

*The Foundations of Public Administration Series* is a collection of articles written by experts in 20 content areas, providing introductory essays and recommending top articles in those subjects.

### **Syllabus for Intergovernmental Relations**

#### **Course Overview: General Focus**

All nations, at any point in time and regardless of size, history, or culture, confront a basic question. How are the competing claims of the center (or capital) and periphery (regions or locales) resolved in selecting the form(s) of governance? In the United States this issue has regularly been framed in legal/constitutional terms and the primary and historic concept for center-periphery relationships is commonly called federalism (FED).

The 20th Century stretched and reshaped American FED in a variety of ways. The alterations were sufficiently significant that two new concepts emerged as features of changing center-periphery relationships. The first concept, Intergovernmental Relations (IGR), originated in the 1930s and introduced a major shift in the framework and avenues for analysis of center-periphery linkages. Fiscal, regulatory, and policy implementation issues became prominent agenda concerns in addition to state-local and inter-local relations. By the 1970s domestic policies produced further nuances and dynamics that gave rise to another concept, Intergovernmental Management (IGM). As the term implies, the role of bureaucracy (and public administrators) assumed major importance. Likewise, the role of “third-parties,” particularly nonprofit as well as for-profit organizations, emerged as significant participants in IGM.

This course focuses on these three interconnected concepts: (a) Federalism, (b) Intergovernmental Relations, and (c) Intergovernmental Management. FED centers attention on historical, constitutional, legal, political, and power issues involving National-State relations--the creation and development of American multilevel system(s) of governance. IGR has evolved over the past seven decades to include several distinctive features, including state-local relations, inter-local relations, regionalism, and strong financial and policy concerns. The third concept, IGM, has gained currency over the past four decades. It emphasizes problem-solving strategies in the implementation of intergovernmental programs where prominent if not dominant roles are played by professional program/policy specialists and administrative generalists engaged in complex boundary-spanning activities.

The three central concepts will be described, discussed, and debated throughout the course, but greater initial emphasis will be on IGR and IGM. For those enrolling for full three hours credit the second half-semester will treat FED in greater depth as well as providing a significant focus on empirical research surrounding all three concepts.

### Course Objectives/Competencies

1. Institutional/Contextual Competencies: Understanding from whence came our multi-level system(s) of governance and how past patterns have produced present problems facing contemporary public administration (path dependency).
  - a. Knowing why we have the contemporary and complex multi-tiered set of governance arrangements in the USA.
  - b. Understanding the development and evolution of major concepts employed to describe jurisdictional complexity in the USA, more specifically the origins of FED, IGR, and IGM.
  - c. Gaining a grasp of how public administration and public administrators fit within these multiple systems of governance.
2. Diagnostic Competencies: Describing who does what, where, when, why, and how in U.S. governmental systems (functional diversity and complexity).
  - a. Identify and understand the roles, responsibilities, and relationships of the different public jurisdictions in the complex and multi-level system(s) in the United States.
  - b. Identify and understand the roles, responsibilities, and relationships of key types of actors in the various jurisdictions, including how they relate to other actors both within and beyond jurisdictional boundaries.
  - c. Identify and understand the interplay of semi-official and unofficial (non-governmental) actors in facilitating or obstructing the functioning of public sector operations, especially non-profit and for-profit actors and organizations.
3. Analytic Competencies: Assessing the past, present, and prospective performance of jurisdictions, actors, and boundary-spanning activities, including research and evaluation (performance criteria and interpreting results).
  - a. Develop the ability to judge the adequacy/inadequacy of inter-actor and inter-jurisdictional performance, and offer suggestions/proposals for change.
  - b. Develop the ability to assess and compare program dynamics and implementation efforts across different policy arenas such as environment, emergency management, economic development, welfare, etc.
  - c. Develop the ability to research current and emerging trends and challenges confronting local, state, and national governments and assessing strategies for addressing them.

### Text and Supplementary Materials

#### A. Main Text

Stephens, G. Ross and Nelson Wikstrom, American Intergovernmental Relations: A Fragmented Federal Polity, Oxford University Press, 2007.

#### B. Edited Readings (Select one)

- (1) Conlan, Timothy J. and Paul L. Posner (eds), Intergovernmental Management for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008.
- (2) O'Toole, Laurence J., Jr. (ed.), American Intergovernmental Relations: Foundations, Perspectives, and Issues (4<sup>th</sup> ed.), Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2007.

