

University of North Texas

Fall 2023

PADM 4130/PSCI 4130 – AMERICAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Faculty: Kingsley Ukwandi
Office: 114E Chilton Hall (Zoom and Teams are also available)
Office Hours: Tu & Th 9:00AM - 11:00AM and by appointment
Class Type: **Asynchronous Online**
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This syllabus can be changed in response to UNT policies. If this were to occur, students will be given advance notice and a copy of the changes.

Course Description

American Intergovernmental Relations examines the complex and often ambiguous relationships between the federal, state, and local governments in the United States. Determining which entity holds what powers or plays what roles because of the shared but competing nature of federalism, forms an integral part of the student's understanding of the American governmental system. A critical part of the education in local government, political science, urban planning, nonprofit leadership, emergency administration, disaster planning or public administration generally is understanding these relationships and thus how to navigate these systems on behalf of citizens and individuals who rely on that understanding in their daily lives.

By the end of this course, students will understand the constitutional and theoretical bases of federalism, debates, tenets of intergovernmental relations, conflicts and cooperation, their impact on American traditions now and in the future, including how these feed into supranational relations and how the American model compares with others. Skills and understanding you will gain in this course are most importantly a holistic knowledge of the relationships between American governing jurisdictions which are needed to pursue an impactful career in public service. Hence, competencies gained in the course align with several employment positions at federal, state, and local governments including nonprofits that fill the voids and engage news issues created by likely inefficiencies arising in part from the systemic frictions.

Course Goals

Public administration involves the "core activities" of government that are performed, for the most part, by highly trained experts and specialized organizations; its purpose is the development and implementation of public policy. This broad description encompasses a large dynamic portion of government at all three levels of the federal system, sometimes engaging private enterprise or the Third Sector. The coordination and productive interaction of governmental units across these levels is the focus of this course including the difficulties realities and conflicts that may be unavoidably present in those relationships.

Course Structure

This course is asynchronous online course. This means teaching will be mainly delivered via Canvas module text/pages with no face-to-face interaction except for appointment/office hours. Weekly introductory video may be used to give some insight and convey students' weekly objective. This means that students are expected to read weekly module pages on Canvas and stay very close to their required readings. Quizzes would be used to test student reading and understanding of materials. On the other hand, discussion will be used to stimulate interests, and exchange of views to gauge student awareness on real or contemporary issues in intergovernmental relations space. Reading specifically for the discussion posts may not be required but having an informed opinion is usually good. When students make serious opinions of fact or law, a reference to that may be stated for the benefit of academic learning, otherwise discussion posts/replies would largely be based on what you think. There would be a 1 presentation video upload, 1 report, and the usual midterm and final. All these are explained in more detail in the Syllabus. Although you may have other materials posted on Canvas or embedded links to external materials and relevant videos, when necessary, all contents pertaining to this course would be communicated through Canvas, which is also where you are to take all your assessments and submit all your works and comments.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, learners will be able to develop competencies in the following areas:

- Constitutional and theoretical bases of government and federalism
- Constitutional, policy, and administrative relations between the federal and state governments.
- Constitutional, policy, and administrative relations between state and local governments.
- Collaborative and competitive relations between local governments.
- Comparative knowledge of intergovernmental relations in other country.
- United States' role in supranational organizations.

Recommended Materials

The following book(s) are recommended and available at local bookstores or online.

"O'Toole, Laurence and Robert K. Christensen. 2013. American Intergovernmental Relations: Foundations, Perspectives, and Issues. 5th Ed. Sage Publications."

Some additional reading will be posted on Canvas. Required readings for each class are included in the course calendar. Students are also advised to stay on top of current events and debates. Time will be reserved to discuss current governmental relationship topics within the public sector.

ACTIVITIES DESCRIPTIONS

Members of the class shall be responsible for completing the following:

1. Quizzes – 20%

There will be a total of 10 short quizzes, that is 1 each week of class beginning in Week 2, there will be a quiz each week except in the weeks of midterm, final, presentation and the public agency executive

interview project. The purpose of the quizzes is to encourage and reward student reading of materials which is very important because of the asynchronous nature of course delivery. Each quiz will attract 20 points, bringing the total to 200 points or 20 percent. Quizzes will take the form of multiple-choice questions, true or false, fill-in-the-blank, or other similar styles.

