



SCHAR SCHOOL OF POLICY AND GOVERNMENT

George Mason University®

Public Technology Management (PUAD 680)

(AI & Emerging Tech and the Impact on Public Administration)

Preliminary

Fall 2025

Wednesday: 7:20 PM to 10:00 PM

David King Jr. Hall 2053

Email: ashark@gmu.edu

Course Overview

This class has been designed to be highly interactive. Each week, each student is expected (unless otherwise instructed) to submit an article that is relevant to the week's topic. You will earn up to 5% of your grade each week as a combination of presenting, posting, and class participation.

This course will be hosted by Canvas; please ensure you are familiar with accessing and navigating this learning management system.

Course Management Instructions

1. Read the Course syllabus that lists topics and assigned readings each week.
2. Post an article that focuses on the week's topic via "Assignments" in Canvas.
3. Students missing a class will have a way to make up for the absence.
4. Let's make it interesting and fun! I will certainly do my part – but seriously we will be covering some very contemporary issues that face us all.

Course Overview

This course explores the implications and principles of information management technologies for public and nonprofit managers, including the role of eGovernment, citizen engagement through Web 2.0 and social media, digital service delivery, open and big data, cyber security awareness, augmented decision-making through artificial intelligence, the

exploration of how policy and technology intersect, and how technology can be best managed through various governance models.

This course is designed for the “non-techie” who will surely be called upon to manage or oversee some form of technology application – either directly or indirectly through policy or management.

The course is taught in a seminar/lecture setting with reliance on classroom interaction and assignments. It provides students with the opportunity to build a sense of greater awareness and confidence in what public managers face in everyday challenges regarding information technology and its related policies.

The course will explore all the latest trends in public management technology and the potential impact for managers and citizens. Students will also gain a better perspective as to how technology is managed through various governance models. Finally, through the course there will be discussions and real-life examples about the need for policies and procedures to safeguard our technology infrastructure while providing greater openness, participation, and transparency.

Upon completion, students should better appreciate how the use of technology applications, "electronic/digital government" and other web-based technologies can transform government and be able to help governments develop and manage programs and services that are more responsive and effective.

Course Objectives

1. Understand how information system design relates to democratic theory.
2. Understand the skills and tools that are useful in information management, information technology, and systems dedicated for the effective flow of information within organizations.
3. Develop an understanding of the role of e-government and e-governance, digital government, and social media in today's society and in public organizations.
4. Develop an understanding of the possibilities and challenges of technology applications within public organizations.
5. Understand how technology can be managed through various governance models.
6. Appreciate emerging technologies that will impact government.
7. Appreciate the role of public policy and technology.

Instructor Information

Dr. Alan R. Shark, D.P.A

Office address: Van Meter Hall 468, Arlington Campus

Email address: ashark@gmu.edu or ashark@pti.org

Internet address: [Schar School of Policy and Government](#), and /or [Public Technology Institute](#)

Office phone: 202-626-2445

Office mailbox: Office hours: by appointment via phone or video conference.

Education:

Dr. Shark holds a doctorate in Public Administration (D.P.A.) from the University of Southern California, an MPA from Baruch College, and a BBA Degree in Business and Public Administration from Baruch College, as well as an AAS Degree in Business Administration with Honors from Staten Island Community College.

Professional work:

The course is taught by Dr. Alan Shark, an associate professor at the Schar School of Policy and Government at GMU, and, for 20 years, served as the Executive Director of the Public Technology Institute. Dr. Shark is a Fellow of the National Academy for Public Administration (NAPA) and is a Co-Chair of NAPA's Standing Panel on Technology Leadership. He serves on the Executive Committee of ASPA's Science & Technology Section. For most of his distinguished career, Dr. Shark has been an author and speaker on technology developments and applications. His experience balances and embraces the business, government, education, and technology sectors. Dr. Shark is well-published, and his many works can be found on [Amazon](#) by searching for his name.

Awards & Recognition:

Dr. Shark is a *Fellow* of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), as well as a *Fellow of the Radio Club of America (RCA)* and a *Fellow* of the American Society for Association Executives (ASAE). He received the 2012 Technology Champion Award from the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO).

Contacting me:

The best way to reach me is to email me, or we can arrange to speak on the phone, via Zoom, or meet on campus. I check my email regularly throughout the workday.

Readings

Two books will be used in the course. Other selected readings will be posted electronically on Canvas or distributed in class.

- ***Technology and Public Management.*** Second edition, Alan R. Shark, Published by Routledge, 2023.
- ***Artificial Intelligence*** – A Primer for State and Local Governments, published by the Public Technology Institute, 2024

Assignments

1. One Page Student BIO and Picture (5% of grade) Please submit a 1 to 3-page bio summary including a picture inserted in the same document – preferably a headshot.

Please state where you have come from, where you are, and where you hope to be in your career journey. Also, include what you wish to get from the class and your degree objectives. What are your professional aspirations? Also, include your e-mail address and a non-GMU Email address if you wish so that I have an alternative way of reaching you (this is voluntary).

