Collaborative Public Management

Course Description
Over the past half century, conducting the public’s business in the U.S. – and many other countries around the world – has become an especially complex undertaking. Meeting public needs has engaged not only government agencies at all levels but also a broad range of non-governmental, “third-party” actors, such as businesses and nonprofit organizations. In the process, the archetypal model that has guided public administration for decades – where the operation of programs happens within a single, hierarchical government organization – has given way to a governance model characterized by dispersed networks of public and private actors working on problems more or less purposively, coherently, and collaboratively.

These complex governance arrangements have profound implications for managers – in and outside government – trying to achieve public objectives while remaining attentive to democratic concerns like equity, accountability, and transparency. Questions shift from which programs can address particular social and economic problems to which networks, strategies, and tools (e.g., grants, contracts, loans, loan guarantees, tax credits, and regulations) can best realize public objectives. Put simply, succeeding in these collaborative management environments requires different skills and disciplines than were needed in more traditional settings. For example, in this environment, government’s role is often one of activating, orchestrating, or simply setting the stage for others to act rather than implementing programs directly. More generally, operating in a system of shared governance entails a shift from management and control skills to “enablement” skills that are required to engage multiple partners in collaborative governance programs.

To explore these and other issues, this course will begin with an examination of the historical roots of our system of collaborative governance, move on to consideration of the important role of “networks” in collaborative governance, and finally to investigation of the different “tools” that structure much government action. Class format will vary and include presentations by the professor, instructor and student-led discussions, regular analyses of case studies, and guest speakers. **Overall, this class will feature a workshop-like approach, with high levels of student participation.** This course is a core requirement for the MPA degree that should be taken toward the end of the degree program. For MPA students, prerequisites for
this course are: PUAD 502, PUAD 511, PUAD 520, and PUAD 540, or permission of the instructor.

**Learning Objectives**

Through this course, students will:

- Deepen their understanding of the collaborative “networks” that engage a variety of governmental and non-governmental agencies in achieving public objectives (readings, class sessions, case studies, papers).
- Increase their knowledge of the basic “tools” – grants, contracts, vouchers, regulation, tax expenditures, and others – that structure the networks of governmental and non-governmental actors involved in accomplishing the public’s business (readings, sessions, case studies, papers).
- Increase their understanding of the complexity of managing across organizational boundaries and the challenges of not only marshaling the support of the organizations in which they work but also finding ways to incentivize, stimulate, cajole, enable, or perhaps even mandate participation by other public and private organizations that answer to different constituencies and subscribe to widely different priorities and values (readings, sessions, case studies, papers).
- Sharpen their ability to manage in the context of collaborative governance (case studies, papers, readings, class sessions).
- Improve their written and oral communications skills (papers, class discussions).

**Course Requirements**

There are two major types of requirements for the course:

1. **Active Engagement:** Students are expected to engage actively in the course in the following and related ways:
   - **Regular Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to arrive in class on time. **Attendance will be noted.** If at all possible, students should email the instructor beforehand when they expect to miss class because of illness or another reason.
   - **Completion of Reading:** Students are expected to complete all assigned reading before class. It is especially important that case studies receive a close reading. In fact, if at all possible, cases should be re-read just before class.
   - **Active Participation:** Students are expected to participate actively in all class sessions. In addition to contributing to regular class discussions, students may be asked to make a presentation or lead a discussion on a relevant issue. The instructor will occasionally cold call on students. **In online session, students should have their video turned on so they are visible to the instructor and their classmates in order to facilitate communication and engagement.**
   - **News Briefs:** Students will sign up at the beginning of the semester to provide a 5-minute presentation about one relevant news article on third-party governance they
have identified. Articles should focus on the topic of the week. Students should submit on BlackBoard short write-up of their news article (1-2 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced) that includes a link to their article. Student write-ups should go beyond a simple, descriptive summary of the news article and include some analysis as well in which students bring in their own interpretations, critiques, etc.,

Student engagement, incorporating all the elements above, will count for 20% of the course grade.

2. Written Assignments and Presentations: Students are expected to complete the following assignments, which are described in detail in Appendices A-F of this syllabus:

- **Assignment #1: Short, Reaction Papers**: These papers will count for 25% of the course grade. See Appendix A for more detail.

- **Assignment #2: Network Management Challenge**: This paper, due September 30, will count for 15% of the grade. See Appendix B for more detail.

