

**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN U.S. PUBLIC POLICY  
PUBPOL 586  
Fall Term 2021**

**Professor Barry Rabe**

**Cell Phone: 734.765.1677**

**E-mail: [brabe@umich.edu](mailto:brabe@umich.edu)**

**Office hours: Tuesday 12 Noon to 2; Wednesday 10 to 11; Monday remote by appointment 8 to 9**

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

PUBPOL 586 provides 1.5 credits and is designed to fill one-half of the Ford School MPP requirement in Public Management, supplemented with completion of a second module selected from a list of electives. This course is intended to introduce students to a series of fundamental issues and challenges linked to the implementation of public policies through governmental departments and agencies. It will examine questions of performance measurement and management in the context of public sector agencies in the United States, including consideration as to whether best practices of evidence-based policy making and implementation are feasible and sustainable in the actual world of public management. This course will focus primarily on the federal level of government but also consider state and local levels while making occasional reference to cases beyond American borders where public management excellence has been achieved.

This module will be divided into two units. First, it will review the political history and institutional evolution of public management in the United States and consider enduring political, social, and economic challenges that frequently lead to management failure. Second, it will consider lessons from recent decades in which performance measurement and management have been mandated by federal and state statute and become a focal point in American governance. Both units will consider whether public management and performance are constant or change in far-reaching ways when elected executive leadership changes, including presidential transition. More broadly, the course is designed to enable students to discern the real-world applicability of many theories, methods, and concepts introduced in other core courses focused on economics, program evaluation, and politics in the applied world of public management and policy implementation where many of them will devote much of their subsequent careers.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Students will have a variety of opportunities to analyze and express their views on major issues concerning public management. This will include two take-home assignments that respond to a specific set of questions provided by the instructor. One assignment will involve completion of a paper of approximately four pages that reflects on our initial weeks of engagement and explores what types of management failures contributed to the Flint water crisis. This will include the roles of the former governor and top agency officials who have recently been indicted by the state attorney general. Your perspectives will be considered in a class debate on paper findings scheduled for October 5 and 12. A second assignment will require you to select any U.S. state for analysis of its public management record during the Covid-19 pandemic, with particular emphasis on post-vaccine governance. This paper will cover approximately five pages (double-spaced) and respond to a memo and outline that will be distributed on November 2. It will be due on November 30, with our final two class sessions devoted to debate on your findings.

The papers will follow a format generally consistent with what is required of research staff at the National Academy of Public Administration for public management review panels requested by federal or state executive agency leaders, including its new Grand Challenges Initiative. Any late submission will be penalized 10 percent of the total available points per day unless alternative arrangements are made in advance with the instructor. In turn, students are expected to come to every class prepared and to engage meaningfully in all discussions; class participation will be weighed formally in establishing a final grade. Participation will also include responses to questions or surveys that I post via Canvas prior to a number of classes. I evaluate participation throughout the term, including notes taken after every class session and subsequent review of session recordings where appropriate. The final grade will be determined on the basis of total points acquired through the various opportunities noted below:

Flint crisis paper: 100 points  
Performance paper: 100 points  
Class engagement: 50 points  
Total: 250 points

The grade scale is as follows:

98-100: A+  
94-97: A  
90-93: A-  
87-89: B+  
84-86: B  
80-83: B-  
77-79: C+  
74-76: C  
70-73: C-

I am mindful that this course takes place under unique circumstances at this stage of the pandemic. And I am saddened to realize that I will not be able to honor a long-standing tradition for this course, hosting a dinner in my home for all students. However, I hope to replicate as much as possible the flavor and rigor of prior versions of this course, all of which have received very positive student evaluations and been recognized on the Dean's Honor Roll among Ford School course offerings. I am closely following the recommendations of the Ford School Resilient Teaching Committee in the design of this course, as was true for all my courses taught during the last academic year. Most of our class sessions will take place in person, albeit mindful of University and Ford School public health guidelines. Four of our sessions will take place solely in a remote format via Zoom. These will entail class discussion and debate sections that focus on key paper findings, taking advantage of the ability to dispense with masks for these exchanges. I intend to use Lecture Capture for all of our sessions, with recordings that include all slides, posted immediately thereafter via Canvas. Please let me know as early in the semester as possible if you have any questions about any issues concerning the course.

