PPPA 6000: Perspectives on Public Values

“It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive or who had ever been alive.”—James Baldwin

Course Description:

Welcome to this different, perhaps unexpected, course!

Through literary fiction we will explore the relationship of person to person, person to work, person to society, person to state. This is not a typical course for a Master of Public Administration (MPA) program. MPA courses usually cover statistics, budgeting, economic thinking, management, and so on. But we think that (in addition to standard courses) asking and reflecting on THE BIG QUESTIONS, that our alumni tell us they confront as their careers develop, is important. Our alumni tell us this is important because making or analyzing or implementing policies and programs requires a deep understanding of others. It also requires a deep understanding of yourself and your many layers and roles—person, woman/man, student, son/daughter, professional, mentor, and the like—as well as the skills and techniques to develop those understandings and to continue to do so over the course of our careers. Novels, studies show, help us do that.

Together we will explore, reflect on, and discuss the complexities of the relationships identified above. In doing so, we will ask: What are your understandings of and assumptions about others and how might others see you? How does this knowledge about yourself and others connect with other courses in this program? How does (or might) your understanding of others relate to your role in informed policy making? To explore these questions, we will focus on the lives of ordinary people and how they understand the world and navigate their place in it. We will do this through the thematic lens of privilege and inclusion.
Bulletin Course Description:

This intensively participatory course looks at the underpinnings and skills necessary for a functioning democratic society. Primary emphasis is placed on empathy and the ability to have civil discourse in order to create, analyze, pass, implement and evaluate policy and programs. Specific subtopics may include privilege, diversity, inclusion, immigration, marketplace of ideas, etc. Primary resources for the course may include literary fiction, narrative non-fiction and ‘live’ resources around D.C.

Course Environment

To make the most of this course, we must create together a rigorous and lively marketplace of ideas. The opportunity to speak freely and know that you will be heard, even if not agreed with, is crucial. We must be careful to approach our discussions with empathy and mutual respect, regardless of ideology political views, or identity. We must value civility because that is the kind of community we want and because civility permits intellectual, personal, and professional exploration and growth.

Recognizing that we all have different learning styles, I have included a variety of learning formats: lectures, discussions, case applications, group dialogues, peer feedback, and various in-class activities. In-class work/activities cannot be made up.

You will do a lot of reading for this course so you should budget your time carefully, make a good cup of [insert your preferred beverage here], and settle into a nice comfy chair. There are also. You should expect to spend an average of two hours per week in class sessions as well as approximately 8-10 hours per week on work outside of class.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify ways in which people experience matters of privilege, diversity, and inclusion under both day-to-day and extreme conditions.

2. Identify/reveal how you see yourself and your status/place in society

3. Imagine and articulate what it is like to experience that which is outside of your experience.

4. Imagine and articulate how others might see you and your status/place in society.

5. Identify sources and resources for connecting your understanding of yourself and others to informed public policy/administration.
6. Anticipate how you might remain in touch with your passion and/or reconnect your motivations and passions with your professional life.

7. Reflect on how to transfer learnings from this course to other courses in the program.

Assessment

Your effort to address the learning objectives will be assessed through the following assignments:

Class Participation:

Class participation, in class or via blackboard (which includes comments, questions, articles or items to share with the class), should demonstrate that you have read/engaged with learning resources (readings, class discussion, in-class activities, outside activities, and anything else you’d like to include) in a thoughtful and analytical way. Your participation should be relevant, on-point, and crafted to move along our discussion and collective thinking.

Structured Reflective Journal (which includes outside activities):

A reflective journal will help you react to and analyze the readings and other assignments. You will gain enhanced knowledge of yourself; enhanced understanding of/for others; and an awareness of the kinds of resources available to you for continued evolution of your thinking. I will read these weekly. I am the only person to see your reflections.

All entries must be submitted by the start of class on the day on which they are due.

If you have read this far please send me a really good knock-knock joke via email using the subject line “knock-knock.”

