

**George Mason University
Schar School of Policy and Government
Fall Semester 2020**

Hello everyone—the syllabus for Fall 2020 will be similar in format and workload but will include many new developments in Culture, Organizations and Technology. Please contact me if you have questions.

Stephen Ruth

Important Note: Starting week 1 this syllabus is replaced by the online course site for current information and assignments

For a video summary of the course by the instructor click [here](#)

PUBP 503.DL1 Culture, Organization, and Technology—Fall Semester 2020—course taught entirely online (3 Credit course)



Instructor: Stephen Ruth, Professor of Public Policy

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Instructor's Personal site <http://icasit.gmu.edu/about-us/stephen-r-ruth/>

Face-to-face Classes : None

Notice about this online course It's entirely online so both student and instructor are required to have continuous, productive and content-specific communications online from beginning to end. In fact, almost half of the course's grade is based on the quality and frequency of participation, both online and in class, including group project posted on course site. So if being face-to-face is what you like best, this section of PUBP 503 may not be for you. There will be extensive class participation—considerably more than in a typical face-to-face class—but much of it will be on-line.

Recommended “homework” before signing up for this virtual course. To prepare you for this process, please watch or skim these three videos by Salman Khan and Stanford professors Daphne Kohler and Peter Norvig, if you have time

1. Salman Khan, [“Let's Use Video To Reinvent Education”](#) (20 minutes)
2. Daphne Kohler, [“What we are learning from on-line education”](#) (20 minutes)
3. Peter Norvig, [“The 100,000 Student classroom”](#) (6 minutes)

Overview of the course

Effective policy analysis and implementation often depend on understanding cultures, organizations and technologies and how they interact with one another. Whether considering the culture of political groups, military or business organizations, religions, the old or the young, farm or non-farm, or any other differentiation scheme, significant issues are involved. Failing to take note of cultural aspects in societies can cause even the most carefully crafted public policy plans to fail. We focus on the role of culture in the context of groups, organizations and societies together with culture-related economic and technological processes at several levels of impact: organizational, regional, national and international. And there is considerable emphasis on the role of technology as it affects culture and

organizations, since developments like blogs and social networks are major factors in public policy implementation.

A new feature of this course is the weekly presentation of what could be called "big ideas" in public policy. These themes change every semester, but are very much in the news and will be integrated into the PUBP 503 lectures and discussion.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes Overall course objectives include greater competence in these areas:

- Observing and describing the manifestations of culture, organizations and technology at micro and macro levels through blogs, news stories, analyses, reports, etc.
- Reviewing the interrelated roles of culture, organization and technology in the context of the current national debate on income inequality
- Clarifying the role of culture as it relates to the practice of leadership in a technological age
- Identifying both cultural enablers and barriers in the context of effective policy development and program implementation
- Examining some of the tools used to measure and present cultural issues, like polling, interviewing and other techniques
- Learning other culture-related skills like leveraging high performance teams, recognizing and evaluating culture-related statistics, etc.
- Using class participation to sharpen understanding of culture's role in public policy analysis
- Taking note of popular culture and organizational interpretations, like Surowiecki's *The Wisdom of Crowds*, Schein's *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Chua and Rubenfield's *The Triple Package*, and others

- Examining closely the statistical and presentation methods used to describe cultural phenomena, like maps, bubblecharts, Gapminder graphs, etc
- Understanding how policy questions are framed in the context of cultural considerations
- Recognition of “big ideas” in policy analysis, like income inequality, algorithmic management, gender equity in many others.

Assignments, Grades and Examinations—Four Key Requirements

1. Three focused written assignments (30%); 2. a final take home exam (20%); 3. extensive participation in class discussions online (30%); 4. individual tutorial presentation (20%)

Participation in weekly class discussions and individual projects

Individual presentation (20%) a carefully prepared tutorial presentation for an on-line audience, including sound, and demonstrating good understanding of the material, and be aimed at stimulating on-line discussion by the class. Several samples are at the course site.

