

MPA Capstone Seminar: Public Administration Theory

POSC 521 — Fall 2024

- **In-Person Sessions:** August 29; September 5, 12, 19, 26; October 3, 10, 17; November 14; December 5.
- **Synchronous Online Session:** November 21.
- **Asynchronous Online Sessions:** October 24, 31; November 7, 28; December 12.

Professor: David P. Adams, Ph.D.

Contact Information:

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- Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays from 9:30 to 11:00, Thursdays from 5:30 to 6:30, and by [appointment](#).
- Schedule meetings throughout the week: dadams.io/appointments

1. Catalog Description

Concepts, models and ideologies of public administration within the larger political system. Course restricted to students in their final six units of graduate work.

2. Course Description

The capstone seminar in the Master of Public Administration program at Cal State Fullerton examines concepts, models, and ideologies of public administration within the larger political system.

3. Course Objectives

This course is designed to accomplish five interrelated objectives:

1. **Theory Examination:** We will delve into the most important theories and literature in public administration, fostering a deep understanding of the field.
2. **Literature Review:** You will complete a literature review in your concentration area, allowing you to specialize and delve deeper into a specific aspect of public administration. This preparation will be crucial for the general concentration portion of the comprehensive exams.
3. **Writing Skills:** This course will enhance your writing skills, focusing on clear, concise, and effective communication. This preparation will be crucial for the general theory portion of the comprehensive exams.
4. **Critical Thinking:** You will develop your critical thinking skills, learning to analyze and evaluate complex arguments and theories. This preparation will be crucial for the general theory portion of the comprehensive exams.
5. **Professional Development:** This course will help you develop the skills and knowledge necessary for a successful career in public administration. You will learn about the latest trends and issues in the field and how to navigate the challenges of public service.

4. Course Materials

Required Texts

- **Denhardt and Denhardt.** *The New Public Service: Serving, Not Steering*. 4th ed. Routledge, 2015.
- **Gooden, Susan T..** *Race and Social Equity: A Nervous Area of Government*. Oxford University Press, 2014.
- **Lipsky, Michael.** *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. Russell Sage Foundation, 2010.

Additional Readings are indicated in the course schedule below.

5. Technical Problems

University IT Help Desk

Contact the instructor immediately to document the problem if you encounter any technical difficulties. Then contact the [Student IT Help Desk](#) for assistance. You can also call the Student IT Help Desk at (657) 278-8888, [email](#), visit them at the Pollak Library North [Student Genius Center](#), or log on to the my.fullerton.edu portal and click “Online IT Help” followed by “Live Chat”.

Canvas Support

If you encounter any technical difficulties with Canvas, call the Canvas Support Hotline at 855-302-7528, visit the [Canvas Community](#), or click the “Help” button in the lower left corner of Canvas and select “Report a Problem”. The [Student Support Live Chat](#) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

6. University Student Policies

In accordance with UPS 300.00, students must be familiar with certain policies applicable to all courses. Please review these policies as needed and visit this Cal State Fullerton website <https://fdc.fullerton.edu/teaching/student-info-syllabi.html> for links to the following information:

1. University learning goals and program learning outcomes.
2. Learning objectives for each General Education (GE) category.
3. Guidelines for appropriate online behavior (netiquette).
4. Students’ rights to accommodations for documented special needs.
5. Campus student support measures, including Counseling & Psychological Services, Title IV and Gender Equity, Diversity Initiatives and Resource Centers, and Basic Needs Services.
6. Academic integrity (refer to UPS 300.021).
7. Actions to take during an emergency.
8. Library services information.

9. Student Information Technology Services, including details on technical competencies and resources required for all students.
10. Software privacy and accessibility statements.

7. Course Student Policies

Course Communication

All course announcements and communications will be sent via *Canvas* and university email. Students are responsible for regularly checking their *Canvas* notifications and email. Students are also responsible for ensuring that their *Canvas* notifications are set to receive messages from the course. Students are expected to check *Canvas* and their email at least once daily.

Response Time: I will strive to respond to all student emails and *Canvas* messages within 24 hours, except on weekends and holidays. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, please send a follow-up message. If you do not receive a response within 48 hours, please send another follow-up message and contact me via phone or SMS text at (657) 278-4770.

