

Syllabus: PPOL 5260: Public Management Theories and Practices

HKUST Division of Public Policy

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Instructor:

Prof. Kira Matus
Division of Public Policy (and Environment and Sustainability)
Office: 4616D (Policy Office, lift 31/32)
kmatus@ust.hk

Office hours:

Thursday, 4-5pm
Teaching: Wednesday, 6:30-9:20pm

Teaching Assistants:

Ian SOARES

Overview- Why are you taking this course?

The study, and more importantly, the practice of policy practitioners does not end once decisions are taken. In fact, most of the hard work occurs in the details of how policy gets implemented, day to day, in the messy and conflicting real world. Many a beautiful piece of policy legislation has resulted in a unwieldy, ineffective mess; in other situations, effective public services have muddled along, under circumstances of neglect or outright disfavor at the decision making level. For many MPM's, they will find themselves working in, or with, public organizations that are responsible for implementing policy on a day to day basis.

This course aims to equip you with a rigorous theoretical as well as practical understanding of the kinds of policy decision making and implementation activities that occur in varying institutional contexts at different levels. You will become familiar with the sectors, organizations, and groups who are participants in public management, including those beyond the traditional confines of government. They will also critically examine the concept of 'leadership' in public organizations- where it is located, and how it is related to the task of policy implementation. Building on that, the course will also explore how approaches to public management differ across types of organizations, geographical, and institutional contexts. This course will help prepare you to undertake continuous learning, flexible adaptation, and creative innovations as core components of policy systems and processes under situations of complexity and uncertainty.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of key theories in public management;
- Demonstrate a clear and nuanced understanding of the types of management instruments required to implement public policy;
- Identify the institutional, organizational, and structural challenges that public organizations

- face when managing and implementing complex policy portfolios;
- Apply scholarly theories and perspectives to real-world cases and own experiences, to
- enhance problem-solving capacity and improve public management practice;
- Develop and apply public management skills required for senior management roles.

Reading Material

There is no single book that covers all the topics of this course. Essential material is provided via Canvas. You are expected to be interested in reading material that is not electronically available. You are not expected to read everything on this reading list. Aim to read the core reading for each class meeting. Further reading provides for alternative sources as well as opportunities for more in-depth study for essays and projects. I try to be as clear as possible about what you absolutely need to read- and why. Please pay attention to this reading!

Assignments:

The details of the assignments will be announced via Canvas. The overall structure and points assigned to each are as follows:

Due Date	Assignment	%
March 8	Short Essay	10
TBD	Reflection (practitioner panel)	5
March 25	Midterm Assignment (Performance Measurement)	25
Draft May 1 Final May 15	Final Group Case Study	25
May 8	Case Competition (groups)	10
Varies by group	Group Presentation	10
Ongoing	Participation and Homeworks (DQs, annotations, discussion board responses)	15

Individual Essay

You will write one individual essay, with a choice of three questions. The questions and marking rubric will be posted on Canvas. The essay should be 1200-1500 words, and engage with both theoretical and case material. The essay is worth 10% of the grade.

Reflection

After our practitioner session (date TBD), I will ask you to each write a short reflection piece (1000 words), reflecting on the session, and linking it to our course learnings.

Case Discussion Posts:

We will discuss a number of cases during the term. You will be required to submit a short discussion post, based on the case topics and the class discussion, for a number of these (we will give you the prompts when we post the materials). You will also be expected to comment on your classmate's posts, to help continue a robust discussion. Prof Matus will give more detail on the exact prompts and timing for each case.

Other Discussion Posts:

I may, from time to time, ask for students to post on the discussion boards about particular topics, or to help us recap a discussion, etc... You are also encouraged to start (and participate) in your own discussions. This method of communication is especially important for any periods where we are operating in online/hybrid modes.

Collaborative Annotations and Discussion Questions

To help improve engagement with the readings, we are going to make use of collaborative annotation software. **To support this, please ensure that you have access to PERUSALL (more info for sign up to follow).**

Group Presentations

One of the major goals of this course is for you to be able to identify the topics we are covering when they occur 'in real life.'

