Course description: Key role of performance measurement in management and organizational leadership is presented. Methods used by managers to systematically assess organizational performance (including outcomes, impacts, efficiency and effectiveness) will be discussed along a wide variety of tools, resources, and readings from federal, state-local and non-profit sectors. Prepares managers—and those aspiring to become managers—to use information more effectively in developing and improving programs and services as well as formulating policy options. The course covers reporting techniques to communicate performance results.

Course will address the challenges managers will face in measuring their performance and using those measures to manage resources, people and technology. The following topics will be covered:

- Strategic planning: the key to both performance measurement AND performance management.
- Performance measurement: the differing types and levels of metrics
- Logic models: connecting inputs to performance outcomes
- Goal setting: choosing and prioritizing objectives
- Analysis: using data to report on performance
- Performance management: using data to manage people and resources
- Current federal framework: the GPRA Modernization Act

Course Expectations

Students will develop an understanding of the principles behind performance assessment and management and develop a working knowledge of how to effectively apply performance assessment and management processes/techniques to improve program/project planning and accomplishment, facilitate effective decision making, assist budget formulation and justification, enhance transparency and accountability with stakeholders (e.g. organizational senior management and leadership, Congress, OMB, the American Public, etc.) from goal-setting to performance reporting. This involves possessing a practical understanding of the different types of performance assessment and being able to select and implement the appropriate approach that best suits the type of activity being assessed, the audience to which the assessment is being provided, and purpose of the assessment in terms of what the information is used for, and determining the most effective means by which to display results.

Grading will follow these weights:
- Final project – 40%
- Midterm project / Comparative Assessment of Agency Practices – 30%
- Readings-related Assignment (2-3 pagers) – 20%
- General verbal participation and presentations – 10%
Students should be sure to always read one week ahead in the syllabus to identify which readings and written assignments are due for the next class. Reading assignments should be completed in time to discuss during the session/week they are listed. Certain weeks include a 2-3 page written assignment, in which the student should provide a synthesis of the key instructive points from the reading assignments to hand-in and discuss during class.

Students should notify the instructor if they are unable to attend a particular class by email either before or immediately after class. Unexplained absences will be duly noted in determining the student’s grade.

Students will be required to hand all assignments in on time. Should students be late, the grade will be lowered by one half of a grade in deference to those students who submitted work on time. However, due to the University’s deadline for submitting grades at the end of the semester, no extensions can be granted for submitting the Final Project (i.e. employed in place of a final exam) beyond the due date of May 4, 2016.

Plagiarism: You are expected to adhere to the honor code of George Mason University. This includes the university’s policy on plagiarism. Using the words or ideas of anyone other than yourself, and pretending those words are your own, constitutes serious academic dishonesty and will not be tolerated. Any words or ideas presented in your paper which are not your own must be properly quoted and/or cited in your paper. To guard against plagiarism and to treat students equitably, written work may be checked against existing published materials or digital databases available through various plagiarism detection services. Accordingly electronic forms of submitted materials may be requested.

The Honor Code policy endorsed by the members of the Department of Public and International Affairs specifies that all work submitted to fulfill course requirements is to be solely the product of the individual(s) whose name(s) appears on it. Except with permission of the instructor, no recourse is to be had to projects, papers, lab reports or any other written work previously prepared by another student, and except with permission of the instructor no paper or work of any type submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of another course may be used a second time to satisfy a requirement of any course in the Department of Public and International Affairs. No assistance is to be obtained from commercial organizations which sell or lease research help or written papers. With respect to all written work as appropriate, proper footnotes and attribution are required.

Reading Materials are available on the GMU Blackboard, under this class designation PUAD 720, Spring 2016. Each item is listed with the corresponding class date during which it will be discussed; therefore the reading materials specified for that class session should be read prior to the specified date so that it can be discussed during that class session.

**January 25 (Session 1) - Why performance matters? Framework for performance management.**

For some individuals, performance assessment is the means for determining which programs or individuals are worth praising and/or continuing from those that should be penalized and/or
discontinued; however there is much more to performance management than a means for judging “good vs. poor”. This session will provide perspective on the potential uses of performance assessment for providing information that can help lead to better outcomes, facilitate planning and decision making, improve credibility, and assist communication.