## **UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN AND FORD SCHOOL POLICIES**

This module has been designed through consultation with all applicable Ford School and University of Michigan policies, including those addressing diversity, inclusivity, accommodations for students with disabilities, and student mental health and well-being. For a more detailed review of many of these policies, please see <http://fordschool.umich.edu/academics/expectations>.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you believe you need an accommodation for a disability, please reach out to the U-M Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office to help determine appropriate academic accommodations and how to communicate about your accommodations with your professors. Any information you provide will be treated as private and confidential.

**Student Mental Health and Well-Being Resources:** The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. We acknowledge that a variety of issues, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, directly impact students' academic performance. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available.

Kristen Carney, LMSW, is an embedded counselor within the Ford School. She is available to meet with Ford School students in person or via remote access using Zoom. You may reach her at [krisca@umich.edu](mailto:krisca@umich.edu). In addition, you may access other counselors and urgent services at [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) and/or [University Health Service \(UHS\)](#). Students may also use the Crisis Text Line (text '4UMICH' to 741741) to be connected to a trained crisis volunteer. You can find additional resources both on and off campus through CAPS or UHS.

**Ford School Public Health Protection Policy:** In order to participate in any in-person aspects of this course—including meeting with other students to study or work on a team project--you must follow all the public safety measures mandated by the State of Michigan, Washtenaw County, the University of Michigan, and the Ford School. It is expected that you will protect and enhance the health of everyone in the Ford School community by staying home and following self-isolation guidelines if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or are awaiting a test result because of symptoms. If you do not have a verified COVID-19 vaccine report in the U-M vaccination report system, you are required to participate in weekly testing if you intend to come to campus for any reason.

**Ford School Inclusivity Statement:** Members of the Ford School community represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. We are committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- share their unique experiences, values, and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value one another's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in Ford classes and across the U-M community

**Academic Integrity:** The Ford School academic community, like all communities, functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. We hold all members of our community to high standards of scholarship and integrity. To accomplish its mission of providing an optimal educational environment and developing leaders of society, the Ford School promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and misconduct.

Academic dishonesty may be understood as any action of attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or any other members of the university community. Plagiarism involves representing the words, ideas, or work of others as one's own in writing or presentations and failing to give full and proper credit to the original source. Conduct, without regard to motive, that violates the academic integrity and ethical standards will result in serious consequences and disciplinary action. The Ford School's policy of academic integrity can be found in its MPP/MPA, BA, and PhD program handbooks. Additional information regarding academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and misconduct and their consequences is available at: <http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/policies/academic-policies/section11#112>

**Use of Technology:** Students should follow instructions from their instructor as to acceptable use of technology in the classroom, including laptops, in each course. All course materials (including slides, assignments, handouts, pre-recorded lectures, or recordings of class) are to be considered confidential material and are not to be shared in full or part with anyone outside of the course participants. Likewise, your own personal recording (audio or video) of your classes or office hour sessions is allowed only with the express written permission of your instructor. If you wish to post course materials or photographs/videos of classmates or your instructor to third-party sites (e.g. social media) you must have informed consent. *Without explicit permission from the instructor and in some cases your classmates, the public distribution or posting of any photos, audio/video recordings or pre-recordings from class, discussion section or office hours, even if you have permission to record, is not allowed and could be considered academic misconduct.*

**Please review additional information and policies regarding academic expectations and resources at the Ford School of Public Policy [at this link](#).**

## **REQUIRED READINGS**

Required readings should be completed, preferably in the order listed below, before each designated class session. Readings are posted on the class Canvas site, with a few emerging case materials likely to be added as the term progresses. There is only one required book: Anna Clark, *The Poisoned City: Flint's Water and the American Urban Tragedy* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2018)

## **SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS**

## **SECTION I: WHY PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IS SO TROUBLED**

### **August 31: Welcome and Introduction**

### **September 7 & 14: Issues and Trends in Public Management: The Perpetual Quest for Evidence in Political Systems (Receive blog assignment on September 14))**

For September 7: Francis Fukuyama, "American Liberty Depends on the 'Deep State,'" *Wall Street Journal* (December 21-22, 2019).