2. Mini Topical Research Paper (10% of grade)

A mini research topical paper is a way to explore a particular topic of interest further on your own. You are free to choose a topic that relates to technology for the public good, considering policy and government. Please list a few references unless coupled to a particular book. Your paper should include a summary of the topic (research question, method, findings, and conclusions) or a chapter (major arguments made in the chapter). Your paper should be 3 to 5 pages long (not counting a cover sheet) and use APA style for quotes, etc.

3. Weekly Assignments/Postings/Class Participation (65% of grade)

Participation is very important in this class, and I will be tracking how each student participates and interacts among the class and myself. Each week at the beginning of each class, you will be asked to scan the journals, newspapers, tech publications and report (orally) what caught your eye, why, and the significance to the topics covered.

The course meets only once a week, so attendance is also critical to the overall grade. If you are unable to attend one class, please check with me (via e-mail) for any changes to the syllabus or announcements that you may have missed during class. I will provide opportunities upon request to make up a missed class. **However, A student missing three or more classes will receive a full letter grade lower.**

You participate by asking a question, responding to a question, or making a comment or observation. Therefore, it is critical to prepare for class by reading the assigned chapters or articles in advance and familiarizing yourself with their main points.

4. Final Paper (15% of grade) A paper will be due at the semester's end focusing on an aspect of technology for the public good and government. You might consider technology applications (or plans) in a governmental department, office, or nonprofit organization. This paper should be between 10 and 12 pages (not counting a cover sheet), and the topic will be of your choosing. Your paper can either be a literature review or a small research study. I will review general requirements in class.

Course Requirements

In general, all assignments (unless otherwise stated) must be:

1. Submitted in Word format, **no PDFs.**
2. Your name should appear as part of the filename.
3. Each assignment must have a cover page with your name, date, and the assignment.
4. All assignments must be submitted through Canvas – not through email attachments.

Grading Criteria

All written assignments shall be evaluated based on content, organization, difficulty of topic, and format. Content means, did you fully complete all required parts of the assignment? Format refers to the proper page length, inclusion of cover page, overall organization of assignment, use of proper citation format (APA) and inclusion of reference list.

Overall, I will use the following to assign grades to your assignments:

There is a total of 100 possible points with the following scales:

A+	Above 98 (Reserved for exceptional scholarship)
A	94 to 97
A-	91 to 93
B+	87 to 90
B	84 to 86
B-	80 to 83
C+	77 to 79
C	74 to 76
C-	70 – 73
F	Below 70 points

Note: No “Incomplete Grade” will be offered for any student who has not completed at least 85% of the coursework. A student missing three or more classes will receive a lower full-letter grade.

Most importantly, the professor reserves the right to deviate from any cumulative assignment postings as tallied on Blackboard and use other criteria in determining your final grade.

Note: No “Incomplete Grade” will be offered to students who have not completed at least 85% of course work.

Student Learning Outcomes (General)

- To participate in and contribute to the public policy process.
- To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions.
- To articulate and apply a public service perspective.
- To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenship.

- To better understand public technology as a set of tools that can be used for the public good.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity AI, other)

AI can be very helpful, the course policy on using ChatGPT or any other generative AI application, is you may use them to get started with a new topic, to get your thinking & writing off and running, or to clean up something you are struggling with that an “extra” pair of eyes might help you with.

If you use generative AI, however, you must flag the text that the program generated by highlighting it, and you are required to provide a statement of how you used it to write and edit your paper. I reserve the right to inquire further if it seems to me that flagging is inconsistent or not utilized.

Please keep in mind the following four principles:

- AI should help you think. Not think for you.
- Engage with AI responsibly and ethically.
- You are 100% responsible for your final product!
- The use of AI must be open and documented.

Assignment	Percent of Grade	Date
Assignment 1: (Bio & Picture)	5% of Grade	August 24
Weekly Assignment (5% each week)	65% of Grade	Weekly
Assignment 2: Mini-Research Paper	10% of Grade	October 8
Assignment 3: Final paper	20 % of Grade	December 12

Course Policies

Canvas:

First, in order to have access to Canvas and all of the course materials, you must be officially registered with Rutgers for this course. Once you have registered, it takes between 24 and 48 hours for you to have access to Canvas. Grades will also be available through Canvas for each assignment. All readings such as articles that are outside of the two required textbooks are available through Canvas and are organized by week.

Class Ground Rules

- Turn off all cell phones and other electronic equipment before entering the classroom. If you must take/make a call, please leave the classroom before doing so.!

- Please try to eat before class or during the break although drinks in class are okay.
- All questions, perspectives and opinions are important and valuable, you are encouraged to share and discuss.
- You are responsible for learning how to use Canvas to participate in the class (find readings, check grades, upload assignments etc.). There is an online tutorial or workshops available.
- All assignments must be uploaded through the Assignments folder in Canvas according to specifications.

