



Public Policy & Administration

PPPA 6000: Perspectives on Public Values

Summer 2024

Tuesday 11:10-1 Rome B103

Tuesday 6:10-8 Tompkins 107

Instructor: Dr. Lori Brainard brainard@gwu.edu

Please [schedule an appointment](#)

“What might it mean to live our lives as if the lives of others truly mattered? One aspect of such a prospect would be our ability to take the stories of others seriously, not only as evocations of responsibility but as well as matters of “counsel.” (R. I. Simon, 2000)

The Course:

Welcome to this different kind of course! This intensive, participatory course focuses on values & skills necessary for a functioning democracy. Students will develop intellectual tools & habits of mind to seek out & understand other perspectives, practice productive civil discourse, & reflect on the values & experiences they bring to public service—all of which is necessary for meaningful professional participation in democratic governance. We will focus on the role of stories, aiming to move beyond the “single story,” & will rely on literary fiction, as neuroscience tells us that reading literary fiction stretches our ability to truly understand different perspectives. This will require humility, vulnerability, & empathy. We ask you to be open to making mistakes, receiving feedback, & sharing honestly with each other.

Bulletin Course Description:

This intensive course looks at the underpinnings & skills necessary for a functioning democratic society. Primary emphasis is placed on empathy & civil discourse to create, analyze, pass, implement, & evaluate policy & programs. Specific sub-topics may include privilege, diversity, inclusion, immigration, marketplace of ideas, etc. The course relies mainly on literary fiction.

What To Expect

This course meets 1 each week for 5 weeks. Each meeting is 1 hour & 50 minutes. In addition, you should expect to spend approximately 5 hours per week preparing for class (reading, notetaking), & approximately 1 hour on written assignments (responses via Blackboard).

Learning Objectives

This course will enable you to:

1. **Seek out & understand** the complexity & nuance of multiple perspectives & identities;
2. **Use empathy & discussion tools** to engage with perspectives different than your own;
3. **Critically reflect** on your own values & their sources & implications;
4. **Devise** ways of incorporating multiple perspectives into your professional practice.
5. **Create** a sense of community among Trachtenberg School students to support *continued* appreciation of & engagement with complex, multiple perspectives.

Assessment

This course uses a labor/effort-based grading system, designed to help you focus on your learning & development & take the focus off grades. Specifically, this system centers skills & habits that will help you throughout the program. Each week, you will track your effort at (1) **preparation for class** (reading/watching/listening to materials, notetaking); (2) **in-class engagement** (attentiveness, contributing to discussions, participating in activities); & (3) **written** responses to prompts on Blackboard.

Each week, for each of these three activities (preparation, engagement, written responses), you will fill out a form that I provide (see below) in which you document the extent of your labor/effort.

I will be able to observe evidence of each category of your labor. Therefore, if I feel you have under- or over-valued your effort, I will let you know, along with my reasoning. If you disagree with my adjustment, please let me know & we will arrive at a value together.

This method emphasizes your development & growth—not my evaluation of your products. If you have questions or concerns at any time, bring them to my attention. I want to be helpful.

Preparation

Preparation helps you make the most of the resources in front of you so that you can make your best effort at in-class engagement & providing written assignments.

Please highlight the column that best describes your preparation for class & provide a 1-2 sentence explanation.

None	Some, But Less than minimal C	Minimal C+ (77)	Adequate B+ (87)	Complete A- (90)	Above & Beyond A (100)
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0¹	(75)				
I was unable to prepare for class this week.	I tried to completely prepare for class, & was able to complete <i>some</i> listening, reading, &/or watching, but was unable to finish.	My preparation was just enough. I read, watched, listened to <i>most</i> of what was required.	My preparation was just fine. I read, watched, listened to <i>all</i> of what was required.	My preparation was great. I read, watched, listened to <i>all</i> of what was required & took notes or noted themes to bring to class.	My preparation was outstanding. I read, watched, listened to all of what was required & took notes or noted themes to bring to class. I went above & beyond by reading, watching, listening to at least one optional item.

Written Responses via Blackboard

Responding in writing to prompts on Blackboard helps you slow down & process what you have read, watched, & listened to, & synthesize it with your experiences. Providing your response to the class helps students learn from each other. Your responses also help make the professor aware of the class’s interests & understanding.

