Urban Management

Spring 2023

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Class Meetings: **Class Location:**
Mondays; April 3 – June 12   5:00pm-9:00pm   Tacoma Campus (TBA)

Course Description: The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the practice of local government management. Key issues of contemporary functioning areas of local government will be highlighted. The course addresses challenges facing local government managers and practices for establishing and maintaining successful relationships with elected officials, assistant managers, department heads, other employees, citizens, and representatives of news media, other governments, and other organizations, while pursuing community goals. In addition to the substantive coverage, the course is also designed to help students determine whether they want to pursue a career in local government and how their skills, interest, and educational training might align with a career in local government.

Learning objectives and student competencies:
• Comprehend the principal forms of local government in the United States;
• Be able to describe the roles of presiding mayor, executive mayor, county commission chair, county and city manager, chief administrative officer, assistant manager, assistant to the manager, and department head;
• Understand the typical nature of interactions among local government elected and appointed officials, residents, citizens, and news media representatives;
• Gain a general knowledge of the importance of local-state-federal relations, regional cooperation, and the variety of non-profit and for-profit organizations involved in providing local government services;
• Be familiar with the ICMA Code of Ethics for professional local government managers and be able to make reasonable judgments about appropriate managerial conduct; and,
• Learn about typical career paths in local government management and the challenges and rewards of sch careers.

Required Readings

Books:

Newell, C. (Ed.). (2004). *The effective local government manager* (3rd ed.). Washington, D.C.: ICMA Press. ISBN: 0873261437. **(AVAILABLE FREE E-BOOK THROUGH The Evergreen State College LIBRARY)**

Recommended readings

Nelson & Stenberg (2017). *Managing Local Government: An Essential Guide for Municipal and County Managers*. CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1506323374

Additional readings will be posted on canvas

Spring 2023 schedule (Faculty may alter schedule and reading assignments)

DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED READINGS
Week 1 **April 3**	Local governments	Nelson & Stenberg • **Chapters 1 & 2**
Week 2 **April 10**	Local government management and careers in public service	Nelson & Stenberg • **Chapter 3** Newell • **Chapters 1 & 8**
Week 3 **April 17**	Managers and Governing Board Relations	Newell • **Chapter 3**
Week 4 **April 24**	Managers and community stakeholders: residents, interests groups, and the media	Newell • **Chapter 2**
Week 5 **May 1**	Local governments and regional cooperation	Nelson & Stenberg • **Chapter 4**
Week 6 **May 8**	Human resources and personnel systems in local governments	Nelson & Stenberg • **Chapter 5** Newell • **Chapter 5**
Week 7 **May 15**	Local government and community engagement	Nelson & Stenberg • **Chapters 6, 7, & 8**
Week 8 **May 22**	Local governments and service delivery	Nelson & Stenberg • **Chapter 9**
Week 9 **May 29** --NO MEETING--	Local government managers' toolbox today and the challenges of tomorrow	Nelson & Stenberg • **Chapters 10 & 11**
Week 10 **June 5**	**Presentations**	

Student Assignments / Basis of Evaluation

1. *Participation and engagement* – Students must attend class having completed the readings and prepared to fully participate in class discussions and exercises. Students are expected to fully engage in discussions, presentations, exercises, and learn from them. If you are unable to attend class, please discuss this with the instructor to find a way to make up the work. Students will be required to do research on each week's topic, where they locate a few articles (or other media) from external sources. These can be from various sources (media, blogs, podcasts, etc), and

students are to provide a brief summary for class discussion/seminar. The summaries should include information on the article (medium)'s content, why it is important, and how it builds on or relates to the required readings. The summaries should not be longer than two double-spaced pages.

2. *Local government issue brief* – Students will research an issue and present the information they believe most relevant to local government decision making. Students will select a topic by drawing on issues raised in the course to date. Students will write from the perspective of a department head or assistant manager of a local government and will address the brief to their city/county manager using memo-style formatting with a summary and subheadings as needed. Information related to writing memos, including format, will be available on canvas. Students may create an argument and provide options and recommendations but are not required to do so for this assignment. Focus should be given to identifying which information is most important and providing an efficient summary.

3. *Policy memo* – Local elected officials are often in part-time roles and may not have administrative expertise. They rely on their appointed manager or administrator to provide them with the information they need to make informed decisions. For the purposes of this assignment, students may wish to choose a specific local government for the setting of the assignment in order to provide context such as existing ordinances, state law, political climate, and guidance from the charter. Students may wish to attend a meeting of the governing body to listen to presentations and review the materials from agenda packets that are often posted online. Students will prepare a policy memo and presentation from the perspective of a city or county manager guiding a council or commission in a decision-making process. Students will select an issue based on personal interest that reflects the contemporary practice of local government management. Examples of possible topics include, but are not limited to: social media and free speech of employees, improving service delivery through functional consolidation, accessing grants and other resources for economic development, overcoming traffic congestion, replacing water delivery infrastructure, strategies for lowering the community's ISO rating, information technology security, establishing performance measures for one or more service, and financial strategies for reducing debt and unfunded liabilities.

