Instructor: Dr. Lori Brainard
Email: brainard@gwu.edu
Class Meets: Wednesdays 3:30-6
Student Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00 by appointment
Schedule meeting: **https://brainard.youcanbook.me/**
Location: Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

PPPA 6000: Perspectives on Public Values

"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, perhaps unexpected, kind of course!

This intensive & participatory course focuses on the values necessary for a functioning democratic society. Students will reflect on the values & experiences they bring to public service, as well as develop the intellectual tools to understand other perspectives & engage in productive civil discourse. A particular focus is on the role of stories—those that are dominant & well-accepted, as well as those that go unheard or misunderstood. The aim of this course is to move each of our thinking beyond the single story—to better understand the complexity of human life, identity, values, & interactions. This type of nuanced understanding of oneself & one another is necessary to effectively create, analyze, manage, critique, implement, & evaluate the policies & institutions that shape our public life. It is also the foundation on which to build lasting societal change.

In our polarized & institutionally gridlocked society, and exacerbated by living in our own media & consumption bubbles, we have a collective tendency to craft over-simplified stories & project them onto others. Then, based on those projections, we undertake efforts to change their minds about controversial issues. Without empathy & meaningful conversation, we will not make progress on important matters of policy & administration.

This is not a typical course for a Master of Public Administration (MPA) or Master of Public Policy (MPP) program. MPA/MPP courses usually cover statistics, budgeting, economics, management, & so on. Developing, analyzing & implementing policies & programs requires a deep understanding of others. It also requires a deep understanding of yourself & your many

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layers & roles, as well as of the skills & techniques to develop those understandings & to continue to do so throughout your careers. Novels, studies show, help us do that.

We start with a broad question: Why can't we all agree? We will explore the various sources of values of individuals' & groups' deep stories (including our own). Next, we will ask: How might we understand each other better? We will use three different models (from sociology, linguistics, & psychology) as possible lenses through which to understand others. Finally, we ask what can each of us do in our own work to practice some of the ideas we have discussed.

To do all of this, we will focus on the lives of ordinary people & how they understand the world & navigate their place in it. We will do this through stories in literary fiction that will foster discussions about such topics as diversity, equity, & inclusion in its many forms (socioeconomic, religion, race, gender identity, & issues you will bring up).

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 narrative non-fiction.

Course Environment

Deep reflection & learning require humility, vulnerability, & empathy. This course promotes these ways of being. We ask you to set aside the ways in which you are sure you already know what's right, what is happening, & what should be done. We also ask you to be open to making mistakes, receiving feedback, & sharing honestly with each other.

You will do a lot of reading 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 of guided, synchronous time with the instructor and approximately 5 ½ hours per week of independent, asynchronous time spent on viewing & reading, preparation for class, & completion of assignments.

Technology

You will need: A computer with WIFI; a good WIFI connection; a way to make videos (e.g. with computer or phone), access to Slack; access to our course on Blackboard.

You may be new to online learning, & that's okay. I suspect we will all have to deal with technological hiccups, especially at first. My advice for the synchronous sessions:

Make sure you are some place reasonably quiet, so that you can hear me & we can hear you.

Make sure you have a strong-enough signal; public wi-fi is probably not good enough.

Try several devices to see which one works best for you. Blackboard Collaborate is supposed to work across all operating systems.

Be flexible when technological glitches happen (which is a given).

Mute your mic when you are not speaking.

Turn on your video so we can all see each other.

Seek technological help when necessary by contacting the Division of Information Technology (https://it.gwu.edu/student-technology-guide and online.gwu.edu/student-support)

Course Process

Well before each synchronous class session, watch the video presentation associated with each session. You can find these on our Blackboard course under "Presentations to be viewed before class." Share your thoughts about the video and the readings on the associated Slack channel. During weeks when you are not the discussion leader, you should post your comments (see "asynchronous participation" assignment) before Tuesday at 12noon. We will use class time for a more detailed discussion of the readings, activities, & exercises. You can revisit any of the online discussions as ideas come to you.

There are some special considerations for online courses. Research shows that students who do best are able to self-motivate, stay on schedule & organize themselves & their work. Research also shows that students find this harder to do for online class than in-person classes. I have taken several steps to support you in this process. These include: using Slack outside of class time to keep our discussions going in a spontaneous way & in a way that helps you navigate your school-work & your other responsibilities; A discussion feature called "Ask the Professor" on Slack, where you can ask questions the answers to which you think the entire class might benefit from hearing (about assignments, e.g.); & synchronous, "in-class" time. Patience is a key quality that we should all bring to on-line teaching & learning. Technology is unpredictable.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Identify & understand the complexity & nuance of multiple perspectives, identities, & interactions.

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2. Use empathy to move beyond stereotypes & reach across boundaries to understand & engage with perspectives different than your own

3. Surface your own values & the assumptions that animate them, their sources, & their implications.

4. Recognize the role of your values & identity in shaping your lived experiences.

5. Consider the different (inadequate) options available to individuals confronting marginalization & discrimination.

6. Imagine & articulate how others might see you & your status/place in society.

7. Create a sense of community among Trachtenberg School students to support continued appreciation of & engagement with complex, multiple perspectives.