- **Assignment #3: “Tool of Government” Update of Trends and Issues**: This assignment will count for 15% of the grade. See Appendix C for more detail.

- **Assignment #4: “Tool of Government” Management Case Study**: The case study paper will count for 15% of the grade. See Appendices D and F for more detail.

- **Assignment #5: Two Student-Led Presentations/Discussions**: Each student will lead parts of two sessions. Together, the student-led presentations/discussions will count for 10% of the grade. See Appendix E for more detail.

All papers should be submitted on BlackBoard. Please note that unexcused late submissions will be marked down.

All students are welcome to talk with the instructor about substituting alternative projects for the assignments identified above. For example, a student interested in a particular field, such as homeland security, financing college education, or climate change, could develop a paper analyzing the use of different tools of government in his/her field of interest. Any Ph.D. students in the class should discuss with the instructor how to tailor the course to their particular needs.

**Grades**

All assignments will receive numerical grades from 0-100. For final grades, numerical grades will be converted to letter grades without rounding as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-96.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.99</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.99</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.99</td>
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Contacting the Instructor:
Dr. Abramson can be reached at the following:

- **Preferred during university partial closure:**
  - Office e-mail: aabramso@gmu.edu
  - Cell phone: 202-262-5204
  - Online office hours: Wednesday, 6:00 – 7:00 pm, and by appointment

- **Not preferred during university partial closure:**
  - Office Address: George Mason University – Arlington Campus, 608 Van Metre Hall, 3351 Fairfax Drive, Mail Stop 3B1, Arlington, VA 22201
  - Office phone: 703-993-8189

Readings and Other Resources
Course readings are available through Blackboard or the GMU Library, are on-line, or are in the following books that are available for purchase through the GMU bookstore at the Arlington campus. Required books:


*Note that students will also be asked to purchase case studies during the course of the semester.* Cases that are available from the Harvard Business School can be purchased for $4.25/case through the following link: [https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/740681](https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/740681). Harvard Kennedy School cases can be searched for and then purchased through [https://case.hks.harvard.edu/content/cases/](https://case.hks.harvard.edu/content/cases/).

Suggested for Background (not required):

Academic Integrity

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt of any kind, please ask for guidance and clarification.

Please note that the university honor code requires students to pledge not to plagiarize, and that this requirement includes the provision that students not self-plagiarize. In this class, this means that students should seek the instructor’s permission before using work that has been or is being submitted for credit in other classes as a new submission.

GMU Email Accounts

Students must activate their GMU email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class.

Disability Services

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit https://ds.gmu.edu/ for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with the instructor. Disability Services is
located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500; email: ods@gmu.edu; phone: (703) 993-2474.

**Diversity and Inclusion**
The Schar School’s MPA program is committed to creating a learning environment that reflects the diversity of the modern workplace and the communities that are served by public service organizations. We welcome, value, and foster respect for all individuals and their differences, including differences of race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, sex, sexuality, gender expression and identity, national origin, first language, religion, ideology, age, and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but also to be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own.

**Other Useful Campus Resources**
- Writing Center: [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu)
- University Libraries “Ask a Librarian”: [http://library.gmu.edu/ask](http://library.gmu.edu/ask)
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (703) 993-2380; [http://caps.gmu.edu](http://caps.gmu.edu)

**University Policies**
The University Catalog, [http://catalog.gmu.edu](http://catalog.gmu.edu), is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.

**Course Outline and Reading Assignments**

Please note that case study material and other readings will be added during the course of the semester. Please be sure to look for emails from the instructor and your classmates that contain course-relevant information. Reading assignments are due on the day they are listed. So, for example, students should read chapters 1-4 of the Pressman-Wildavsky book in time for class on September 2.

1. **AUGUST 26: Overview of Course; Definition of Key Terms**

Suggested:

2. **SEPTEMBER 2: Origins of the U.S. System of Shared Governance; The Challenges of Policy Implementation**

SIGN UPS:
--NEWS BRIEF: PRESENTATION AND SHORT PAPER
--PAPER ON UPDATE ON “TOOL” TRENDS AND ISSUES (assignment #3)
--PAPER ON “TOOL” MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY (assignment #4)
--LEAD PARTS OF TWO CLASS SESSIONS ON NETWORK MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE, TOOL TRENDS, OR TOOL MANAGEMENT CASE (assignment #5)
Required:

Suggested:

3. SEPTEMBER 9: Multi-Sector Approaches to Addressing Society’s Needs
Required:

Suggested:

4. SEPTEMBER 16: Introduction to Networks; Rise of Networks and Their Advantages and Challenges
Required:

Suggested:

5. SEPTEMBER 23: Managing Networks: Design and Integration and Ensuring High-Quality Performance and Accountability
Required:
--Goldsmith and Eggers, *Governing by Network*, chs. 5-8.

