

USG4640: Achieving Success in Public Governance

Period 1, 2018-2019

Introduction

Societies cannot survive and thrive if they are not governed well. Solving complex and shared societal challenges – e.g. climate change, anti-smoking and health initiatives, refugee resettlement, etc. – requires effective management and coordination. Achieving this in the current era of connectivity, transparency, accountability and assertive, skeptical and empowered citizens deeply challenges government institutions.

In both popular and academic discourse, a focus has been on the frailty and fallibility of government institutions. We excel in explaining how policies fail, organizations decline or waste resources, and collaborations fall short.

Taking a different perspective, in this course, we seek an understanding of the practices which contribute to good governance. In doing so, we aim to empower students as future public leaders with the analytical skills to assess success and the practical skills to communicate the results of their analyses to both academic and applied audiences, in a range of policy domains.

In the first six weeks of this course, in a seminar format with guest speakers and with intensive small-group discussions, we examine the theoretical and practical concepts of success in public policies, public agencies, collaborations, and in local government. Each week, you will work in groups to write and present blog posts (to be published on the Successful Public Governance research program website). These memo-style blog entries will begin as syntheses of canonical works, and advance through the term towards highlighting theoretical controversies and empirical applications, with the goal of developing innovative arguments and insights into the literature(s) on governance success. This format prepares you for positions of leadership in a range of disciplines by requiring not only thorough theoretical fluency and application familiarity, but also the ability to accessibly contextualize and communicate analytical results to academic and practitioner audiences.

Successful completion of this course is equivalent to 7.5 ECTS.

Course goals

After completing this course, the student will:

- understand defining and assessing success in public governance, in its conceptual, normative and methodological complexities;
- have a working knowledge of the most important theoretical perspectives on success in public organizations, policy, and collaborations;
- be able to analytically evaluate cases of governance success and communicate findings to both academic and practitioner audiences.

Instructor

Dr. Mallory Compton, m.e.compton@uu.nl, office 0.11

Literature

All assigned course readings will be provided to the students through the course BlackBoard page. Students are expected to read all assignments prior to class meetings and arrive at class prepared to discuss the assigned readings.

Meeting Times

All classes for this course are between 10 September 2018 and 7 November 2018. All meetings will be in the UUSG/USBO building (Bijlhouwerstraat 6) in **USBO room 2.20** and will take place weekly on **Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 to 10:45.**

Any changes to the schedule will be announced through the course BlackBoard page and by email.

Meeting Format

Meetings will take a seminar form, with scheduled guest speakers, intensive interactive discussions of the literature, interpretive theoretical group assignments, and student presentations.

The majority of in-class time will be in seminar form. **In order to foster collegial dialogue in these sessions, students should arrive in class prepared to discuss the reading material and students are asked to refrain from using computers, tablets, or other electronic devices during seminars.**

Assessment

Achievement in this course is assessed in three ways, together amounting to a grade between 1 and 10. Every student is required to complete an **advisory paper**, to participate in group activities including the writing and presenting of **blog entries**, and finally, to participate in the **capstone simulation exercise**, including submission of a reflective de-briefing paper.

Passing grades are those between 5.5 and 10, grades between 5.0 and 5.5 can be compensated by higher grades in other elements of the same course. Lower grades can be re-examined (when the average grade for the entire course is 4.0 or above), as can grades between 5.0 and 5.5 when the average grade for the course is below 5.5. The education and examination regulations for the Bachelor of the Utrecht University School of Governance apply to this course.

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are to be submitted through the appropriate link on the course BlackBoard webpage.

Blog Entries: 30%

Students will collaborate in groups of 2 or 3 to write blog entries in weeks 2 through 8 of this course; please refer to the below schedule for more details. These blog entries should relate to the assigned readings in the relevant week and should either highlight important academic debates or connect literature to a relevant current event or political issue. After revision, each entry will be posted to the Successful Public Governance website. Each group/student is responsible for submitting and presenting 6 blog entries in this course. All blog entries will be graded on a three-point scale (I for insufficient and a score of 0, S for sufficient and a score of 6, and G for good and a score of 9), with a final grade reflecting the average of students' 5 highest scores (students' lowest blog entry score will be dropped from the final grade calculation).

- Blog entry (400-500 words) submitted through BlackBoard by 17:00 Tuesday of assigned week
- Revised version re-submitted through BlackBoard due 17:00 Thursday of assigned week

Paper: 50%

Students will write advisory style papers, in which they will choose a specific real-world public initiative as a case study– either a policy, organization, or collaboration– and will then (1) evaluate the degree of governance success in their case and (2) analyze what can be learned or generalized from the case. Students are encouraged to select cases from any country or policy area.

