University of North Florida
Master of Public Administration program
PAD 6436 Ethics: theory and practice for public administrators
Fall 2017

Assignments

Readings:
In order to cover as much material as possible, keeping up with the readings is essential. Readings will be used to supplement lectures - lectures will not necessarily be structured by the readings.

Attendance/participation:
Attendance is required, and participation encouraged. If you cannot make class, inform me beforehand. Though not assigned a specific point value, irregular attendance will be penalized.

Research papers
The papers have a number of goals:
- To deepen understanding of course materials.
- To develop the student's ability to do research.
- To develop the student's written communication skills.

Grading criteria: A consistent grading schema will be used for all written work, with the points available for the various assignments apportioned among a number of criteria. These will include the following (and are further elaborated below):
- Systematic, comprehensive research (30%)
- Write professionally (30%)
- Cite sources in text, correctly (10%)
- Logical, coherent, balanced argument (30%)
- Well used tables/ graphs (bonus)
- Follow instructions (debits)

Paper #1 -- 10 points
Students will write a paper of at least 500 words, submitted in class or electronically on 7 September. The paper will be on the following topic:
- Cooper and Sen discuss similar topics, though use different terms. Cooper’s focus is on the importance of the responsible administrator in the process of governance; while Sen appears more concerned with justice, which might be seen as a social outcome. Summarize, compare and contrast, and critically assess these two approaches.

Paper # 2 -- 20 points
Students will write a paper of at least 1000 words, submitted in class or electronically on 28 September. The paper will be on the following topic:
- The readings in weeks 3-5 suggest that ethical public administration is more complex than one might otherwise think: there is a social context that needs to be considered;
administrative responsibility is of central importance; yet conflicts of responsibility make this far from simple. Summarize, compare and contrast, and critically assess these topics.

**Paper # 3 – 20 points**  
Students will write a paper of at least 1500 words, submitted in class or electronically on 26 October. The paper will be on the following topic:

- The third section of this class, weeks 6-9, present the public management ethical implications of four diverse areas: social equity, markets, the global context, and civil society. Summarize, compare and contrast, and critically assess these topics.

**Paper # 4 – 20 points**  
Students will write a paper of at least 1500 words, submitted in class or electronically on 30 November. The paper will be on the following topic:

- The final weeks of this course brings in some relatively nuts and bolts issues. Summarize these topics and, given them and previous course readings, a) identify the concept you found least helpful, and b) discuss your major take-away from this course.

**Exams**

**Final exam -- 20%**  
There will be a final exam on 6 December. The exam will take the format of an informal round table discussion, and will consist of two parts.

- **Written exam:** The first part (10%) will be a short take home essay. The exam will be emailed to me prior to 4 December, and will be no more than 500 words. In this section of the exam students will draw from course materials (assigned readings) to answer the question posed.
- **Oral exam:** The second part of the exam (10%) will be oral. Students will prepare a short, 2-3 minute response to the question posed. This will be presented to the class during the exam session, which will be held on 6 December. For the oral presentation students may draw broadly for inspiration to further embellish the case made in the written response. Important provisos: students may not recite from a prepared text, and controversial stands and/or humour are encouraged. Anything to fire people up. Each presentation will be followed by a 2-3 minute discussion period. Students are expected to participate in this, commenting on other students' presentations.

  **Exam question** (two parts):
  - Which of the various issues that we discussed do you think is most important for effective public administration ethics, and why?
  - Which of the various issues that we discussed do you think is least important for effective public administration ethics, and why?

**Written exams grading criteria:**  
See the grading criteria for written work presented above.

**Oral exams grading criteria:**
- State the main theme
- Adequate oral presentation (i.e. don't recite)
• Logical, coherent, balanced argument
• Engagement with other student presentations (think in terms of at least one comment on another student's presentation)
• Well used tables/ graphs (bonus)
• Follow instructions (debits)

Grading:
A multi-step process (if necessary) is used to determine final class grades:
1. The usual grading schema is applied, with 90%+ = As, 80-89 = Bs, 70-79 = Cs, 50-69 = Ds. If all students score 90%+, all students will receive an A.
2. If step #1 does not result in a normal grade curve (more or less 25% each for A, A-, B+ and B for graduate classes), the grade curve above is recalculated based on the highest score in the class. So if the highest combined score is 95%, A grades will range from 85.5 (.9 x .95) to 95, etc.
3. If step #2 does not result in a normal grade curve, the grade scale may be 'curved' further downwards, as appropriate. The floor for passing grades is at that point where students do not demonstrate engagement with course materials, do not follow instructions, and do not respond to feedback.

