

**IDS4930: Special Topics in Interdisciplinary Studies/Public Service Management & Leadership  
and PAD3003: Introduction to Public Administration**

Spring 2026, 3 credits  
January 13 – April 21, 2026  
Tuesdays, 1:55 PM – 2:45 PM and Thursdays, 1:55 PM – 3:50 PM  
Matherly, Room 117

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For more information on those policies and for resources for students, ***please visit this link.***

Instructor: Marianne Vernetson, MPA Public Policy  
Office Location: Bob Graham Center for Public Service, Pugh Hall, Room 220  
Office Hours: Mondays, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM and Thursdays, 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM (drop-in)  
Email: [mvernetson@ufl.edu](mailto:mvernetson@ufl.edu)  
Phone: (352) 846-1575 x. 0

Graduate Teaching Assistant: Rory Church  
Office Hours: Mondays, 2-4 pm, Pugh Hall, Room 220 (drop-in)  
Email: [rwentworth.churc@ufl.edu](mailto:rwentworth.churc@ufl.edu)  
Phone: (352) 846-1575 x. 0

Course Description:

Advanced study of selected topics. Content varies from term to term.

This is an upper-level interdisciplinary studies course that will serve as an introduction to managing and leading public service organizations. You have taken this class because you want to have a positive impact on the world. Your interests could be affordable housing, sustainable cities, access to quality health care, food security, arts & culture, education, or the environment. You may want to work in non-profits, local, state or national government, or the philanthropic arm of a for-profit company. You could also be focused on ensuring public policies are based on the best possible evidence; that non-profits are financially solvent and measure their impact; or that employees are treated fairly and respectfully. Whatever your individual passion, you can only realize that by mastering organizational processes. Organizations are how work gets organized, coordinated, and accomplished. Knowing how organizations work, and how to work within them, are two of the most powerful tools you can have.

Course Goals:

The goals of this course are to:

- Provide you with a broad overview of managing and leading public service organizations.
- Develop and enhance your management and leadership skills in the public and non-profit sectors.
- Make available to you the tools you need to diagnose and solve organizational problems; influence the actions of individuals, groups, and organizations; and lead impactful organizations.

### Student Learning Outcomes:

Through required readings, class discussions, individual assignments, and the group project, students should be able to:

- Identify and describe key concepts for managing and leading public service organizations.
- Discuss and explain tools that can be used to lead impactful public service organizations.
- Implement the use of key concepts and tools through their individual assignments, small group discussions, and the semester long group project.
- Examine the use of key concepts within area non-profits and local government.
- Through case study analysis, critique the use of key concepts in managing and leading organizations and make recommendations.
- Create a model public service entity that meets the required organizational elements discussed in class.

### Course Materials:

There is one required text for this course: Bolman, Lee G. and Deal, Terrence E. Reframing Organizations, Artistry, Choice and Leadership, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Published 2021.

The remaining readings, listed below in the course schedule, will consist of scholarly articles, news articles, case studies, and other online resources made available through Canvas or through the [UF Libraries website](#). If you need help navigating the library website, [tutorials are available here](#). From your computer, you will need to be on the [UF VPN Network](#).

There is no course materials fee for this course.

### Course Format:

Each class will focus on a particular set of management and leadership skills. Our goal is to distinguish between effective and ineffective strategies. We will accomplish this by discussing key concepts and analyzing related cases. You will also complete a team project during the semester. Tuesdays are lectures only, while Thursdays are a mixture of lectures and team project work.

This course reflects a dual focus on theory and practice. The course readings introduce key concepts and useful ways of thinking about common situations in complex organizations. Case studies and class exercises provide opportunities for you to apply theories, concepts, and research findings to situations and sectors, and to hone your skills in problem definition and problem solving. The written assignments, including the team project, ask you to consolidate your insights and to practice your analytic skills.

A major component of this course is the team project. More information about the project can be found on Canvas under Assignments. You will have an opportunity to articulate your public service interest area (e.g., international development, education, healthcare, human rights, civic engagement, or social entrepreneurship). Together with up to three other students, you will create a public service organization with its own unique mission, structure, culture, products and/or services and develop a logic model, and strategic plan. Throughout the semester you will provide deliverables for each of these steps and receive instructor and/or peer feedback. Your team will conduct a presentation and write a paper on your organization, both of which are due at the end of the semester. Most Thursdays, during the double period, you will have time to work on the group project.