    The structure and format of the policy memo should be crafted to effectively convey the relevant information but must include a summary, background, options, analysis (which may include potential costs, legal considerations, and public awareness efforts), and any other necessary subheadings. Competing perspectives on the issue should be explored as well as potential future developments around the topic. The memo should conclude with a recommendation and implementation suggestions. Information related to writing memos, including format, will be available on canvas.

4. *Staff Report and Presentation* – In teams, students will write a staff report on a policy or problem of their interest. A staff report is a policy memo developed by local government staff for the legislative body as an aid in decision making. It contains the recommendations of the chief executive officer on the issue. Student teams will give a presentation on the policy issue they selected for the staff report in week 10 session.

<u>Course Policies</u>

Format: Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments should be typed, double spaced, 12 point font, and follow APA format and citation style. [APA Style http://www.apastyle.org/learn/index.aspx Purdue Writing & Grammar Guide http://owl.english.purdue.edu/] All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors. Students may request resource writing assistance from faculty and/or the Graduate Writing Assistant.

Participation and attendance: Students are required to attend each synchronous online class meeting in its entirety. Participation includes focusing on class content, speaking in class and seminar, listening to others, taking notes, completing class interactive exercises, avoiding distractions, and listening to and dialoging with the guest speakers. If an absence is unavoidable, faculty should be notified prior to a class. After one absence (full synchronous online day), make-up work may be assigned at faculty discretion on case-by-case. Makeup work must be completed by the deadline assigned to ensure full receipt of course credit. After two absences (two synchronous online days) students may be denied full credit. Finally, if students do miss a class, they are expected to do the reading for that class meeting and turn in any assignments that were due that class date.

Late assignments: Turning in assignments late is unacceptable. However, if there is an unavoidable need to turn in an assignment late, the student should contact their seminar faculty no later than the original assignment due date to discuss options. Parameters are left to the discretion of the faculty on a situation-by-situation basis. Late assignments must be completed by the revised due date to ensure full receipt of course credit.

Credit: Students will receive four graduate credits at the end of the course if all requirements have been satisfactorily completed. Students will be evaluated based upon their progress towards the learning objectives, assessed from classroom, seminar, and assignment performance. No incompletes will be awarded. Full loss of credit decisions will be made by the faculty. Full loss of credit for two terms of core may result in dismissal from the MPA program. Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own) may result in total loss of credit for the class and may result in dismissal from the MPA program. See the MPA Handbook and College statement on academic honesty for more information. Failing to meet course requirements (ex. not completing one or more assignments, completing one or more assignments late, or multiple absences) may constitute denial of total credit at the discretion of the faculty. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the quarter.

Evaluation: A written self-evaluation and faculty evaluation are required each quarter for credit. All final evaluations are to be submitted via my.evergreen.edu. Evaluation conferences may occur in-person or over the phone.

Multiculturalism and diversity: Faculty and students will actively work towards contextually weaving multiculturalism and diversity throughout our learning as related to readings, lectures, seminar, and group projects. In a learning community students and faculty share the responsibility for the teaching and learning environment. Multiculturalism and diversity is to be understood as: aiming to promote constructive community discourse about issues of culture, power, and differences including but not limited to race, ethnicity, color, nationality, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, class, sexual orientation, age, religion, (dis)ability, and veteran status.

Technology use and learning styles: We all have different ways of acquiring new knowledge. Therefore, faculty will actively work towards providing information in multiple formats: tactile, auditory, visual, experiential, etc.

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for any student who qualifies for them through a working relationship with Access Services. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (867-6348 or 6364). If the student is already working with the office of Access Services the faculty should have received a letter clearly indicating the student has a disability that requires academic accommodations. If any student has a health condition or disability that may require accommodations in order to effectively participate in this class, please do the following: Contact faculty before class and Contact Access Services to receive a letter of accommodation. Information about a disability or health condition will be regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's Students with Disabilities Policy.

Conduct and conflict resolution: Discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved (so long as the concerned party feels safe doing so). Possessing respect for others is fundamental to an open, free, and educational dialogue. All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom and learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MPA program. All students will be held accountable for maintaining the highest of academic standards.

We will abide by the social contract: WAC 174-121-010 College philosophy.
We will abide by the student conduct code (including academic integrity and plagiarism): Chapter 174-123 WAC, Student Conduct Code & Grievance/Appeals Process.
We will abide by the non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC.

Guest policy: Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during class time and seminar meetings with discretionary approval from course faculty in advance of the requested visit. It is the host student's responsibility to contact the faculty with details about the requested guest visit and await approval. Guests must abide by all social contract conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines as aforementioned in this syllabus.

Inclement weather: In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check with for announcements of campus closures. Students can call the main campus line 867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Faculty may decide to cancel a class meeting even if campus is open and we will send an all-class email prior to 3:00 pm the day of class. Students are responsible for checking email and ensuring viable transportation options are available to them.

Communicating: Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. Students are responsible for checking their Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.