In writing their papers, it is important the students demonstrate their understanding of the literature from this course and their ability to make connections between the course material and a real-world case. Grading of these papers will be based on four elements:

- (1) how well the student translated course literature to a practical application
- (2) the extent to which the student has presented their work in the form of an advisory report
- (3) the clarity of the argument
- (4) the extent to which the argument is supported

Students should always use and appropriately cite course readings in any assignment, and as a rule of thumb, students are advised to use a minimum of 8 additional reputable sources in their papers. If students have any questions about proper citation of references in academic work, please refer to the guidelines posted on the course BlackBoard page or feel free to ask the instructor.

Paper proposals will be due on 7 October and should be one half to one page in length. In order for students to receive effective and constructive feedback, paper proposals must include: (1) a brief description of the selected case, (2) an initial evaluation of the degree of success in the public initiative, and (3) an initial idea of which parts of the course the student intends to use in drawing lessons from the case. Students will receive written feedback from their peers and from the instructor on their paper proposals. The instructor will also issue a go/no-go decision based on the final proposal submitted on 12 October. Papers will not receive a passing grade if students have not obtained a 'go' decision by the instructor before submitting their drafts. Students will receive additional feedback in their one-on-one meetings based on their complete drafts, which are due 7 November. A schedule for the one-on-one meetings will be made during class meetings, it is therefore critical that students be present to include themselves on the schedule.

Specifics about the paper:

- Final paper of 4,000-5,000 words (including all references, tables, footnotes, etc.)
- A consistent and standard reference style must be used
- The paper must be both analytical and advisory
- Literature from the course must be used, as well as material from outside the course reading list

Deadlines:

- 8 October, 17:00: First draft proposals due
- 10 October, 17:00: Peer-review review due
- 12 October, 17:00: Revised paper proposal due
- 5 November, Midnight: Paper draft due
- 7 November: One-on-one draft meetings
- 9 November, 17:00: Final paper due, to be handed in both through Eporus (you will find a link on the BlackBoard page and use the code **2018-USG4640-paper**) and via hard copy delivered to the instructor's pigeon hole at the Front Office of the USG building.

Capstone ‘Success Cockpit’ Exercise: 20%

In small groups, students will apply scholarly knowledge gained in this course to a real-world governance case. The goal of the exercise is to synthesize course material to evaluate and advise in a simulated workplace environment, with specific time constraints and concluding in a presentation of a final product.

- 60% of students’ capstone grade will be determined by their active participation in the simulation activity on 31 October
- 40% of the capstone grade will be determined by individually authored debriefing documents, addressing reflective questions about their experience with the exercise, to be submitted through Ephorus (you will find a link on the BlackBoard page, and use the code **2018-USG4640-simulation**), due Friday 2 November by 17:00

As you can understand, it would be impossible to evaluate a student’s performance on this capstone exercise if they are not present to participate on the day of the simulation. It is therefore crucial that students make appropriate accommodations well in advance to ensure they can be present in class on 31 October, and a failure to attend may result in a score of zero for this component of the course grade.

Attendance

Because interacting with and about the literature is a vital part of this course, there is an 80% attendance requirement. Students not satisfying this requirement must repair their deficiency by completing additional assignments as determined by the course instructor.

Re-sits

In the event that a student attempted all of the course requirements and failed to achieve a passing grade, re-sits for the course requirements will be scheduled in December 2018. It is the students’ responsibility to coordinate with the instructor to arrange any exam re-sits or assignment re-evaluations.

Additional Information

Professionalization and labour market orientation

To contribute to students’ preparation for a global labor market, this course:

- includes multinational guest lectures by scholars with diverse professional backgrounds
- draws on globally diverse and multi-cultural examples
- will organize an on-site visit with professionals involved in public governance
- includes a simulation exercise to engage students in workplace-like dynamics
- is designed to develop a range of social and professional skills including, but not limited to, team-working, communication, professional writing, and presentation.

Language

This course is taught in English, all communication concerning this course is in English. The paper, coursework, capstone debriefs, and blog entries must be written in understandable English. Naturally, as your instructor, I cannot evaluate work that I don’t understand. The quality of written English is (be it to a much lesser degree than is content) one of the elements evaluated in all written assignments but is certainly not the only factor.