Due Dates

All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on the date specified in the course schedule. Late assignments will only be accepted if prior arrangements have been made with the professor. Students must submit all assignments on time and in the correct format. Failure to submit an assignment on time may result in a grade penalty.

Alternative Procedures for Submitting Work

Students are expected to submit all assignments via *Canvas*. If you cannot submit an assignment via *Canvas*, please contact the professor to discuss alternative submission procedures.

Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities will not be offered in this course. All students will be graded based on the same criteria and standards.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to the sanctions described in the [Academic Dishonesty Policy](#) (UPS 300.021). Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and submitting previously graded work without prior authorization. Students are expected to be familiar with the university's policy on academic dishonesty and to adhere to this policy in all aspects of this course. Any student who has questions about the policy should ask the professor for clarification.

8. Course Requirements

Annotated Bibliography, Synthesis, and Personal Reflection

During the first eight weeks of the course, students will complete an annotated bibliography, synthesis, and personal reflection on the assigned readings. The annotated bibliography will include a summary of the critical points of each reading, an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments presented, and a reflection on the implications of the readings for public administration theory and practice. The synthesis will integrate the key points of the readings and identify common themes and divergent perspectives. The personal reflection will provide an opportunity for students to connect the readings to their own experiences and perspectives and consider the readings' implications for their future careers in public administration.

MPA Comprehensive General Area Essay Exam

Students will complete a comprehensive general area essay exam as part of the MPA program's comprehensive exam requirement. The exam will consist of three questions from which students will choose one to answer. The questions will be based on the course readings and discussions and will require students to demonstrate their understanding of public administration's key concepts, theories, and debates. The exam will allow students to synthesize their learning in the course and demonstrate their ability to think critically and write clearly about complex issues in public administration.

Concentration Area Literature Review

Students will complete a literature review in their concentration area as part of the MPA program's comprehensive exam requirement. The literature review will examine the practical and theoretical issues related to a specific public administration topic and synthesize the essential findings and debates in the literature. The literature review will

allow students to deepen their knowledge of their concentration area and develop their research and writing skills. A peer review process will be used to provide feedback on the literature review, and students will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work based on the feedback received.

9. Course Requirements Due Dates

The due dates for the course requirements are as follows:

- Annotated Bibliography, Synthesis, and Personal Reflection: Due each week by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday
- MPA Comprehensive General Area Essay Exam:
 - Distributed on 10/31
 - Due on 11/7
- Concentration Area Literature Review:
 - Topic Selection: Due on 11/14
 - Annotated Bibliography: Due on 11/21
 - Draft: Due on 12/5
 - Peer Review: Due on 12/12
 - Final Draft: Due on 12/19

10. Grades

Your work in this class will be graded based on four criteria:

1. Thoroughly complete each assignment, address all questions, and participate in class discussions.
2. Effective use of class materials (and other literature while researching your literature review topic).
3. Sophisticated substantive content and discussion rather than superficial.
4. Writing at the graduate level, including proper mechanics, grammar, syntax, and citation style.

Table 1: Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A+	98.0 – 100	B-	80.0 – 81.9
A	92.0 – 97.9	C+	78.0 – 79.9
A-	90.0 – 91.9	C	72.0 – 77.9
B+	88.0 – 89.9	C-	70.0 – 71.9
B	82.0 – 87.9	D	60.0 – 69.9
D-	50.0 – 59.9	F	0 – 49.9

Table 2: Grade Weights

Assignment	Percentage
Weekly Annotated Bibliography	5%
Weekly Synthesis	20%
Weekly Personal Reflection	5%
MPA Comprehensive General Area Essay Exam	50%
Concentration Area Literature Review	20%

Grading Scale and Grade Weights

The grading scale is shown in Table 1. Grades will be given based on the weights in Table 2.