For September 7: Katherine J. Cramer, "The Turn Away from Government and the Need to Revive the Civic Purpose of Higher Education," *Perspectives on Politics* (June 2016): 442-450.

For September 14: Clark, *The Poisoned City*, Prologue and Part I.

For September 14: City of Flint, *2019 Annual Water Quality Report*.

### **September 21: Capture and Executive Overreach as Contributors to Public Management Failure**

George J. Stigler, "The Theory of Economic Regulation," in *The Citizen and the State: Essays on Regulation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), pp. 114-141.

REGBLOG, Penn Program on Regulation, "Rooting Out Regulatory Capture," (June 13, 2016). Please read entries by Senators Mike Lee and Elizabeth Warren.

Scott McCartney, "Boeing 737 MAX: The Latest Example of a Passive DOT," *Wall Street Journal* (March 12, 2019).

"Bureaucratic Blight," *The Economist* (September 7, 2019).

Clark, *The Poisoned City*, Part II.

### **September 28: The Bounds of Rationality and the Master Narrative in Public Management**

Herbert A. Simon, "Administrative Behavior and Contemporary Behavioral Science," in *Administrative Behavior* (New York: Free Press, 1975), 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, pp. xxvi-xl.

Michael Lewis, “People Risk” in *The Fifth Risk* (New York: Norton, 2018), 83-126.

Clark, *The Poisoned City*, Part III.

“With the lead piping,” *Economist* (December 5, 2020), 33.

Recording of Professor Manuel Teodoro’s 2019 Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy presentation on U.S. drinking water policy.

**October 5 & 12: Submit blog assignment on October 5 and debate findings with colleagues on one of these dates. Remote sessions.**

**October 19: Fall Break. Enjoy!**

## **SECTION II: CAN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPROVE GOVERNMENTAL PERFORMANCE?**

**October 26: The Administrative Presidency in the American Federal System**

Frank Thompson, Kenneth Wong and Barry Rabe, *Trump, the Administrative Presidency, and Federalism* (Brookings Institution Press, 2020), chapter 1.

Paige Williams, “Urgent Care: As Trump Flails in the Pandemic, the Army Corps of Engineers Gets It Done,” *The New Yorker* (August 3 & 10, 2020)

**November 2 & 9: Measuring Performance and Improving Outcomes (Receive final paper assignment on November 9)**

Donald P. Moynihan, “The New Federal Performance System: Implementing the GPRA Modernization Act,” (IBM Center for the Business of Government, 2014).

U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Performance and Accountability Report: Fiscal Year 2020*: 2-66.

Russ Linden, “When Performance Measures Go Horribly Wrong,” *Governing* (November 14, 2016).

Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene, “Away with the Whip,” *Governing* (May 2019).

### **November 16: Performance Management at the State Level**

National Academy of Public Administration, *An Organizational Assessment of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission*, Report by a Panel of the National Academy of Public Administration for the Second Century Corporation Commission Task Force (November 2018), 7-26.

J.B. Wogan, “How Stat Got Stuck,” *Governing* (April 2017): 32-37.

John Buntin, “25 Years Later, What Happened to ‘Reinventing Government?’” *Governing* (September 2016).

### **November 23: Intergovernmental and International Models of Performance Management in the Pandemic**

Tom Frieden, “Which Countries Have Responded Best to Covid-19?,” *Wall Street Journal* (January 2-3, 2021), C4.

Elizabeth Kolbert, “Independent People: How Iceland Managed to Beat the Curve,” *The New Yorker* (June 8 & 15, 2020): 25-30.

Beverly A. Cigler, “Fighting COVID-19 in the United States with Federalism and Other Constitutional and Statutory Authority,” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* (August 2021): 1-20.

Jongeun You, “Lessons from South Korea’s Covid-19 Policy Response,” *American Review of Public Administration* 50 (2020): 801-808.

Elaine Kamarck, “America Needs a Covid-19 Commission,” Brookings Institution (December 1, 2020).

### **November 30 & December 7: Performance Paper Debates (Final papers due by beginning of December 7 class) Remote sessions.**