Please use only English when you are in the classroom (also before and after classes) and when you leave the room during breaks. It need not be perfect English, as only very few of us will be native speakers and at times we will need to help each other out, but nothing is more excluding and isolating than speaking in a language that we do not all share.

Prerequisite

Please note that for non-USG bachelor students the course Introduction public administration and organizational science (USG5520/USG5020) or another introductory course covering the subject of public administration is recommended.

Electronic learning environment

This course uses BlackBoard to share documents and for handing in assignments (not for the paper or capstone de-briefing). When you are properly enrolled in this class, you will have access (from February 5 at the latest) to the learning environment for this course by using your solis-id and password at <http://www.uu.nl/blackboard>.

Approaching the instructor and asking questions

There are substantial differences in academic culture between academic institutions and certainly between countries. This means that it is quite natural that you do not know how things work (from what is expected of you in an exam, to how you can approach teachers with questions or problems, and everything in between). I have tried to answer some of these questions in this syllabus, and I will continue to discuss elements that I know to differ in many of the meetings. Nevertheless, feel free to ask any question during meetings, the breaks in meetings, after meetings, when you meet me in the hallways or by e-mail. This is nothing strange and I am used to students asking a lot of questions.

Part of the academic culture at the Utrecht University School of Governance is that we emphasize student involvement during meetings. We highly value questions about what we discuss, but we ask you a lot of questions and we allow plenty of room for debate. I am convinced that you will learn more if you use these opportunities, and you should feel welcome to discuss any concerns you may have with me.

Feedback

In addition to being invited to speak with the instructor at any appropriate time, students will have several opportunities for structured feedback throughout this course. Every week, feedback on blog entries will be given and opportunities for revision will be provided. Students will also receive feedback from peers and the instructor at two critical stages of their individual paper projects.

Academic Honesty

Students are responsible for their own work. Plagiarism is not acceptable in any shape or form. If any of the university's policies with regard to academic integrity are unclear, students should consult with their instructor, sooner rather than later. All coursework will be submitted through a link on the BlackBoard page which employs software designed to detect plagiarism. Any coursework deemed by the instructor to be substantially plagiarized will not receive a passing score.

Schedule of Topics and Meetings

Please note that all assigned weekly readings will be made available on the course BlackBoard page, and it will be students' responsibility to locate and read all assignments prior to class meetings.

Week 1: Introduction

In this week, we will tackle some fundamental questions about achieving successful public governance. What is governance? What is success? How can it be recognized? The first day of class will be interactive and no reading assignments are required in advance. We will discuss cases and concrete examples. In the second class meeting, we will begin working with theoretical concepts and engaging with academic debates on the meanings, boundaries, and components of 'public governance.'

- **Monday 10 Sep:** Introduction – 'picturing' governance success
 - No reading assignment
- **Wednesday 12 Sep:** What is governance? (How) is governance different from government or public administration?
 - Fukuyama, Francis. 2016. 'Governance: What Do We Know, and How Do We Know it?' *Annual Review of Political Science*. 19:89-105

Week 2: Dimensions of Governance Success

In the second week of this course, we will begin to unpack the meaning of 'success' in public governance. Many theoretical dimensions or perspectives are relevant, including accountability, legitimacy, reputation, and effectiveness. These concepts will be repeated throughout the course as we study governance forms in greater depth. Your first blog post will be due in this week, with a first draft due 18 September and a final draft due on 19 September. We will therefore spend a substantial portion of class time on Monday discussing expectations for your blog posts.

- **Monday 17 Sep and Wednesday 19 Sep:**
 - Center for Public Impact, (2017). *Extending the smoking ban in the Netherlands: the 2008 amendment to the Tobacco Act*. Available at: <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/case-study/smoking-ban-netherlands-2008-amendment-tobacco-act/> 18 September, 2017
 - Carpenter, D. P. and Krause, G. A. (2012) 'Reputation and Public Administration', *Public Administration Review*. Wiley Online Library, 72(1), pp. 26–32.
 - Fahy, Lauren (2018) *An Introduction to Accountability*. **Available on BlackBoard**

Week 3: Collaborations

Collaborations are one of the three forms of public initiatives we examine in this course. Our first guest lecturer will join us on 24 September as we define and conceptualize 'collaborations' in public governance.