#### C. Supplementary Books (Select one for written review and oral report.)

- (1) Scheberle, Denise, Federalism and Environmental Policy: Trust and The Politics of Implementation, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Georgetown University Press, 2004. (For those with an environmental policy interest.)
- (2) Agranoff, Robert and Michael McGuire, Collaborative Public Management: New Strategies for Local Governments, Georgetown University Press, 2003. (For those with a local economic development interest.)
- (3) Birkland, Thomas A., Lessons of Disaster: Policy Change after Catastrophic Events, Georgetown University Press, 2006. (For those with an interest in emergency management.)
- (4) Winston, Pamela, Welfare Policymaking in the States: The Devil in Devolution, Georgetown University Press, 2002. (For those interested in welfare and human services.)
- (5) Manna, Paul, School's In: Federalism and the National Education Agenda, Georgetown University Press, 2006. (For those with an interest in education policy.)

### Additional Text Materials

Wootton, David (ed.), The Essential Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers, Hackett Publishing, 2003.

Pressman, Jeffrey, Federal Programs and City Politics, University of California Press, 1975.

### Course Outline Criteria

Several criteria guide the formulation of this outline of topics, readings, and assignments.

1. We list only minimum reading assignments drawn from the text (Stephens and Wikstrom) and articles, mainly from *Public Administration Review (PAR)*.
2. We resist listing clusters of potentially relevant *Public Administration Review* articles because each topic could be connected with a score or more articles from the dozens of essays in the reference list for this Foundation Series. Furthermore, each *PAR* article is tagged by one, two, or all three of the FED, IGR, IGM concepts. Each instructor is therefore provided with guidance in deciding what articles may be most appropriate to her/his purposes or emphasis in the content of the course.
3. By adopting a less detailed syllabus we leave open for instructional discretion two major types of options in approaching course topic assignments. One is a choice of which jurisdictional plane/level of government an instructor may wish to emphasize—local, state, or national. Secondly, an instructor may choose to emphasize one or more major functions to the exclusion of others, e.g., environment, emergency management, welfare, education. Here also the reference list can be helpful in two respects. First, there are few if any program or functional topics that are not addressed by articles in *PAR* across 67 volumes. Second, the reference list provides access to essays across seven decades and thus offers an opportunity to ground program/functional issues in historical context(s).
4. Another reason for a skeletal syllabus hinges on the extent to which the operating realities of IGM, IGR, and FED are brought to the class/seminar sessions from external sources. Two major avenues for importing external features are (a) guest speakers invited to share their practitioner--based boundary-spanning experiences, and (b) student reports summarizing their project papers and/or book critiques. The templates for two interview-based student project reports follow the course outline.
5. The use of in-class time requires balancing several competing claims. These involve assessing assigned readings, focusing on information gathering and sharing, developing relevant interpretations, drawing defensible inferences, interpretations, drawing defensible inferences and interpretations, discussing/debating issues, and evaluating alternative courses of action (past, present, and future). One minimal approach to course readings encourages the instructor to carefully weigh this balancing process.
6. A similar balance among competing claims revolves around the emphasis devoted to the three central concepts. This is particularly problematic for two reasons. One is the split-course feature where a module (7-8 week) class (1½ credit hours) is combined or blended with a full semester (3 credit hours) course. A related balancing feature is the composition of students, especially the diversity between MPA and Ph.D. students.

With these criteria, cautions, and complexities in mind we submit the following topics and assignments as a skeletal framework around which instructors may build more robust features.

### Course Topics, Readings, and Assignments

#### **Week 1 Introduction to IGM, IGR, and FED**

Readings:

Wright, Stenberg, and Cho. *PAR* Foundation Series (circulated in advance).

Guest Speakers: Working in the web-like world of complex cross-boundary relationships.

