administration is rarely a solo effort in the real world, and you will benefit from building on others' ideas. You will learn about and gain skills in team dynamics. As a team, you will negotiate and submit a team agreement to guide your work together. You will also learn to and provide formal feedback to your teammates during the course of your work. Twice during the semester, I will ask you to provide a feedback memo to each of your teammates, which will not be graded. I will ask you to consider these in your final reflection paper (described below). We will discuss teams and feedback in class. You can find resources for the team agreement and providing feedback on the course Blackboard page.

The team component consists of: a team agreement (1%); two team papers applying practical reasoning to case examples (see Writing Lab below); peer review of another team's work (1%); a team project (3%) that culminates in individually produced analytic papers; and team process feedback and reflection.

### Writing Lab (30%)

I designed the Writing Lab to reinforce good professional writing skills. Workplace writing is significantly different from the kind of academic or descriptive writing you may be accustomed to. You will apply this professional writing style in two team papers, and in your individual analytic paper.

I want to make sure you have ample opportunity to practice workplace writing and receive feedback along the way so that you can succeed in your writing assignments for this and future courses in the MPA program, and as a professional in the workplace. To that end, you will have an opportunity to re-write each of your team papers, based on feedback I and your peers provide. The two team papers are the basis for that practice. Following the relevant in-class exercise (September 19 and 26), you will have one week to submit your initial drafts. I will provide feedback within one week. I will ask you to submit a second draft of your first paper (responding to my feedback) by October 17 for the peer-review exercise on October 17. I will provide feedback on each paper once more before your final submissions, due November 7.

Your final papers should look very different from your initial submission. I encourage you to aim for your best work in your initial submission. Your starting place in this process will impact how far you can go in the time we have together.

The same writing style and structure is expected for the individual analytic papers.

### Individual analytic paper and team project (35%)

As a team, you will choose one of the twelve [Grand Challenges from the National Academy of Public Administration](#) and then choose a program in a federal agency or nonprofit organization that addresses some aspect of your selected Grand Challenge.

The objective of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to apply the concepts and guiding frameworks from the course to a real-world program, and to discover how they can assist you in better understanding the contextual opportunities and constraints of a public administration endeavor.

*This is not a research paper.* You will work together to identify and discuss how materials from the course readings and class discussions apply to your team's selected program. Each team member will write their own individual analysis paper.

I have included in the course schedule milestone dates and submissions to ensure you are making timely progress. These initial submissions are pre-requisites to completing each of the component parts of this assignment (and receive independent points towards your grade), and you may adjust these components as you reflect further on and perhaps learn more about your team's selected program.

### Reflective journal entries (20%)

I will ask you to complete two reflective journal entries. The focus is on self-awareness and self-assessment to inform your effective practical reasoning, interpersonal relationships, and behavior as a public administrator.

The purpose of the first journal entry is to raise your awareness about your personal preferences and potential biases related to *how* you gather information and make decisions. You will reflect on and validate your perceived Myers-Briggs Type and identify implications for how you will work with, manage, and lead others in public service.

The second journal entry is a reflection on the overall course experience, including the content related to the public administration profession and where you see yourself within this profession, your team experience, related feedback, and implications for your professional growth.

These reflections and any additions/amendments you make will be one of the important foundations for reflecting on your learnings and evolving career plans at the end of the MPA program and beyond.

### Practitioner Speaker Series

In collaboration with TSPPPA Career Services Office, we have organized a practitioner speaker panel from among TSPPPA alumni. The panel will introduce you to the three sectors operating in the public service (public, private, and nonprofit), in order to inform your thinking about your role and place in public administration. The panel will take the place of one of our regularly scheduled class meetings (noon, November 28) and does not require additional reading or time outside of class.

The purpose of the PPPA 6001 Practitioner Speaker Panel is pedagogical and part of required class time. These are not recruitment talks, nor do they address any one specific organization (including the speakers' employers). Rather, we will ask invited speakers to talk about what careers in their sector look like generally, and how they decided to move between sectors during their careers, if relevant.

### Summary Calendar: Assignments, Assessment, and Due Dates

10 pts 10%	Participation and preparation (see assignment description)	Ongoing
	Complete MBTI <a href="#">here</a>	No later than August 31
5 pts 5%	Self-Reflection 1: MBTI validation	September 19

1 pt 1%	Team agreement	September 19
1 pt 1%	Team's selected grand challenge and related program	September 26
	Team paper 1, draft 1	September 26
	Team paper 2, draft 1	October 3
	Revised team paper 1 for peer review	October 17
1 pt 1%	Application notes 1: application of three PA paradigms, and values orientations to selected program	October 17
	Team peer review exercise (in class)	October 17
1 pt 1%	Final peer review to peer teams	October 24
	Mid-term feedback exercise	Complete by October 27
30 pts 30%	Team papers 1 and 2 final drafts	November 7
1 pt 1%	Application notes 2: application of human nature assumptions to program implementing organization and accountability to citizens and other stakeholders	November 15
	Final feedback to your teammates	No later than November 17
35 pts 35%	Individual analytic paper	December 5
15 pts 15%	Final reflection	December 8