Note: I give 'meaningful' grades, based on the assessment criteria indicated above, which means that I have almost invariably applied step #3.

Extra credit: just as in life, no extra credit opportunities will be afforded.
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Grading criteria further elaborated: Following is a collection of standard rules for professional (or academic) writing, and common mistakes by students. These will be applied in grading assignments. If you disagree with some of this, are confused, or require clarification: raise your concerns now.

Grading rubric: All assignments, including the component parts below, are graded on the following rubric:
• Mastery: above normal requirements for professional work (100% of possible points).
• Adequate: at a level appropriate for professional work (75-95% of possible points).
• Insufficient minor: for professional work, requires minor improvement (50-70% of possible points).
• Insufficient major: for professional work, requires considerable improvement (0-45% of possible points).

Systematic, comprehensive research
• Rule of thumb #1: engage course materials (cite course readings liberally). You are allowed, even encouraged, to challenge course readings and lectures, but must provide better evidence than that provided in course readings and lectures. You cannot, though, ignore course materials. 'Course materials' includes relevant materials listed on the readings page, with the assigned course text(s) especially important.
• While you cannot ignore the weekly lecture notes, cite these only if they provide information not supported by references that you can follow up, as citing the lecture notes demonstrates no research on your part (lecture notes are my research).
• By all means cite sources referred to in course materials (lecture notes or readings), but do not copy quotations or references of others and cite this from the original source, or just rephrase the reference. Instead, go to the original source yourself to ensure that you understand the context, expand the quote a bit, then you can cite the original source.

• Rule of thumb #2: demonstrate command of course materials, as relevant. Beyond answering the assigned question, you need to demonstrate that you understand course materials.

• If your list of works cited includes only course materials; and if your outside research includes only books, only journals, or (especially) largely internet sites, the research was neither systematic nor comprehensive. When I'm concerned that a student hasn't done enough research, I check the following sources. If your list of references is lean, and I find substantial amounts of material that you haven't referred to, expect the worst:
  o UNF library catalog
  o EBSCO Host Electronic Journals Service
  o JSTOR

Beware the internet! Only use web information from a well-known, respected source. Wikipedia is of too uneven quality to be used in academic/professional work (example).

• Remember that this program is about public administration, not elected politicians, or the management of business firms.

• Do not give dictionary definitions (and cite these), as you can assume that your reader is familiar with standard English. Similarly, do not use encyclopedias.

Write professionally
• Rule of thumb #3: use a professional tone. Don't force it: always try to expand your vocabulary, but don’t use words if you are not certain of the meaning. Some tips:
  o Do not use first person (e.g. I, my, we, our), or second person (you, your). Use third person. In a professional context you most often are not writing for yourself, you are writing on behalf of an organization, to an impersonal audience.
  o Learn the difference between there, they're, and their; your and you're; and its and it's. There is no such word as [its’].
  o Learn the difference between threw, through and though; too, to and two; who’s and whose; and where, we’re and were.
  o Learn the difference between possessive apostrophes and plural.
  o Learn the difference between colons and semicolons.
  o Beware singular/plural inconsistency (e.g. The student lost points for singular/plural consistency in their paper).
  o Do not use contractions (e.g. don't).
  o Avoid rhetorical questions (e.g. Why is this the case?).
  o Avoid starting a sentence with a conjunction or preposition (e.g. The paper was bad. And she started a sentence with a conjunction.).
  o Get used to gender neutral usage.

• Write for an informed lay person on the street, rather than for experts, the uninformed, or your class professor. So do not assume that your reader is in this class, and will know who Professor Candler is, or what was discussed in week three.