Self-Assessment

You will assess your participation/experience in this course.
# Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>In-Class Activity</th>
<th>Homework</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Let’s Get Going!</td>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>2nd ½ of class session: 1-hour workshop on Civil Conversations by Professor Janice Shack-Marquez</td>
<td>1st reflection (about week 1 &amp; anything else you’d like to include)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>Are you kidding? Novels in a PA course?</td>
<td>Donald Schon, chapter from “Reflective Practitioner”</td>
<td>Janice Shack-Marquez is a teacher, speaker &amp; leadership coach who draws on 20 years of experience as a senior executive. She retired in 2015 after 33 years of Federal Government service from the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve where she was a business leader &amp; a leadership coach. She held a dual appointment as Deputy Director in the Division of Research and Statistics and in the Division of Monetary Affairs at the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. She has extensive experience leading change, developing innovative programs, dealing with challenging workplace issues, and helping clients deal effectively with interpersonal conflicts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>What is reflection? What is a reflective practitioner and how do I become one?</td>
<td>Movie: The Lives of Others</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>How can we really talk about this stuff?—Guest speaker: Janice Shack-Marquez.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>What is privilege?</td>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>1st reflection (about week 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Where is the line between fiction &amp; non-fiction—in life as well as literature?</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Who gets to write whose stories?</td>
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<td>9/17</td>
<td>Being and Caring For Refugees.</td>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>2nd reflection (about week 2 &amp; anything else you’d like to include)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/17</td>
<td>Lina Musayev (MPA 2007)-- Guest speaker- Managing Director, Capacity Building Network, at MA Charter Public School Association.</td>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>3rd reflection (About week 3 &amp; anything else you’d like to include)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Home Fire (1st ½)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment: 2nd reflection (about week 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme 1: Privilege, Inclusion, &amp; Work</td>
<td>What is it like to straddle worlds and ways?</td>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>4th reflection (about week 4 &amp; anything else you’d like to include)</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>What role does the state play in crafting identity?</td>
<td>Home Fire (2nd ½)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment: 3rd reflection (about week 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme 2: Privilege, Inclusion, &amp; Work</td>
<td>But what IS the black box anyway and is it</td>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Homework: Work on Final</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
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Course Materials


Assignment: Reflective Journal-- Tasks by Week:

Your journal must include four entries that you will need to submit to me for assessment. Reflection 1 should be an initial reflection on week 1. Reflections 2 and 3 should reflect on any two of the three classes from among Weeks 2, 3 or 4. Finally, Reflection 4 will close out the course and look both back to the past and forward towards the future and entail outside activities.

Each reflection will respond to specific questions and activities. A detailed description of what each reflection must include (though you are welcome to go beyond the requirements) is below.

Assessment of your weekly reflection will be based on the following criteria: (1) Meeting/addressing all components of the assignment; (2) reflecting an understanding of the complexities of the issue; (3) the level of depth; (4) connecting class materials to experience and synthesizing them; (5) clarity of writing. These are detailed in the rubric below.

Each week you will submit your reflections to me via Blackboard. I will provide you feedback on each reflection. Please see the detailed assignment attached to this syllabus.

As I read through your reflections, I will be looking for emerging common themes (if any) across the class. These will constitute an additional learning resource for us as I will use the major, emergent themes each week in class to foster conversation. You will, of course, remain anonymous unless you choose to identify yourself.

Read on for specific, detailed instructions.

**Week 1, prospective reflection:**

Look backwards to look forward

1. Have I ever been discriminated against? What did it look like?

Reflect on the present
2. Am I a reflective kind of person?
3. What is a reflective practitioner?
4. I am passionate about issues of privilege and inclusion and also about [complete and elaborate on your other passions]
5. I am less interested in issues of privilege and inclusion but I am passionate about [complete and elaborate on your passions]
6. What do I know about people in marginalized, vulnerable, or underprivileged communities? What do I want to know?
7. Reflect on readings and class discussion: This should be a thoughtful, critical reflection on some aspect or aspects of the text. Focus on something noteworthy, surprising, or perplexing, and discuss that in detail, citing and analyzing relevant passages where appropriate. A “reflection” is not simply a personal opinion (“I like it”): while it is an opinion (your personal take on the matter), that opinion has to be reasoned and substantiated (“I like it because it seems to help me understand this”). Also, “critical” does not mean a negative critique is necessary: it can be negative (“This argument fails because...”), but a good critique is often positive (praising a good argument, for example, while explaining its virtues and potential).