Suggested:
6. SEPTEMBER 30: Collective Impact
Assignment #2 – Paper on Network Management Challenge DUE
Presentations on Network Management Challenges

Required:

Suggested:

7. OCTOBER 7: Tools of Government: Basic Analytics and Direct Government
Required:
--Suzanne Mettler, The Submerged State, ch. 1.

Suggested:
--Cooper, Policy Tools, Direct Government: pp. 32-49
8. OCTOBER 14: Tools: Human Service Contracting (Purchase-of-Service) and Other Contracting (e.g., Defense)

Required:

Suggested:


Required:
10. OCTOBER 28: Tools: Public Information and Vouchers
Required:  

Suggested:  

11. NOVEMBER 4: Tools: Regulation and Credit Programs (Direct Loans and Loan Guarantees)
Required:  
University – Schar School of Policy and Government, and the American Society for Public Administration, pp. 123-129, available at:

Suggested:

12. NOVEMBER 11: Tools: Tax Expenditures and Tools Wrap-Up

Required:

Suggested:
---Suzanne Mettler, *The Submerged State*, chs. 4-5.

13. NOVEMBER 18: Negotiation as a Critical Skill in Third-Party Governance
   Required:

NOVEMBER 25: No Class, Thanksgiving holiday

14. DECEMBER 2: Conclusion: Implications and Future of Third-Party Governance
   Required:
   --Suzanne Mettler, *The Submerged State*, ch. 2.

DECEMBER 9: Please hold for make-up class if needed
Appendix A: Assignment #1

Short, Reaction Papers

To enhance learning of important material and prepare for class discussions, students will complete a series of short (1-2 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced) papers.

Strong papers will connect (multiple) course readings to the issue being addressed. For example, if a reaction paper focuses on an analysis of a particular case study, a good paper will reference some of the other readings for the week.

Reaction paper assignments will generally be given one week before they are due. For example, in session #1, students will receive the assignment due at session #2.

These papers should be submitted on BlackBoard and will generally not be accepted late. Students who miss class for any reason have the option of handing in these papers before the class session for which they are assigned.

Students are excused from writing a reaction paper on the days they complete assignments #3 and #4 described below but are not excused on days they are presenting a news brief.

The two lowest reaction paper grades will be dropped.

These papers will count for 25% of the course grade.
Appendix B: Assignment #2

Network Management Challenge

This paper, due September 30, should analyze one management challenge facing a network of the student’s choosing.

The paper should include a description of the network, including the most significant organizations and individuals in the network, and the inter-organizational management problem the network faces. Networks should involve multiple organizations.

Most importantly, the paper should discuss the student’s recommendation about how to address the management challenge, including assessment of the “pro’s” and “con’s” of the recommendation and consideration of how some of the “con’s” could be minimized. The paper might also discuss other approaches for resolving the network challenge that the student considered but did not select. Ideally, the paper should address an unresolved problem rather than a solution that is already in place.

References should be included where appropriate.

Students are encouraged to select a network to which they have good access, such as a network they are familiar with through work, internships, or volunteering. Students are also encouraged, where possible, to interview relevant network members.

This paper should be approximately 4-5 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, and will count for 15% of the grade.
Appendix C: Assignment #3

Update of “Tool of Government” Trends and Issues

Students will sign up at the beginning of the semester to develop a short paper that updates material in Salamon’s *Tools* book on one of the tools of government (see sessions for October 7 – November 11).

The paper (approximately 4-5 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font) should discuss important tool-related trends and issues since 2002, when the Salamon book was published, with minimal repetition of material that is in the Salamon book. If an issue, challenge, or trend described in the 2002 book is still relevant today, please provide current information and examples to support your analysis.