Assessment

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

Participation (15 points):

Your synchronous & asynchronous, (including comments, questions, articles or items to share with the class), should demonstrate that you have read/engaged with learning resources (readings, class discussion, in-class activities, outside activities, other students' engagement & participation, video presentations, etc.) in a thoughtful & analytical/reflective way. Your participation should be relevant, on-point, & crafted to move along our discussion & thinking.

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

This assignment asks you to reflect on yourself & on the reading. An excellent reflection will link the two:

(a) What are your top 3-4 values? Where do they come from? (NB: You will use this for your final assignment).

(b) Identify a related issue position close to your heart. What do you feel about this issue? Why do you feel this way? Do you have any conflicts about this?

(c) How do the characters' experiences shape their values stories?

(d) Reflect on reading/class discussion. This should be a thoughtful, critical reflection on some character, issue, or aspect of the text. Focus on something noteworthy, surprising, or perplexing, & discuss that in detail. A "reflection" is not simply a personal opinion ("I like it"): while it is an opinion (your personal take on the

matter), that opinion has to be reasoned & substantiated ("I like it because it helps me understand this"). Also, "critical" does not mean a negative critique is necessary: it can be negative ("This argument fails because..."), but a good critique can be positive (praising a good argument and explaining its virtues.

Serve as Discussion Leader (20 points)—Each student will be assigned to serve as asynchronous discussion leader for one week. You are to post a presentation (approx. 5 minutes) to Voice Thread. In your presentation, identify your reaction to an issue, idea, character (etc.), in the reading for that week. What is your key takeaway? What two questions do you have for the other students in the class? These presentations can be narrated PowerPoints that you post as a new Voice Thread or videos that you create within Voice Thread. Please be sure your presentation or video is available to the class by noon on the Saturday before the class session for which you are a leader. There will be more than one leader each week. Please confer with each other to try to avoid duplication (complementarity is fine).

Asynchronous comments (20 points)—Each week that you are not a discussion leader, between 1pm on Saturday & our synchronous time, you are to post 3 comments on the presentations or videos posted by the discussion leader. Spend about 30-60 minutes viewing/reading the presentations & commenting on them.

Multiple Perspectives Assignment (25 points)—Revise Parts A & B from "your values assignment" (above) to constitute Part I of this Multiple Perspectives Assignment. For the issue you identified & discussed in part one, seek out different voices (people who hold a different view, people with different identities than you). What are the assumptions & values of those who disagree with you. Discuss. Can you identify complexity beyond a simple dichotomous (e.g. left-right) position? What are the opportunities or areas for potential fruitful dialogue, policy, research on this topic? Part 1 of this assignment was 3-4 pages. Part II should also be 3-4 pages. Your finished product should be no longer than 8 pages.

Course Grades

Lowest possible grade 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

1. Our course is on Blackboard.gwu.edu and you should see it listed. Click on the course and 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, with a bit more detail than you already have. The second announcement details how this course will operate each week, which is very important to know. In general, you will have lectures and videos to watch (as well as reading the books) before each class session. In class—that is, during our synchronous time together—we will have a discussion and then engage in

various activities and exercises. There are ways for you to engage throughout the week and the announcement on Blackboard talks about them.

2. After you read the announcements and syllabus, click on "Discussions" and then "Introductions" and 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 and tell us a bit about you. 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 in order to put your cursor in there.
   g. Click on Attach a file
   h. Browse your files and find your video
   i. Upload

4. To find our synchronous class sessions: Go to our course on Blackboard. Click on "tools." Click on "Blackboard Collaborate Ultra." You will see a class session listed there. Just click. Please be sure to have your video on so we can all see you and get to know each other a bit. Well before the class session—a couple of days or so—you must watch the video presentation associated with that session. Click on "Presentations for Viewing Before Class" and then click on the Presentation for Week 1 called "Let's Get Going!" You should do this each week. Presentations must be viewed before class.

5. Between class sessions, we can use Slack to share thoughts, ideas, connections to current events, etc. I chose Slack especially because it suits the nature of online learning. You do not need to be at a desk and you do not need to set a time. When you get an idea, post it. You can be home, at work, at your desk, on the beach. The way slack works is that each "space" is called a workgroup. So we will have a "workgroup" called PPPA 6000 Perspectives on Public Values. In that workgroup, you'll see different channels. There is a channel dedicated to each class session. I did this in order to keep discussions specific to the different course topics. Please send me your GW email address and I will place you in our Slack workgroup.

6. Let me know if you have any questions. If you think your question is one for which the entire class would benefit from hearing the answer, please post it to Blackboard. In "Discussions" I have set up a thread called "Ask the Professor."