Readings (2 items):
- “Delivering High Performance Government”; Analytical Perspectives, President’s FY 2012 Budget; pp.77-81.

February 1 (Session 2) - Strategic planning: the key to both performance measurement AND performance management.
This session will discuss the value that strategic planning can have in establishing a “path” from which activities, budgets, and schedules can be planned, synchronized, and conveyed internally and externally to the organization. Discussions will address the need for distinguishing between strategic vs. tactical and where such a distinction could be important. The potential for using strategic planning in aligning organizational units and workforce, budget planning, fostering credibility and support will be presented. As a part of strategic planning, identifying and mapping the connections from inputs to the outcomes employing logic models will be explained, including identification of the inputs (e.g. workforce, materials, support services, direct and indirect funding) vs. “strategies,” vs. outcomes.

Readings (4 items):
- “Is Department-Based Strategic Planning More Effective than Organization-Wide Strategic Planning?”; Ronnie L. Korosec; Public Performance and Management Review; Vol. 30, No. 2 (December, 2006), pp. 221-244.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE FOR CLASS (2-3 pages): Each student will submit and present for discussion in class the key points they would make to convince their senior management/leadership to engage in strategic planning and performance measurement vs. concerns that this is too costly to pursue, is not worth the resources that would need to be expended, is impractical and/or only a bureaucratic exercise that only produces reports that few used and does not provide value to the organization, and/or could lead to criticism if established goals/targets are not met.
**February 8 (Session 3) - Goal setting: choosing and prioritizing objectives**

Having clear definitive goals has been identified as one of the main determining factors of an effective organization. This session will explore the attributes of a clear goal, how to determine clear definitive goals including those for a multi-faceted organization and hard to quantify objectives (e.g. State Department), behavioral reactions to having goals (positive and negative) and how that can affect the implementation of your performance assessment process, and if there is a meaningful distinction between goals and targets.

Readings (3 items):
- “Golden Goals for Government Performance (five case studies on how to establish goals to achieve results);” Jitinder Kohli, Doing What Works, Center for American Progress, Washington DC (February, 2010).

**February 15 (Session 4) –Developing the appropriate type of performance measure for the corresponding type of activity or purpose**

It is important to understand that performance management includes several different types of measurement and assessment. In this session we will distinguish the different types of performance measures and how to match the most effective measures to the corresponding type of activity or purpose. This session will explore examples of different performance measures including outcome, output, annual, multi-year, service quality, efficiency vs. cost-effectiveness, etc. The discussion will also focus on the determining the timeframe and level of detail that is most appropriate for measurement, and matching the level of detail to the corresponding level of management (e.g. manager vs. executive vs. stakeholder) and why this is important. Aspects of attribution and means for metric formulation will also be discussed.

Readings (4 items):
- “Program Performance Measures: Designing a System to Manage for Results;” John M. Kamensky; Public Productivity and Management Review; Volume 16, No.4; Summer 1993, pp. 395-402.
- “Attributes of Performance Measures”; E. Gerald Hurst, Jr.; Public Productivity Review; Volume 4, No.1; March 1980; pp. 43-49

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE FOR CLASS (2-3 pages):** Each student should submit for discussion in class their assessment of the characteristics they would consider most important in determining the appropriate approach for measuring performance in an organization.
February 22 (Session 5) - Examples of different performance assessment approaches
There are various performance measurement approaches that can be applied, depending upon the type of activity, organizational characteristics, audience, and purpose. These different performance measurement approaches will be discussed, such as the trajectory/road-map approach, Baldrige criteria, balanced scorecard, earned value management, etc. This discussion will especially include the means for deciding which approach to use in which cases, which is as important as knowing the techniques.

Readings (4 items):
- Handout: Performance Assessment Techniques Table (Beck)

March 1 (Session 6) – Applied Performance Measurement Development and Assessment Techniques
Guest Lecturer – John O’Brien (Lt. Col ret.) of the National Defense University will share his insights and experiences on the design and application of performance measures. He will also discuss his experiences in employing the Balanced Scorecard technique, which he has employed with tribal governments.