### Preparing for Class:

It is critical that you complete the readings for each session in advance. You and your classmates will not benefit as much from the class session if you come unprepared. Take time to analyze and absorb the readings and cases to prepare for class discussion. Many of the principles and issues involved are timeless and not limited only to organizations of a public service nature. Some of the more “classic” readings are included because they speak to important issues in useful, interesting, and time-tested ways. The articles and text provide key ideas and theoretical insights into human behavior and its impact on organizational performance. To be sure you have grasped the point of each piece, ask yourself:

- What is the author’s main argument?
- What are the key concepts and principles introduced?
- Why do these concepts and principles matter?
- What are the implications for the kinds of challenges I face or will face as a leader, a manager, a policy analyst, an urban planner, or government affairs director?
- How can I apply this to my campus involvement, my organization, or intended career?

### Assignments and Grading Policy:

To facilitate application of the course concepts, you will be asked to complete individual and team assignments. Your assignment categories are Case Studies and Reflection Papers (40%), Group Project (25%), Final Exam (20%), and Class Participation (15%).

Specific assignments are listed below and details can be found on Canvas:

Assignment	Due Date
Leadership Orientations Survey	1/16
Team Charter	1/29
Organizational Mission Statement	2/12
Case Analysis 1 (15%)	2/17
Case Analysis 2 (15%)	3/10
Logic Model & Strategic Plan	3/13
Theory of Change	3/26
Culture Statement	4/2
Reflection Paper on Leadership (10%)	4/9
Team Presentations (10%)	4/14 and 4/16
Final Team Paper (15%)	4/21
Peer Evaluation	4/21
Final Exam (20%) <i>Details found on Canvas</i>	5/1
Class Participation/Meeting Expectations (15%)	Each Class
Total: 100%	

I adhere to the following letter-to-grade conversion chart for all assignments and final grades. Grades ending in 0.5 or higher are rounded up to the nearest whole percentage point.

93 or above=A	90-92=A-	87-89=B+	83-86=B	80-82=B-	77-79=C+
73-76=C	70-72=C-	67-69=D+	63+-66=D	60-62=D-	< 60=E (failing)

Individual written work will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Theory: How well can you apply the conceptual material offered in readings and lectures?
- Data: How well do you utilize descriptive data to support your argument?
- Analysis: How well do you integrate theory and data to create a coherent and logical argument?
- Organization: How clear and well-organized is your presentation? Are all questions answered?
- Writing: How well do you reflect professional quality in your spelling, grammar and writing style?
- Formatting: Assignments should be written in a 12-point font, left justified, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, numbered pages, and no longer than the specified page limit.

One general guideline is to favor depth over breadth. That is, papers covering fewer topics display more thorough analysis than assignments trying to cover more topics.

Class Participation and In-Class Assignments:

A class like this requires attendance and active participation, as well as mutual respect. You should attend all classes and participation will be assessed each class period. It is especially important that you do not disturb your classmates by arriving late, leaving early, or causing other disruptions. While we are not a technology free classroom, I do expect you to be an active participant in class discussion and reserve laptop or tablet use for group project time. During class please do not use your cell phone.

**You will earn full class participation credit when you meet course expectations.** Specifically, these are as follows:

- 1) Students are expected to attend every class on time (see [University attendance policies](#) for further information).
- 2) Students are expected to actively participate in class discussion – including answering discussion prompts or sharing out in small group breakouts (see notes below).
- 3) Students are expected to respect their classmates' contributions
- 4) Late assignments will be accepted, but points will be deducted.

All class sessions involve active discussion based on the readings and cases, with an emphasis both on theoretical questions and practical implications. Be prepared to share your ideas and to listen to and interpret the issues presented by others. In-class assignments allow you to engage with the material and your classmates to deepen your understanding of the topic or group project assignment. Your goal should be quality over quantity and deliver high quality comments and questions. High quality comments and questions possess one or more of the following attributes:

- Relevance: How is your comment/question related to the current discussion?

- **Accuracy:** Do you use terms and concepts in ways that are consistent with definitions provided in readings and lectures?
- **Analysis:** Can you explain the reasoning behind your comment/question using careful analysis?
- **Integration:** Does your comment/question move the discussion forward by building on previous contributions with new insights?
- **Individuality:** Does your comment/question contribute a new perspective to the discussion, or does it simply repeat what others have already said?
- **Application:** Does your comment/question apply the theory and concepts to real-world situations?