Please highlight the column that best describes your written response & provide a 1-2 sentence explanation.

None 0	Some, But Less than minimal C (75)	Minimal C+ (77)	Adequate B+ (87)	Complete A- (90)	Above & Beyond A (100)
I was unable to provide a written response on Blackboard (Bb) this week.	I tried, & was able to provide somewhat of a response, but not completely.	My response was enough. I provided at least a 250-word response to the prompt.	My response was just fine. I provided a 250–500-word response to the prompt, drawing specifically on the assigned readings, podcasts, videos.	My response was great. I provided a 250–500-word response to the prompt, drawing specifically on the assigned readings, podcasts, videos & my own personal &/or professional experiences.	My response was outstanding. I provided a 250–500-word response, drawing specifically on the assigned readings, podcast, videos & my own personal &/or professional experiences. I went above & beyond somehow: Perhaps I revised

¹ On all tables, these numbers are the score equivalent of letter grades.

					my written response, based on class discussions or something another student wrote. Or perhaps I commented (meaningfully & substantively) on other students' analyses.
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In-class Engagement

Engagement in class should demonstrate thoughtful analysis & reflection, as well as the principles of courageous conversations: (1) stay engaged; (2) be OK with discomfort; (3) speak your truth; & (4) expect/accept non-closure on these issues. Engaging robustly in class discussions & activities helps you clarify your thinking—& your classmates—learn.

Please highlight the column that best describes your in-class engagement * provide a 1-2 sentence explanation.

None 0	Some, But Less than minimal C (75)	Minimal C+ (77)	Adequate B+ (87)	Complete A- (90)	Above & Beyond A (100)
I was unable to attend class.	I attended class.	My engagement was just enough. I attended class & was attentive throughout.	My engagement was just fine. I attended class, participated actively & meaningfully in class discussion or activities.	My engagement was great. I attended class, participated actively in class discussion, & contributed meaningfully to activities.	My engagement in class was outstanding. I attended class, participated actively in class discussion, & contributed meaningfully to activities. I went above & beyond in some way. Perhaps I helped identify overlooked dynamics or interrupted discussion to note stereotypes or single stories, or raised a counter-

					narrative, corrected an error, identified something that made you uncomfortable.
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Course Grades

For week 1, you will submit a Preparation Form & a Class Engagement Form. For the next 4 class sessions, you will submit a Preparation Form, a Class Engagement Form, & a Bb Response Form. This totals 14 forms for the course. Your final grade will be an average of the 14 forms, including any feedback from me.

Course Materials

- Haigh, Jennifer. (2016). *Heat & Light: A Novel*. Ecco.
- Whitehead, Colson. (2000). *The Intuitionist: A Novel*. Anchor Books.

You should borrow, rent, or purchase these books. They are usually available at libraries. The weekly schedule (below) provides links to additional written, audio, & video materials).

Class Schedule

Sessions & Dates	
<p>8/27 The Context: Democracy</p> <p>(changing role of public service in democracy; role of empathy in public life; catalysts & barriers to empathy)</p>	<p>Reading Due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus (entire) • Zaki, "<u>Calls For Racial Justice Gained Steam With Empathy.</u>" <p>Optional Background Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "<u>A Guide to Critical Reading</u>" • Jacob, chapter 2 of "The Pleasures of Reading In an Age of Distraction." <p>Submit: Preparation & Engagement forms</p>
<p>9/3 Values & Identities</p> <p>(values development, single stories; democratic paradox; listening to others)</p>	<p>Assignment Due: Respond to prompt on Bb.</p> <p>Readings Due: Jennifer Haigh, <i>Heat & Light</i> (first ½)</p> <p>Optional: background materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LARA method: https://sparqtools.org/lara/# • Radical Listening method: https://orghacking.com/the-radical-conversation-cycle-tamerius-68a26ff9d6ca