The update paper should focus especially on any *management changes* related to the tool being discussed. More generally, update papers should address the following and related questions:

- Have programs in this tool category generally expanded or contracted in recent years? Why?
- Have any major programs in this tool category been eliminated in recent years, or have new programs been created? Why?
- Has there been any change in the way programs in this tool category are handled in the budget process?
- How have advances in technology affected the management of programs in this tool category?
- Have there been significant changes in the rules or regulations regarding how programs in this tool category are implemented?
- Have there been other important changes in the way programs in this tool category are managed?

The paper should pay particular attention to issues/trends that affect multiple - rather than single - programs in the tool category. Outside research is required to complete this paper.

Some sources to explore are:

- **Suggested readings listed in this syllabus;**
- The “Analytical Perspectives” section of the President’s budget, which contains special analyses related to several of the tools (see [https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/analytical-perspectives/](https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/analytical-perspectives/)).
- Reports by other government agencies, including the General Accountability Office (GAO), the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), and the Congressional Research Service (CRS); and
- Relevant scholarly and journalistic accounts.
This assignment will count for 15% of the grade. Students are excused from writing a reaction paper in the week that they write this tool update paper.
Appendix D: Assignment #4

“Tool of Government” Management Case Study

Students will also sign up at the beginning of the semester to develop a paper on a management case study involving one of the tools of government action (see sessions for October 7 – November 11).

The management case study should focus mostly on issues that arise in the implementation of a program. **Students are strongly encouraged to develop their own “case study” material using news articles, academic papers, original documents, videos, etc. or they may identify an existing case study from the Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard Business School, the Electronic Hallway, or elsewhere to use.** Some options for case studies are given in Appendix F of this syllabus.

**Students should start early in identifying their case study and consult with the instructor as needed.**

Students should develop a short (approximately 4-5 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font) paper analyzing the case study they select. The paper is due on the day the tool is discussed in class. Students are excused from submitting a reaction paper in the week that they write a case study paper.

The case study paper will count for 15% of the grade; students who write on case studies not included in Appendix F or who develop their own, original case study material will receive extra credit. Student-developed case studies will become part of the case options for students in future classes.
Appendix E: Assignment #5

Student-Led Presentation/Discussion

Students will sign up at the beginning of the semester to lead two sessions on their network management challenge paper (see assignment #2), tool update paper (see assignment #3), or their tool management case study paper (see assignment #4).

Presentations on Network Management Challenge:
- Students will have a **maximum of 10 minutes** for their presentations.
- Following their presentations, students should facilitate up to **10 minutes of discussion** with their classmates about the challenge they discussed.

Presentations on Tool Update:
- Students will have a **maximum of 10 minutes** for their presentations.
- Presenters should be open to fielding questions from their classmates but should **not** plan to engage the class in extended discussion.

Presentations on Tool Management Case:
- Students will have a **maximum of 15 minutes** for their presentations and discussions.
- Students who are presenting a management case study will develop the reaction paper questions for the weeks they present.
- **Students leading management case study discussions must submit their session designs** (e.g., the case study they will use, the speaker they would like to invite, etc.) and a **draft reaction paper assignment to the instructor for approval no later than two weeks before the class session when they will lead the discussion. Students will then provide the relevant background reading (e.g., case study) and reaction paper assignments to their classmates one week before the class discussion.**
- Students are encouraged to **be creative in organizing their sessions** (e.g., use a role play, simulation, or small group discussion for the case study session).
- Students leading case study discussion may present some material but should also engage the class in discussion.

Use of PowerPoint and/or handouts is encouraged but not required for presentations on tool updates and tool management cases. Also, for updates and management cases, students are welcome to bring in an outside speaker for their session, but a speaker must be pre-approved by the instructor before an invitation is extended to the speaker. **Presentations on either tools updates or tools management cases should include only minimal introductory material about the specific tools being discussed because the instructor will be covering this basic information in the first part of each class session.**
Presentations/discussions will count for 10% of the grade, and these grades will be integrated into the paper grades described above for assignments #2, #3, and #4.
Appendix F: Management Case Studies for Tools of Government

Where the cases can be found:

- **HBS Coursepack:** These cases can be found in the Harvard Business School coursepack for this class, which is accessible at: [https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/740681](https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/740681).
- **HKSG:** These cases are available through the Harvard Kennedy School of Government case program. Individual cases can be searched at: [https://case.hks.harvard.edu/content/cases/](https://case.hks.harvard.edu/content/cases/)
- **BlackBoard:** These cases are available on BlackBoard under “Course Content” in a folder labeled “management cases.” These are largely cases that students have developed around academic and other articles.

