Capstone: Public Administration Theory

POSC 521 | Fall 2023

Thursdays at 7:00 PM in 302 Gordon Hall

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- Schedule meetings throughout the week: https://t.ly/dpa_appt

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.

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. **Peer Review and Collaboration**: Through a structured peer review process, you will learn to provide constructive feedback, gain new perspectives, and improve your own

work based on your peers' insights. This collaborative learning approach is designed to mimic real-world public administration environments where collaboration and feedback are key.

5. **AI-Assisted Learning**: We will be incorporating AI (ChatGPT) into our learning process. You will interact with this AI to refine your understanding of weekly readings and improve your assignments. This innovative approach enhances your learning experience and prepares you for a future where AI tools are increasingly prevalent in public administration.

Throughout the course, we will cover the following topics:

Topic	
Public Administration Theory	Public Administration in a U.S. Context
Street-Level Bureaucrats	Public Policy and Implementation
Public Service Values and Ethics	Privatization and Contracting
Leadership	Performance Measurement
Motivation	Nonprofits and Public Administration
The Future of Public Administration	Current Issues in Public Administration

Required Readings

Books

There are four required books for this course.
- Denhardt and Denhardt (2015) develop a framework emphasizing the importance of public service values, democratic engagement, and collaboration between citizens and government. The authors argue that the New Public Service (NPS) is a departure from the traditional public administration model, which prioritizes efficiency and effectiveness, and instead emphasizes the public interest, social equity, and the need for public servants to engage with citizens and communities. The NPS emphasizes that public service is a calling and requires a commitment to serving the public good above personal gain or profit. The framework has implications for how public organizations are structured, how they engage with citizens, and how they are held accountable for their actions.

- Gooden (2014) explores the historical and contemporary challenges surrounding race and social equity within public administration. The book highlights the importance of addressing racial disparities in policy outcomes and emphasizes the critical role of public administrators in promoting social equity. Through a comprehensive analysis of the intersection between race and public policy, Gooden offers practical strategies and best practices for fostering a diverse and inclusive public service workforce. This essential resource equips students and practitioners with the knowledge and tools necessary to confront racial disparities and work towards a more equitable society in their roles as public administrators.

- Kamarck (2007) posits that the traditional bureaucratic model of government is evolving into a more efficient and responsive system due to the transformative power of technology and globalization. She contends that this shift is characterized by the rise of networked governance, in which governments increasingly collaborate with private and non-governmental organizations to deliver public services and by adopting performance-based management techniques. While challenging the status quo, Kamarck argues that these changes enhance governments' capacity to address complex social and economic issues, providing citizens with more effective and accountable institutions.

- Lipsky (2010) focuses on the role of front-line public service workers, or "street-level bureaucrats," who directly interact with the public and implement policies. He explores the dilemmas these workers face, such as limited resources, conflicting goals, and the need to exercise discretion in decision-making. The book relates to public administration by illuminating the importance of understanding the experiences and challenges faced by street-level bureaucrats, as their actions determine the success or failure of public policies.

Additional readings are indicated in the course schedule below.

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://t.ly/csuf-syllabus`) 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.

Remember to refer to these policies and resources throughout the course, as necessary.

Course Work

1. Weekly Essays and Peer Review

To facilitate class discussion and prepare you for comprehensive exams, your weekly writing assignment begins with an annotated bibliography of each weekly reading. It concludes with a 1–2-page synthesis of the week's readings. This assignment incorporates a group activity, use of an AI large language model (e.g., ChatGPT) and individual work.

- Citation is required at the top of each bibliographic entry (refer to the citation guide at the end), and each entry should include a summary highlighting the central theme and important points of the reading. Each bibliographic entry should be approximately one paragraph.

- The synthesis focuses on the lessons/implications of all the week's readings for the theory and practice of PA (i.e., what do these works, taken together, tell us about the study and practice of public administration?).

Details

We'll be incorporating AI (ChatGPT) in our weekly assignments to facilitate your learning and manage the course effectively. This AI will provide additional feedback on your work and help understand the weekly readings and refine your assignments.