11. Course Schedule

Week 1 – 8/29: Introduction to Public Administration Theory

- **In-person Session:** Introduction to the Course
- Readings:
 - Weber (1946)
 - Denhardt and Denhardt (2015), Chapters 1–2
 - Rosenbloom (2008)
 - Wilson (1887)
 - Wilson (1989)
- Due: Annotated Bibliography, Synthesis, and Personal Reflection

Week 2 – 9/5: Public Administration in the U.S. Context

- **In-person Session:** Public Administration in the U.S. Context
- Readings:
 - Allison (1990)
 - Kaufman (1969)
 - Kettl (2020)
 - Overeem (2005)
 - Denhardt and Denhardt (2015), Chapters 3–4
- Due: Annotated Bibliography, Synthesis, and Personal Reflection

Week 3 – 9/12: Street-Level Bureaucrats

- **In-person Session:** Street-Level Bureaucrats
- Readings:
 - Lipsky (1980)
 - Maynard-Moody (2012)
 - Lipsky (2010), Chapters 1–6
- Due: Annotated Bibliography, Synthesis, and Personal Reflection
- **Assignment:** Literature Review Topic Selection

Week 4 – 9/19: Public Service Values and Ethics

- **In-person Session:** Public Service Values and Ethics
- Readings:
 - Friedrich (1935)
 - Finer (1941)
 - Frederickson and Ghere (2005)
 - Adams and Balfour (2009)
 - Denhardt and Denhardt (2015), Chapter 7
- Due: Annotated Bibliography, Synthesis, and Personal Reflection

Week 5 – 9/26: Leadership and Motivation

- **In-person Session:** Leadership and Motivation
- Readings:
 - [Christensen, Paarlberg and Perry \(2017\)](#)
 - [Denhardt and Denhardt \(2015\)](#), Chapter 8
 - [Lachance \(2017\)](#)
 - [Magee \(2014\)](#)
 - [Fairholm \(2004\)](#)
- Due: Annotated Bibliography, Synthesis, and Personal Reflection

Week 6 – 10/3: Performance Management

- **In-person Session:** Performance Management
- Readings:
 - [Behn \(2003\)](#)
 - [Denhardt and Denhardt \(2015\)](#), Chapter 9
 - [Douglas and Ansell \(2021\)](#)
 - [Marvel \(2015\)](#)
 - [Nicholson-Crotty \(2004\)](#)
- Due: Annotated Bibliography, Synthesis, and Personal Reflection

Week 7 – 10/10: Equity, Diversity, Intersectionality, and Inclusion

- **In-person Session:** Equity, Diversity, Intersectionality, and Inclusion
- Readings:
 - [Gooden \(2014\)](#), Chapters 1–4
 - [McCandless, Bishu, Gómez Hernández, Paredes Eraso, Sabharwal, Santis and Yates \(2022\)](#)
 - [Jiang, DeHart-Davis and Borry \(2022\)](#)
 - [Marvel \(2015\)](#)
 - [Robles and Mallinson \(2023\)](#)
- Due: Annotated Bibliography, Synthesis, and Personal Reflection

Week 8 – 10/17: Privatization and Contracting

- **In-person Session:** Privatization and Contracting
- Readings:
 - [Brown, Potoski and Slyke \(2016\)](#)
 - [Cohen and Eimicke \(2008\)](#)
 - [Hefetz, Warner and Vigoda-Gadot \(2014\)](#)
 - [Jos and Tompkins \(2009\)](#)
 - [Lamothe and Lamothe \(2012\)](#)
- Due: Annotated Bibliography, Synthesis, and Personal Reflection

Week 9 – 10/24: Comprehensive General Area Essay

- **Asynchronous Session:** Comprehensive General Area Essay Study Break

Week 10 – 10/31: Comprehensive General Area Essay Exam

- **Asynchronous Session:** Comprehensive General Area Essay Exam Distributed

Week 11 – 11/7: Comprehensive General Area Essay Exam

- **Asynchronous Session:** Comprehensive General Area Essay Exam Due

Week 12 – 11/14: Concentration Area Literature Review

- **Synchronous Online Session:** Concentration Area Literature Review
- Literature review expectations and guidelines
- Due: Literature Review Topic outline

Week 13 – 11/21: Concentration Area Literature Review

- **Asynchronous Session:** Concentration Area Literature Review
- Due: Literature Review Annotated Bibliography

Week 14 – 12/5: Concentration Area Literature Review

- **Asynchronous Session:** Concentration Area Literature Review
- Due: Literature Review Draft

Week 15 – 12/12: Concentration Area Literature Review

- **In-person Session:** Concentration Area Literature Review
- Due: Literature Review Peer Review
- Course Wrap-Up and Final Reflections

Week 16 – 12/19: Concentration Area Literature Review

- **Asynchronous Session:** Concentration Area Literature Review
- Due: Literature Review Final Draft

References

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