Look ahead
8. What will this course be like?
9. Do I think I’ll “like” this course?
10. What are my concerns about this course?
11. What are my personal goals for this course?
12. This course may relate to my other current classes by/because [complete and elaborate on this statement]
13. This course may relate to my future classes by/because [complete and elaborate on this statement]
14. This course may relate to my role in informed policy making and implementation by/because
15. What do I want to know about marginalized communities or individuals?

Weeks 2, 3, 4 interim reflections (choose two out of these three weeks to reflect on).

Each component should be addressed.

16. Reflect on week 2, 3, 4 (choose 2) the readings and class discussion. This should be a thoughtful, critical reflection on some aspect or aspects of the text. Focus on something noteworthy, surprising, or perplexing, and discuss that in detail, citing and analyzing relevant passages where appropriate. A “reflection” is not simply a personal opinion (“I like it”): while it is an opinion (your personal take on the matter), that opinion has to be
reasoned and substantiated (“I like it because it seems to help me understand this”). Also, “critical” does not mean a negative critique is necessary: it can be negative (“This argument fails because...”), but a good critique is often positive (praising a good argument, for example, while explaining its virtues and potential).

17. Are any of my thoughts about a particular aspect/topic of readings/discussions changing at all from my previous reflection/s? How? Why? Describe the change.

Due October 22: Final Retrospective & Prospective Reflection, Including Outside Activity

Reflect on the readings and class discussion:

18. Reflect on Week 5 readings and class discussion: This should be a thoughtful, critical reflection on some aspect or aspects of the text. Focus on something noteworthy, surprising, or perplexing, and discuss that in detail, citing and analyzing relevant passages where appropriate. A “reflection” is not simply a personal opinion (“I like it”): while it is an opinion (your personal take on the matter), that opinion has to be reasoned and substantiated (“I like it because it seems to help me understanding this”). Also, “critical” does not mean a negative critique is necessary: it can be negative (“This argument fails because...”), but a good critique is often positive (praising a good argument, for example, while explaining its virtues and potential).

Reflect on 2 Outside Activities

“Doing & Observing” exercises: Studies show that we learn more when we “do” and “observe. To do that, this course asks you to take the perspective of both the characters in what we’re reading and the public service professional. Some possible activities that emerge when we think about the relationships between doing, observing, the character, and the professional are below. Choose two activities from the table.

19. What were my expectations before I performed the activity?
20. What were the surprises?
21. This has affected my thinking by...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From perspective of vulnerable individual/group</th>
<th>Doing</th>
<th>Observing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview a person who is from a vulnerable or marginalized group about their experience with privilege, inclusion, government, society. You are</td>
<td>Website analysis—interrogate a website from the perspective of a person from a marginalized group who needs specific information.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
From perspective of a public professional who works with a vulnerable person/group
also free to propose an activity to professor.
Engage with nonfiction—e.g. work with a data set, or book, or article to ask: what do data teach us that stories do not? What do stories teach us that data do not? You are also free to propose an activity to professor.
You are also free to propose an activity to professor.
Interview to understand the opportunities to make a difference and the challenges in doing so. You are also free to propose an activity to professor.

Look backwards
22. How has my thinking about privilege and inclusion changed? Why?
23. How did this relate to the other courses I took this semester?
24. How has this related to my role in informed policy making?

Reflect on the course by elaborating on these statements:
25. Before I started this course, I expected...
26. I was surprised by...
27. Something I would change is...
28. Something I would do the same is...

