

PUBP 4226—Business and Government
FALL 2026
CRN 92012, Section RDC

I. Course Description

This course explores how government regulates business and markets, and how business exercises power and influence on government across different economic sectors and policy issues. It therefore examines the intersection of business and politics in the policy process. Students will be expected to look at various business sectors and policy areas with a focus on what political influences are at play. The course will use a lens primarily at the Federal level, but there will be discussion of state and local dynamics as well. A variety of guest lectures will attend various classes and I expect full attention and engagement – you can learn a tremendous amount from the various stakeholders of the political process.

II. Course Objectives

The primary goal of this class is for students to learn the scientific basis for/against government regulation of business and for the limitations thereof. In doing so, students will be exposed to a wide variety of contemporary public policy controversies. The work you do outside of class will be as important as the work in class. In addition, to the primary goal given above, by the end of this course you should be able to:

- Define/identify an economic or social problem and evaluate claims about the roles of business vs. government in solving it.
- Identify policy options for solving the problem
- Use policy analysis tools to compare the merits and disadvantages of different policy approaches to a particular problem and estimate the likely consequences of proposed policies
- Develop and strengthen skills in research, analysis, and problem-solving
- Develop and strengthen skills in written and oral communication.

Core Area E: The above satisfy the designated learning objectives for courses carrying social sciences credit at Georgia Tech: “Students will be able to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.”

Core IMPACTS Statement:

PUBP 4226 is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area. Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students’ broad academic and career goals. This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question: How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcomes:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

III. Required Course Materials

Required: No purchases required. Assigned readings will be made available on the course Canvas site or as part of the GT Library’s digital collection. Assignments prefaced with “Mp3” are not readings but computer audio files (usually ~30 minutes each) which should be treated as seriously as an in-class lecture or assigned reading (i.e. you are responsible for knowing assigned Mp3 material).

Recommended (writing and research):

- Writing for Busy Readers: Communicate More Effectively in the Real World* by Todd Rogers and Jessica Lasky-Fink
- Plain Style: A Guide to Written English* by Christopher Lasch (Univ. Pennsylvania Press, 2002)
- Writing That Works: How to Communicate Effectively In Business* by Kenneth Roman & Joel Raphaelson
- Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life* by Theodore Porter (Princeton Univ. Press, 2020)
- Counting: How We Use Numbers to Decide What Matters* by Deborah Stone (WW Norton, 2020)
- Serious students should also consider subscriptions to *The Economist*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, and the *Journal of Economic Perspectives* or access them for free via the Tech Library.

IV. Grades

Your grade will be determined by: how well you *communicate* to the instructors that you *understand* the *fundamental* definitions, concepts, and causal relationships of policy analysis *as presented in the lectures, readings, discussions and other assigned materials.*

It bears repeating that your personal (dis)agreement with the definitions, concepts, & relationships presented in this class will *not* affect your grade. You do however need to show that you understand these fundamentals as they are currently accepted by the community of top researchers in public policy. You need not agree with them, but you do need to show that you understand them. Your understanding of the course material will be communicated to me via the following (see course website for details):

- **35 points: Class Participation**
- **15 points: Attendance (15 classes, including review and midterm quiz, hearing days, and guest lectures)**
- **20 points: Discussion posts on Canvas based on class (10 posts w/ 2 points for each discussion)**
- **25 points: Mid-Term Exam**
- **40 points: Final Exam or Final paper**

Students should note that, for individual assignments (papers, tests, etc), grades in this course are not rigidly related to numerical scores, distribution functions, predetermined percentages, or your knowledge of academic jargon. As can be seen from the following grade descriptions, individual assignment grading in this course is related more directly to a student's demonstrated mastery of the material. This also means that the relative performance of one's peers is less important, though not irrelevant, to one's grade. Finally, in determining an assignment's grade, consideration is given for elegance of presentation, creativity, imagination, and originality *only* where these have been appropriately be called for, and where mastery of the fundamentals has already been demonstrated. A satisfactorily completed individual assignment will receive one of the following grades:

A: Exceptionally good performance demonstrating a superior understanding of the subject matter, a foundation of extensive knowledge, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials.

B: Good performance demonstrating capacity to use the appropriate concepts, a good understanding of the subject matter, and an ability to handle the problems and materials encountered in the subject.

C: Adequate performance demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject matter, an ability to handle relatively simple problems, and adequate preparation for moving on to more advanced work in the field. Writes at the level of ChatGPT.

Other grades awarded include:

D: Minimally acceptable performance demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating deficiencies serious enough to make it inadvisable to proceed further in the field without additional work.

F: Failed. Has not demonstrated familiarity with the subject matter, nor the capacity to deal with simple problems in a manner recognizable to the consensus of mainstream academic practitioners within the field. This includes:

- citation of non-existent sources
- citation of an irrelevant source or one that fails to support the claim cited
- blatantly inaccurate facts, data, or quotations
- failure to use the citations guidelines (see handout)
- inability to knowledgeably discuss written deliverables
- use of ChatGPT or other LLM in research, analysis, or writing

Note that this course's internal grading system includes plus (+) and minus (-) modifiers for use with the letter grades A, B, C, D, and F. However, they are not officially part of students' grades, they do not appear on Georgia Tech transcripts, and they do not affect internally or externally reported grade-point averages.

V. Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken each class and will be a portion of your grade. If you have advance knowledge of an absence, please send the instructors a note. Students are responsible for all materials, discussions, comments, etc. covered in class (i.e. don't miss class, it may effect your grade). Students who arrive late to, or leave early from, class are required to do so with minimum disturbance.

VI. Additional criteria for successful completion of the course

A) **Students are required to check their email at least once per day.**

B) **Communications:** If you have questions about any of the assignments, readings, etc., ask! The instructors can be available to meet with a student before or after class or upon a mutually agreeable time.

C) **Random websites and online material are generally *not* accepted as legitimate sources for use or citation in your papers and presentations. Exceptions to this policy will be discussed in class.**

VII. Academic Honesty & Academic Integrity

Students are expected to read and abide by the Georgia Tech Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Honor Code. All violations will be reported. The complete text of these two Codes may be found at:

1. <https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/student-code-conduct>
2. <https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/academic-honor-code>

VIII. Acceptable Student Conduct

Student should be acquainted with GT Student-Faculty Expectations (<https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/21/>).

Students will treat each other and the professor with respect. Constructive questioning and criticism are welcome & encouraged. Personal attacks & insults are not. The rule of thumb here is that critical comments and questions should be maturely phrased in a manner that encourages constructive and open debate; they should not be phrased as insults, threats, or in a manner that shuts down conversation or debate.

IX. Email Policy

A) General communications from the professor to the class will be sent by email *and* posted on Canvas.

Students are required to check their email and/or the Canvas site (Announcements section) on a daily basis.

B) Personal or confidential communications from the professor to you will sent by email. **You are therefore required to have a functioning email account**, check it daily, to alert the professor if you are not receiving emails on it, and to provide a functioning email address if this one fails to operate properly.

C) The professor will check email at irregular intervals between 9am and 6pm every weekday; but reserves the

right to check and respond to emails more often than this.

D) Your emails will be responded to within 24 hours of their receipt, if not faster, conditional on the following:

- Include the course number in the “Subject” line of your emails.
- Write a meaningful subject line (e.g. “PUBP 4226—is recycling a good topic for final paper?”)
- If you have a general question, check the syllabus and Canvas *before* emailing...the answers might be in there!
- Be sure to do the readings and listen to the lectures thoroughly *before* emailing questions about the material...the answers might be in there too!

It is the student’s responsibility to adhere to these guidelines. Any e-mail not adhering to these guidelines may be mistaken for spam (or a joke) and discarded.

E) Unless specifically instructed, written assignments are always to be submitted in hard copy form only; **electronic submissions serve only as backups & confirmations.** (i.e. we don’t have time to download, print, & staple 13 papers).

X. AI Policy

- Students *may not* use AI when conducting research because one goal of this course is to learn how to identify, find, digest, and interpret expert sources. Also, students who conduct research at the level of AI may not receive a passing grade.
- Students *may not* use AI when writing because one goal of this course is to build skills and experience in critical thinking, communication, and original thought (i.e., avoid plagiarism). Also, students who write at the level of AI may not receive a passing grade.
- Students *may* use AI when creating graphics and data visualizations because, while one goal of this course is to learn how to identify high v. low quality visualizations, students need not become skilled graphic designers. Grading will be based on quality, accuracy, source id, etc. but not the use of AI.
- Students *may* use AI when creating software code because the acquisition of programming skills is not a goal of this course. Grading will be based on the quality and accuracy of the results, but not the use of AI. Also, this course neither requires nor expects students to code.

XI. Plagiarism Policy¹

In brief, plagiarism is defined, for the purposes of this class, as: copying, borrowing, or appropriating another person’s work **and** presenting it as your own in a paper or oral presentation, deliberately or by accident. Acts of plagiarism will be reported in accordance with the Honor Code. In order to avoid being charged with plagiarism, if you use the words, ideas, phrasing, charts, graphs, or data of another person or from published material, then you must either: 1) use quotation marks around the words **and** cite the source, or 2) paraphrase or summarize acceptably using your own words **and** cite the source. The plagiarism policy is not restricted to books, but also applies to video & audio content, websites, blogs, wiki’s, and podcasts. Plagiarism produced by AI still counts as plagiarism. **Plagiarism includes putting your name on a group project to which you have minimally contributed.**

CRUCIAL: if you're unsure about what is allowed, what constitutes plagiarism, etc., ask! In an online world, it might be tempting to cut and paste, including inadvertently using text from your notes that were copied. Be very careful.

XII. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404) 894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/> as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your

¹ Brennecke, Patricia. 2005. *Academic Integrity at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: A Handbook for Students* (MIT: Cambridge, MA).

needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also email me to set up a time to discuss your learning needs. Do not assume that ODS will always contact me. You'll need to check with me before each quiz or exam.