

# **Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration**

## **Fall 2024**

**PPPA 8190:** Philosophical Foundations of Policy and Administrative Research

**CRN:** 81746

**SEH 7040, Monday, 5:10PM-7PM**

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**Professor:** Sanjay K. Pandey, PhD  
Shapiro Professor of Public Policy and Public Administration

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**Office phone:** 202-994-1084

**Office hours:** Monday 4-5PM and by appointment

### **About the Professor:**

Professor Pandey has a number of research interests and is widely published in leading public policy and administration journals. At George Washington University, Professor Pandey, in collaboration with colleagues from GWU and other universities, has convened conferences bringing together leading scholars from US and abroad on the intersection of public management and nonprofit management, developing insights from behavioral public administration to address bureaucratic red tape and administrative burden, and race and gender in public policy and administration.

Professor Pandey's scholarship on public policy and public administration has been honored by numerous awards, including the Herbert Simon Award for the scientific study of bureaucracy, the H. George Frederickson Award and the Dwight Waldo Award for career contributions to public management and public administration scholarship.

In 2024, Professor Pandey was awarded the Honey W. Nashman Spark A Life for Faculty Member of the Year Award for positive mentoring relationships and impact on holistic development of students.

For more on the professor, please see his [Trachtenberg School Website](#) or his profiles on [Google Scholar](#), [ResearchGate](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

### **Course Description (from bulletin):**

PPPA 8190. Philosophical Foundations of Policy and Administrative Research. 3 Credits.  
Philosophy of science as applied to research in public policy and public administration. Topics include the nature and current problems of epistemology, development and role of theories, and relationships among theory, methodology, and empirical data.

### **Focus of Course and Learning Objectives**

Some philosophers contend that whether you know it or not, you are a philosopher! You are a philosopher in the sense that you subscribe to key assumptions about the nature of reality, appropriate ways of understanding, and developing knowledge about social reality. Where the

“rubber hits the road” is the level of self-awareness you may have about your philosophical leanings.

Most mature social sciences informing research on public policy and public administration (e.g., economics, political science, psychology, sociology, anthropology etc.) proceed with social inquiry about individuals and collectivities without significant reference to philosophical underpinnings. Public policy and public administration scholars -- drawing upon a variety of disciplinary sources -- cannot afford to ignore underlying philosophical commitments. These commitments have profound implications for what is contested and what counts as knowledge.

In this course, we will examine philosophical underpinnings as well as important debates that endure. Put another way, this course will engage in “thinking about thinking” in different social science disciplines. We will do so by asking questions, considering and proposing answers to these questions, listening carefully to answers offered by others, and working together to improve understanding. It is possible that the intellectual challenge posed by conflicting perspectives will cause some discomfort and motivate a search for ways to reconcile conflicting positions. This may or may not be possible. Our goal is not to reach closure and agreement but to be able to explore different viewpoints in an open, and hopefully, joyous manner!

The **learning objectives** for this course are:

1. To stimulate and raise your awareness of the relation between philosophical concerns and social science research
2. To surface implicit assumptions that underlie different scholarly traditions
3. To develop your ability to engage in critical and reflective appreciation of public policy and administration scholarship.

### **Readings:**

Two required books for the course are listed below. To accomplish the learning objectives, you are expected to go beyond the required readings. Although suggestions on additional readings and resources may be provided, you are expected to display initiative and energy in compiling and selecting relevant readings to complete course requirements.

Kuhn, Thomas, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.

Rosenberg, Alexander. *Philosophy of Social Science, Fifth Edition*. Westview Press

### **Course Requirements and Grading:**

#### **GRADING:**

Grades will be based on completing following activities (specific details on each requirement provided below):

- Readings and Participation – 40%

- Book Review – 20%
- Course Project/Final Paper – 40%

### **Grades and Expectations:**

A (Excellent): Exceptional work for a graduate student. Shows a strong command of the material.

A-(Very Good): Very strong work for a graduate student. Shows signs of a strong understanding of appropriate analytical approaches and meets professional standards.