The Setup and Disclaimer:
- Students will be separated into dynamic groups of three classmates, for a total of eleven groups. Groups will change each week.

- In the first class, we'll go over the pedagogical reasoning behind this and how to interact with ChatGPT, and you'll have a chance to practice using it. While ChatGPT is a powerful tool for learning, remember that it's meant to complement, not replace, your own critical thinking and learning process.

- Please make sure to be as specific and detailed as possible when talking with ChatGPT. The more information you provide, the more effective the feedback will be.

- We're using this technology to enhance your learning experience and make the course more manageable for everyone. I'm excited about this approach; it will add much value to our class.

Iterative Annotated Bibliographies and Syntheses

Annotated Bibliographies:

An annotated bibliography is an organized list of sources (like a reference list), where each source is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph—the annotation. In this course, each annotation should consist of a citation, a summary of the central theme and key points of the source, and a note on its relevance to the week's topic.

The annotated bibliography in this course is to review the literature on the week's topic and prepare you for in-depth discussion and analysis. It also helps develop your ability to distill and synthesize complex information, a key skill in public administration.

Syntheses:

A synthesis is a piece of writing that combines information from many sources to present an understanding or make a point. The sources used in a synthesis may be different articles, essays, interviews, or lectures. In this case, your sources are the readings for the week.

The purpose of the synthesis in this course is to pull together the main themes and insights from the week's readings and discuss their implications for public administration. The synthesis should not be a simple summary of each source, but rather a critical analysis that identifies patterns draws connections, and addresses contradictions among the sources. The synthesis encourages you to think critically and analytically about the readings and their implications for the theory and practice of public administration.

Remember that both the annotated bibliography and synthesis are iterative processes, where feedback from peers, the AI, and your reflection will be used to refine and improve your work.

The Process:

Annotated Bibliographies:
- Weeks 2 and 3:
    - Draft an annotated bibliography for each of the weeks' readings, and then share it with your group. The group collectively discusses each bibliography and gives feedback. This could be done in Canvas or a GoogleDoc. Following group discussions, you will revise your annotated bibliography accordingly and share it with the AI (ChatGPT) for further feedback. This prompt might look something like: *"I've completed an annotated bibliography for an article. The citation is [insert citation]. The summary I wrote is [insert summary]. I've noted the relevance as [insert relevance]. Could you provide feedback on my summary and relevance note?"* Make a second revision of your annotated bibliography incorporating feedback from the AI.
- The remainder of the Term:
    - Draft an annotated bibliography for each of the weeks' readings, and then share it with your group. The group collectively discusses each bibliography and gives feedback. This could be done in Canvas or a GoogleDoc. Following group discussions, you will revise your annotated bibliography accordingly.

Synthesis:
- Based on the feedback received from your peers and the AI on the annotated bibliography, you will draft a synthesis and share it with your group for a group review discussion.
- For each group member, write a brief (no more than one page) professional review suggesting improvements in content, connections that could be strengthened, etc. After completing this review, you'll use a structured prompt to get feedback from ChatGPT.

For example: *"I've reviewed a classmate's synthesis on [topic]. Here are my main comments and suggestions [insert comments and suggestions]. Could you provide feedback on the completeness and depth of my review?"*

- Share your reviews and the AI's feedback with your group as a second round of peer review.

Final Submission:
- Incorporate feedback from the second round of feedback and redraft your synthesis. You'll then use a structured prompt to get feedback from ChatGPT. For example: *"I've synthesized the information from [number] articles on [topic]. Here's my initial draft of the synthesis [insert draft]. Could you provide feedback and suggest any connections or contrasts I missed?"* **You will submit 1) your draft and 2) the feedback from ChatGPT on your draft.** You do not need to rewrite your synthesis based on feedback from the AI; instead, use this opportunity to learn about your writing. (In a real-world setting, you would do a final synthesis draft.)