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben Montgomery, Kelley Benham French, & Thomas French. 2018. <u>"21 Americans With Opposing Views on Guns Sat Down to Talk to Each Other. Here's What They Discovered."</u> <i>Time</i> • <u>"The Deep Stories Of Our Time"</u> On Being (podcast). <p>Submit: Preparation & Engagement & Written Response forms</p>
<p>9/10 Bridging & Bonding</p> <p>(roles of language & heuristics; Identifying multiple perspectives; Journalism: complicating stories)</p>	<p>Assignment Due: Respond to prompt on Bb.</p> <p>Readings Due: Jennifer Haigh, <i>Heat & Light</i> (second ½)</p> <p>Optional Background Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complicating the Narratives: https://thewholestory.solutionsjournalism.org/complicating-the-narratives-b91ea06ddf63 • Robert Shiller, <u>"Economics and the Human Instinct for Storytelling."</u> <i>Chicago Booth Review</i> <p>Submit: Preparation & Engagement & Written Response forms</p>
<p>9/17 Individual & Society</p> <p>(Micro-Macro issue; your story)</p>	<p>Assignment Due: Respond to prompts on Bb.</p> <p>Viewing/listening Due: "What the Constitution Means To Me"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View on <u>Prime</u> (if you have it) OR • Learn <i>about</i> it via <u>podcast</u> <p>Optional Reading: Hannah-Jones, <u>"America Wasn't A Democracy Until Black Americans Made It One."</u></p> <p>Submit: Preparation & Engagement & Written Response forms</p>
<p>9/24 In the Field</p> <p>(research methods; work preferences; neutrality, impartiality, & objectivity & their limits)</p>	<p>Assignment Due: Respond to prompts on Bb.</p> <p>Reading Due: Colson Whitehead, <i>The Intuitionist</i> (entire)</p> <p>Optional Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan Lanzoni (2020). <u>"Why Empathy Is Key,"</u> <i>Washington Post</i> • <u>John Pearson, "The Case for Neutrality in Public Administration."</u> <i>PA Times</i> <p>Submit: Preparation & Engagement & Written Response forms</p>

Policies & Resources for Students

Class Policies

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 & justifying the case for a changed grade with examples from your work.

Academic Integrity Code

Academic integrity is an essential part of the educational process, and all members of the GW community take these matters very seriously. As the instructor of record for this course, my role is to provide clear expectations and uphold them in all assessments. Violations of academic integrity occur when students fail to cite research sources properly, engage in unauthorized collaboration, falsify data, and otherwise violate the Code of Academic Integrity. If you have any questions about whether particular academic practices or resources are permitted, you should ask me for clarification. If you are reported for an academic integrity violation, you should contact Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR) to learn more about your rights and options in the process. Consequences can range from failure of assignment to expulsion from the University and may include a transcript notation. For more information, refer to the SRR website at studentconduct.gwu.edu/academic-integrity, email rights@gwu.edu, or call 202-994-6757.

Health & Well-Being

Counseling and Psychological Services: GW's Health Center offers short-term counseling and psychological services to GW students in Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia. If you are living outside these regions, the office may be able to refer you elsewhere. Assistance and referrals 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and can be reached on (202) 994-5300. The Counseling Center also provides Virtual Workshops open to any student regardless of geographic location. These can be exceptionally valuable and help you build essential skills and cope with common ongoing mental health concerns. Please contact the GW Student Health Center on (202) 994-5300 for more information.

Other Needs: Your well-being is important to us. If you are in need of additional support, or are concerned about another's well-being, please visit the CARE Team, Student Support, or the Community Counseling Services Center. Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact GW's Office of Student Financial Assistance for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable doing so. Some other resources to support you are found under the course menu item Student Resources and include support for academic achievement and personal well-being.

Security: In an emergency: call GWPD 202-994-6111 or 911. For situation-specific actions: review the Emergency Response Handbook. In an active violence situation: Get Out, Hide Out or Take Out. Also see, Stay informed.

University policy on observance of religious holidays

Students must notify faculty during the first week of the semester in which they are enrolled in the course, or as early as possible, but no later than three weeks prior to the absence, of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. If the holiday falls within the first three weeks of class, the student must inform faculty in the first week of the semester. For details and policy, see provost.gwu.edu/policies-procedures-and-guidelines.