• Use quotations sparingly. This is meant to be a paper by you, not a collection of selected quotes that you thought were especially relevant to the topic. As a rule of thumb, no more than 10% of your work should be direct quotations.
• See George Orwell’s ‘six rules for writing’.
• Why it matters. Some perspectives:
  • “I won’t hire people who use poor grammar. Here’s why.” Link.
  • “Graduates failing bosses.” Link.
  • Finally, this from a COJ hiring officer:
    “We have about 10 applications so far for the new... position. A few look promising.
    Sadly, some of the people have very poor writing skills and actually submit letters with
    spelling and grammatical errors. If you can’t pull it together for a cover letter for a job,
    what kind of work product would you produce?”
• Format:
  • I prefer electronic submission (as an email attachment). It is your responsibility to get the
    paper to me, and to keep a copy of it. I will acknowledge email receipt of your paper. If
    you don't get such an acknowledgement within two working days, email me again.
  • Save paper. Include your name, course number, assignment name, title of the paper and
    all that at the beginning of the paper, but you needn't do this on a separate page.
    Similarly, the works cited do not need to start on a new page.
    o Especially if you submit the paper electronically, feel free to single space. I will
      usually the comment function in MS Word to insert comments.
    o When emailing in general, adopt a professional format. All emails should have a title,
      and a message with a salutation, a body (however brief) and be ‘signed’.

Cite sources correctly, in text and in the bibliography
  o Cite your sources. If you lack credible sources to support what you are writing: don’t write it.
  • You may use any of the standard citation methods. Key points:
    o Sources must be retrievable. Given the in-text citation, your reader should be able to go
      directly to the appropriate full citation in your list of works cited (or footnote), and from
      this to the page (though this is sometimes tricky with web sites) of the document from
      which you got the information.
      o This means give page numbers!
    o Alphabetize sources.
      o This also means that if you cite something as (Smith 1776, p. 477) in the
        narrative, the source should be listed under ‘S’ (Smith) in the works cited.
    o You must have a list of works cited. Everything cited in text must be in this list of works
      cited; anything not cited in text should not be in this list of works cited.
      o References must be complete, and informative on their own.
      o References should be included any time you need to let your reader know where you
        got the information that supports your argument.
        o However, you don't need a quotation every time you include a citation.
      o Cite only sources that you actually cite! If a source you have read specifically quotes,
        or refers to someone else, cite that someone else in the source you read (e.g.: Smith,
        as cited in Jones 2009), then list only the source you accessed in your works cited. Do
        not cite sources that you have not read, as you did not access this original source.
  • Be spare in referring to sources in text. For instance, do write 'Perry (1996) argues...' Do not
    write, 'James L. Perry, in his chapter titled “Effective enterprises, effective administrators” in
    his 1996 book Handbook of Public Administration, argues...' In many newspaper articles,
    government reports, and in popularized academic stuff (like a textbook, for instance), you
may see examples like the one that I ask you not to use. But more analytical work doesn't typically do this, and I want you to practice this usage.

- Don't cite a single source repeatedly in a paragraph. Every sentence does not need to be supported. You can summarize extended passages of a source in a paragraph, then cite the source once at the end, indicating the pages from which it came, e.g.: (Perry 1996: 739-45). The exception to this rule is direct quotes, all of which need to be sourced, with page number.

- Include the intext citation in the sentence it is a part of. Like this:
  ...the world is round (Columbus 1492).
  Not like this:
  ...the world is round. (Columbus 1492)
  or like this:
  ...the world is round. (Columbus 1492).

- Don't include the intext citation in quotation marks. Like this:
  "The world is round" (Columbus 1492).
  Not like this:
  "The world is round (Columbus 1492)."
  and certainly not like this:
  "The world is round. (Columbus 1492)."

- For web sources:
  o Don't cite urls in the narrative of the paper.
  o In your works cited, listing a url is not enough, as your reader should get some idea where the information is from, so that s/he does not have to go to the source to get some idea of credibility.
  o Instead, give all the normal information that you would use when citing a book or article, as available: author, document title, publisher, year/date.
  o You should list the url where you found the article, as well as the date you accessed it.
  o For an example, see the 'Referencing' section at the end of the course Research page.

- Note, again, the admonishment against plagiarism, and consult UNF's Academic Integrity Policy.