March 8 (Session 7) - Analysis: Using data to report on performance
While transparency and accountability of government program performance in spending taxpayers’ money is, in itself, an adequate justification for employing performance information, performance information can also help inform decisions and effect future plans. Employing performance information in planning and decision making can cause sensitivities among managers and executives on what effect releasing this information will have on the organization’s future. This session will explore the different recipients of performance information (i.e. your customer or target audience), their potential uses of the information, and potential resulting effects and how these considerations affect the design of a performance management process to the needs of the customer. The effective use of performance information is in recognizing the receiving audience, their purpose in having the information, and the implications (or potential repercussions) of them having it.

Readings (3 items):

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT FOR CLASS (2-3 pages): Each student should submit for discussion in class their assessment of the factors that are most important for whether the use of performance information will actually help improve the organization’s performance.

NOTE: MIDTERM ASSIGNMENT WILL BE DUE FOR YOUR SUBMISSION AND PRESENTATION IN THE SESSION FOLLOWING SPRING BREAK (See description under March 16 – Session 8)

March 15 - Spring Break (or possible make-up session) – no class

March 22 (Session 8) - Assessment of Agency Annual Performance Reports for effective use of performance management concepts

MIDTERM PROJECT DUE FOR CLASS: Each student will submit and present for discussion in class a brief paper (10-12 pages in length) comparing 3 government agencies’ (e.g. regulatory agency, programmatic or service agency, research/R&D agency) use of outcome goals, strategies, and performance metrics in their annual performance reports in conveying what the organization is trying to achieve and how it is progressing. Assess whether the agency’s performance report provides clear outcomes (vs. outputs), provides an informative way to track and report progress, if the performance report is balanced, and if you think it is readily understandable by the reader. Assess whether you think it could do better and how; remembering that many government programs have difficult-to-quantify results. The OMB website, www.performance.gov, offers links to the annual performance reports under each individual agency listed on the website [Do NOT review the Department of the Interior nor any of its bureaus…Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, US Geological Survey].

Papers will be graded on the extent to which each paper provides:
• A brief informative background on the agency selected and its purpose
• Assessment of the use of performance in terms of class concepts (e.g. use of goals, targets, results, and explanations especially for improvement)
• Evidence to substantiate your critique
• Assessment of the usefulness to public and/or government of the report’s information
• Any suggestions for improvement (or why the report is adequate).
March 29 (Session 9) – Conducting Quarterly Status Reviews

To better ensure success in reaching performance goals, it is important to review interim progress toward achieving the performance goal on a routine basis. This can be done monthly, or at least quarterly. This session will explore the important factors for establishing, conducting, and managing the information for effective quarterly status reviews, along with some important rules of engagement to ensure that the status reviews are productive and useful to all involved rather than just another time-consuming meeting.

Readings (4 items):

- “Review What Works Case Studies”; John Griffith and Gadi Dechter, Center for American Progress; February 2011.

written assignment due for class (2-3 pages): Each student should submit for class a list of key attributes for setting-up and conducting a quarterly review process, including who is involved, what materials are provided, and the factors for considering the range of topics to be discussed. Any specific stipulations as to what to guard against to better ensure a useful effective review should be included.

April 5 (Session 10) – Using performance data for budget formulation, justification, and resource allocation

After providing transparency/accountability and assessing the level of progress toward a performance goal, the next most expected purpose for having performance information would be for budget formulation. This session will explore how performance information can be used for budget formulation and justification, the extent to which performance information is used for this purpose (and why), the potential for performance information being used punitively in the budget process and how that effects the use of performance information by an organization.

Readings (4 items):

- “Performance-Based Budget Systems”; Richard D. Young; Public Policy & Practice (USC Institute For Public Service And Policy Research); January 2003, pp. 11-23.
- “Using a Performance Budgeting System: Lessons from the Texas Experience”; Joe Adams (Research Associate); John C. Stennis Institute of Government Mississippi State University, pp426-459.
April 12 (Session 11) – Current federal framework: the GPRA Modernization Act
Relative to the original Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA 1993), the GPRA Modernization Act reflects the evolution from establishing the requirements for the basic components of performance management for federal agencies to defining the processes for placing those original principles into practice. The provisions of the GPRA Modernization Act will be presented along with discussing how these provisions help to place the original principles from the initial 1993 Act into practice, especially when applied as an integrated performance management system.

Readings (2 items):

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE FOR CLASS (2-3 pages): Each student should submit for discussion in class a list of the key provisions from the GPRA Modernization Act and a brief assessment of how each provision can help assist an organization’s performance.

