PUBP 8803RB1: Special Topics: Intergenerational Policy, CRN 94056
Fall 2026
Instructor: Richard Barke
Email: barke@gatech.edu

Course description
We will examine the challenges of making decisions that affect the interests of both the present and future generations, using constitutional, legal, public policy, political, economic, and ethical concepts to explore the difficulties and opportunities for long-term policy. Our goal is to combine vision and passion with pragmatism. Students will work, individually or in teams (depending on class size), to design posterity-oriented actions, anticipating setbacks and pushback, contributing to the work of others, and doing what Tech students are best at doing: finding pragmatic solutions to real problems.

Course objectives / approved course learning outcomes
At the end of the course students will:

- Recognize human and institutional obstacles to long-term thinking and the balancing of interests
- Be familiar with academic theories and concepts in a variety of disciplines for addressing posterity's problems
- Know how apply long-term thinking to a variety of current and emerging intergenerational issues
- Navigate the capability and limitations of policy analysis methods for long-term policy

Required course materials
There are no textbooks for this material. Assigned readings will be available over the web or via Canvas.

Grading policy and weighting *(USG)*

Team project	20%
Discussions (6 @ 4%)	24%
Perusall engagement (6 @ 6%)	36%
Individual in-class reports on the readings	10% (5% each)
Midterm	10%

Course grade: A=90-100%, B=80-89%, etc.

*"**Our Future" Project*** –Students will use course materials and their own resources (ideas, experiences, etc.) to formulate feasible mechanisms to address the needs of future generations, either focusing on specific topical areas (for example: health care, social security, infrastructure, education) or institutional reforms that could serve multiple issue areas. There will be a written report and students will present their findings during the final class meetings. Criteria for assessing the project(s) will be provided after we will discuss your ideas for projects (20%)
Discussions –These should be approximately one page (s-s) and will be uploaded to Canvas Discussions Topics and guidelines will be provided, but it will be essential for you to incorporate (with explicit references) ideas from the assigned readings as they influenced your thoughts. (24%)
Perusall Readings – Six readings will be assigned for annotations on Perusall. (36%)
Reading Reports – Each student will identify two optional readings and present the key points in a 5-10 minute discussion in class. (2 @ 5% = 10%)
Midterm – Short-answer questions will assess familiarity with the assigned readings. (10%)

Attendance policy

Many of your parents and grandparents sacrificed greatly for you to be here, so it's not just self-damaging but unethical to not engage fully with your courses. We will take roll on random days. A pattern of absences will be noted, especially if your final grade is near a cutoff.

Additional criteria for successful completion of the course

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. Policy analysts and decision makers must balance personal views and professional norms. Discussions about the policy implications of differing political values in society are encouraged in this course, online and in class. We have a duty to treat different political values with respect, but also to expect positions to be anchored by reasonable arguments and evidence. Positions might be espoused to develop argumentative and analytical abilities without necessarily reflecting genuine preferences. We all should be committed to cultivating an intellectual climate that embraces the many flavors of cultures and opinions we find in our student body.

Academic honesty / academic integrity statement

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code and the student Code of Conduct. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

You are encouraged to form study groups before quizzes and the final exam. It is a matter of personal integrity whether you carry your weight. Others may depend on you for a portion of their studying and grade. How you work with your classmates will create a reputation that will persist long after you graduate. **All graded assignments must be your personal work.**

AI tools for writing and research to be useful but hardly perfect (much like Wikipedia) so whatever AI tells you should be verified. I will treat AI-based assistance the same way I treat collaboration with other sources: you can talk about your ideas and work with other people and you should use AI tools the same way. But just as you would never present another person's ideas as your own, you should **never include in your assignment anything that was not written directly by you without proper acknowledgement or citation (e.g., AI prompts)**.

Disability Accommodations

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 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, so alert me before an assignment for which an accommodation will be requested.