

PIA 2020: Administration of Public Affairs (Spring 2019)

Course Information

Class Time: Thursday, 9:00am–11:55am
Classroom: 3415 Wesley W. Posvar Hall

Professor:

Gary E. Hollibaugh, Jr.
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Office: 3802 Wesley W. Posvar Hall
Office Hours: Wednesday, 10:00am–11:30am
Thursday, 1:00pm–2:30pm
By Appointment

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the field of public management and administration. This field concerns how governments—both agencies and the organizations and individuals who work for them—provide services to citizens. Politicians, bureaucrats, and citizens throughout the world share a common, but often elusive quest to improve delivery of these services. In this course, we will discuss approaches to governance and management as well as learn about how governments deliver (or do not deliver) on their promises to citizens. Additionally, this course will introduce you to several theoretical and practical concepts that will help you understand how the public sector is organized and how it is managed. Although the concepts and issues we discuss in the course are generalizable to a wide range of contexts, we will take the system of government in the United States as a primary point of departure.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Understand the role of public administration in democracies and other forms of government.
- Understand the tradeoffs and tensions between governance and representation.
- Apply various theories of administrative processes to substantive problems encountered by public administrators.
- Obtain a broad understanding of the various components of public administration.

Books and Course Materials

The following books are required:

Politics of the Administrative Process by Donald F. Kettl (Seventh Edition).

The Ethics of Dissent: Managing Guerrilla Government by Rosemary O’Leary (Second Edition).

Policy on Academic Integrity

All students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty. Any student engaged in cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty would be subject to disciplinary action. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity at <http://provost.pitt.edu/faculty-resources/academic-integrity-freedom/academic-integrity-guidelines>. In particular, any assignment found to have plagiarized material will automatically receive a failing grade, and serious cases of plagiarism can result in a failing grade for the class, so take the time to familiarize yourself with the rules of citation and with GSPIA's policy (found in the GSPIA handbook of academic policies and procedures).

Policy on Disabilities

If you require special accommodations or classroom modifications, please notify both the instructor and Disability Resources and Services by the end of the first week of the term. The office of Disability Resources and Services is located in 140 William Pitt Union (412-648-7890 [voice or TDD]), and their website is at <http://www.drs.pitt.edu>. If you have a physical, learning, or emotional disability, please let me know as early as you can so that I can accommodate you.

Policy on Classroom Recording

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

Policy on Technology

When submitting any assignment electronically in this course, you are responsible for any technological problems (e.g., internet connection difficulties, corrupted files, etc.). To prevent problems along with the associated lateness penalties, you should submit papers well before the deadline and take proactive steps to ensure that the file was not corrupted. Above all, please do not trust your computer to function correctly at the last minute.

That said, access to computers and the Internet should generally be done outside of the classroom. Unless I grant an explicit exception, laptops, cell phones, tablets, and all other electronic devices are not allowed during class, since hand-written note-taking is associated with better comprehension and less distraction (of both the student and those around him/her).

Policy on Diversity, Inclusion, and Academic Freedom

Members of our community are encouraged to speak, write, listen, challenge and learn, without fear of censorship. Civility and mutual respect are vital to all of us, and freedom of expression

does not mean the freedom to harass or threaten others. You will find that we expect members of our community to be engaged in rigorous debate, discussion, and even disagreement. At times this may challenge you and even cause discomfort. However, fostering the free exchange of ideas helps to build a campus that welcomes people of all backgrounds. Diversity of opinion and background is a fundamental strength of our community, and I consider this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability, and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class, so everyone can have the freedom to espouse and explore a wide range of ideas. As such, I expect that all students—as well as the instructor—will follow the guidelines set out in the **Pitt Promise**:

- I will embrace the concept of a civil community, which abhors violence, theft, and exploitation of others.
- I will commit myself to the pursuit of knowledge with personal integrity and academic honesty.
- I will respect the sanctity of the learning environment and avoid disruptive and deceitful behavior toward other members of the campus community.
- I will support a culture of diversity by respecting the rights of those who differ from myself.
- I will contribute to the development of a caring community where compassion for others and freedom of thought and expression are valued.
- I will honor, challenge, and contribute to the scholarly heritage left by those who preceded me and work to leave this a better place for those who follow.