April 19 (Session 12) – Program evaluation and performance assessment
This session will compare/contrast the use of performance assessments vs. program evaluation, understanding the differences in purpose, timeframes, required resources, data collection, and analysis techniques. Along with an understanding of techniques, this involves determining which of the two approaches is best suited to the question being investigated.

Readings (3 items):
- Handout: Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART)

April 26 (Session 13) - Organizational considerations for performance measurement and assessment
There are different organizational arrangements for performance management across the government. Some integrate performance into the budget office, sometimes with one in the same individuals doing both, some agencies have a dedicated planning and performance office, some have a specified Program Analysis and Evaluation (PA&E) office, etc. The pros and cons of the different organizational approaches will be compared and assessed to determine what approach is likely to most effective where. There are also considerations of job series classifications,
workforce numbers, placement of personnel (centralized or distributed), and supporting resources.

Readings (3 items):
- “Taking Measure -- Moving from Process to Practice in Performance Management”; *Partnership for Public Service* and *Grant Thornton*; September 2013.

**May 3 (Session 14) - Using performance data to manage projects, people, and resources**

This session will explore the means by which performance information can be used to track progress toward project completion/delivery, determining potential problem areas in advance to take alternative action so as to improve the probability of success, the use of organizational assessments to compare individual performance to that of the organization as part of OPM’s individual performance evaluation and award process certification, and for resource allocation (which sometimes takes funds from initiating or on-schedule programs to provide to programs that are behind schedule).

Readings (3 items):
- Revising the Human Capital Planning, Reviews, and Reporting Framework”; OPM Acting Director Memorandum for Chief Human Capital Officers; April 26, 2013.

**NOTE:** FINAL PROJECT WILL BE DUE AT THE NEXT SESSION ON MAY 4

**May 10 – Submission of the Final Project (i.e. Final Exam)**

FINAL PROJECT DUE: Students should demonstrate the extent of the knowledge and perspective they have gained through this class by developing and submitting their own written proposal (15-20 pages in length) for the design of an effective performance management approach for use by a government agency that would help define what the organization is trying to achieve, provide strategic guidance across units within the organization, define a means for assessing and reporting interim progress to:
- inform leadership, managers, and stakeholders on progress towards defined goals and help provide insights into where alternative/corrective action is needed;
- increase programmatic success;
• provide a balanced assessment (i.e. does not only show the “good” results) for transparency and accountability to stakeholders organizations in a way that would help foster credibility and support for the program.

The proposal should specify what performance-related information would be used; a description of how it would be gathered, reviewed, and presented; estimated resource requirements and timelines; who would be involved in the processes; an assessment of the potential challenges and pitfalls to implementing the process with possible compensating strategies; and a convincing discussion on how the performance information would be used for the benefit of the organization. Along with narrative, exhibits displaying the relationship among the components of the performance management approach and its processes, with possible templates and reporting formats should be used for illustrative/instructive purposes.

**Tips:**
Propose a PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT APPROACH to your organization’s director (actual or contrived; no sensitive/classified references) that will help improve the organization’s planning, results, and transparency/accountability

Specify:
• **Components** of the performance management system and the interrelationships of the components;
• **Content:** what performance information would be used;
• **Process:** how the performance information would be gathered, reviewed, and presented including what type of performance measures would be used;
• **Resources:** estimated resource requirements in terms of workforce, timeframes, and funding;
• **Participants:** who would be involved in the processes, and in what roles (can refer to groups of individuals);
• **Challenges with Solutions:** an assessment of the potential challenges and pitfalls to implementing the process with possible compensating strategies;
• **Benefits:** how the information would be used for the benefit of the organization in:
  o Improving ability to achieve goals / produce results
  o Budget formulation and justification
  o Improved credibility through accountability/transparency.

**Grading:**
Your project will evaluated/graded on:
• Organization – can I readily follow the flow/logic of your paper?
• Clarity of your points – can I readily determine what you are trying to convey or do I need to try to figure it out?
• The extent to which you use/apply concepts, practices, and rationales from the reading assignments and discussed in class;
• How convincing is your rationale?
  o can I readily see your approach is plausible / readily executable?
  o does it convince me that this is important to do (not just compliance)?
  o can you convince me that the costs are reasonable and, most importantly, that they are worth it?
  o does it convince me it will improve the agency’s results and credibility?