## Course Schedule

Class	Class Topic	Readings/Pre-class work	Activities/Assignments
<b>Setting the stage/The big picture</b>			
1 8/29	Why are you here? And what is public administration?	Listen to <a href="#">Throughline: The Shadows of the Constitution<sup>1</sup></a> (46 minutes)  "The Service Choice Spiral," 8-11.  "The New Public Service Revisited," 664-670.  "Theory Competency for MPA-Educated Practitioners," 111-114.	Mini-lecture on the history and paradigms of public administration  Open discussion of penumbra and other readings
2 9/5	Why do we have the government we have?	"Public Administrative Theory and the Separation of Powers," 219-225.  "Bureaucracy and the Constitution," 65-70.  "Representation as a Constitutional Defect," 40-53.	<b>Due by noon 9/4: 3-2-1 reading reflection</b>  Clarification of questions  Mini-Lecture  <a href="#">REGISTER FOR NEXT WEEK'S WORKSHOP</a>
3 9/12	What do you and others bring to the table?  VIRTUAL meeting	"Teams and Teambuilding" PowerPoint show (43 minutes).  Team building handouts.  Rec.: "The wisdom of teams," 84-93.	MBTI Workshop Access the workshop <a href="#">here</a>

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<sup>1</sup> Please note, this podcast contains material that may be difficult to hear, including descriptions of domestic violence.



Class	Class Topic	Readings/Pre-class work	Activities/Assignments
<b>Looking Out</b>			
4 9/19	How do we know we're serving citizens?	<p>"Repositioning American PA?," 278-287.</p> <p>"Administrative burden and social equity," 104-117.</p> <p><a href="#">Reinventing government book summary</a>, 1-3.</p> <p><a href="#">"Reinventing government – two decades later,"</a> 1-4.</p>	<p><b>Due by noon 9/18:</b> Reading reflection</p> <p><b>Due by class:</b> Self reflection: MBTI validation</p> <p><b>Due by class:</b> Team agreement</p> <p>In-class exercise: Babcock place</p>
5 9/26	What is the public interest?	<p>"The elements of a good society," 3-33.</p> <p>"Different Sets of Moral Foundations," <b>1029-1033, 1040-1041 (General Discussion)</b></p> <p>"PA, diversity, and the ethic of getting things done," 1191-1213.</p> <p>"Democracy &amp; social feminist ethics of Jane Addams," 418-438.</p>	<p><b>Due by noon 9/25:</b> Reading reflection</p> <p><b>Due by class:</b> Team's selected grand challenge and related program</p> <p><b>Due by class:</b> Team paper Babcock place (first draft)</p> <p>In-class exercise: Voting rights</p>
6 10/3	How does representation matter in public bureaucracies?	<p>"RB: Lever to enhance social equity, coproduction, &amp; democracy," 21-28.</p> <p>"Will More Black Cops Matter?," 206-214.</p> <p>"Feminism, masculinity, and active representation," 1101-1123.</p> <p>"The Myth of Representation," video (24 minutes).</p>	<p><b>Due by noon 10/2:</b> Reading reflection</p> <p><b>Due by class:</b> Team paper Voting rights (first draft)</p>

Class	Class Topic	Readings/Pre-class work	Activities/Assignments
		Recommended: "Women bureaucrats in male-dominated professions," 1063-1072.	
7 10/10	What contexts do you have to navigate?	<p>"The science of 'Muddling through' revisited," 249-251.</p> <p>"Managing boundaries in American administration," 10-18.</p> <p>"Democracy &amp; the NPS," 3-14.</p> <p>"Racist fake news in US history," 477-488.</p> <p>Rec.: "<a href="#">Michael Rushton on Lindblom's 'Science of muddling through'</a>," video (12 minutes).</p>	<b>Due by noon 10/9:</b> Reading reflection
10/12-13	Fall Break		
<b>Looking In</b>			
8 10/17	Feedback and non-violent communication	<p>"Feedback give and take," PowerPoint show (50 minutes)</p> <p>"The lost art of feedback," 1-10.</p> <p>"Find the coaching in the criticism," 1-5.</p> <p>"Three triggers that block feedback," 15-26.</p> <p>"Learn how wiring and temperament affect your story," 147-164.</p>	<p><b>Due by noon 10/17:</b> Team paper 1 second draft due for peer-review</p> <p><b>Due by class:</b> Summary notes: application of three PA paradigms, and values orientations to selected program</p> <p>Feedback Q&amp;A</p> <p>Peer-review exercise</p> <p>Team work time</p>