2. Discussion Posts/Responses – 20%

This class is designed to be highly interactive and exciting from point of view of students' discussions and analysis of issues in the governments space. During the length of the course there will be a total of 10 discussion questions occurring once on a weekly basis except for the weeks of exams, presentation, project submissions. Each student is expected to make 1 discussion post addressing the issue or question raised and then proceed to respond to at least 2 posts from their peers. Beginning from Week 1, each week of discussion/responses to peer's contribution will be graded for 20 points (200 points in total). This means that discussion/responses to peers' contribution would contribute 20 percent to your final grade for this course.

NOTE: As a guide, please keep your main post between 100 and 250 words max, and each response to peers should be within 25 to 50 words. The upper limit rule is not strict.

3. Burning Issue Presentation – 10%

Students are to take any hot button issues in which the authority of one branch of government was challenged by another and discuss whether the current structure makes sense. The issue must highlight the complexity of intergovernmental relations. Your analysis would include a background discussion of the problem in terms of its origin, nature, and controversies in the issue management. It should also contain description of agencies or levels of governments involved, key actors and their approaches. Lastly, your analysis must discuss whether the structure makes sense and contain your recommendations on how the weaknesses you see can be addressed for optimum result. In fulfilment of this assignment, presentation will be recorded and uploaded to class discussion platform on Canvas. This will be no discussions or quizzes in the week issue presentation is due.

4. Public Agency Executive Interview Project – 15%

Students are to interview a public agency executive of your choosing and write a 4-page paper discussing the various governmental agencies they interface with across other levels of government and how this impact their work. As a template to aid your question structure, page 1 of report should detail the name, brief description and rank/position of the senior officer interviewed, the work and nature of governmental agency being reviewed, the level of government they represent in terms of federal, state, local or international authority. Page 2 should delve into how the agency does its work including the names of intergovernmental organizations they interface with and how they do this. Page 3 of report is to address the conflicts or cooperation they encounter and how those impact their delivery. Lastly, page 4 should detail your recommendations for improvement on the work of the agency or agencies in this regard and the benefits of such recommendations to citizens they serve. *There will be no point deduction based on word counts if you supply all the things needed.*

Students can reach out for ideas on questions to ask if in doubt and report their findings based on above format. While abiding by the template should not mean submitting a disjointed essay nor evidence of a perfect work, failure to follow the basic/complete page requirement and content may result in a poor

grade for paper. Students are expected to make appointments with their preferred public meeting paper agency or officer, which may be in-person or interviewing via email or telephone, but either way, be sure to ask follow-up questions when appropriate. If you are to interview in-person which is often more productive, please remember to dress appropriately in business attire. It is also customary to send a thank you note to the person sharing their valuable time.

5. Exams – 35%

There will be 2 exams – a midterm and final. Midterm will attract 150 points (15 per cent of the total available) and would focus on all materials covered before the exam. On the other hand, final will contribute 200 points or 20 percent of the class total and would cover all topics examined in the course. Questions in both exams will be diverse and may include multiple choice, true or false, fill-in-the-blank, and short essay. Again, the weeks of midterm and final will be free of other expectations for this class.

Grading Table

Class Activity	Points Total	Percentage of Final Grade
Quizzes (10 x 20)	200	20%
Discussion/Responses (10 x 20)	200	20%
Hot Topic Presentation (1 x 100)	100	10%
Public Agency Executive Interview Project (1 x 150)	150	15%
Mid-term (1 x 150)	150	15%
Final (1 x 200)	200	20%
Total Points	1,000	100%

GRADING SCALE:

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = 59 and below

Table of Weekly Activities

Based on the nature of course delivery, content of class weekly activities will be published on a rolling basis.

Week	Topic/Readings	Assignment Due*
Week 1	Introduction	Self-introduction, Syllabus Quiz, Discussion 1
Week 2	American Federalism II	Quiz 1, Discussion 2
Week 3	American Federalism II	Quiz 2, Discussion 3
Week 4	Federalism or IGR	Quiz 3, Discussion 4
Week 5	Moral Hazard and IGR	Quiz 4, Discussion 5
Week 6	Policy Conflict and Regulation I	Hot Button Issue Presentation
Week 7	Policy Conflict and Regulation II (in Tribal Lands)	Quiz 5, Midterm Exam Review
Week 8	Midterm	Midterm
Week 9	Federal-State Relations: Fiscal Federalism I	Quiz 6, Discussion 6
Week 10	Federal-State Relations: Fiscal Federalism II	Quiz 7, Discussion 7
Week 11	International Organizations: WTO, UN, and NATO	Quiz 8 Discussion 8
Week 12	Homeland Security	Quiz 9, Discussion 9
Week 13	Mexican Intergovernmental Relations	Quiz 10, Discussion 10
Week 14	British and French Intergovernmental Relations	Public Agency Executive Interview Project
Week 15	Russian Federalism	Final Exam Review
Week 16	Final	Final