Look ahead:
29. Were my initial concerns about the course (if any) reflected in the actual course?
30. How might this course relate to future courses in the program?
31. How might this course relate to my future role in informed policy making and implementation?

Self-Assessment
32. Did I complete/achieve the goals I set for myself in the first reflection? If yes, how? If no, why?
33. Did my goals change? Why and how so/in what way?
34. What did I learn?
35. Please re-read the description of class participation above. Your participation is worth 15 points—5 from you and 10 from professor. Please assign a grade for yourself and justify it. The highest grade you can give yourself is 5 points; the lowest is 1 point.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Superior/Exceeds Expectations</th>
<th>Good/Fully Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Borderline/Meets minimal expectations</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required Components</td>
<td>Reflection includes all components and exceeds all requirements. Each component is addressed thoroughly.</td>
<td>Reflection includes all components and meets all requirements. Each component is addressed.</td>
<td>Reflection is missing some components and/or does not fully meet the requirements indicated. Some parts of the assignment are not addressed.</td>
<td>Reflection excludes components and/or does not address requirements indicated. Parts of assignment are addressed minimally, inadequately, or not at all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Perspective</td>
<td>Reflection is imaginative and considers complexities of the issue. Limits of perspective, thesis, and/ or argument acknowledged. Alternative points of view identified and synthesized within position.</td>
<td>Reflection considers complexities of the issue and alternative points of view acknowledged.</td>
<td>Reflection considers the complexities of the issue or acknowledges alternative points of view.</td>
<td>Simplistic, obvious. Position nonexistent or unclearly stated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depth of Reflection</td>
<td>Demonstrates an in-depth reflection on the ideas presented in course materials (readings, discussions, outside activities, etc). Viewpoints and interpretations are insightful and well argued/ supported with evidence and examples. Clear and detailed.</td>
<td>Demonstrates a general reflection on the ideas presented in course materials (readings, discussions, outside activities, etc). Viewpoints and interpretations are supported. Appropriate examples are provided, as applicable.</td>
<td>Demonstrates minimal reflection on ideas presented in course materials (readings, discussions, outside activities, etc). Viewpoints and interpretations are unsupported or supported with flawed arguments. Examples, when applicable, are not provided or are irrelevant.</td>
<td>Demonstrates lack of reflection on course materials (readings, discussions, outside activities, etc). Viewpoints and interpretations are missing, inappropriate, and/or unsupported. Examples, when applicable, are not provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection to Experience</td>
<td>Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of formal classroom (work/civic/ academic experiences) to deepen understanding of fields of study and broaden own points of view.</td>
<td>Effectively selects and develops examples of experiences outside of formal classroom (including work/civic/academic experiences) to illuminate ideas</td>
<td>Compares life experiences and academic knowledge to infer differences and similarities, and acknowledge perspectives other than own.</td>
<td>Fails to identify connections between life experiences and academic texts and ideas perceived as similar and related to own interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of Writing</td>
<td>Skillfully communicates meaning to reader with clarity and fluency and is error-free</td>
<td>Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to reader. Language has few errors.</td>
<td>Uses general language that conveys meaning to reader. May have errors or unclear spots.</td>
<td>Much of the meaning is unclear to reader.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Grades

Your grade for the course will be tabulated as follows:

Because these are cumulative—that is, each reflection requires you to reflect on past reflections—each reflection will be worth more than the last.

First reflection: 10 points
Second Reflection: 20 points
Third Reflection: 20 points
Final Reflection: 35 points

Participation:

15 points (5 points via self-assessment; 10 points via instructor assessment)

Helpful (Selected) Nonfiction Resources

- National Institute for Civil Discourse - https://nicd.arizona.edu/
- Ashoka - https://www.ashoka.org/en
- Vox’s The Weeds podcast: Optimism about America, May 7, 2018
If You’d Like to Keep Reading Relevant Fiction
(aka “A Very Short Collection of Books I Could Easily Have Chosen But Did Not and Would Welcome the Opportunity to Talk About With You”)


The Fine Print

It's often said (in jest of course) that public administrators love fine print...