- **Monday 24 Sep and Wednesday 26 Sep:** Guest lecturer Scott Douglas (Monday only)
 - **Readings to be announced and made available on BlackBoard**

Week 4: Comparative Perspective

How is evaluation of 'success' different or similar across levels of government and national or institutional contexts? Taking a comparative perspective is essential for substantive inferences on success in governance. On Monday of week 4, we will discuss the contexts (institutional or

social) which might affect the meaning and mechanisms of success. On Wednesday of this week, we will begin work on student's individual advisory papers. Much of the class period will be dedicated to discussing the requirements for this assignment, and some time will be dedicated to brainstorming for students to kick-start their individual projects.

- **Monday 1 Oct:**
 - Center for Public Impact (2018) *Fighting Corruption in Botswana, CPI Public Impact Observatory*. Available at: <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/case-study/fighting-corruption-botswana/> (Accessed: 13 March 2018).
 - Christensen, Julian et al. 2018. "How Do Elected Officials Evaluate Performance? Goal Preferences, Governance Preferences, and the Process of Goal Reprioritization." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* (August): 197–211.
 - Pollitt, C. and Bouckaert, G. (2011) 'Many houses: types of politico-administrative regime', in *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis - New Public Management, Governance, and the Neo-Weberian State*. 3rd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 47–74
- **Wednesday 3 Oct:** In class discussion about writing an advisory paper
 - McCloskey, Deirdre. 1999. "Economic Writing: An Executive Summary." *Eastern Economic Journal* 25(2): 239–42.

Week 5: Paper Preparation & Leadership

On Monday, dr. Paul 't Hart will join our class to discuss successful public governance from yet another exciting angle. We will not meet as a class on Wednesday of this week, as students will have an individual writing day and opportunity to complete their peer-review exercise. This time should be used to complete and polish their individual paper proposals, which will be due by end of week.

- **Monday 8 Oct:** Guest lecturer Paul 't Hart
 - **Readings to be announced and made available on BlackBoard**
 - * **Paper Proposal due through BlackBoard by 17:00**
- **Wednesday 10 Oct:** Writing & Peer Review Day, *No class meeting*
 - * **Peer-Review exercise due through BlackBoard by 17:00**
- **Friday 12 Oct:**
 - * **Revised paper proposals due through BlackBoard by 17:00**

Week 6: Public Organizations

Tackling the second form of public initiative, in week 6 we will be joined by Lauren Fahy, a guest lecturer and expert on public organizations. Monday will begin with an in-depth discussion of a public organization case-study and Wednesday will be oriented towards a more theoretical discussion on success in organizations.

- **Monday 15 Oct and Wednesday 17 Oct:** Guest lecturer Lauren Fahy
 - **Readings to be announced and made available on BlackBoard**

Week 7: Public Policy

The third and final form of public initiative considered in this course are public policies. In week 7, guest lecturer and public policy expert Johanna Luetjens will join our class. Again, we will begin the week with a substantive case-study and end the week with a more theoretical discussion on success in public policy.

- **Monday 22 Oct and Wednesday 24 Oct:** Guest Lecturer Johanna Luetjens
 - ****Readings to be announced and made available on BlackBoard****

Week 8: Capstone Week

The purpose of the success cockpit simulation exercise is to apply what students have learned throughout the term to a real-world problem under time and resource constraints. The challenge will be for students to effectively work together in teams to respond to information with constructive solutions, in real-time. Monday will be devoted to preparation and background material, and class time on Wednesday of this week will be devoted to the simulation exercise. Students' participation is essential.

- **Monday 29 Oct:** Preparation for simulation exercise
 - Boin, A. et al. (2016) 'Managing Crises: Five Strategic Leadership Tasks', in Boin, A. et al. (eds) *The Politics of Crisis Management: Public Leadership under Pressure*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3–22.
 - Tindall, K. and 't Hart, P. (2011) 'Evaluating government performance during consular emergencies: Toward an analytical framework', *Policy and Society*. Policy and Society Associates Ltd Partnership, 30(2), pp. 137–149.
- **Wednesday 31 Oct:** Simulation Exercise
- **Friday 2 Nov:**
 - * **Simulation debrief due through BlackBoard by 17:00**

Week 9: Final Papers

All remaining time in this course will be devoted to students' individual papers. On Monday, students will have an opportunity to workshop their papers in class to get feedback and perspective from their peers. On Wednesday, students will meet one-on-one with the instructor before submitting their final drafts on Friday evening.

- **Monday 5 Nov:** In-class writing café
 - * **Paper drafts due by Midnight**
- **Wednesday 7 Nov:** One-on-one paper meetings, No class meeting
- **Friday 9 Nov:** No class meeting
 - * **Paper drafts due through EPhorus by Midnight (code: 2018-USG4640-paper)**