I will grade your participation based on your observed behaviors in class, using the following guidelines:

- **Poor Participation (69-70):** The student rarely or never offers comments and questions in class, and/or does not appear to be regularly paying attention to lectures, presentations, or in-class activities. The student may only participate if prompted;
- **Fair Participation (71-75):** The student occasionally offers comments and questions in class, and/or is mostly engaged in class, paying attention to lectures, presentation, and in-class activities. The student may occasionally have to be prompted to participate;
- **Good Participation (76-80):** The student regularly offers comments and questions that demonstrate more than surface level understanding of course material, and/or the student regularly pays attention to lectures, presentations, and in-class activities. The student rarely requires prompting to participate;
- **Excellent Participation (81-85):** The student regularly offers comments and questions that demonstrate more than a surface level understanding of course materials, and the student regularly pays attention to lectures, presentation, and in-class activities. The student never requires prompting to participate.

#### Syllabus Change Policy

Except for changes that substantially affect the parameters of evaluation, including grading and the scheduling of the final exam, this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and only if it benefits the student. You will be notified in advance in class and via your university registered email contact about any changes.

#### Course Schedule:

##### **Prior to Session 1. (our class begins on Tuesday, January 13)**

- Log on to Canvas and tour the course site, including the Syllabus and Grading Policy.
- Review the Syllabus and come to the first class with one question or comment.

##### **Session 1: Overview of Course and Introductions (January 13)**

Objective: To understand course objectives and requirements

- Complete: Leadership Orientations Survey in Canvas by January 16
- Complete: Information/Team Formation Survey in Canvas by January 16

## **Session 2: Making Sense of Organizations (January 15)**

Objective: To understand the different ways to make sense of organizations

- Read: Chapters 1 and 2 in Bolman & Deal
- Read Case: Goodbye to Happy Hour, University of Washington/NASPAA Publiccases (Canvas)

## **Session 3: Guest Speaker (January 20)**

Objective: To learn from a professional about managing and leading in the public sector

- Read: Website and bio of our guest speaker, [Hagar Chemali](#)
- Come to class prepared with (1) question for our speaker

## **Session 4: Team Formation (January 22)**

Objective: To understand how to build a team for success and review team project

- Read: Chapter 5 in Bolman & Deal
- Team Project: Form project teams by end of Session 4

## **Session 5: Managing Your Team for Success (January 27)**

Objective: To review strategies for effective team management

- Read: Duhigg, Charles. (2016). What Google Learned From Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team. The New York Times Magazine, February 25, 2016. (Canvas)
- Read: Baskin, K. (2023, June 14). *Four steps to building the psychological Safety that High-Performing Teams need*. Harvard Business School. (Canvas)

## **Session 6: Managing Conflict (January 29)**

Objective: To understand the collaborative approach to conflict management

- Read: Whetten, David and Cameron, Kim. (2016). Managing Conflict. Developing Management Skills, Chapter 8 (pp. 306-320), Pearson Education. (Canvas)
- Read: Harvard Case Study: Tackling Homelessness and Addiction - Coalition-building in Manchester, NH (Canvas)
- Team Project: Submit Team Charter

## **Session 7: The Strategic Planning Process (February 3)**

Objective: To learn the key features of strategic planning

- Read: Bryson, J. M. (1988). A Strategic Planning Process for Public and Nonprofit Organizations. Long Range Planning, 21, pp. 73-81.

## **Session 8: Decision Making (February 5)**

Objective: To review the sources of systematic decision-making biases and to understand how to solve problems, including those with ethical dilemmas

- Binder, J. & Watkins, M. (2024). To Solve a Tough Problem, Reframe It. Harvard Business Review, January – February, pp. 80-89 (Canvas)
- Read: Campbell, A., Whitehead, J., & Finkelstein, S. (2009). Why Good Leaders Make Bad Decisions. Harvard Business Review, February, pp. 60-66.

## **Session 9: Ethical Decision-Making (February 10)**

Objective: To understand different ways to think about decisions with ethical consequences

- Read: [Making Choices: A Framework for Making Ethical Decisions. Taken from Brown University Website](#) (Canvas)

### **Session 10: Ethical Decision-Making II (February 12)**

Objective: To practice making decisions with ethical consequences

- Read: Pope, S. and Bromley, P. (2023). From Doing Good to Being Good. Stanford Social Innovation Review, Summer, pp. 49-54. (Canvas)
- Read Case: Meine, M. F. & Dunn, T. (2014). Loyalty, Ethics, and Whistle Blowing. The Electronic Hallway, University of Washington. (Canvas)
- Submit: Team Mission Statement