B+ (Good): Sound work for a graduate student. This grade indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic course objectives.

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.

B- (Inadequate): Weak work for a graduate student. Understanding of key issues is incomplete. A cumulative GPA of B- will lead to academic probation.

Grades of below B- indicate extremely weak performance and insufficient grasp of the material.

### **Specific detail on course requirements:**

*1) Readings and Participation (40% of the grade)*

Most sessions will have the following structure:

1. Opening remarks setting the context for the week's readings
2. 1 (or more) students leading discussion on key reading(s)
3. Conversation in response to a Deliberation Prompt

**Proper attribution to sources you draw upon is important** – for specific guidance, please see this [University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center document titled "Quoting and Paraphrasing"](#) I specifically draw your attention to 3 points:

- i) If you use text from a reading, be sure to put this text within quotation marks and note the source name and page number(s) in accordance with the APA style.
- ii) Note the comment about **shared language** in this resource – it is OK to use as part of a paraphrase words and phrases that constitute shared language in public policy and public administration.
- iii) I encourage you to read advice in this resource on paraphrasing **difficult texts**.

**-As a discussion leader you will prepare a report on the assigned reading, post your report on the discussion board for the respective week, and present it in class.** Please be sure to review and follow guidelines provided in the syllabus addendum titled, “PhD Seminar Presentation & Participation Guidelines”.

- You will speak on a deliberation prompt once during the semester. **Come prepared to talk for approximately 5-7 minutes on a deliberation prompt and be sure to post a 1-page document on Blackboard discussion board for the week.** This document should provide an outline of your remarks and citations for sources you have consulted. The syllabus provides a list of deliberation prompts that are closely related to the weekly theme – **further guidance on how to prepare is provided** in the syllabus addendum titled, “PhD Seminar Presentation & Participation Guidelines”.

- **If you are not a discussion leader or deliberation participant for a given session, please be sure to post a thoughtful comment** on some aspect of the week’s readings on the weekly discussion forum before class convenes for the week.

Your grade on this part of the course will be based on your attendance, participation, and performance in the following roles:

- a) Discussion leader (15%)
- b) Deliberation participant (15%)
- c) Participation in class conversations & other assigned analyses and presentations (10%)

## 2) *Book Review (20% of the grade)*

You will read a philosophy of social science book and write a review. For the purpose of this exercise, I embrace a broad definition of philosophy of social science and will allow you to choose theoretically focused books from various social science disciplines. In choosing a book, you should be guided by your interests. Identify a few candidate books and choose the one that offers a moderate level of intellectual challenge. Keep learning objective #3 in mind as you choose a book to review. I am happy to provide suggestions or to help you choose from a list of books you are considering.

Good book reviews provide an accessible summary and a thoughtful evaluation. Your review should summarize core arguments of the book and also discuss its relevance for public policy and administration research. The review should be no longer than 10 pages. Writing good book reviews is a craft – you will find Edwin Battistella’s **advice on writing a book review** helpful; it is available at <https://blog.oup.com/2015/08/how-write-book-review/>

## 3) *Course Project (40% of the grade)*

You will do a course project on which you will write a report and make an oral presentation in class. Your overarching goal for this project is to learn philosophy of social science relevant to public policy and administration research broadly defined. I want this project to engage and excite you and therefore I will work with you so that you have a significant role in framing and choosing a project.

**You should take advantage of consultations offered to do the best work you can!** A typical course project is a literature review. To get the most out of consultations, prepare according to

the document titled, “Course Project/Final Paper Consultation Guidelines”.

I am open to considering and approving alternate student-initiated projects that are tailored to your specific learning goals and aspirations.

**To sum up, you are expected to:**

- 1) When serving as a **discussion leader**, prepare and share a written report on the assigned reading (Due the day you make a presentation; **post** to Blackboard discussion board for the respective week)
- 2) When serving as a **deliberation participant**, prepare a 1-page outline (Due the day of the deliberation; **post** to Blackboard discussion board for the respective week)
- 3) If you are not serving as a discussion leader or deliberation participant, please be sure to post a comment on Blackboard discussion forum for the week on some aspect of the week’s reading
- 4) Work on a course project all through the semester, submit a written report, and make a class presentation on it
- 5) Choose a book to review by the second week of the semester and review course calendar for due dates for book review and course project/final paper deliverables.

