

PADP 9200
MANAGING GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE
Fall Semester 2009

Room 202 Baldwin Hall
Monday evenings, 6:50 p.m. - 9:50 p.m.

The University of Georgia
School of Public and International Affairs
Department of Public Administration & Policy
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Course Description and Objectives

Performance improvement is a leading theme in modern day Public Administration, both in theory and practice—and across the globe. Yet, it is surprising that so little attention has been devoted to clarifying important theoretical and conceptual issues related to performance improvement such as how performance should be defined and measured; understanding the role of administrative and program performance in the broader context of politics and the policy process in democratic political systems; comprehensively modeling the factors that affect performance in the public sector; and empirically evaluating the impact of administrative reforms and management practices that have been advanced in recent years to improve government performance—paying attention to both intended and unintended consequences. Fortunately, most of these concerns are now receiving increased attention. One purpose of this course is to track these important developments in both theory and practice.

This course will provide an overview of the history of the performance improvement movement and an introduction to the government performance literature. Different definitions of performance will be explored, and an effort will be made to understand the role of administrative and program performance in the broader context of democratic governance. Students will be introduced to the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical issues involved in defining and measuring performance, and they will review and critique several recent attempts to model performance improvement in the public sector. One key question is “does management matter?” – and if so, *how does it matter?* Other topics include performance measurement, performance management, and performance budgeting; report cards; benchmarking; goal-setting and strategic planning; and a host of other administrative reforms, policy innovations, and management approaches for improving government performance. The latter part of the course will focus intently on empirical work that assesses the impact of these purported drivers in several specific governmental domains; i.e., comparative cross-country studies, English local government

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.

studies, and studies of U.S. federal agencies, state governments in the U.S. (including state health and human service agencies), Texas public school districts, and other emerging arenas.

This seminar is designed for advanced Master's degree and doctoral level students who have a good working knowledge of the political, administrative, and policy processes. Students should also have strong analytical skills and some knowledge of empirical research techniques.

Seminar Sessions

The class will be conducted as a reading course and working seminar. Students will be actively involved in the work at hand, and their respective contributions will be welcomed and valued. For a typical class, students will be assigned general readings (items read by the entire class) and specialized readings (items read by the student only). The instructor will present material, pose questions for discussion, help the class focus on points of dispute, and aid in the process of critical inquiry. Seminar participants will present, discuss, and critique assigned readings, and take an active role in other discussions and exercises. All participants are expected to attend all sessions, complete all readings on time, and be prepared to comment on and assist in the analysis of the literature and other issues under discussion. As mentioned below, attendance and the level and quality of participants' contributions are a grading factor in the course.

Assignments and Grades

Grades will be based on students' performance on written assignments, a final examination, and attendance and participation in the seminar. These components are explained below, and they will be discussed in more detail during the first class session. Individual components are weighted as follows:

<u>Component</u>	<u>Percent of Course Grade</u>
Two written assignments	60%
Final examination	30%
Attendance and Participation	<u>10%</u>
	100%

Written Assignments

Masters students will complete two short essays consisting of 8-10 pages each as follows:

- The first essay will answer a set of questions on conceptual and theoretical issues related to government performance such as the difficulty of defining and measuring performance, or the scope of New Public Management reforms being implemented across the globe. The set of questions will be distributed near midterm, and the completed essay will be due approximately one week later.
- The second essay will be individually-tailored: the student will select a topic of interest and write a summary and critique of empirical research published on the topic. This topic may be a barrier or facilitator of performance improvement, e.g.,

organization structure, networking, red tape, management strategy, or public service motivation. Another alternative is to survey performance-related work done in a specific governmental domain; e.g., cross-country studies or studies of English local government authorities, U.S. federal agencies, state governments (including state health and human service agencies), Texas public school districts, etc. As mentioned above, the student will select the specific topic and/or domain of interest, develop a reading list, prepare the written essay, and give an oral presentation at semester's end.

Together, these essays will count approximately 60 percent of the final course grade for Masters students (they are weighted equally). Students should strive for papers that are high quality, cosmetically pleasing, and easy for readers to follow. The papers should be type-written in a conventional 10 or 12 point font, double-spaced with one inch margins on all sides, and formatted in one of the following styles: APA, MLA, Chicago, or Turabian. Grading will be based on the quality of presentation and content. Late assignments will be subject to grade penalties unless prior arrangements have been made.

Doctoral students will complete the second essay described above and give an oral presentation. Plus, doctoral students will write a more in-depth, term-length paper consisting of 20-30 pages on a topic related to managing government performance. This paper can be a multiple-book review, field essay, theoretical exploration, empirical study, or other type of scholarly inquiry or exposition on an appropriate topic. The end goal is to produce a high quality paper that is suitable for publication.

Together, these essays will count approximately 60 percent of the final course grade for doctoral students, with the second essay weighing more heavily (approximately 40 percent).

Final Examination

Students will take a comprehensive, open-book final examination worth approximately 30 percent of the final course grade. This examination will consist of several essay type questions, and the essays themselves may be handwritten or typed. For grading purposes, the main emphasis is on content but quality of presentation is also a consideration.

The examination will be administered from 6:50 to 9:50 p.m. on Monday, December 14, in Room 202 Baldwin Hall.²

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are required in this course and count approximately 10 percent toward the final grade. With respect to participation, I consider how frequent, valuable, and constructive a student's contribution is to class discussions and group projects. This component also includes completion of several short homework-type assignments during the semester.

² University policy provides that any student with three final examinations scheduled on the same calendar day or two examinations at the same time may petition an instructor to reschedule one exam at a different time.

Reasonable Accommodations

Students with disabilities that could affect their ability to participate or perform well in the course should see me early in the semester. I am receptive to these situations and will make any reasonable accommodations.

Academic Honesty

Please familiarize yourself 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.” Students should inform themselves about these standards before performing any academic work. Details are available at: <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>

Students should complete all written assignments in this seminar individually – not collaboratively – unless otherwise specified.

Required Readings

The required readings for the course are as follows:

- Geert Bouckaert and John Halligan, 2007. *Managing Performance: International Comparisons*. London: Routledge
- Carolyn J. Heinrich and Laurence E. Lynn Jr., 2000. *Governance and Performance: New Perspectives*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press
- Paul C. Light, 2002. *Government’s Greatest Achievements: From Civil Rights to Homeland Defense*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press
- David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, 1993. *Reinventing Government: The Five Strategies for Reinventing Government*. Reprint edition, New York: Plume-Penguin Group, 2001

Additional readings will be assigned from a supplemental list throughout the semester.

The books listed above are available at the UGA and off-campus bookstores. Limited copies may also be available for temporary use from the main library, departmental library, or directly from the instructor. Note: copies of the supplemental readings (to be announced) are available online or will be provided by the instructor.

Tentative Course Schedule

Required readings are listed below under the appropriate heading. This schedule will serve as a guide but not a rigid constraint throughout the semester. Some topics will likely take less than the allotted time, while others will require more attention. Any changes in the syllabus or course schedule will be announced by the instructor.