Reflection[i]:
- Weeks 2 and 3:
    - Once your synthesis is completed, you will write a brief reflection on the entire process, your insights, and how the feedback from peers and the AI helped shape your synthesis. Reflect on your learning process - how your understanding of the readings evolved, which feedback was most helpful, and how your thought process changed over time. The reflection is then shared with the AI for feedback. For example: *"I've written a reflection on [topic or assignment]. Here's what I wrote [insert reflection]. Could you provide feedback or ask questions to provoke further thought?"* **Submit your reflection and the feedback from ChatGPT to Canvas before Thursday's class.**
- The remainder of the Term:
    - Feel free to continue formally doing the reflections independently, but no written submission is required. In class discussion, we will continue the reflection process more informally.

Deadlines for Submission to Canvas
- **(Suggest) Monday**: Share annotated bibliography.
- **(Suggest) Tuesday**: Conduct peer reviews within the group (feedback to be submitted by the end of the day)
- **Wednesday**: **Submit synthesis incorporating the feedback.**
- **Thursday**: **Reflections due before class in weeks 2 and 3**

Bye Week:
- Every student takes **one** bye week, during which they may choose to skip either the annotated bibliography and synthesis, the peer review, or both. However, it's important to note that the peer review and annotated bibliography and synthesis don't have to be skipped simultaneously. You can take your bye week for each component at separate times in the semester.

- Regardless of when you choose to take your bye week, you will still be assigned a group in Canvas for that week.

- If you plan to use your bye week for the peer review, it's crucial to inform your group members in advance so they can adjust their expectations accordingly.

- This means that out of the eleven total assignments, you will only be graded for a total of ten.

Options for Bye Week:
- **Option 1:** Skip peer review and individual annotated bibliographies and syntheses simultaneously.
- **Option 2:** Skip only the peer review. (Remember to inform your group!)
- **Option 3:** Skip only the individual annotated bibliographies and syntheses.

Remember, the bye week is an option to provide flexibility in case of unforeseen circumstances or an overwhelming workload, not an encouragement to disengage from the course. Keeping up with the readings and participating in class discussions is still crucial.

2. Book Reports

This semester, you will write three book reports, each contributing 15% to your course grade. The book report is another opportunity to apply and hone the skills you are developing through the AI-assisted peer review, synthesis, and annotated bibliographies for the weekly readings. Here are some guidelines to help you:

- Each report should be limited to twelve pages, using double-space and 12-point Times New Roman (or equivalent) font. Be sure to include page numbers. (I care less about the font than the identical nature of the word counts with these limits.)
- Organize your report by chapter. For each chapter, write a brief annotated bibliography, focusing on summarizing the main arguments, theories, and concepts, just as you do in your weekly assignments.
- Concisely summarize each chapter; avoid superficially skimming through each chapter.
- Focus on summarizing the most essential points for each chapter, by chapter, and avoid disconnected sentences or bullet points.
- After summarizing each chapter, synthesize the entire book in the final 1.5–2 pages. This synthesis should highlight the main arguments and theories of the book, discuss its implications for the theory and practice of Public Administration (PA), and explain why this work is essential to the field or your area of the field. This is like the weekly synthesis assignment.
- Properly cite each chapter in your book report.
- Upload your reports to Canvas by the deadline; late reports will not be accepted.

Book Report Discussion Boards

We will use online Discussion Boards for book report discussions to encourage peer engagement and collaborative learning. Each book has its own Discussion Board (DB) with several prompts

for you to address. This is another chance to hone and refine the peer-review skills you learn and use in your weekly reading assignments. Here's how to participate:

- Upload your book report by the due date and time (11:59 PM)
- Address at least two prompts in the DB, providing thoughtful responses that encourage discussion.
- Respond to at least one other student's comments (can be on any prompt) using a peer review approach like what you practice in the weekly assignments.
- Upload your comments to the DB by Friday of each week (also at 11:59 PM)

The discussion board is a virtual platform where you can share your thoughts about the book, engage with your peers, and deepen your understanding of the material. Avoid quoting directly from the book or your report, as it may affect your grade.