## **Course Schedule (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

Notes:

1. Please review and follow guidelines provided in the syllabus addendum titled, “PhD Seminar Presentation and Participation Guidelines”.
2. Average Minimum Hours of Workload: Students will spend ~2 hours per week on direct (or guided) instruction and ~5.5 hours per week on independent activities, on average. Over the course of the semester, students will spend 7.5 hours in instructional time per week for a total of 112.5 hours for the semester.

### **Session 1 – August 26, 2024**

Introduction and Overview

- ➔ Read Rosenberg Chapter 15 and come prepared to briefly speak about questions posed in the Welcome announcement
- ➔ Select a book to review and email to [skpandey@gwu.edu](mailto:skpandey@gwu.edu) by Wednesday, September 4, 2024

\*\*\*\*\*Labor Day Holiday on September 2\*\*\*\*\*

### **Session 2 -- September 9, 2024 – Normal Science; Role of Philosophy**

Kuhn, Chapter 1 to 6

Rosenberg, Chapter 1

Deliberation Prompt: Philosophical insights and analyses have clear benefits for public policy and administration scholarship.

On Logical Empiricism, see:

Creath, Richard, "Logical Empiricism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL =

<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/logical-empiricism/>>.

You may also be interested in the SEP entry on Vienna Circle.

### **Session 3 -- September 16, 2024 – Revolutions; Naturalism versus Interpretation**

Kuhn, Chapter 7 to 13

Rosenberg, Chapter 2

Deliberation prompt: To be truly effective, public policy and administration scholarship needs to embrace critical theories that aspire to serve practical goals of human emancipation.

On Relativism, see:

Swoyer, Chris, "Relativism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL =

<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/relativism/>>.

#### **Session 4 – September 23, 2024 – Human Action, Intentionality, and the Mind-Body Problem**

Rosenberg, Chapter 3, 4

Deliberation prompt: The quest for uncovering/discovering universal laws of public policy and administration is unwise. (Note the term universal laws is used in the sense we think of laws governing physical phenomena, e.g., Newton's universal law of gravitation, Coulomb's inverse square law, Planck's radiation law etc.)

#### **Session 5 – September 30, 2024 -- Behaviorism and Rational Choice**

Rosenberg, Chapter 5, 6

Deliberation prompt: Confusing causal description with causal explanation has serious implications for developing usable knowledge in public policy and public administration.

#### **Session 6 – October 7, 2024 – Course Project Consultations (1-on-1 meetings)**

➔ **Book review due**

#### **Session 7 – October 14, 2024 – Interpretive theories and perspectives**

Rosenberg, Chapter 7, 8

Deliberation Prompt: The potential of Weber's idea of *verstehen*, empathic capacity to understand other humans, remains unrealized because of polarized debates in social science that call for choosing between explanation and understanding.

#### **Session 8 – October 21, 2024 -- Holism, Social Facts, and Functionalism**

Rosenberg, Chapter 9, 10

Deliberation Prompt: Applying theories of racial position and/or racial hierarchy to understand social problems are not more useful than empirically driven economic analyses of racial disparities.

#### **Session 9 – October 28, 2024 – Nature or Nurture – Social Sciences and Sociobiology**

Rosenberg, Chapter 11, 12

Deliberation Prompt: Public policy and administration scholarship continues to be a bulwark for patriarchal power.

**Session 10 – November 4, 2024 -- Facts and Values; Ethics in Social Inquiry**  
Rosenberg, Chapter 13, 14

Deliberation Prompt: The lack of self-awareness about theory-ladenness of observation and measurement stymies deep understanding of core issues in public policy and administration.