Logical, coherent, balanced argument

- Your argument should have logical structure, and be easy to follow.
  - Rule of thumb #4: identify the issue, state the question, identify the main theme, etc. Tell your reader in the first paragraph, if not the first line, your purpose: what is the central message of the paper. If you can't identify a central message, rethink the paper! Do this as clearly as possible, with a "This paper will..." statement, if necessary.
  - Also, close the introduction with a brief summary of how the argument will proceed.
    o The main body of the argument should be consistent with what you told your reader you were going to do in the "brief summary" in the introduction.
    o Make economical use of subheadings, or clear transition sentences, to signal to your reader you are shifting focus, again consistent with your opening 'brief summary'.
    o The conclusion should be consistent with the introduction, and with the main body.
  o Remember that your reader is not inside your head, and so may not know where you are going, or why you are going there, if you do not make this clear.

- These are not opinion pieces. Be detached, analytical, and use credible research.
o Present fairly the relevant credible perspectives on the issue. It is not necessary (indeed is discouraged) to choose a 'solution' to the issue which you are addressing. That is for politicians. Simply present the evidence and the options.

o Avoid logical fallacies. For some examples, see this, and this.

o You are being trained to work in mainstream America, so
  - engage mainstream evidence, and
  - avoid sources with an ideological bias, fringe views, or populist conspiracy theories.
    Especially do not use an openly ideological source to support an argument consistent with that source’s ideology.
  
  o Instead, practice counter-ideological sourcing: if your argument is consistent with a particular ideological perspective, seek supporting evidence from a source not within that ideological orbit. If you can’t find such support, rethink your argument.

  o In short: all opinions are not equal, and there are not two sides ('a' Republican view, and 'a' Democratic view) to every issue. Instead, there is an underlying reality that can be discerned, to greater or lesser degree, through detached research. Even if this reality is discerned to a ‘lesser’ degree, a detached analysis seeking to identify that reality will always be more accurate than partisan spin, ideological dogma, or public opinion.

**Well used tables/ graphics (bonus)**

- Note the 'well used'. Few people do this well, so this requirement encourages development of this skill. This does not mean produce a large, gaudily coloured pie chart when it would be easier to simply write "55% of Vermonters remain opposed to the civil unions law."
  - It especially doesn't mean reproduce a table, diagram, or figure that you find elsewhere. It must be original.

- All tables and graphics need to be self-contained, including both a title, and acknowledgment of the source from which you got your data. They also need to be incorporated into the narrative of your paper: "as shown in Figure 4 below...", “The table also illustrates...”

- Tables and graphics should be professionally presented.

**Follow instructions (debits)**

- Pay attention to the various course requirements, including specifics of assignment questions, and format instructions above.

- Length requirements are net of quotations. If you submit a 1200 word paper for a 1000 word assignment, but 600 of your words are direct quotes, you have only written 600 words.

- As a general rule, the paper should not be longer than 50% more than the minimum length requirement.

- All written assignments will receive feedback. Do not repeat mistakes made on earlier assignments, in this or in previous classes that you have had with me. If earlier feedback is unclear, ask for clarification.

- Papers inconsistent with the assignment requirements (including the assigned topic) may have a penalty assigned to them (generally the smaller of a 50% or 10 point reduction), and will be returned for rewriting and resubmission. If not rewritten, a grade of zero will result. Especially later in the semester, this rewrite option will not be available.

- Especially note UNF’s [Academic Integrity](Academic%20Integrity) and [Academic Misconduct Policies](Academic%20Misconduct%20Policies). An online plagiarism tutorial can be found [here](here). Examples of plagiarism will result in a report being
filed in accordance with these policies, with a recommendation that the student fail the course. For a definition and discussion of plagiarism, see:

"Plagiarism is the deliberate attempt to deceive the reader through the appropriation and representation as one's own the work and words of others. Academic plagiarism occurs when a writer repeatedly uses more than four words from a printed source without the use of quotation marks and a precise reference to the original source in a work presented as the author's own research and scholarship. Continuous paraphrasing without serious interaction with another person's views, by way of argument or the addition of new material and insights, is a form of plagiarism in academic work."

Irving Hexham

Three especially common forms of plagiarism:

1. Copying something written by someone else, and pasting (or transcribing) it into your work, without both putting the words in quotation marks, and citing the source.

2. Copying something written by someone else, and pasting (or transcribing) it into your work, without putting the words in quotation marks, even if you cite the source. By doing this, you are implying that you wrote those words, based on information included in the source you cite. This is not the case: you copied the words of others.

3. Copying something written by someone else, and pasting (or transcribing) it into your work after making a few minor changes. This is called paraphrasing and, again, you did not write it.