### **Session 11: Organization Structure (February 17)**

Objective: To learn what to consider when designing an organization's structure

- Read: Chapters 3 and 4 in Bolman & Deal
- Submit: Case Analysis 1

### **Session 12: Organizational Culture (February 19)**

Objective: To discuss how to form an organization's culture

- Read: Chapter 12 in Bolman & Deal

### **Session 13: Organizational Culture II (February 24)**

Objective: To continue discussion of forming an organization's culture

- Read: Chapter 13 and 14 in Bolman & Deal

### **Session 14: People and Personnel (February 26)**

Objective: To review how to manage people strategically

- Read: Chapter 7 in Bolman & Deal
- Read: Mortensen, Mark, and Amy C. Edmondson. (2023). Rethink your Employee Value Proposition: Offer your people more than just flexibility. Harvard Business Review, January – February, pp. 45-49 (Canvas)

### **Session 15: People and Personnel II (March 3)**

Objective: To understand how to set goals and incentives to support productive behavior

- Read: Chapter 6 in Bolman & Deal
- Read: Kerr, S. (1995). On the folly of rewarding A, while hoping for B. Academy of Management Executive, February, pp. 7-14. (Canvas)

### **Session 16: Nonprofit and Public Sector HR (March 5)**

Objective: To understand differences between managing people in nonprofit and public sectors

- Read: Pynes, J. (2009). Strategic Human Resources Management and Planning. *Human Resources Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, Ch. 2. John Wiley and Sons. (Canvas)
- Team Project: Peer Review of DRAFT Strategic Plan and Logic Model

### **Session 17: Managing Feedback and Team Effectiveness (March 10)**

Objective: To understand how to give constructive feedback and evaluate team effectiveness

- Read: Fernandez, M. (2025, July 15). *4 Strategies to help new leaders give feedback*. Harvard Business Review.
- Submit: Case Study 2

**Session 18: Group Project Workshop (March 12)**

Objective: to work in teams to complete the **final drafts of your Strategic Plan and Logic Model**

- Submit: Team Strategic Plan (with Logic Model) by noon on Friday, March 13

***Our Spring Break is scheduled from March 16 – March 20. Enjoy!***

**Session 19: Power and Influence I (March 24)**

Objective: To develop skills of the constructive politician

- Read: Chapter 9 in Bolman & Deal

**Session 20: Power and Influence II (March 26)**

Objective: To learn how to identify important political players and their sources of power

- Read: Chapter 10 in Bolman & Deal
- Guest speaker on Power and Influence (students will be notified no fewer than 2 weeks in advance)
- Submit: Team Theory of Change

**Session 21: Leadership (March 31)**

Objective: To understand the history of leading

- Read: Chapter 17 in Bolman & Deal
- Read: Su, Amy. (2017). How New Managers Can Send the Right Leadership Signals. Harvard Business Review, July/August, pp. 2-5. (Canvas)

**Session 22: Leading Change (April 2)**

Objective: To review models on the strategic management of change and discuss leading organizational change with a guest speaker

- Read: Chapter 19 in text
- Read: Frei, Frances, and Anne Morriss. (2023). Storytelling that Drives Bold Change. Harvard Business Review, November/December, pp. 62-71. (Canvas)
- Guest Speaker: Dr. Taylor Stokes, Director, Beyond120 and Senior Lecturer
- Submit: Team Culture Statement

**Session 23: Sustaining Change (April 7)**

Objective: To understand the basic elements of program evaluation

- Read: Behn, R. D. (2003). Why Measure Performance? Different Purposes Require Different Measures. Public Administration Review, September/October, pp. 586-606. (Canvas)
- Read Case: Establishing Metrics: What Comes Out of a Backpack in Chapter 4, Cases in Nonprofit Management, A Hands-On Approach (Canvas)

**Session 24: Leadership and the Four Frames (April 9)**

Objective: To understand the history of leading and to look at it through the four frames

- Read: Chapter 18 in Bolman & Deal
- Submit: Reflection Paper on Leadership

**Session 25 & 26: Team Presentations (April 14 and April 16)**

In these two classes we will have team presentations.

- Submit: Team Paper by 11:59 PM on April 21



- Submit: Peer Evaluation by 11:59 PM on April 21

**Session 27: Bringing It All Together and Case Study (April 21)**

Objective: To summarize the four frames discussed this semester and use them to analyze a case study. We will revisit a case study used earlier in the semester and apply the four-frame model.

- Read: Chapter 21 in Bolman & Deal
- Read Case: Meine, M. F. & Dunn, T. (2014). Loyalty, Ethics, and Whistle Blowing. The Electronic Hallway, University of Washington. (Canvas)

**Final Examination:** The final examination is a 5-7 page case analysis and should be submitted by 10:00 AM on Friday, May 1 via Canvas. Full directions for the assignment will be listed on Canvas by April 21.