**Session 11 -- November 11, 2024 -- Course Project Consultations (1-on-1 meetings)**

**Session 12 -- November 18, 2024 – Social Science and Philosophy – Recapitulation**

\*\*\*\*\*Thanksgiving Break, November 25-30\*\*\*\*\*

**Session 13 – December 2, 2024 – Course Project Presentations**

**Session 14 -- December 9, 2024 – continued**

**Session 15-- December 16, 2024 – Course Project Paper**  
→ Course Project/Final Paper due

### **Course Policies: Grades**

Late Work Policy: Assignments turned in late will be assessed a penalty: a half-letter grade for anything from 1 – 12 hours late, a full-letter grade for 12-24 hours. Students will not receive credit for any assignments turned in after 24 hours.

Professor Pandey's Policy on grading concerns: The professor will not consider any verbal or oral statement of concerns about grading. The student must write a detailed memo to the professor explaining how his/her work met the requirements outlined in the respective evaluation rubric for the professor to consider the grade.

**Expectations of Written Work: For all written material you submit or share in this course, be sure to use quotation marks to denote exact quotations and provide the page number(s). Failure to attribute sources correctly may constitute plagiarism and result in a grade of F for the course.**

### **Course Policies: Technology and Media**

Blackboard: Blackboard may be used as an aid to the course for providing course readings and for sharing course materials and carrying out course-related exchanges.

Computer and cellphone usage: If you use a computer during class to take notes, please only take notes. The class is a cellphone-free zone. In the case of an emergency, please step out of the classroom discreetly and without distracting others. Any use of technology to distract one's self or others in the class may lead to suspension of the privilege to use technology during class.

### **Course Policies: Student Expectations**

#### Course Policy on Generative Artificial Intelligence:

First, a word on thinking and learning – I place a premium on your intellectual growth, and am concerned about ways in which generative artificial intelligence use may inhibit your learning and intellectual growth. That said, you may use generative artificial intelligence for course assignments subject to the following conditions:

- i) Provide complete disclosure of how you plan to use artificial intelligence applications, and obtain instructor permission in advance.
- ii) Your use of artificial intelligence does not violate GWU academic requirements and policies.

Respect for Diversity: It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. I strive to create an inclusive classroom and present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity including gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, and political affiliation. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

Civility Policy: Higher education works best when it becomes a vigorous and lively marketplace

of ideas in which all points of view are heard. Free expression in the classroom is an integral part of this process. At the same time, higher education works best when all of us approach the enterprise with empathy and respect for others, irrespective of their ideology, political views, or identity. We value civility because that is the kind of community we want, and we care for it because civility permits intellectual exploration and growth.

Attendance and Participation Policy: Attendance and participation is crucial to learning and you are expected to attend all classes except in case of extreme hardship such as an unforeseen medical emergency.

Professionalism Policy: Per university policy and classroom etiquette; mobile phones, iPods, *etc.* must be silenced during all classroom lectures. Those not heeding this rule will be asked to step outside the classroom so that the learning environment is not disrupted.

Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, *etc.*, and have been warned, will result in a letter grade reduction to their final grade.

#### **Policies in The Trachtenberg School Courses:**

1. Incompletes: 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 TSPPPA Student Handbook or visit <http://bulletin.gwu.edu/university-regulations/#GIncomplete> for the policy on incompletes.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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. See the GW Academic Integrity Code at [studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity](http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity)
5. 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.

6. 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. Excused absences will be given for absences due to religious holidays as per the university schedule, but please advise the instructor ahead of time.

## **University policies**

### **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](http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/academic-integrity), email [rights@gwu.edu](mailto:rights@gwu.edu), or call 202-994-6757.

### **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](http://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](http://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu) if you have questions or need assistance in accessing electronic course materials.

## **Academic support**

## **Academic Commons**

[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](http://go.gwu.edu/tutoring).

Visit [academiccommons.gwu.edu](http://academiccommons.gwu.edu) for study skills tips, finding help with research, and connecting with other campus resources. For questions email [academiccommons@gwu.edu](mailto: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.mywconline](http://gwu.mywconline).

## **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](http://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](http://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.

## **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](http://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](http://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](https://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 staff 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