**URPA 5350 500**

**Introduction to Public Administration**

**Fall 2015 Syllabus**

College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs

University of Texas at Arlington

**Class Meetings: Online (August 17, 2015 – October 9, 2015)**

**Instructor Information:**

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Office Hours: Wednesday: 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m., or by appointment

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**DESCRIPTION OF COURSE CONTENT**:

This graduate level course introduces students to the field of public administration research, inquiry, and practice by providing in-depth coverage of important topics that helped shape the nature of public administration. Concepts such as the debates and discussions of public managers’ responsibilities and preservation of public values will equip students with an understanding of the cultural, constitutional, institutional, organizational, and ethical context of public administration through experiential learning.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. To provide a foundation of understanding of public administration in the context of managerial, political and legal arenas
2. To broadly survey the literature on and contributors to the theoretical and intellectual history of public administration
3. To reveal the wide range of policy issues confronting public administration, today, and the options available to address these issues.

To effectively accomplish this, class time is divided between lectures, threaded discussions, and independent research activities for better application of concepts. Preparation for class becomes important in a discussion setting; students are required to complete the readings for understanding the lectures, and are required to participate in discussions after each lecture. For active learning, the instructor has adopted several learning tools that are meant to enhance the online learning experience.

**NASPAA COMPETENCIES**

Four of the five universal competencies required by NASPAA for students graduating

from all accredited MPA programs are addressed in this course.

1.The ability to lead and manage in public governance

1. Manage projects

b. Identify and manage the political, social, and institutional factors that affect

public organizational performance

c. Lead and manage in the politically charged context of public policy making and

implementation

2. The ability to participate in and contribute to the policy process

a. Identify and explain the institutional, structural, and political contexts of policy making;

b. Identify and explain the policymaking process, including problem definition, agenda setting,

policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation;

c. Understand and apply the legal context of public affairs, administration, and policy

3. The ability to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions

a. Think critically as demonstrated by the use of well-reasoned argument that contributes to

resolving complex problems

4. The ability to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry

* 1. Demonstrate written communications proficiency: Writes concise reports based on sound research and analysis to help public decision making;
  2. Demonstrate oral communications proficiency: Presents information accurately, clearly, concisely, and persuasively to help public decision making;
  3. Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively in discussions with other peers

5. The ability to articulate and apply a public service perspective

1. Demonstrate command of key elements of personal and professional ethics
2. Be ethically responsible when conducting research

c. Understand and apply concepts of social equity to public affairs, administration, and policy

* 1. Lead by understanding and accepting differences and by building consensus around public service values
  2. Advance public values by serving the community and the profession

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Through course lectures, active seminar discussion, organizational analysis, written resources and prepared material, students should, by the end of this course, be able to:

1. Understand the various theories, concepts, and components pertaining to public administration.

2. Demonstrate and exhibit understanding of the core issues of public administration.

3. Identify and appreciate the unique governance and leadership issues.

4. Understand the criticality of ethics and accountability responsibilities in public administration.

5. Use critical thinking to evaluate real-life cases and scholarly literature.

6. Demonstrate effective writing skills in various formats.

**Required Textbooks:**

1. ***Introducing Public Administration*** by Shafritz, Russell, and Borick. (8th edition)

ISBN: 020585589X (Referred to as SRB)

1. ***Public Administration: Concepts and Cases*** by Richard Stillman (9th edition)

ISBN: 9780618993017 (Referred to as Stillman)

**COURSE GRADING**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignments** | **Number** | **Total Points** | **Due On** |
| Threaded Discussion Participation (5 points each) | 6 -- 5 x 5 (highest graded) | 25 | Weeks 1- 6 |
| Local Government Contexts | 1 x 15 | 15 | Week 3 |
| Exploring Local Government Public Participation Processes: Independent Research Activity   1. Student-Practitioner Interview 2. Final BLOG | 1 x 15  1 x 15 | 15  15 | Week 5  Week 7 |
| Final Exam | 1 x 30 | 30 | Week 8 |
| **Total** |  | **100** |  |

**Grades Breakdown\***

A = 100–90% B = 89–80% C = 79–70% D = 69–60% F = 59% below

**IMPORTANT NOTE**: Students are expected to keep track of their performance throughout the semester and seek guidance from available sources (including the instructor and coach) if their performance drops below satisfactory levels.

\*For borderline grades the instructor will evaluate the students overall performance across all three areas: discussion participation, individual assignments and the final exam to determine the final letter grade. If the student has a higher grade in 2 of the 3 categories, the grade may be rounded up.

**ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:**

1. **Threaded Discussion Participation (Individual Activity)**: (25 points total) A major goal of this course is the understanding and appreciation of basic public administration concepts by students, and connecting them to real-life situations. To that end, lectures will introduce and explain concepts and theories and students are required to apply those in threaded discussions after each lecture is completed. Threaded discussion participation will be graded on content, relevance, and quality of argumentation. Please remember that simply posting a question (e.g., How does it relate to PA?), or agreeing/ disagreeing with someone without any substantive reasoning (e.g., I agree with the previous post), or arguing without any basis and/ or logic (only relying on personal examples or opinions without connecting to course concepts), will certainly not be considered “participation.” There are 6 threaded discussions posts, of which, your 5 best contributions/ discussions will be graded.
2. **Exploring Local Municipal Government Contexts (Individual activity)**. (15 points) In Module 3, you see this assignment. It asks you to gather some data from several different sources about a local municipality. Your municipality of study will be assigned to you in the first week of the class, and you can begin this assignment as soon as you would like. However, the readings in Module 3 may be of help as well as a tutorial related to finding the correct Census data. You will be graded on the accuracy and completeness of the information that you submit in regards to the questions. **The requirements of this assignment are detailed in Module 3 and due at the end of Module 3.** The data you collect is being used as part of a larger project across the College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs (CAPPA) focused on authentic public participation across the state of Texas.
3. **Exploring Local Government Public Participation Processes (Individual Research Assignment)** : 2 Parts: Student-Practitioner Interview (15 points) and Final BLOG (15 points)