#### **Week 2 History, Theory, Concepts, and Institutions**

Readings:

1. Stephens and Wikstrom, *American IGR*

a. Ch. 1. “The U. S. as a Federal System”

b. Ch.2. “Concepts and Models”

2. Wright, “FED, IGR, and IGM” *PAR* 1990

3. Wright, “Understanding Intergovernmental Relations,” in *Classics of Public Administration* (Schafritz, ed., 1997)

4. Conlan, “From Cooperative to Opportunistic Federalism,” *PAR*, 2006

5. McGuire, “Intergovernmental Management: A View from the Bottom,” *PAR* 2006

#### **Week 3 Diversity, Divisiveness, and Decision making**

Readings:

1. Stephens and Wikstrom, *American IGR*, Ch. 3, “Cooperation and Conflict”

2. Wise, “Organizing for Homeland Security,” *PAR* 2006

3. Eisinger, “Imperfect Federalism,” *PAR* 2006

Assignment: Course Project/Paper

1. Selection of an administrator to be interviewed to describe and assess the nature, scope, content, and character of her/his IGM/IGR contact network.

2. Selection of an implementation issue for description and assessment—either

(a) grant program or (b) regulation or mandate.

## **Week 4 Policy Making and Implementation**

Readings:

1. Stephens and Wikstrom, *American IGR*
  - a. Ch. 5, “National Policy Process and Public Policy.”
  - b. Ch. 6, “Regulation and the Intergovernmental System.”
2. Agranoff and McGuire, “American Federalism and Four Models of Management,” *PAR* 2001
3. Selected articles (or books) on particular functions, policies, or programs (environment, economic development, education, welfare, etc.).

## **Week 5 Fiscal Federalism and IGR Finances**

Readings:

1. Stephens and Wikstrom, *American IGR*, Ch. 4, “Fiscal Federalism”
2. Sunshine, “Minimizing the Disappointment of Unsuccessful Grant Applicants,” *PAR* 1982.
3. Kloha and others, “Developing and Testing a Composite Model to Predict Local Fiscal Distress,” *PAR* 2005.
4. Selected readings on IGR finances: *PAR*, *Publius*, *J-PART*, *Public Budgeting and Finance*

## **Week 6 The American States: Middlemen and Balance Wheels**

Readings:

1. Stephens and Wikstrom, *American IGR*
  - a. Ch. 7, “The Resurgent States”
  - b. Ch. 8, “State-Local Relations”
2. Reports, Reviews, Reflections: Commentaries on interviews conducted by class members of local/state/national officials’ IGR networks.

## **Week 7 Local Governments: Foundation Stones of IGR**

Readings:

1. Stephens and Wikstrom, *American IGR*, Ch. 9, “Local Governments”
2. Reports, Reviews, and Reflections: Commentaries on analysis and assessments of implementing (a) federal aid program, or (b) regulation rule or mandate (state-local or national-state).

## **Week 8 Context of Contemporary Federalism**

Readings:

1. Kettl, “The Fourth Face of Federalism,” *PAR*, 1981.
2. Derthick, “American Federalism: Madison’s Middle Ground,” *PAR*, 1987.
3. Kettle, “The Transformation of Governance: Globalization, Devolution, and the Role of Government,” *PAR* 2000.
4. Radin, “Federalism in Global Context,” *PAR* 2007.
  5. Publius, “The State of American Federalism” (most recent annual review issue).

### **Week 9 Exploring and Explaining FED, IGR, and IGM**

#### Readings:

1. Case Study Research
  - a. Classic Case Studies (5)
  - b. Urban Politics/Policy: Pressman, Federal Program and city Politics (1975).
  - c. Human Services Delivery, Agranoff, *Intergovernmental Management* (1986).
2. Empirical Analyses: *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 14(4) October 2004 (special issue on intergovernmental relations research).
  - a. Cho and Wright, “The Devolution Revolution in IGR in the 1990’s.”
  - b. O’Toole and Meier, “Public Management Intergovernmental Networks.”
  - c. Agranoff and McGuire, “Bargaining and Negotiation in Intergovernmental Management.”
  - d. Krane, Ebdon, Bartle, “Devolution and Fiscal Federalism.”
  - e. Bowman, “Horizontal Federalism.”

### **Week 10 Federalism in the USA: Originating Context, Conceptual Meaning(s), Continuity of Content**

#### Readings:

1. Wootton, The Essential Federalist, “Introduction: Understanding the Constitution,” pp. ix-xxxiii.
2. E.M. Earle, *The Federalist* (1937), “Commentary on the Constitution.”
3. Clinton Rossiter, *The Federalist Papers* (1961), “Introduction.”
4. Stephen Schechter “New York Notes: A Guide to the Federalist,” (1987). 8 pp.