Class	Class Topic	Readings/Pre-class work	Activities/Assignments
		Familiarize yourself with the Center for Nonviolent Communication: <a href="https://www.cnvc.org/">https://www.cnvc.org/</a>	
9 10/24	What PA history do you need to know?	<p>"Study of PA," 1-16.</p> <p><a href="#">"The racist legacy of Woodrow Wilson,"</a> 1-9.</p> <p>"Significance of the <i>Administrative State</i>," 53-56.</p> <p>"American empire and the origin of PA," 185-194.</p> <p><i>Accounting for slavery</i>, 187-204.</p>	<p><b>Due by noon 10/23:</b> Reading reflection</p> <p><b>Due by class:</b> final peer review to peer teams</p> <p><b>Due by 10/27:</b> complete mid-term feedback exercise</p>
10 10/31	What should our organizations look like?	<p><a href="#">"Management theory of Max Weber,"</a> 1-3.</p> <p>"Managing state government operations," 307-335.</p> <p>"Mary Parker Follett enduring contribution," 520-528.</p> <p><a href="#">Mary Parker Follett</a>, video (4:39 minutes).</p> <p>"Care-centered approach for nonprofit management," 286-301.</p>	<p><b>Due by noon 10/30:</b> Reading reflection</p>
11 11/7	Who is governed? Who is managed? (Underlying assumptions about human nature)	<p><a href="#">"Taylorism on ABC World Report,"</a> video (4:48 minutes)</p> <p>"The framing of the issue," 27-52.</p> <p><a href="#">"Federalist No. 10 Part 1,"</a> video (9:57 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Due by noon 11/6:</b> Reading reflection</p> <p><b>Due by class:</b> Team papers 1 and 2 (final versions)</p> <p>In-class exercise: Case of rural democracy</p>
12 11/14	What drives human behavior?	<p><a href="#">"The Hawthorne Effect,"</a> video (3:17 minutes)</p>	<p><b>Due by noon 11/13:</b> Reading reflection</p>

Class	Class Topic	Readings/Pre-class work	Activities/Assignments
		<p><a href="#">“Mayo’s Hawthorne Effect,”</a> video (6:32 minutes)</p> <p><a href="#">“Douglas McGregor’s Theory X and Theory Y,”</a> video (7:37 minutes)</p> <p>“Performance-related pay,” 39-48.</p> <p>“Transformational leadership &amp; PSM,” 710-716.</p>	<p><b>Due by 5 pm 11/15:</b> Application notes 2: application of human nature assumptions to program implementing organization and accountability to citizens</p> <p><b>By 11/17:</b> Final feedback to your teammates</p>
11/20-25	Thanksgiving Break		
<b>Looking Ahead</b>			
13 11/28	Where will you serve?		<p>Alumni practitioner panel</p> <p>Live Zoom 12-1 pm. Otherwise we will view the recording virtually together starting at 6:10.</p> <p>We will all meet virtually to reflect on it 7:15-8:00 pm</p>
14 12/5	Final course reflections		<p><b>Due by class:</b> individual analytic papers</p> <p><b>Due by 11/8:</b> Final reflection</p> <p>Final course reflections</p>

## Our shared responsibilities

1. The Syllabus: This syllabus is your guide to this course. To ensure our learning objectives, we still have to be flexible. I may at some points during the semester find a need to change content and/or requirements.
2. Religious holidays: If you are religiously observant, you should notify me the first week of classes regarding any session that you will miss.
3. Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: We want to accommodate your needs on the basis of disability as we can. To do so, you need to give notice and provide documentation to the Office of Disability Support Services, Rome Hall, 801 22nd St., NW Suite 102, 202-994-8250 (see <https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu>). I will make the accommodations recommended by the DSS Office.
4. Support for Students Under Stress: I recognize that coursework can be very stressful, and especially when combined with internships, work, and emerging challenges in one's personal life. I want to ensure you have all the support you need. I encourage you to seek support from the university's Counselling and Psychological Services in the Colonial Health Center (located on the ground floor in the Marvin Center). Please see their webpage for the services available and to make an appointment: <https://healthcenter.gwu.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services>.
5. Academic Honesty: I assume you will all act with integrity. The university requires us to express our expectation that you know and follow the University's Code of Academic Integrity (see <http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>). Please make sure you understand the definition of plagiarism so that you do not inadvertently violate the code: "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." If you have any questions or confusion whether or not particular academic practices or resources are permitted, please ask me for clarification.
6. When you're running late: I know life happens. If something happens beyond the usual stresses of managing a full plate (e.g., you get sick or have a family issue) and you need an extension, contact me before the due date and let's discuss. If I haven't heard from you and your assignment is late, I will reduce your grade by one-half grade for every three days (or parts thereof) that it is late.
7. Incompletes: If you want to receive an incomplete (grade of I), you need to consult with me no later than the last day of classes in a semester. The University policy on incompletes requires that your previous work completed be at least satisfactory and that you complete the remaining (incomplete) work within a year. Please visit <http://bulletin.gwu.edu/university-regulations/> for the complete University policy on incompletes.
8. Changing Grades After Completion of Course: I can't make any changes in grades after the conclusion of the semester, except in cases of clerical error.
9. If you want to contest a grade: Write me a professional memo outlining your case, along with supporting examples from the submitted assignment, using the relevant rubric.