Effective policy analysis, program design, implementation, and management often depend on understanding the culture(s) of the organizations and individuals involved. Whether concerned with issues related to professional cultures, bureaucratic, technological, or business systems, or processes of organizational and societal change, cultural knowledge can be a crucial determinant of success or failure. This course focuses on the dynamic role of culture in societal, political, and economic processes as they affect organizations, with special attention to technological change and influence at various levels of analysis. With the aim of providing both practical and intellectual insights and skills, the objectives of the course include learning to

- observe and describe culture at the organizational and societal levels;
- observe and describe important cultural and organizational features of target groups and populations;
- identify cultural enablers and barriers in policy development, program design, and implementation; and
- observe and describe the interaction between technologies and cultural and organizational systems, and their relative effects.

Course Requirements
All students are expected to come to class prepared, having completed the required readings for each week, and to participate in class discussions. In addition, students are each required to make one class presentation and to facilitate related discussion, to prepare two brief analytical essays that draw on assigned class readings, and to take a final examination. Grades are determined by class participation (20%), the presentation (25%), the essays (30%), and the final examination (25%).

Required Books

Recommended Books
SPGIA Policy on Plagiarism

The professional scholarship and 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 Policy, Government, and International Affairs (SPGIA). 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. 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 SPGIA faculty 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 (e.g., F-1, J-1, or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the SPGIA 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 SPGIA policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.

Disabled Student Accommodation

If you are a student with a disability for which you need academic accommodation, please inform the professor and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be recognized and arranged through the DRC.