To help us get used to applying these ideas to real world examples, you will split into groups of 4. Each group will sign up for a different topic week during the term.

For your presentation:

1. Pick an article from the news about a public organization (could be something that has gone wrong, but could be a reorganization, report/evaluation of performance, example of crisis communication, etc...)
2. Put together a short (5 min) group presentation covering:
 - a. A brief summary of the overall situation (what happened)
 - b. A run down of the key actors (who is involved)
 - c. How this is an example of the topic we are covering that week

Midterm Project:

The details of the midterm project will be posted on Canvas. It will be a memo of approximately 2000 words giving recommendations for effective performance metrics and management for a given sector (i.e. school, university, police, etc...). More information and materials will be posted on Canvas. This is an individual assignment.

Final Group Project: Case Study Writing

In groups of 2-3 students, you will each develop an original case study (5000 words), based on a real-life example, relevant to the course. More details to come, but be thinking about this.

We will ask that by Week 7, you have chosen your group and submit 3 ideas for the focus. For your topic submission, you also need to decide which topic(s) in the course your case will link to. It doesn't need to be one that we've covered (you can also look ahead at the readings, or talk to me if you need some help).

A draft will be due before the last class (May 1), and the final draft will be due during exams (tentatively May 15).

Case Competition

- The last week of class, we will pick 2-3 cases of the drafts submitted
- In predetermined groups of 5, you will have an hour to prepare your proposed solution to the case assigned to you (short presentation of 4-5min)
- Each group will present their solutions to a panel of judges

Course Topics

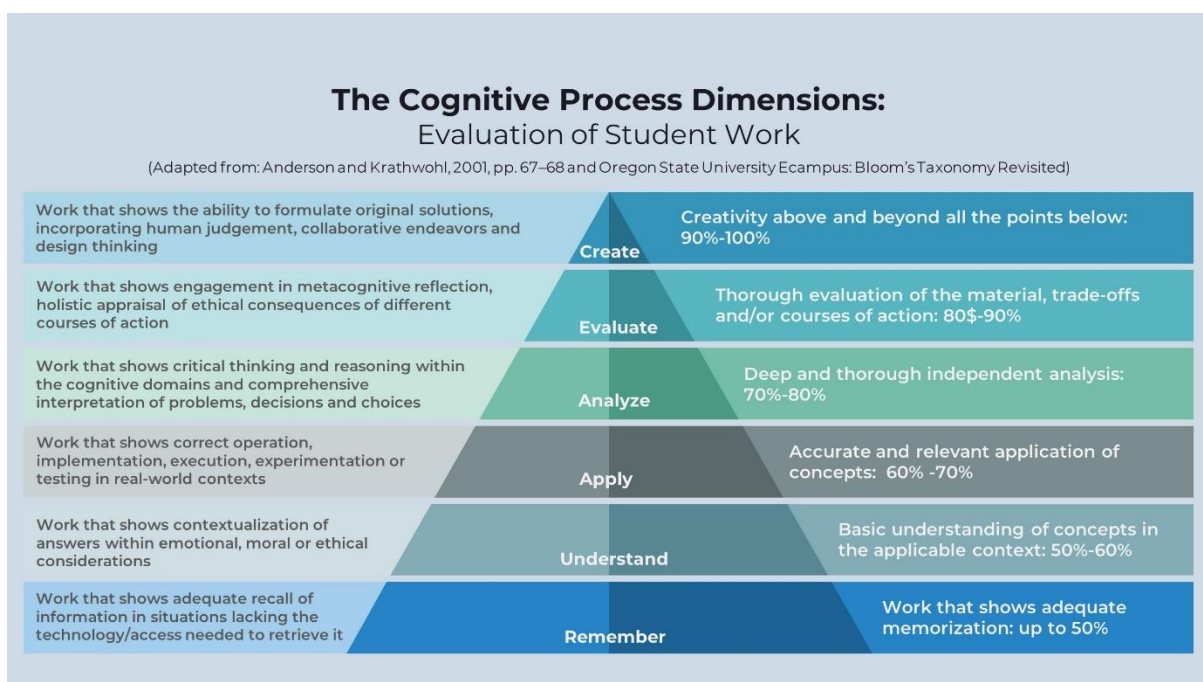
All readings, discussion prompts, and materials will be posted on Canvas. Each week will be its own 'module' with readings, notes, slides, etc....