You will use the same **local municipality that you studied in Module 3 for this assignment.** This assignmentrequires you to answer several questions about the municipality’s public participation process. There are 2 key parts to the assignment:

**Part 1: Student-Practitioner Interview**: You are required to conduct at least 1 interview with an appropriate contact at your assigned municipality to learn more about their public participation process **The requirements of this part of the assignment are detailed in Module 5.** However, note you are also required to submit your interview schedule details at the end of **Module 4**. In Module 4 you will also find the template you should use when establishing your appointment with your contact and in Module 5 you will find the list of interview questions. The contact information will be provided to you. **The transcript of your interview is due at the end of Module 5.**

**Part 2: FINAL BLOG**: In addition to using the information obtained in your interview, you are required to analyze at least two other sources (examples could be a city report or the city web site) to further explain and analyze the public participation process used by the local government and its effectiveness. You will prepare a blog (600 words maximum) to convey your assessment of it. The blog should accomplish the following (order is up to you):

* provide a very brief description of the local government and its context;
* describe the public participation process used by the local government and why;
* identify the benchmarks or measures used to measure “success” in public participation;
* discuss the social media tools used;
* discuss if it is perceived by the organization as effective or not;

Finally, you are also asked to present an argument as to (a) why YOU feel the public participation process is effective or not in enhancing public administration in this context and (b) identify TWO recommendations for improving the public participation process in this city.  You will also want to link your analysis to the political, social, economic and demographic context of your municipality (as discovered in Part 1).

In total, your blog should be informed by the following data sources:

1. The data you obtained on your own in the Local Government Context Assignment;
2. The interview data you obtained from your interview;
3. Two additional document or web-based sources produced by the municipality;
4. Two relevant course readings;
5. Two outside articles or publications (can be from ICMA, ASPA, peer-reviewed journals government documents on public participation processes, etc.).

The grading will be based on how well formed the written analysis, accuracy and completeness of information, the strength of the analysis of the public participation process and the feasibility of recommendations. You are also required to include a references list and use in-text citations, APA style, 6th edition (<http://www.apastyle.org>). If you do not know how to cite appropriately, please visit the UTA writing center website for resources or set up an online appointment with them. **Failure to produce a reference list and to appropriately use in text citations will result in an automatic 5 points being deducted from the assignment.** **The details of this assignment are provided in Module 7.**

1. **Final Exam**: You will have one comprehensive online exam due on the last week of class. It will cover topics discussed in class, and will be a combination of multiple-choice and short essay questions.

**CLASS POLICIES**

* **Instructor Response Expectation:** For any course related queries, please use the discussion board so that other students can also benefit from the question. I will check the discussion forum every 48 hours. For personal (grade related) questions, **email me I will try my best to respond within 2 days**. In addition, you can also chat with me via the online chat option in Blackboard.
* **Class Notes:** Class Notes will be uploaded online on Blackboard a week before the scheduled date. Students are required to read the notes and participate in the subsequent discussion within the assigned period.
* **Assignments:** **All assignments *will be due by 11:59 PM CST of the last day of the week*. For example, the Week 1 Threaded Discussion should be submitted by 11:59 pm CST on August 23,** 2015. For assignments to be completed on Blackboard, the system will automatically close at the assigned time.
* **Attendance**: At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students’ academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, attendance is required for virtual meetings and for participation in discussion forums.
* **Class Participation Expectations:** Your primary means of participation is through the weekly discussion posts.
* **Other Requirements**: Students should expect to attend each session, participate in discussions after reading each week’s notes, and spend at least an additional 9 hours per week in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, participating in discussion forums, small group work, etc.
* **Class Decorum**: Civility and Politeness appreciated in discussion forums.
* **Make-up exams**: None
* **Late submissions**: 1 point deducted for each day overdue. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY UNLESS YOU HAVE A MEDICAL EXCUSE** (documentation required).
* **Librarian to contact:** Mitch Stepanovich. Phone: 817-272-2945; Email: [stepanovich@uta.edu](mailto:stepanovich@uta.edu)

**OTHER INFORMATION AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**Grade Grievances:** Any appeal of a grade in this course must follow the procedures and deadlines for grade-related grievances as published in the current graduate catalog. For more information, see <http://grad.pci.uta.edu/about/catalog/current/general/regulations/#gradegrievances>

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/ses/fao>).

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX:** The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law “Title IX” such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Student Support Services**:UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs.

For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory will be asked to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS) about the course and how it was taught. Instructions on how to access the SFS system will be sent directly to students through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback data is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Obviously, this does not apply to our class, as we will all be meeting in various locations. However, be sure you are aware of the environment in which you are working and locate the emergency exits.

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center, 411 Central Library, offers individual 40 minute sessions to review assignments, *Quick Hits* (5-10 minute quick answers to questions), and workshops on grammar and specific writing projects. Visit [https://uta.mywconline.com/](https://owa.uta.edu/owa/luket@exchange.uta.edu/redir.aspx?C=jqplelmmw0KcvkWv1pRv_rHS8ofUUtFIXl_CWZTLffEmCPyZf3x4ncUbBmD9p3gSPROCbhSJj7U.&URL=https%3a%2f%2futa.mywconline.com%2f" \t "_blank) to register and make appointments. For hours, information about the writing workshops we offer and descriptions of the services we offer undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty members, please visit our website at [www.uta.edu/owl/](http://www.uta.edu/owl/).