

Western Kentucky University
Department of Political Science
Course Syllabus
Political Science 520: Elements of Public Administration
Winter 2019

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Professor: Daniel Boden, Ph.D., MPA
Office Address 350 Grise Hall
Office Telephone: (270) 745-6357
Email: daniel.boden@wku.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is organized around the notion that in order to understand the systems within administrators work and to apply the skills of public administration, it is essential to comprehend the dynamics and the context of public administration in a constitutional democracy. As implementers of public policy, public administrators play an important role in maintaining the relationship between citizens and the state.

The fit between public administration and democracy has never been comfortable. The quest for efficient and effective administration of public programs takes place in an environment characterized by lively deliberations over policy objectives, clashing philosophies, citizen participation, the role of equity, and demands for accountability. This course provides an overview of the approaches to public administration that have developed over roughly the last century in the United States. As efforts to reconcile public administration with democratic processes have evolved, so too have the skills of administrators and the systems within which they work.

We will examine the changing approaches to administration and the implications for practice through course readings, writing assignments, case analysis, and in-class exercises and discussions. You will learn about the different organizing concepts of public administration, the relationship of public administration to democratic governance, the evolving skills and practices of public administration, and the relationship of your own public service to broader democratic processes.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this course students will be able to:

1. Identify and explain the theoretical foundations of the field of public administration. (1.2, 1.3, 3.2)
2. Describe and explain the nature and development of public administration as an academic discipline and field of practice in the United States. (1.2, 3.1, 4.1)

3. Analyze competing conceptual frames of public service in the United States. (1.3, 4.1, 4.2)

The content of the course is designed to provoke thought about these types of questions:

1. What ideas and events have shaped (and continue to shape) contemporary public administration?
2. What is the relationship between American society and the action options open to public service practitioners?
3. As practitioners, whom do we serve, and for what purposes?

LEARNING GOALS OF THE MPA PROGRAM

The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration require, as the basis for our curriculum the adoption of a set of required competencies related to our mission and public service values. This course equips students with both theoretical and practical skills necessary to exercise competency in the following areas:

- To lead and manage in public governance;
- To participate in and contribute to the policy process;
- To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
- To articulate and apply a public service perspective;
- To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The following texts are available through the WKU bookstore or can be purchased from the source of your choice:

Kettl, D.F. (2014). *Politics of the administrative process, 7th edition*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. ISBN 13: 978-1-50635709-6

Box, R.C. (2018). *Essential history for public administration*. Irvine, CA: Melvin & Leigh, Publishers. ISBN 13: 978-0-99923591-1

In addition to the texts, supplemental readings will also be assigned. These will be available on Blackboard or will be given to you in class. Supplemental readings are designated by ** in the course schedule below.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Although it goes without saying that students get out of a course what they put into it, it is important to emphasize several key expectations.

CONTACT WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

Email is the best way to contact me, as I check it on a regular basis. Feel free to contact me at any time for any reason. Because this is a web-based class, I will not have specific office hours. However, if you would like to see me in my office, contact me and we can schedule a convenient time for us to meet. Please feel free to call me with questions. Also, be sure to check your campus email account on a regular basis, as that is how I will communicate with you. I am not responsible for email messages you do not receive due to problems with email forwarding, etc.

GRADING

All written work submitted for this course must be typed in Microsoft WORD, double-spaced, paginated (pages should be numbered at the bottom center), using no larger than a 12 point font with one inch page margins. The standard for writing in this course is of a professional quality that is indicative of a graduate degree program that prepares students for advanced scholarly or professional work. Writing must be clear and grammatically correct in terms of punctuation and use of language. Further resources can be found at the [Western Kentucky University Writing Center](http://www.wku.edu/writingcenter/) webpage (<http://www.wku.edu/writingcenter/>).

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST). Assignments will be assessed a 10% penalty for each 24 hour period they are late unless arrangements have been made with the instructor in advance or the student has appropriate documentation from the Dean of Students.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology has become an important part of higher education. This course requires that you have access to a computer and a reliable internet connection. Students will need access to Blackboard to access course reading material, complete course assignments, and turn course assignments in for grading purposes. Also, any email communication should be via WKU email addresses.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Cheating and Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of either cheating or plagiarism will be referred to appropriate administrative proceedings at Western Kentucky University. Additionally, the student will receive a zero for the assignment

General Rules for the Discussion Board

1. Your responses should not be repetitive but rather should engage your fellow student by expanding, enhancing and or critically evaluating their response.

2. Do not simply cut and paste submissions from online sources. This is considered plagiarism and those caught doing this will be given a zero on this portion of the course and referred to the administration for possible further punishment.
3. Do not send posts with personal attacks, foul language, inappropriate comments, insulting criticism, or use the discussion board as a personal “soap box”. A good rule of thumb is that if you are not sure whether something is appropriate you should not post it.
4. Your responses should explicitly refer to the readings. You are welcome and encouraged to bring in current domestic and foreign events; however, these discussion board posts are an opportunity for you to engage with your colleagues about the concepts presented in the assigned readings.

Discussion Questions (20%)

You will discuss questions posed by me on the Blackboard Discussion Board. You will be responsible for contributing and/or commenting on others’ input throughout the course. A new question will be posted every day except for exam days. You will be responsible for contributing to the discussion with an original response to the prompt and at least two (2) additional responses to your colleagues’ posts for a minimum of three posts. You will only receive credit if your original response is posted by 11:59 p.m. on the day the original prompt is posted and your two (2) responses are by 11:59 p.m. the following day. Your discussion board grade will be based on the quality of your posts as well as how many questions you respond to.

PA in the News (20%)

During the first week of class students will find a current news story related to public administration. Students will research the topic presented in the news story and prepare a brief report (no less than 1500 words) on how this story relates course readings. The report should not be a summary of the news article. Reports should include a description of the issue presented in the news article; the public organizations involved, stakeholders, interests, and officials involved.

The report should highlight the direct connection between the news story, public administration as a field, course readings, as well as an analysis of the particular issue presented in the news article and how it relates to course content. This will require students to explicitly draw upon concepts found in course readings. ***YOUR REPORT MUST CITE COURSE READINGS.*** The report will need outside sources and as such must have a reference list. The sources should be cited in APA style. For questions about APA please visit [The Purdue Online Writing Lab](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/) at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>. The report is due by Monday, January 7th at 11:59 p.m.

Exams (60%)

The midterm exam will be a take-home exam; the exam will be **due no later than 11:59 p.m. January 12th**. The final exam will be a take-home exam; the exam that will be **due no later than 11:59 p.m. January 18th**.

GRADE WEIGHTS

Final Grades will be computed in the following manner:

Assignments	Percentage of Final Grades
Discussion Questions	20%
PA in the News	20%
Exam	60%

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage Scale for Each Letter
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	59 and below

Title IX Misconduct/Assault Statement

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding [WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy](https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf) (#0.2070) at <https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf> and

[Discrimination and Harassment Policy](https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf) (#0.2040) at https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf.

Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the [Title IX Coordinator](https://www.wku.edu/eoo/titleix/coordinatordeputies.php) at <https://www.wku.edu/eoo/titleix/coordinatordeputies.php> or at 270-745-5398

Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and **MUST** report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact [WKU's Counseling and Testing Center](https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/) at <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> or at 270-745-3159.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Student Accessibility Resource Center has issued the following statement:

"In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. The phone number is 270.745.5004 [270.745.5121 V/TDD] or email at sarc@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations

directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation (LOA) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center."

For more information, visit the [Student Accessibility Resource Center website](https://www.wku.edu/sarc/) at <https://www.wku.edu/sarc/>.