Public Administration and Management  
RPAD 303 – Spring 20167  
Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy, SUNY Albany  
Department of Public Administration and Policy  

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Class time: Meets asynchronously  
Class location: Online  
Instructor email: adavis-alteri@albany.edu  
Office hours: by appointment (online)

Course Description

This course is designed to provide students an introduction to the field of public administration, including its practice, themes and values, and contemporary challenges. Public administration is government in action, as broadly defined by Woodrow Wilson in 1887. Public administration includes activities taken directly by government, or indirectly by its partners, to meet the democratically expressed needs of the public. These activities include policy design, implementation, evaluation of outcomes, and re-design or re-direction.

By the end of the course, students should have a basic understanding of 1) the relationship and tensions between politics and administration, 2) various means for assuring administrative accountability and responsiveness, and 3) the challenges associated with implementing public programs. It is intended that students will leave the course with a substantive, applied understanding of the values and practice of public administration.

Course Design

This course is an online course, which means your instruction, activities, and assessments will occur online. RPAD 303 is a 3-credit-hour course and you should generally expect to spend approximately 3 hours per week completing online activities and lectures, not including the time you spend preparing for the mid-term and final exams or completing two memo assignments. Since the class discussions build upon the material that is assigned that week, it is important that you complete the assigned readings and online lectures and activities prior to engaging in online discussions.

Text Books


Additional readings will be made available through the course web page on Blackboard, which can be accessed at https://blackboard.albany.edu/ using your MyUAlbany sign on credentials.
Communication

Communication will occur primarily over email. Students are expected to check their email every day. The best way to contact your instructors is by email. Meetings and office hours should be scheduled by appointment. All class-related activities, including class and group discussions, emails and assignments should be conducted in business standard English.

Grading

Student performance in the course will be determined by:

- Mid-term exam (20%)
- Final exam (20%)
- Two short memos: see appendix I;
  - Memo #1 (15%)
  - Memo #2 (25%)
- Participation (online) (20%) see appendix II.

Attendance. Attendance is required and necessary for your success in the course. Any student with more than 2 unexcused absences will lose 5% from the final grade. A student with more than 3 unexcused absences will have a notation placed on the transcript indicating you stopped attending class. The instructor reserves the right to drop you from the class if you have more than three absences. Absences will only be excused under certain circumstances, such as an unplanned health emergency, in case of religious observance, or for an authorized intercollegiate event. Documentation is required to have an absence excused.

Grading Scale. Each student’s final grade will be determined by a weighted average of the points earned. For example, assume a student earned the following grades: 100 for participation, 87 on the first memo, 92 on the second memo, 80 on the midterm exam, and 93 on the final exam. She also missed 3 classes. The student’s grade would be calculated as follows:

\[
(100 \times .2) + (87 \times .15) + (92 \times .25) + (80 \times .2) + (93 \times .2) = 91 - 5 = 86 \ (B)
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A:</td>
<td>93 percent and above</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-:</td>
<td>90 to 92 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+:</td>
<td>87-89 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>B:</td>
<td>83-86 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-:</td>
<td>80-82 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+:</td>
<td>77-79 percent</td>
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<td>C:</td>
<td>73-76 percent</td>
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<td>C-:</td>
<td>70-72 percent</td>
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<td>D+:</td>
<td>67-69 percent</td>
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<td>D:</td>
<td>63-66 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-:</td>
<td>62-60 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>F:</td>
<td>below 60 percent</td>
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</tbody>
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Grade Appeals. Students may appeal a grade on a specific assignment within two weeks of the assignment being returned. To submit an appeal, the student should return the original graded assignment and a letter/memo outlining why you think the grade should be changed. Appeals must be submitted electronically. In the appeal, students must identify 1) the specific issue you believe should be reconsidered and 2) evidence from assignment instructions, assigned readings, lectures, or other materials that would indicate your original submission is worthy of a higher grade. Be aware that your grade may go up, down, or remain the same as a result of your appeal.
**Academic Honesty**: Academic honesty is something your professor takes very seriously. Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. Students are required to be familiar with the university’s academic honesty policies; ignorance is not an excuse for dishonest behavior. In all cases of cheating, a Violation of Academic Integrity Report will be submitted to the Office of Undergraduate Education to be placed in your university file, with copies provided to you, the department head, and the Dean of Rockefeller College. Additional penalties may include some combination of the following: revision and re-submission of the assignment, reduction of the grade or failure of the assignment, reduction of the course grade or failure of the course, filing of a case with the Office of Conflict Resolution and Civic Responsibility, suspension or expulsion.