Class participation in on line discussion groups (30%) This covers all aspects of interaction from the first class to the last, especially active participation in class discussions through frequent well-thought-out posts (**at least 5 informal posts per week and one formal post every other week**). Examples of typical informal and formal posts are available on the course website, along with information on rubrics used to evaluate them.

Written assignments 30%

There will be three written assignments, each with appropriate citations, graphs and charts, as needed. These assignments will be given by the instructor about every three or four weeks. Target **minimum** length: about 2000 words, not including end notes, diagrams, etc. See instructions for submission of written work at end of this syllabus. Please be sure that citations follow some standard format and style guide. Samples of top notch format are provided. **Use of Zotero is urged for formatting and footnotes.**

Final examination (take home) 20%

The final examination will be a take-home test of five or six questions. It will be distributed in mid-April and will require about 10-12 hours of your time to be completed successfully. Again samples of excellent exam question responses are provided

Required Textbooks

Edgar Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 5th edition (OCL) (Jossey-Bass,), 2017 , (Available for rent at the GMU bookstore for under \$30.00)

Amy Chua and Jed Rubenfeld, *The Triple Package—How Three Unlikely Traits Explain the Rise and Fall of Cultural Groups in America* (TP) (Penguin, 2014)

Optional Reading

Hans Rolsing, *Factfulness* (Flatiron Press, 2018)

Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel—The Fates of Human Societies*, (Norton, 1999 for paperback and 2005 for hardcover)

Gladwell, Malcolm, *The Tipping Point—How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Back Bay Books 2002)

Murphy, Cullen, *Are We Rome?* (Houghton Mifflin, 2007), paperback

Mann, Jim, *Beijing Jeep: A Case Study of Western Business in China*, (Westview Press, 1997)

Friedman, Thomas, *The World is Flat -- A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*
Release 3.0

Levitt, Steven, and Steven D. Debner, *Freakonomics*, (Morrow, 2005)

Fuller, Robert, *All Rise--Somebodies, Nobodies, and the Politics of Dignity*, (Berrett Kohler 2006)

Read, Herbert, *To Hell With Culture* (Schocken Books, 1963)

Gladwell, Malcolm, *Outliers* (Little Brown, 2009), paperback

Wedel, Janine, *Shadow Elite: How the World's New Power Brokers Undermine Democracy, Government, and the Free Market* (Basic Books, 2010)

Course Timeline (2020)

January 21

May 4

Informal on-line posts XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Bi-weekly Formal posts XX XX XX XX XX XX XX

Preparing presentation X XXX X X X X X X X

First written assignment XX X X X

Second written assignment X X X X

Third written assignment X X X X

Final Exam X X X X X

Technology Requirements

Hardware:

You will need access to a Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and access to a fast and reliable broadband internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL). A larger screen is recommended for better visibility of course material. You will need speakers or headphones to hear recorded content and a headset with a microphone is recommended for the best experience. For the amount of Hard Disk Space required to take a distance education course consider and allow for:

1. the storage amount needed to install any additional software and
2. space to store work that you will do for the course.

If you are considering the purchase of a new computer, please go to the [GMU computer store site](#)

Software:

This course uses Blackboard as the learning management system. You will need a browser and operating system that are listed compatible or certified with the Blackboard version available on the myMason Portal. See [supported browsers and operating systems](#). Log in to [myMason](#) to access your registered courses. Some courses may use other learning management systems. Check the syllabus or contact the instructor for details. Online courses typically use [Acrobat Reader](#), [Flash](#), [Java](#) (Windows), Your computer should be capable of running current versions of those applications. Also, make sure your computer is protected from viruses by downloading the latest version of Symantec Endpoint Protection/Anti-Virus software for free at <http://antivirus.gmu.edu>.

Note: If you are using an employer-provided computer or corporate office for class attendance, please verify with your systems administrators that you will be able to install the necessary applications and that system or corporate firewalls do not block access to any sites or media types.