Week	Date	Topic
1	Jan 31	Introduction to Public Management: Public vs Private Sectors
2	Feb 7	The State, Strategy, and the Public Sector
3	Feb 14	<i>**NO CLASS: Rescheduled Practitioner Session **</i>
4	Feb 21	Street-Level Motivations and Discretion
5	Feb 28	Leadership
6	March 6	Performance Measurement and Management
7	March 13	Organizational Change
8	March 20	Ethics and Accountability
9	March 27	Administrative Burdens and the Politics of Access
10	April 3	No class
11	April 10	Stakeholder Engagement and Transparency
12	April 17	Collaborative Governance/PPPs
13	April 24	Crisis Management
14	May 8	Case Competition

Grading:

For each assignment, we will provide the outline and marking rubrics. Please pay close attention, as this will make our expectations very clear. But for all assignments, it will be helpful to keep Bloom's Taxonomy in mind.

Please note: fulfilling the basic requirements of an assignment is not enough, in and of itself, to warrant an 'A' grade. Very good work, that fulfils the assignment, often gets a grade of a B+ or even a B. To get into the A range, we expect to see original thought, nuance, drawing on a range of sources of information (course readings, cases, empirical data, etc..), that is well organized and thoughtful.



Note: Late assignments will incur a penalty for each day they are late, except in cases where extensions have been granted by the instructor. Except for emergencies, extensions are much more likely to be granted when they are requested well in advance, with strong justification. If you are struggling to complete your coursework, please come discuss with us sooner rather than later, as it is always easier to adjust things before there is a crisis.

A note on academic integrity

One of the worst parts of my job is dealing with issues of academic dishonesty and plagiarism. They are unpleasant for students and faculty alike. Academic dishonesty hurts you, your peers, and your teachers. If you are ever unclear about what is allowed (i.e. working in groups vs. own work, etc...), ask me or the TA's. If you are ever unclear about whether (and how) to cite something, once again,

you can talk to me or the TA's, or check in with the library resources or our (soon to be hired) language tutor. I excerpt the HKUST policy, below.

“The University’s approach to cases of academic misconduct is fundamentally educational. The process for dealing with these cases is designed to enable students to better understand the nature of academic misconduct and the high standards of academic integrity that are expected. The sanctions available in confirmed cases of misconduct are intended to signal the importance that the University places on maintaining these high standards and to communicate this to students.

2. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

Cheating: conduct designed to mislead those responsible for making a judgment on a student’s academic performance or standing, including:

- Unauthorized conveyance or receipt of examination or test questions
- The giving, receiving or utilizing of unauthorized information or assistance in completing an assignment, test or examination
- Breaches of the regulations for examinations set out in the Annex
- Impersonating another student or allowing oneself to be impersonated by another student in participating in a test or examination
- Submission of academic work containing purported statements of fact or references to sources that have been fabricated
- Presenting for credit work that has already been accepted for credit in another course

Plagiarism: the presentation of work which originates from other sources, including the work of other students, as the student’s own work, without appropriate attribution to the source.” THIS INCLUDES THE USE OF AI content creation.

<http://acadreg.ust.hk/generalreg.html>

GENERATIVE AI

In this course, you are expected to produce original and authentic work that reflects your own understanding and creativity. The use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Bing Chat, Claude, Google Bard, or any other automated assistance, to complete any part of your assignments is strictly prohibited, *unless you have a written permission from the instructor, or we are expressly using such tools in class.*

Generative AI tools are not reliable sources of information, and they may produce inaccurate, misleading, or plagiarized content. Using these tools without proper citation and acknowledgment is a form of academic dishonesty, and it will result in serious consequences, such as a failing assignment grade, a report to the dean, or even a failing final grade. Therefore, you are strongly advised to avoid using generative AI tools for your coursework, and instead, rely on your own skills, knowledge, and resources.