The University, the Trachtenberg School, and the instructor have formal policies concerning attendance, written work, and incompletes. Students are responsible for understanding these and acting accordingly. Without prior approval, late work cannot be accepted for full credit. Grades will be discounted by one half grade (e.g., A becomes A-, A- becomes B+, etc.) for every three days (or portion thereof) that assignments are late. I do not change grades except in cases of mathematical error. If you wish to contest a grade you must submit a brief, professional memo stating the grade you believe is merited and justifying the case for a changed grade with examples from your work and referencing professor feedback.

University Policy on Religious Holidays

Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations. Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.

Support for Students Outside the Classroom

Disability Support Services (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Rome Hall, Suite 102, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu

Mental Health Services 202-994-5300

The University's Mental Health Services offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. counselingcenter.gwu.edu/

Academic Integrity Code

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For the remainder of the code, see: studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity

Policies in Public Administration and Public Policy Courses

Incomplete

A student must consult with the instructor to obtain a grade of I (incomplete) no later than the last day of classes in a semester. At that time, the student and instructor will both sign the CCAS contract for incompletes and submit a copy to the School Director. Please consult the TPSSP Student Handbook or visit https://tspapa.gwu.edu/documents-and-forms for the complete CCAS policy on incompletes.

Submission of Written Work Products Outside of the Classroom

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an instructor receives each written assignment. Students can submit written work electronically only with the express permission of the instructor.
Submission of Written Work Products after Due Date: Policy on Late Work

All work must be turned in by the assigned due date in order to receive full credit for that assignment, unless an exception is expressly made by the instructor. [Note: Professor Brainard’s policy is that without prior approval, late work is reduced by one-half grade for every three days (or parts thereof) that it is late].

Academic Honesty

Please consult the “policies” section of the GW student handbook for the university code of academic integrity. Note especially the definition of plagiarism: “intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following: quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information.” All examinations, papers, and other graded work products and assignments are to be completed in conformance with the George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW THE CODE AND TO FOLLOW IT.

Changing Grades After Completion of Course

No changes can be made in grades after the conclusion of the semester, other than in cases of clerical error.

The Syllabus

This syllabus is a guide to the course for the student. Sound educational practice requires flexibility and the instructor may therefore, at her/his discretion, change content and requirements during the semester.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

In order to receive accommodations on the basis of disability, a student must give notice and provide proper documentation to the Office of Disability Support Services, Marvin Center 436, 202-994-8250. Accommodations will be made based upon the recommendations of the DSS Office.

Instructor’s Policy on Grade Contestation

Letter grading is based on a four-point scale as follows:

3.7-4.0 A: Excellent and exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional professional quality.

3.6-3.7 A-: Very Good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Shows signs of creativity and a strong understanding of appropriate analytical approaches, is thorough and well-reasoned, and meets professional standards.

3.3-3.6 B+: Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, without serious analytical shortcomings. This grade indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of this graduate course.

3.0-3.3 B: Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student with some evident weaknesses. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but the understanding or application of some important issues is less than complete.

2.7-3.0 B-: Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student but meets minimal expectations in the course. Understanding of key issues is incomplete. (A B- average in all courses is not sufficient to sustain graduate status in good standing.)

2.3-2.6 C+: Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; rarely meets minimal expectations for the course. Work is poorly developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstandings of important issues.

2.0-2.3 C: Deficient – see above

1.7-2.0 C-: Deficient – see above

Less than 1.7 F: Unacceptable: Work fails to meet minimal expectations or course credit for a graduate student. Performance has consistently failed to meet minimum course requirements. Weaknesses and limitations are pervasive.

Students wishing to contest a grade are required to write a professional memo stating the grade they believe is merited and outlining and justifying their case for a changed grade. Student must use examples from her/his work, referencing professor feedback.