Class Schedule

9/2	Reading due:

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	• Ted Talk: Adichie. "The Danger of a Single Story." Ted Talk, July 2009, at: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimam&a_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/up-next?language=en • Zaki, "Calls For Racial Justice Gained Steam With Empathy" Slack Channel: #empathy-walls-talk Class topics: • Our technology • What is the value of multiple perspectives & how do we find them? • Barriers to & catalysts for empathy Synchronous Activities: • Discussion • Mini-workshop on multiple perspectives • Creation of a social contract for our class discussion
9/9	Assignments Due: • Presentation due, if discussion leader • Asynchronous comments, if not discussion leader Reading due: • *Heat & Light* (first ½) • Hannah-Jones, "America Wasn't A Democracy Until Black Americans Made It One." Slack Channel: #heat&light-deepstories-americanparadox Class topics: • Paradox of American public life? • The role of "Deep Stories," metaphors, & moral receptors Synchronous Activities: • Discussion • Mapping personal histories, values, & social networks of book's characters
9/16	Assignment Due: • "Your Values" assignment • Presentation due, if discussion leader • Asynchronous comments, if no discussion leader Reading: *Heat & Light* (second ½) Slack channel: #heat&light-deepstories-americanparadox Class topic: ways of understanding values from sociology, linguistics, & psychology

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	Synchronous Activities: • Application of language, culture & history models to ourselves • Apply to public policy & public administration
9/23	Assignments Due: • Presentation due, if discussion leader • Asynchronous comments, if not discussion leader Reading: *Home Fire* Slack Channel: #homefire-immigration-citizenship Class topics: • The Micro-Macro issue • The idea & practice of citizenship Synchronous Activities • Character mapping on micro/macro issue
9/30	Assignments Due: • Presentation due, if discussion leader • Asynchronous comments, if not a discussion leader Reading: *The Intuitionist* Slack Channels: #intuitionist-into-the-future Class topic: • Constructing public administration & public policy Synchronous Activity: To be announced
10/7	Assignment Due: Multiple Perspectives assignment

Course Materials

Haigh, Jennifer. (2016). *Heat & Light: A Novel*. Ecco.
Shamise, Kamila. (2017). *Home Fire: A Novel*. Riverhead Books.
Whitehead, Colson. (2000). *The Intuitionist: A Novel*. Anchor Book

Multiple Perspectives Assignment Rubric (goes onto next page)

Criteria	Superior/Exceeds Expectations (A - A- = 90-100)	Good/Fully Meets Expectations (B+ - B- + 80-87) If your assignment satisfactorily meets requirements & expectations, you	Borderline/Meets *minimal* expectations (C+ - C- = 70-79)	Unacceptable (F = 0)

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		can except to fall here.		
Required Components	Includes all components & exceeds all requirements. Each component is addressed thoroughly.	**Includes all components & meets all requirements. Each component is addressed.**	Assignment is missing some components &/or does not fully meet the requirements. Some parts of the assignment are not addressed.	Assignment excludes components or does not address requirements. Parts of assignment are addressed minimally, inadequately, or not at all.
Depth of Reflection	Demonstrates an in-depth reflection on the ideas presented in course. Viewpoints & interpretations are insightful & supported with evidence & examples. Clear & detailed.	**Demonstrates a general reflection on the ideas presented in course. Viewpoints & interpretations are supported. Appropriate examples are provided, as applicable.**	Demonstrates minimal reflection on ideas presented in course. Viewpoints & interpretations are unsupported or supported with flawed arguments, when applicable, are not provided or are irrelevant.	Demonstrates lack of reflection. Viewpoints & interpretations are missing, inappropriate, &/or unsupported. Examples are not provided.
Connection to Experience	Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences (work, civic, academic) to deepen understanding & broaden own points of view.	Selects & develops examples of experiences outside of formal classroom (work, civic, academic) to illuminate ideas	Compares life experiences & academic knowledge to infer differences, similarities. Acknowledge perspectives other than own.	Fails to connect experiences & academic texts & ideas perceived as similar & related to own interests.
Clarity of Writing	Skillfully communicates meaning to reader with clarity & fluency & is error-free	**Uses straightforward language that conveys meaning. Language has few errors.**	Uses language that conveys meaning. May have errors or unclear spots.	Much of the meaning is unclear to reader.

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 and policy, see "Religious Holidays" at provost.gwu.edu/policies-procedures-and-guidelines

Support for Students Outside the Classroom

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<u>Mental Health Services 202-994-5300</u>
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/

<u>Academic Integrity Code</u>
Academic Integrity is an integral part of the educational process, and 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, and 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 and 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.

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.

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

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

<u>Writing and research consultations</u> are available online. See academiccommons.gwu.edu/writing-research-help

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

<u>Academic Commons</u> 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

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

<u>Academic Commons</u> provides tutoring and 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.

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

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

<u>Safety and Security</u>
- 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

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- 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
<u>Incompletes</u>
> 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.

<u>Submission of Written Work Products Outside of the Classroom</u>
> 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.

<u>Submission of Written Work Products after Due Date: Policy on Late Work</u>
> 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].

<u>Academic Honesty</u>
> 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.

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

<u>The Syllabus</u>
> 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.

<u>Accommodation for Students with Disabilities</u>
> 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.

<u>Letter grading</u> 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.

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Weaknesses & limitations are pervasive.

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