Additionally, please read Vice Provost Kenyon Bonner's statement [here](#).

Assignments

NOTE: Unless otherwise specified, all assignments must be turned in to Courseweb at or before 9:00am on the listed due date, and all must comport with the following formatting requirements:

- Double-spaced
- Size 11 font
- One-inch margins
- Standard font (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Helvetica, or something similar)
- APA or Chicago style citations

Public Administrator Career Biography (40% of grade). Each student will be required to author an interview-based biography of a public administrator (including nonprofits) whose work is relevant to their own, but also someone they do not know particularly well and seek to get to know better and learn more about. **Choosing someone with whom you have a “close tie” due to professional organizations or networks is not permitted.** Ideally, the person you select should be in a position and working in an agency/organization or department that reflects your professional aspirations.

Those whose biography subjects are approved first by me will be assigned to them. No multiple biographies on the same individual will be permitted under any circumstances (so please provide me your subjects ASAP if you want to ensure they will be approved). The subject must be a current, active employee of a governmental agency, institution, or nonprofit. These individuals can be either appointed or career civil servants at any level of government. The individual profiled must agree to serve as a subject and offer their permission that the content of the interview will be information shared with the entire class. **No email interviews will be allowed.** Only those public administrators who grant formal permission to be a subject, and also either provide or permit access to a resume or biography will be permitted for purposes of this assignment. It will be the responsibility of the student to both obtain and submit proof of formal permission from the subject to the instructor.

There will be checkpoints along the way for this assignment, and the 40% of your grade covered by this assignment will be distributed as follows:

- **Subject Name** (2.5% of grade). By January 31, students must provide me with the name, occupation, and contact information of the individual they plan on asking. Only after these names have been provided will students be permitted to contact them. Names will be approved on a rolling basis, so please provide them to me as soon as possible; doing so will give you as much time as possible to contact your subjects and, in the event they decline to be interviewed, provide a second name for approval.
- **Subject Agreement** (2.5% of grade). By February 14, students must provide me with written proof that their subjects have agreed to be interviewed, as well as a tentative date for the interview itself. No interviews will be allowed to proceed until I receive the subject agreement, so please submit these as soon as possible.
- **Interview Questions** (5% of grade). By February 21, students must provide me with a list of open-ended questions that they plan on asking their subject. No interviews will be allowed to proceed until I receive the questions, so please submit these as soon as possible. The questions should address the following:
 - The subject’s attraction to a career in public service.
 - The subject’s educational training and professional journey (previous positions held).
 - The subject’s formal responsibilities within his or her agency/department/organization.
 - The missions, values, and vision of the subject’s agency/department/organization and the subject’s role in furthering them.

- The skills and attributes the subject deems most critical for the next generation of public administrators.
- The subject's insights on the challenges facing modern public administrators in the social, economic, and political environment in which they operate.
- Any other lessons or key insights the subject has learned along the way as a public administrator.

Please make sure to provide these questions to the subject at least 2–3 days before the interview, in order to give them a chance to prepare.

- **Career Biography Report** (20% of grade). By March 21, students must submit to Courseweb a written essay based upon the public administrator interview. This essay, which should be no longer than ten (10) pages, excluding the title page, should be broken into sections based upon the bulleted question areas noted in the *Interview Questions* section. Students are encouraged to link relevant insights obtained from the assigned readings and other class activities to the insights provided by the administrator. The public administrator's resume or public biography must be submitted with the student's own paper.
- **Biographical Presentation** (10% of grade). On March 21, the class will present the results of their interviews in 12–15 minute individual PowerPoint presentations. Students should make sure to cover the following:
 - Pertinent personal and professional facts (i.e., education, professional experiences, current areas of responsibility, etc.) about that person's life.
 - An overview of that person's department or agency of affiliation, inclusive of the agency's mission, vision, and values.
 - That person's insights on the current challenges facing public service in an ever-changing society, in particular as they relate to making and implementing decisions as well as the concept of administrative responsibility.
 - The future implications of your findings from this interview for public administration and governance.