**All submissions are due by 11:59PM on Wednesday of any week there are assignments. Although late policy is stated on the syllabus, point deduction would normally not be implemented unless for submissions made after 11:59PM on Friday of same week.*

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE:

GRADING AND STUDENT IMPROVEMENT

Grades are based on mastery of the content and a rubric is provided on Canvas to guide you if in doubt. As a rule, I rarely grade on a “curve” because that is a comparison of your outcomes to others. I do, however, encourage you to find opportunities to learn with and through others. Explore [Navigate’s Study Buddy](https://navigate.unt.edu) (<https://navigate.unt.edu>) tool to join study groups. Maximize your learning with our coaching staff at the Learning Center. Focus on areas where you are struggling in this course by attending scheduled study group sessions with me the week before each exam. Forward together!

Note that students who use other people’s work without citations will be violating UNT’s Academic Integrity Policy. Please read and follow this important set of [guidelines for your academic success](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>). If you have questions about this, or any UNT policy, please email me or come discuss this with me during my office hours.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Research has shown that students who attend class are more likely to be successful. In this case you attend class by showing up online, engaging with your peers and instructor as required, reading module pages/materials and completing all weekly activities, quizzes, discussion posts/replies, take your exams and other submissions as at when due. You are expected weekly online for your course tasks unless you have a university excused absence such as active military service, a religious holy day, or an official university function as stated in the [Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy \(PDF\)](https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.039_StudAttnandAuthAbsence.Pub2_.19.pdf) (https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.039_StudAttnandAuthAbsence.Pub2_.19.pdf). However, I understand tardiness and absences may occur, and I have great respect for students who are balancing the demands of their coursework with the responsibilities of caring for family members. If you run into challenges that require you to miss a class, please contact me or my TA in advance. There may be some flexibility we can offer to support your academic success but please remember to be kind to your group members.

Students are expected to timely attend to all class activities and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to meet weekly class expectations because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in your community. If you are experiencing any [symptoms of COVID](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires

you to contact the UNT COVID Team at COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure.

INCOMPLETES, LATE HOMEWORK, AND EXTRA WORK

In most cases, students would not be allowed to do extra work (i.e., an additional paper) to improve their grade in the course. This is not fair to other students who are not given the same opportunity. Late homework will be penalized unless the student has a legitimate excuse or crisis causing the delay in completing work (i.e., illness, family death etc.). Also, I will only grant incompletes or extension to students who have legitimate excuses or crises and who make requests prior to the end of the course.

You will lose 5% of your total score in an assessment if you submit within 24 hours after the deadline. You will lose 10% of your total score if you submit beyond 48 hours after the deadline. Your assignment will not be accepted beyond 7 days of the deadline with no legitimate reasons or no communications with the instructor. Please email the instructor BEFORE the deadline to request any accommodation to waive the late policy.

POLICY ON DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](http://www.unt.edu/oda) website (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

ENCOURAGING COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

Connect with me through email and/or via Canvas messaging. Please note that during busy times, my inbox becomes rather full, so if you contact me and do not receive a response within two business days, please send a follow up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated. Alternatively, office hours offer you an opportunity to ask for clarification or find support with understanding class material. Come visit me! I encourage you to connect with me and/or my TA for support. Additional office hours, in person and virtually, will be offered as the semester concludes. Your success is our goal.

SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. All discussions should be respectful and civil in line with [Code of Student Conduct](#). Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together.

In particular, the Department of Public Administration believes in the fundamental principles of life, liberty, equality, equity, and in doing good to all people as we serve our students and the public interest.

- *We believe in the importance of diversity and inclusion*
- *We believe in fairness and equity for all faculty and students in and out of class*
- *We believe in mutual respect and civility for all students and faculty*
- *We believe that faculty and students have a right to a redress of grievances*
- *We believe that students and faculty should be actively engaged in good works.*



open evaluation time.

STUDENT EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. Student feedback is very important to UNT, and students will be reminded of the opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught when the survey becomes available. Please complete your SPOT (Student Perceptions of Teaching) survey during the