**Other Course Policies**

- It is your instructor’s goal to conduct class in an environment that is welcoming to all perspectives. Please treat your fellow students with the respect you want to receive.
- Students with needs consistent with the Americans with Disability Act should inform the instructor during the first week of class so that reasonable accommodations can be made.
- This syllabus serves as a general outline. The instructor reserves the right to deviate from the plan if necessary. Students will be notified promptly of any modifications.

**Typical Week**

Monday – Thursday:
(1) Complete assigned weekly readings that are listed in the syllabus;
(2) Post individual discussion board / reading commentaries; and
(3) Collaborate with your group to complete and post case study discussion questions.

Friday – Sunday:
(1) Work with your group to critique the answers to case study discussion question for your assigned group.

Throughout the week (due Sunday):
(1) Post at least two individual responses to your classmates’ discussion board / reading commentaries.

**Course and Weekly Reading Schedule**

January 23: Introduction and Core Concepts of Public Administration
1. Kettl chapters 1 and 2
2. Cases: Kettl case 1.1 Accountability & Kettl case 2.1: The Administrative State

January 30: Key Activities of Government
1. Kettl chapters 3 and 5
2. Cases: Kettl case 5.1: The Federal Aviation Administration & Kettl case 5.2: Which Way for Cheese
February 6: Regulation and the Courts
1. Kettl chapter 13

February 13: Accountability
1. Kettl chapter 14
3. Case: Hurricane Katrina Toxic Trailers

February 20: Strategic Management
3. Case: Strategic Planning in the Air Force, and Ellen Schall and the Department of Juvenile Justice

February 27: Decisionmaking
1. Kettl chapter 10
3. Case: Housing for Single Mothers in Chicago & Kettl case 10.3: Tweeting to the rescue?
4. Review for Midterm Exam

March 9: Midterm Exam (24-hour take-home exam)
Your take home exam will be available starting at 2:30 pm on Thursday, March 9th. Your exam will be due by 2:29 pm on Friday, March 10th, regardless of when you begin your exam.

March 13: Spring Break

March 27: Social Equity
http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2012/05/20/is-segregation-back-in-us-public-schools?module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar

April 3: Implementation
1. Kettl chapter 12
2. Case: Fuel Efficiency & Kettl case 12.1: Policy Implementation in Florida
3. Memo #1 Due: Thursday, April 6th
   Memo #1 will be due to Blackboard at 2:30 pm on Thursday, April 6th.
April 10: Contracting
3. Case: NYS Wireless Network

April 17: Nonprofits
3. Case: Building Black Leadership on HIV/AIDS Issues

April 24: Personnel Management
1. Kettl chapter 8
2. Case: Griggs vs. Duke Power

May 1: Financial Management
3. Review for Final Exam

May 11: Final Exam (24-hour take-home exam)
Your take home exam will be available starting at 2:30 pm on Thursday, May 11th. Your exam will be due by 2:29 pm on Friday, May 12th, regardless of when you begin your exam.

May 15: Memo #2 Due
Memo #2 will be due to Blackboard at 2:30 pm on Monday, May 15th.

Appendix I: Two Short Memos
Memo #1 due April 6th, Memo #2 due May 15th
Overview. To assess your understanding of the course material and your ability to apply concepts to real life cases of government action, students will write two short memos during the semester. Each memo will require students to use coursework to understand the case Ellen Schall and the Department of Juvenile Justice. Additional details about the exact questions and formatting will be distributed separately.
You will occasionally work as a “Taskforce” in a group to analyze the case during your online
discussions. However the two memos you submit will be written individually. The two memos to Ellen Schall will detail your group’s analysis of problems and potential solutions. You need to read the case by the week of February 20th as opportunities to meet with your groups will begin on that date.

Submission of paper. Memos are due by 2:30 pm and should be submitted via the SafeAssign function in Blackboard. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure the electronic file is readable and not corrupted. An assignment is considered late if the electronic file is not submitted and/or if the electronic file is not readable. Please note: once you hit the submit button in SafeAssign, you cannot go back and submit a different version.

Formatting. Pages are to be formatted with one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 point font and pages are to be numbered.

Citations. If you use ANY outside sources (including class readings), you must include a bibliography. Students are to cite sources in a manner consistent with academic honesty policies. Your professor would rather you include many citations rather than too few. As a general rule of thumb, provide a citation for something you did not know before you began your research. In-text citations and the bibliography should be formatted in MLA style. See the recommended text for assistance in using MLA style or other on-line help sheets such as:

http://library.albany.edu/cfox?type=mla
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/
http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/mla

Note: Wikipedia is not an acceptable source; blogs are not an acceptable source.