The presentation will count for 10% of the course grade and will be graded on clarity of presentation. Please make sure to submit your PowerPoint slides to Courseweb before presentations commence.

Individual Case Study (40% of grade). I will provide a choice of several case studies for students to choose from. Your goal is to write a memorandum in which you explain how a theory or concept helps us understand what has occurred in the case study. There will be checkpoints along the way for this assignment, and the 40% of your grade covered by this assignment will be distributed as follows:

- **Individual Case Study Outline** (5% of grade). By March 28, students must submit a one-to two-page outline of their memo to Courseweb. **The outline may be single-spaced.** This outline should include information on the following:

- The case study under analysis.
- The theory or concept(s) used to explain the case study.
- A very brief mention of your conclusion about the significance of your analysis.

Since this is an outline, you do not need to go into a great deal of detail, but there should be sufficient information for me to understand how you plan to structure the final memorandum.

- **Rough Draft of Individual Case Study Memorandum (10% of grade).** By April 11, students must submit a rough draft of their memorandum. During the course of the memorandum, the students should make sure to provide some background on the case itself; that is, students should discuss:
 - A brief discussion of the problem that necessitated action (defining the case).
 - How the problem was addressed in the case.
 - Any challenges there were with addressing the problem under analysis (or expected problems for the future).
 - Policy successes or failures.
 - Implications or other lessons learned for the future.

In the course of doing so, students should apply relevant theoretical concepts learned in class to the substance of the case study, making sure to link theory with practice and provide effective suggestions for public administrators. More specifically, the case study memorandum should include:

- The definition and explanation of the theory or concept you are using.
- The explanation of how the theory or concept helps to understand the case
- Your conclusion about the significance of your analysis, with practical suggestions for public administrators.

This assignment should be no more than eight (8) pages (excluding a reference list); going over this limit is not permitted and will result in a letter grade deduction for each portion of a page you are over (even if it's just by one word or line).

Finally, each memorandum must have the following information at the top of the first page:

- The date.
- My name as the recipient.
- Your name as the person sending the memo.
- A "subject heading" that describes the main topic discussed.

- **Final Draft of Individual Case Study Memorandum (15% of grade).** By April 25, students must submit the final draft of their memorandum. The requirements for this assignment are the same as the Rough Draft.

- **Individual Case Study Presentation** (10% of grade). On April 25, each student will present their case studies to the class in 12–15 minute individual PowerPoint presentations. The presentation will count for 10% of the course grade. Please make sure to submit your PowerPoint slides to Courseweb before presentations commence.

In-Class Group Case Studies (20% of grade). During the course of the semester, students will engage in a series of in-class case study analyses. These will generally be done in groups of 2 or 3 and will take place in the second half of each class meeting (unless stated otherwise). The cases will be drawn from the short cases in the Kettl textbook. Students will have approximately 60–90 minutes to briefly analyze the case in the context of the theoretical concepts discussed in class and provide practical suggestions or guidance for public administrators who might find themselves in situations similar to those presented in the case study. At the end of class, students will briefly present their analysis of the case to the rest of the class.

There will be seven (7) such sessions, starting on January 24, and they will collectively count towards 20% of your grade. Students will be graded on the clarity of the presentation and their efforts/ability to connect the theoretical frameworks discussed in class to the short cases, with allowances made for the short amount of time to do so. Everyone is expected to actively and effectively contribute to their group’s output for every session, and everyone is expected to *present* on behalf of their group at least once during the semester.