Syllabus Content and Schedule Changes

The syllabus schedule and content may change at the discretion of the instructor. Such changes will be clearly announced in class and posted to Canvas.

Important Notice:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

*Statement on academic integrity, for example:

Faculty in the Schar School have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty and will strictly enforce Mason's honor code.

- Statement on University Health Policy Regarding COVID

Students are required to follow [Mason's current policy about facemask-wearing](#). As of August 11, 2021, all community members are required to wear a facemask in all indoor settings, including classrooms. An appropriate facemask must cover your nose and mouth at all times in our classroom. If this policy changes, you will be informed; however, students who prefer to wear masks will always be welcome in the classroom.

- Statement on services for people with disabilities

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit the [Disability Services website](#) for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

- Statement on diversity and inclusion

The Schar MPA program is committed to create a learning environment that reflects the growing diversity of the modern workplace and of the communities that are being served by public service organizations. We welcome, value and foster respect for all individuals and their differences, including race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, sex, sexuality,

gender expression and identity, national origin, first language, religion, ideology, age and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own.

Academic Standards

Academic Standards exist to promote authentic scholarship, support the institution's goal of maintaining high standards of academic excellence, and encourage continued ethical behavior of faculty and students to cultivate an educational community which values integrity and produces graduates who carry this commitment forward into professional practice.

As members of the George Mason University community, we are committed to fostering an environment of trust, respect, and scholarly excellence. Our academic standards are the foundation of this commitment, guiding our behavior and interactions within this academic community. The practices for implementing these standards adapt to modern practices, disciplinary contexts, and technological advancements. Our standards are embodied in our courses, policies, and scholarship, and are upheld in the following principles:

- **Honesty:** Providing accurate information in all academic endeavors, including communications, assignments, and examinations.
- **Acknowledgement:** Giving proper credit for all contributions to one's work. This involves the use of accurate citations and references for any ideas, words, or materials created by others in the style appropriate to the discipline. It also includes acknowledging shared authorship in group projects, coauthored pieces, and project reports.
- **Uniqueness of Work:** Ensuring that all submitted work is the result of one's own effort and is original, including free from self-plagiarism. This principle extends to written assignments, code, presentations, exams, and all other forms of academic work.

Violations of these standards—including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication, and cheating—are taken seriously and will be addressed in accordance with university policies. [The process for reporting, investigating, and adjudicating violations is outlined in the university's procedures here.](#) Consequences of violations may include academic sanctions, disciplinary actions, and other measures necessary to uphold the integrity of our academic community.

The principles outlined in these academic standards reflect our collective commitment to upholding the highest standards of honesty, acknowledgement, and uniqueness of work. By adhering to these principles, we ensure the continued excellence and integrity of George Mason University's academic community.

Student responsibility:

Students are responsible for understanding how these general expectations regarding academic standards apply to each course, assignment, or exam they participate in; students should ask their instructor for clarification on any aspect that is not clear to them.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Under the administration of University Life, Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. Students can begin the registration process with Disability Services at any time during their enrollment at George Mason University. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit the [Disability Services website](#) for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu. Phone: (703) 993-2474

Student responsibility:

Students are responsible for registering with Disability Services and communicating about their approved accommodations with their instructor in advance of any relevant class meeting, assignment, or exam.

FERPA and Use of GMU Email Addresses for Course Communication

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) governs the disclosure of education records for eligible students and is an essential aspect of any course. **Students must use their GMU email account** to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. Instructors will not respond to messages sent from or send messages regarding course content to a non-GMU email address.

Student responsibility:

Students are responsible for checking their GMU email regularly for course-related information, and/or ensuring that GMU email messages are forwarded to an account they do check.

Title IX Resources and Required Reporting

As a part of George Mason University's commitment to providing a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment for all members of the University community, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities. Accordingly, **all non-confidential employees, including your faculty member, have a legal requirement to report to the Title IX Coordinator, all relevant details obtained directly or indirectly about any incident of Prohibited Conduct** (such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based stalking, dating/domestic violence). Upon notifying the Title IX Coordinator of possible Prohibited Conduct, the Title IX Coordinator will assess the report and determine if outreach is required. If outreach is required, the individual the report is about (the "Complainant") will receive a communication, likely in the form of an email, offering that person the option to meet with a representative of the Title IX office.

For more information about non-confidential employees, resources, and Prohibited Conduct, please see University Policy 1202: [Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct and Other Forms of Interpersonal Violence](#). Questions regarding Title IX can be directed to the Title IX Coordinator via email to TitleIX@gmu.edu, by phone at 703-993-8730, or in person on the Fairfax campus in Aquia 373.

Student opportunity:

If you prefer to speak to someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential employees in [Student Support & Advocacy \(SSAC\)](#), Counseling and [Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#), [Student Health Services \(SHS\)](#), and/or the [Office of the University Ombudsperson](#).