**Direct Government**
- Turnaround at the Veterans Health Administration - HBS Coursepack
- Building an Interagency Website: [www.business.gov](http://www.business.gov) - HKSG
- Challenge of Adapting to Climate Change: Kings County Brings Local Action to a Global Threat – HBS Coursepack
- Tennessee Responds to the 2009 Novel H1N1 Influenza A Pandemic – HBS Coursepack
- When Prevention Can Kill: Minnesota and the Smallpox Vaccine Program – HKSG
- Implementing the Arlington Restaurant Initiative - BlackBoard

**Human Services Contracting (Purchase of Service Contracting)**
- Partners in Child Protection Services: Dept. of Social Services and La Alianza Hispana – HBS Coursepack
- Oklahoma Milestones Reimbursement System: Paying for What You Get – HBS Coursepack
- Contracting for Human Services (A) - HKSG

**Defense Contracting**
- Coast Guard and LORAN: In-House vs. Contracting Out - HKSG
- Trident Contracting (C): Negotiating the Contract - HKSG
- Building the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter – BlackBoard

**Grants**
- United Way – HBS Coursepack
- United Way Mass Bay and the Faith and Action Initiative (A) - HKSG
- Community Development in Gainesville (A) - HKSG
- Implementing the Boston Healthy Start Initiative - BlackBoard
• ‘Self-Help’ Housing on the Texas-Mexico Border (C): tackling Big Problems with Federal Dollars and Small Nonprofits – HKSG
• Weathering Explosive Growth: Weatherization Assistance Grants under ARRA - BlackBoard

**Government Corporations and Government-Sponsored Enterprises**
• Federal Prison Industry Reform – BlackBoard
• U.S. Postal Service – BlackBoard
  o The Lost Genius of the Post Office
  o The Postal Service is Still a Great Innovator
  o Is Amazon Bad for the Postal Service? Or Its Savior?

**Public Information**
• Social Media and the Planned Parenthood/Susan G. Komen for the Cure Controversy – HBS Coursepack
• Moving People Out of Danger: Special Needs Evacuations from Gulf Coast Hurricanes – HBS Coursepack
• Spreading the Gospel – DARE Program (A) - HKSG
• High Road or Low?: Transparency International and the Corruption Perceptions Index - HKSG
• Lead Poisoning (A) - HKSG
• Tennessee Responds to the 2009 Novel H1N1 Influenza A Pandemic – HBS Coursepack

**Vouchers**
• Cleveland School Vouchers (A) - HKSG
• How Chicago’s Public Housing Transformation Can Inform Federal Policy – BlackBoard
• “Not the Golden Ticket”: Colorado Democrats May Change Section 8 Housing Rules - BlackBoard

**Economic Regulation**
• Policy-Induced Competition: Case of Cable TV Set-Top Boxes - BlackBoard
• State Regulation of Nonprofits - BlackBoard
• Uber: 21st Century Technology Confronts 20th Century Regulation – HBS Coursepack
• Airbnb - BlackBoard
  o New York Goes to War Against Airbnb for Disrupting Hotel Business
  o Airbnb Cozies Up to Cities

**Social Regulation**
• Implementing Technology-Forcing Policies: Auto Emissions - BlackBoard
• Taking on Big Tobacco - HKSG
• Ruckelshaus and EPA - HKSG
• Arsenic in Drinking Water – HBS Coursepack
• Role of Government in the Labeling of GM (Genetically Modified) Food - BlackBoard
• Food Safety Regulation and Small Processing: A Case Study of Interactions between Processors and Inspectors - BlackBoard
• Customer Responses to Mandatory Menu Labeling at Full-Service Restaurants - BlackBoard

Tax Expenditures
• Tax Incentives for Charitable Giving - HKSG
• Evaluation of Missouri’s Historic Tax Credit Program – BlackBoard
• Opportunity Zones – How a Trump Tax Break to Help Poor Communities Became a Windfall for the Rich - BlackBoard

Direct Loans and Loan Guarantees
• To Understand a Growing Organization: Case of Greater Miami Neighborhoods – HBS Coursepack
• Solyndra - BlackBoard
• Public Service or Gravy Train?: Federal Guaranteed Student Loan Program – HKSG
• Student Financial Assistance - BlackBoard
  o National Student Aid Profile
  o Why One University Is Sharing the Risk on Student (Income-Share Agreements)