Grading

Below is how your final percentage grade will be mapped into a letter grade. To reduce ambiguity, there will be no rounding. So if you get an 89.999999% when the semester is over (for example), your final grade will be a B+. **No exceptions.**

Percentage point range	Letter grade
93+	A
90–92.999...	A-
87–89.999...	B+
83–86.999...	B
80–82.999...	B-
77–79.999...	C+
73–76.999...	C
70–72.999...	C-
60–69.999...	D
0–59.999...	F

Late Assignments

Assignments are due at 9:00am on the dates indicated on the syllabus. **All assignments must be submitted via Courseweb.** Written material submitted within 24 hours of the deadline will be accepted with a 25% grade reduction, and nothing will be accepted more than 24 hours after the deadline. **There will be no exceptions.**

However, students occasionally request an extension at the end of the semester if they cannot complete their assignments due to serious unforeseen circumstances. A “G” grade will be given only under exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the instructor, and should be discussed with the instructor before the end of the term. According to GSPIA policy, a student must remove the G grade by completing the assigned work for the course as soon as possible in the semester following the course.

Grade Appeals

All appeals must be made in writing to the instructor. No grade appeals will be considered within the first 24 hours of a grade being posted on Courseweb; those that come in within the first 24 hours will be discarded. All grade appeals must be received within seven calendar days of the grade being posted on Courseweb to be considered; those that arrive after this deadline will be discarded. All appeals must contain the following information:

- The name of the assignment in question.
- The reason why you believe your grade should be higher. Be specific and discuss this in the context of the requirements of the assignment.
- Determine whether you believe it is an error of calculation (that is, the instructor incorrectly tabulated points), judgment (the grade received does not reflect the quality of the assignment), or both.

If the instructor determines that an error of calculation is present, then the correct grade will be calculated and the correct grade will be posted. If it is argued by the student that an error of judgment is present, then the student has the option to have the assignment graded *de novo* by the instructor. Because this will be a regrade, there is the possibility that the grade given to the regraded assignment will be lower than that given to the initial submission. Regardless, all decisions by the instructor are final.

Policy on Email

Any requests to the instructor (e.g., meetings outside of office hours) *must* be made in writing via email so everyone has a record of the request and decision. **For emails sent between Monday and Thursday, inclusive, please allow the instructor up to 48 hours to respond. For those sent between Friday and Sunday, inclusive, please allow the instructor up to 96 hours to respond.** **The instructor endorses the general principles for email communication (for any professional communication via e-mail, not just those for this class) outlined here.**

Course Topics

Note: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. We may not cover all of these topics. Conversely, time permitting, other topics might be covered in this course. Moreover, even if we do not cover something in class, you are still responsible for knowing what is in the readings.

January 10: Introduction and Overview; What is a Responsible Public Administrator?

- *No In-Class Group Case Studies Today*
- Kettl, Chapter 1

January 17: What is Public Administration?

- *No In-Class Group Case Studies Today*
- Kettl, Chapters 2 and 3

January 24: Organizational Theory

- Kettl, Chapter 4

January 31: The Executive Branch

- *Interview Subject Names Due to Courseweb by 9:00am*
- Kettl, Chapter 5

February 7: Organization Problems and Administrative Reform

- Kettl, Chapters 6 and 7

February 14: The Civil Service and Human Capital

- *Interview Subject Agreements Due to Courseweb by 9:00am*
- Kettl, Chapters 8 and 9

February 21: Decision Making—Rationality and Risk

- *Interview Questions Due to Courseweb by 9:00am*
- Kettl, Chapter 10

February 28: Budgeting

- Kettl, Chapter 11

March 7: In-Class Career Biography Workshop

- *No In-Class Group Case Studies Today*

March 14: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

March 21: In-Class Career Biography Presentations

- *No In-Class Group Case Studies Today*
- *Public Administrator Career Biographies and PowerPoints Due to Courseweb by 9:00am*

March 28: Implementation and Performance

- *Individual Case Study Outlines Due to Courseweb by 9:00am*
- Kettl, Chapter 12

April 4: NO CLASS – CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

April 11: Regulation and the Courts; Accountability and Politics

- *No In-Class Group Case Studies Today*
- *Individual Case Study Rough Drafts Due to Courseweb by 9:00am*
- Kettl, Chapters 13 and 14
- O’Leary, entire book

April 18: In-Class Individual Case Study Workshop

- *No In-Class Group Case Studies Today*

April 25: In-Class Individual Case Study Presentations

- *No In-Class Group Case Studies Today*
- *Individual Case Study Memoranda and PowerPoints Due to Courseweb by 9:00am on April 25*