Grading. Together, the memos constitute 40% of the student’s grade for the course. The first memo is worth 15% of the semester grade, while the second memo constitutes 25% of the semester grade. Students must complete both memos.

Rubrics will be provided for each memo and posted on the course Blackboard page. In general, submissions will be assessed according to the degree to which the student 1) evaluates the case in a sophisticated manner, 2) illustrates a complete understanding of the course material, 3) uses evidence to support arguments, 4) presents a well-organized and professional paper, and 5) follows formatting and citation guidelines.

Late Assignments. An assignment is considered late if the electronic file is not submitted before class, and/or if the electronic file is not readable. Assignments submitted between 10 minutes and 24 hours after the due date will be considered late and will be automatically reduced by 10%. Papers submitted one day after the due date will be automatically reduced by 20%; memos submitted two days after the assigned date will be reduced by 30%, etc. Exceptions will be made for extreme health and family emergencies. It is better to submit memos early rather than late, so please plan ahead if you know you will unable to submit the memo on the day it is due.
NOTE: Exams cannot be submitted late. If you submit an exam after the deadline, it will not be graded. Exceptions will be made for extreme health and family emergencies, but must be pre-arranged with the instructor.

Appendix II: Class Participation

Participation in the course constitutes 20% of the student’s semester grade. This will be evaluated by:

1) Weekly discussion board / reading commentaries (1/2), and
2) Online group discussions and critiques (1/2).

Weekly Discussion Board / Reading Commentaries.
Participation in the online weekly discussion board constitutes 10% of the student’s semester grade. There are two primary purposes for the commentaries: 1) to hold students accountable for completing the assigned reading, and 2) to provide information to your instructor which will influence the content of class discussions.

Students are required to post one original thread (250 word minimum) and respond to two fellow students posts (150 word minimum) each week. Comments or questions included in your posts should illustrate comprehension of the assigned material each week. Comments can focus on something you find interesting, surprising, disagree with, etc. Additionally, comments may “connect the dots” between assigned readings and the various cases we will discuss during the semester. Importantly, the commentaries should not be summaries of the reading. Instead they should reflect your thoughts and analysis on the week’s topic and cases. For example, why do you find a particular topic interesting? How does the reading help you reflect on something in the news recently? How does the reading help you understand the case more effectively? Is there something you disagree with and why? Etc. Questions can also indicate a topic you find confusing and why you are unclear on the matter.

NOTE: Commentaries should be focused on assigned readings for the week. However, discussions regarding the weekly case studies should be reserved for the group and class discussions. Please restrict your original threads/posts to a discussion regarding the remainder of the content for the week.

Submission. Commentaries are due by 11:59 PM on Thursday. Responsive posts are due by 11:59 PM on Sunday. They are to be submitted through Blackboard, in electronic form only. Of the 12 weeks of assigned reading, students are to submit commentaries and responsive posts for 10 of the 12 weeks. Late commentaries will not be accepted, except in extreme cases of a health or family emergency.

Grading. Each week’s commentaries are worth 20 possible points, with 10 points for an original post and 5 points possible for each responsive post. Submissions will be graded according to the following criteria: 1) did the student submit an original post and two responsive posts, 2) to what degree do the comments/questions represent independent analysis, and 3) to what degree to the comments/questions reflect the content of the assigned reading.
Online group discussions and critiques.
Participation in the online group discussions and critiques constitutes 10% of the student’s semester grade. This grade will be based on your substantive contributions to discussions and the quality of the responses submitted by the group.

At the beginning of the semester, your professor will assign you to a discussion group that you will work with for the semester. You should assume that you will work with the same group for the entire semester; however, your professor reserves the right to change group assignments as needed. As a group, you will complete the following group activities each week:

1. Collaborate with group to complete and post case study discussion questions.
2. Work with group to critique the case study discussion question answers for your assigned group.

Each week you will be responsible for reading several case studies. Your group should read these cases and respond to the assigned discussion questions. When you have formed your responses, you are required to post your team’s responses on the group discussion thread for the week. These group responses are due by 11:49 PM on Thursday.

After the responses are posted, you will work with your group to critique the responses of another group using assigned discussion questions. Your professor will assign the group you will be critiquing each week.

You may choose to coordinate your group discussions however you like, but some possible options include: emailing; using group chat; or meeting in-person (during assigned class time or at another time).

Acknowledgement: I wish to thank Professor Ellen Rubin (Department of Public Administration and Policy, University at Albany, State University of New York) for her assistance in the design of this course. Portions of her syllabi were used here.