3. Literature Review

Your final assignment is a literature review on a topic related to your concentration area. This should be approximately ten double-spaced pages with 12-point Times New Roman (or equivalent) font. The instructor must approve your topic by October 5th.

A literature review is a comprehensive survey of existing research related to a specific question or topic. Unlike the conventional literature review, you are not required to propose a new research question for this assignment. Instead, you will review the literature on a preexisting question or topic.

The Process
1. **Selecting the topic**: Choose a critical, focused, and related topic for your concentration area. The scope of the topic should be manageable within the two months allocated for this task.

2. **Annotated Bibliographies**: Like your weekly assignments, you will create annotated bibliographies for each of the critical pieces of literature related to your topic. This will help you summarize and note the relevance of each work, giving you a solid foundation for the literature review. This is for you and will not be turned in for a grade.

3. **Synthesis**: Based on your annotated bibliographies, create a synthesis that weaves the main arguments, theories, or findings from the literature. This synthesis will provide the foundation for the body of your literature review. This is for you and will not be turned in for a grade.

4. **Structure**: Organize your literature review into distinct sections and use headings and subheadings as appropriate:

   - Introduction: Clearly state your topic and briefly outline your literature review.
   - Body: Review and discuss the literature you've selected, using your synthesis as a guide. Organize your discussion according to publication chronology, approaches, methods, or theories.

- Conclusion: Discuss the findings of the literature review. What do we know, and where is the field on this topic?
- Bibliography

Additional Parameters

- Your literature review should discuss the field's evolution on the chosen topic, from its origins to its current state, including the most influential works in between.

- Discuss whether this is an issue/question/topic with coherent theories, approaches, and models or if it is a disjointed, contentious field. You may find some early literature is discredited by later research.

- Remember, this paper is significantly longer than your weekly annotated bibliographies, so it's a chance to delve deeper into the details of the various approaches, methods, and theories you've reviewed.

- Your review should be written and free of grammatical/spelling errors.

Literature Review Deadline

Your literature review is due on Thursday, December 14th by 11:59 PM. No late work will be accepted.

Literature Review Executive Summary

In addition to the literature review, each student will prepare an executive summary to share with students in your concentration. The executive summary should be double-spaced and two pages long and should include the following:

- Your topic
- Main findings
- Conclusion
- Bibliography

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.

Please note that you must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade. Grades will not be curved.

Grade Breakdown

Assignment	Percentage
Book report (Lipsky)	10%
Book report (Kamarck)	10%
Book report (Gooden)	10%
Weekly bibliographies	40%
Literature review	25%
Participation[ii]	5%
Total	**100%**

Grade 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		

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction and Overview
- *Orienting*
    - Syllabus Overview
    - MPA Comprehensive Exam Discussion
    - Study Plans
    - Review of Citation Style
- *Peer Review Introduction*
    - Groupings
    - Learning AI Prompts

Week 2: Public Administration Theory
- *Administrivia*
    - Check-in on Peer Review Activity
- *Readings*
    - Denhardt and Denhardt (2015) chapters 1–2

- – Wilson (1989)
- – Weber (1946)
- – David H. Rosenbloom (2008)
- *Submissions*
  - – Weekly essay due

Week 3: Public Administration in the U.S. Political Context
- *Administrivia*
  - – Reflections on Annotated Bibs, Peer-Review, Synthesis, and ChatGPT
  - – Check-in on book reports
- *Readings*
  - – Allison (1990)
  - – David H. Rosenbloom (1983)
  - – Donald F. Kettl (2020a)
  - – Kaufman (1969)
  - – Overeem (2005)
  - – Denhardt and Denhardt (2015) chapters 3–4
- *Submissions*
  - – Weekly essay due

Week 4: Book Report 1
- *Administrivia*
  - – **No Class**
- *Book*
  - – **Upload book report for Lipsky (2010)**
- *Discussion*
  - – Discussion Board on *Canvas* with final conversations due by 11:59 PM on September 14th.