Use of Electronic Course Materials and Class Recordings

Students are encouraged to use electronic course materials, including recorded class sessions, for private personal use in connection with their academic program of study. Electronic course materials and recorded class sessions should not be shared or used for non-course related purposes unless express permission has been granted by the instructor. Students who impermissibly share any electronic course materials are subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Contact the instructor if you have questions regarding what constitutes permissible or impermissible use of electronic course materials and/or recorded class sessions. Contact Disability Support Services at disabilitysupport.gwu.edu if you have questions or need assistance in accessing electronic course materials.

Academic support

Academic Commons is the central location for academic support resources for GW students. To schedule a peer tutoring session for a variety of courses visit go.gwu.edu/tutoring. Visit academiccommons.gwu.edu for study skills tips, finding help with research, and connecting with other campus resources. For questions email academiccommons@gwu.edu.

GW Writing Center

GW Writing Center cultivates confident writers in the University community by facilitating collaborative, critical, and inclusive conversations at all stages of the writing process. Working alongside peer mentors, writers develop strategies to write independently in academic and public settings. Appointments can be booked online at gwu.mygwconline.

Support for students in and outside the classroom

Disability Support Services (DSS) 202-994-8250

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services at disabilitysupport.gwu.edu to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Student Health Center 202-994-5300, 24/7

The Student Health Center (SHC) offers medical, counseling/psychological, and psychiatric services to GW students. More information about the SHC is available at healthcenter.gwu.edu. Students experiencing a medical or mental health emergency on campus should contact GW Emergency Services at 202-994-6111, or off campus at 911.

Sexual Harassment and Assault: George Washington University (GW) and its faculty are committed to creating a safe and open learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, and stalking, please know that help and support are available. GW strongly encourages all members of the community to take action, seek support, and report incidents of sexual harassment to the Title IX Office. You may contact the Title IX Office at 202-994-7434 or at titleix@gwu.edu or learn more by visiting the GW Title IX Office site.

Please be aware that faculty members are required to disclose information about suspected or alleged sexual harassment or other potential violations of the Title IX Sexual Harassment and Related Conduct Policy to the Title IX Office. If the Title IX Office receives information about an incident, they will reach out to offer information about resources, rights, and procedural options as a member of the campus community. Community members are not required to respond to this outreach. If you, or another student you know, wishes to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, please contact Counseling and Psychological Services through the Colonial Health Center 24/7 at 202-994-5300, or the Office of Advocacy and Support at 202-994-0443 or at oas@gwu.edu.

GW Campus Emergency Information

GW Emergency Services: 202-994-6111

For situation-specific instructions, refer to [GW's Emergency Procedures guide](#).

GW Alert

GW Alert is an emergency notification system that sends alerts to the GW community. GW requests students, faculty, and staff maintain current contact information by logging on to alert.gwu.edu. Alerts are sent via email, text, social media, and other means, including the Guardian app. The Guardian app is a safety app that allows you to communicate quickly with GW Emergency Services, 911, and other resources. Learn more at safety.gwu.edu.

Protective Actions

GW prescribes four protective actions that can be issued by university officials depending on the type of emergency. All GW community members are expected to follow directions according to the specified protective action. The protective actions are Shelter, Evacuate, Secure, and Lockdown (details below). Learn more at safety.gwu.edu/gw-standard-emergency-statuses.

Shelter

- Protection from a specific hazard

- The hazard could be a tornado, earthquake, hazardous material spill, or other environmental emergency.
- Specific safety guidance will be shared on a case-by-case basis.

Action:

- Follow safety guidance for the hazard.

Evacuate

- Need to move people from one location to another.
- Students and staffs should be prepared to follow specific instructions given by first responders and University officials.

Action:

- Evacuate to a designated location.
- Leave belongings behind.
- Follow additional instructions from first responders.

Secure

- Threat or hazard outside of buildings or around campus.
- Increased security, secured building perimeter, increased situational awareness, and restricted access to entry doors.

Action:

- Go inside and stay inside.
- Activities inside may continue.

Lockdown

- Threat or hazard with the potential to impact individuals inside buildings.
- Room-based protocol that requires locking interior doors, turning off lights, and staying out of sight of corridor window.

Action:

- Locks, lights, out of sight
- Consider Run, Hide, Fight