Seminar Guidelines for PADP 8710
(Ideas & Issues in Public Administration)

Basic Seminar "Rules of Thumb"

A. *Evaluate the work, conditional on what the author(s) are setting out to accomplish. In other words, does the work succeed or fail based on the terms defined by the author(s) themselves? That is, emphasize evaluating the work "inside–out" (as opposed to an "outside–in" analysis).*

B. *Please note and elaborate the 'strengths' of the research under investigation.*

C. *Students are expected to be able to BOTH critique and offer recommendations for improvement/refinement. Any particular critique offered must be accompanied with a corresponding well–thought out recommendation for improvement/refinement.*

D. *Please allow fellow classmates potential "space" to offer their own analysis to the seminar group. The best seminars are ones where all students have ample room to make contributions during class sessions (as opposed to one or two students dominating the seminar discussion).*

Reading and Evaluating Research:

(1) Define the research puzzle/problem advanced by the author(s). Why is it an important puzzle? How many different audiences does it reach?

(2) What is the author(s) theoretical 'story'

(2a) Stated or Implied premises/assumptions/"first principles" serving as the basis for the theoretical foundation (i.e., what does one have to "buy" to make the author(s) theoretical 'story' a plausible/valid one;

(2b) State the author(s) causal/logical mechanism (i.e., "WHEN", "WHY", "HOW" aspects) that are premised on (2a). This component should cover the theoretical propositions/hypotheses;

(2c) What are the empirically testable implications/predictions generated from (2a) and (2b)? In other words, how can we empirically observe evidence consistent with the author's theoretical story outlined in (2a) & (2b)?

(3) How are the theoretical concepts of interest empirically operationalized – and subsequently measured by the author(s).

(4) What is the "setup" (i.e., variables, model specification, modeling technique) for the empirical test of the author(s) theoretical predictions? Is it logically consistent (i.e., isomorphic) with the theory being advanced by the author(s)?

(5) What, if any, empirical evidence is found for the author(s) theoretical 'story'?

(6) What is theoretical and empirical contributions related to the puzzle in question?

(7) What is the broader relevance of the author(s) study to students outside the particular *puzzle*? Outside the particular *subfield*? Outside the particular *field*?