### **Week 11 Understanding Federalism in *The Federalist***

#### Readings:

Wootton, The Essential Federalist (Questions)

1. On what fundamental political premises were the Federalist papers grounded? (see 1-6, 10, 51, 63, 85).
2. What did the framers mean by “federalism”? What was their “original intent”? (12-14, 16, 39)
3. What was wrong with the Articles of Confederation? (15, 21, 22, 38).
4. What did they think about the (then) present and future role of the states? (17, 44-46).
5. What were the virtues of a large republic? (9,10).
6. What was the nature of national powers? (3, 4, 16. 30-33. 44).
7. What controversies surrounded the provisions specifying the adoption of the constitution? (38, 40, 43).

**Week 12 Courts, Complexity, and Coercion in U.S. Federalism**

Readings:

1. Stephens and Wilstrom, Ch. 6, American IGR, “Regulation.”
2. Federal Courts and Public Administrators.
  - a. O’Brien, “Federalism as a Metaphor in the Constitutional Politics of Public Administration,” *PAR*, 1989.
  - b. O’Leary and Wise, “Public Managers, Judges, and Legislators: Redefining the New Partnership,” *PAR*, 1991.
  - c. Wise and O’Leary, “Breaking Up is Hard To Do: The Dissolution of Judicial Supervision of Public Services,” *PAR*, 2003.
3. Mandates and IGR
  - a. Lovell and Tobin, “The Mandate Issue,” *PAR*, 1981.
  - b. Gullo and Kelly, “Federal Unfunded Mandate Reform,” *PAR*, 1998.
  - c. Caruson and MacManus, “Mandates and Management Challenges in the Trenches: An Intergovernmental Perspective on Homeland Security,” *PAR*, 2006.

**Week 13 FED, IGR, IGM: Past and Present Perspectives.**

Readings:

1. Wright and Stenberg, “Federalism, Intergovernmental Relations, and Intergovernmental Management,” Ch. 11 in Rabin (ed.) In Handbook of Public Administration (2007): 407-479.
2. Student Reports and Paper Presentations.

**Week 14 FED, IGR, IGM: Present and Future Perspectives.**

Readings:

1. Stephens and Wikstrom, American IGR, Ch. 10 “Intergovernmental Relations: Present and Future.”
2. Student Reports and Paper Presentations.

## Syllabus for Intergovernmental Relations

### Project / Paper Report I: Mapping IGR Networks of Public Executives

IGR Questions for an agency executive (revised draft).

1. About what proportion of your work (in an average week) involves IGR contacts with officials or administrators in other governmental units – local, state, or national? (e.g., 20%, 1/3, ?)
  - 1a. Among those IGR contacts, which ranks highest (and lowest) in terms of frequency of contacts: \_\_\_ local, \_\_\_ state, \_\_\_ national? (Are there special reasons for this?)
  - 1b. On balance and on a scale of cooperation from 1-10 (with 10 most cooperative), how would you rate your contacts with: \_\_\_ local, \_\_\_ state, \_\_\_ national officials? (Are there special reasons for these ratings?)
2. What is the frequency of individual contacts (by phone, email, or face-to-face) that you have with officials in the most frequently contacted government? (\_\_\_ more than once a day, \_\_\_ daily, \_\_\_ weekly, etc.)
3. Are the contacts chiefly with appointed or elected officials? If the former, are they mainly with program policy professionals (PPPs), or with appointed administrative generalists (AAGs)?
4. Do contacts revolve more around funds (grants) or regulations? Or each about the same?
5. Does your unit/agency/organization receive federal aid and/or state aid? If yes, about what proportion of your budget comes from federal aid? 1-24%, 25-49%, 50-74%, 75+%? From state aid? 1-24%, 25-49%, 50-74%, 75+%?
6. Apart from contacts with other governments what other organizations and nonprofit entities do you have regular contacts? How often and for what purpose(s)?
7. Are there any general observations, comments, evaluations, or views about IGR that the executive is ready to volunteer?

# PAR

## *Foundations of Public Administration*

American Federalism, Intergovernmental Relations, and  
Intergovernmental Management – Syllabus

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