Blackboard Support

Email address for support

support@gmu.edu

Student support website

<http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/students/>

Are you looking for quick video help about Blackboard? Visit

<http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm>

If you can not log in to myMason please contact the ITS Support Center at (703) 993-8870 or reset your Mason NetID password at <http://password.gmu.edu>

Weekly Schedule—please note that actual assignments will be shown at the course web site

Week 1 Introduction, some fundamental “big ideas” in COT, including cultural differentiation, blogs and income inequality

Week 2 Schein and Hofstede on defining the structure of culture: organizations, artifacts, beliefs, group formation, case studies etc.; AI and COT

Week 3 Triple Package Controversy (immigration policy); Wealth Effects of COT; Elites; some international aspects of COT

Week 4 Schein on macrocultures: COT and religion; ethnographic analysis; Gapminder—amazingly successful analytical tool available to all

Week 5 Problems and challenges of public opinion polling; importance of social capital in COT analysis (Robert Putnam)

Week 6 Social Movements and Social Networks, prediction markets, Schein, Turkle and Christakis

Week 7 Leadership and culture; Wisdom of Crowds; crowdsourcing

Week 8 Spring break- no assignment

Week 9 Gender Equity Issues: Pay and benefits comparisons; insights from thought leaders; research pro and con; Government policies that may be useful

Week 10 Deciphering and diagnosing organizational culture; Embedding Creativity in Organizations

Week 11 Assessing culture—case studies by Edgar Schein; Assessing COT: measures and metrics; new “big ideas”

Week 12 Policy Trends, Digital Divide, Diamond on Extinction, Other “Big Ideas”

Week 13 Synthesis of COT "Big Ideas"

Week 14 Reviewing Class Presentations--tutorials

Week 15--Final Week--Summing up--review and synthesis

Ethical Conduct--GMU Honor Code GMU shares in the tradition of an honor system that has existed in Virginia colleges since 1842. The Honor Code is an integral part of university life. Students are responsible for understanding the provisions of the code. In the spirit of the code, a student's word is a declaration of good faith acceptable as truth in all academic matters. Therefore, attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing of academic work and related work constitute Honor Code violations. All work must be your own. Inappropriate use of the work of others without attribution is plagiarism and a George Mason University Honor Code violation punishable by expulsion from the University. All students should familiarize themselves with this honor code provision. To guard against plagiarism and to treat students equitably, written work may be checked against existing published materials or digital data bases available through various plagiarism detection services. Accordingly materials submitted to all courses must be available in electronic format.

SPP Policy on Plagiarism--The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the

meaning of the university and the purpose of the School of Public Policy. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable. Plagiarism is the use of another's words or ideas presented as one's own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another's work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one's professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the School of Public Policy takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of "F." This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student's transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (eg. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the SPP policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The SPP policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it. See also the university's academic policy web site at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>.

Disability Accommodation If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see instructor and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

Importance of Good Writing and Presentation Skills. Students in this course will be expected to do several writing assignments, a normal requirement in graduate courses in public policy and at least one high quality presentation in class. From the outset, the highest standard of writing will be expected. Here are some of the criteria that will be used to measure submitted written work: quality of content: analytical clarity/persuasiveness; objectivity; quality of source material; use of evidence/methodology.

From Professor Ruth — PUBP 503 written assignments – please read carefully

In my experience, some students are not accustomed to the importance of writing a paper that not only has good content, but also looks professional. So even before you start writing, I suggest you find a solid report from government or any other source. I will be glad to send you one. It will have a nice aspect, headings and paragraphs in good order, footnotes clickable and in impeccable format, easy for the reader to go directly to the source. So rather than suggest style guides or rules, my request is that Assignment 1, and all assignments, both **be good and look good**. I can promise you that being especially attentive to this can be a huge asset in your career. Many will already be used to this advice, but I will be insisting on top notch writing. That includes proper footnoting, which should be equally divided between outside and class sources, and should also follow a consistent format.

Since these written assignments require careful, replicable use of citations from course sources as well as other sources, it's crucial that the formatting be of high quality. For those of you who have already incorporated Zotero into your research repertoire, it will be easy to assemble sources and have them appear professional, also making it easy for the reader to access them with a click. So I urge that everyone be particularly attentive to the importance of good formatting in these written assignments and to use Zotero or some other formatting method. I'll be glad to send you samples of high quality formatting if you would like.