Week 5: Bureaucracy and Organizational Theory
- *Readings*
  - – Follett (1926)
  - – Brownlow (n.d.)
  - – Donald F. Kettl (2020b)
  - – Downs (1967)
  - – Schachter (2007)
  - – Denhardt and Denhardt (2015) Chapters 7 and 9
- *Submission*
  - – Weekly essay due

Week 6: Bureaucrats and Representative Bureaucracy
- *Administrivia*

- **This will be a virtual week with a short class on Zoom.**
- *Readings*
    - Maynard-Moody (2012)
    - Krislov (1974) chapter *n*
    - Thomas (1990)
    - R. D. Behn (2001)
    - Molina (2012)
    - Denhardt and Denhardt (2015) chapters 5–6
- *Submission*
    - Weekly essay due

Week 7: Public Service Values and Ethics
- *Readings*
    - Frederickson and Ghere (2005)
    - R. D. Behn (2001)
    - Yang (2016)
    - Adams and Balfour (2009)
    - Raile (2013)
- *Submission*
    - Weekly essay due

Week 8: Book Report 2
- *Administrivia*
    - No Class, No Office Hours
- *Book*
    - **Upload book report for Kamarck (2007)**
- *Discussion*
    - Discussion Board on *Canvas* with final conversations due by 11:59 PM on October 12th.

Week 9: Behavioral Public Administration: Motivation & Leadership
- *Administrivia*
    - The literature topic must be approved by the end of Friday this week.
- *Readings*
    - Motivation
        - Herzberg (2003)
        - Christensen, Paarlberg, and Perry (2017)
        - Lachance (2017)
        - Miller (1992) Chapter *n*
    - Leadership
        - Paarlberg (2010)

- • Fairholm (2004)
- • Magee (2014)
- • Denhardt and Denhardt (2015) Chapter 8
- *Submission*
  - Weekly essay is due: *half should focus on motivation and half on leadership.*

Week 10: Behavioral Public Administration: Decision-Making
- *Readings*
  - Rivlin (2015) chapter(s) *n*
  - Lindblom (1959)
  - Caiden (1981)
  - Pandey (2010)
  - Nutt (2005)
- *Submission*
  - Weekly essay due

Week 11: Public Policy and Implementation
- *Readings*
  - May and Winter (2007)
  - Roman (2015)
  - Kingdon (1995) Chapter *n*
  - Bardach (1977)
  - Head (2019)
  - Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) Chapter *n*
- *Submission*
  - Weekly essay due

Week 12: Privatization and Contracting
- *Readings*
  - Hefetz, Warner, and Vigoda-Gadot (2014)
  - Jos and Tompkins (2010)
  - Lamothe and Lamothe (2012)

  - Brown, Potoski, and Slyke (2016)
  - Cohen and Eimicke (2008)

- *Submission*
  - Weekly essay due

Week 13: Book Report 3
- *Administrivia*
  - No Class

- *Book*
  - **Upload book report for Gooden (2014)**
- *Discussion*
  - Discussion Board on *Canvas* with final conversations due by 11:59 PM on November 16th.

Week 14: Measuring Performance
- *Readings*
  - Robert D. Behn (2003)
  - Nicholson-Crotty and O'Toole Jr (2004)
  - Marvel (2016)
  - Douglas and Ansell (2021)
- *Submission*
  - Weekly essay due

Week 15: Contemporary and Future Public Administration
- *Readings*
  - *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, Acceptance*
    - McCandless et al. (2022)
    - Jiang, DeHart-Davis, and Borry (2022)
  - *Present and Future*
    - Robles and Mallinson (2023)
    - Marvel (2016)
    - Denhardt and Denhardt (2015) chapters 10–11
- *Submission*
  - Weekly essay due

Week 16: Literature Review
- *Submission*
  - Literature review due by 11:59 PM on December 14th.

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[i] Reflections allow for the development of metacognitive skills, a greater understanding of the learning process, in-depth learning, and personal growth.

[ii] Participation is evaluated based on class interactions, online discussion board engagement, peer review effort, and attendance.