

# Doing Democratic Administration

## 1st year Core Tacoma, Winter 2024

<u>Class Meeting Times:</u> All Wednesday Evenings 6pm to 8:50pm	<u>Faculty Teaching Team</u> Doreen Swetkis swetkisd@evergreen.edu
<u>First Class:</u> Wednesday, January 10 <sup>th</sup> , 6pm to 8:50pm Tacoma campus, Room 105	Benjamin Feldbush Benjamin.W.feldbush@evergreen.edu
<u>Additional Meeting:</u> Saturday, March 16th, 10am to 5pm	

### **Pre-Class Assignments**

There is an expectation that students will have completed the readings, other media, and assignments before we meet for class each week.

### **Winter 2024 Course Description:**

The purpose of 1st year Core is to identify and explore the fundamentals of governing and administering for the public. A substantial part of our work winter quarter examines the knowledge and skills needed to practice democratic public administration through our departments, agencies, and organizations. Our goal is to gain an understanding of how to apply theories of public administration in our day-to-day work.

Complementing our focus on systems thinking is a focus on how to build effective teams. Working in teams and collaborations are increasingly common in public and nonprofit administration, which requires team building competencies. Therefore, a key part of our work each week during winter quarter will involve working in teams and advancing and learning how to effectively collaborate for the common good. Consequently, we have established three learning competencies for winter quarter. These learning competencies are meant to clarify what results we want our learning community to achieve by the end of the quarter.

### **Learning competencies (LC):**

**LC 1** – Assess and recognize multiple lenses of thinking about the structure and behavior of organizations.

**LC 2** – Develop and strengthen the ability to work collaboratively.

**LC 3** - Apply and analyze equity and ethical principles in relation to doing democratic public administration.

**Course Credit Equivalencies for Winter Quarter:**

- 2 – Team building
- 4 – Organizational Studies

See below for more information regarding credit requirements and how to successfully fulfill program expectations.

**Brief Look Ahead for the Tacoma cohort:**

**Spring quarter**, we will examine the policy, budgetary and fiscal aspects of public service and public goods. Key to our work spring quarter will be to learn about the potential sources and uses of the resources needed to carry out service to the public. We will examine how federal, state, and local resources are being deployed and consider the implications in terms of equity, ethical principles, and democratic public administration. Also, there will be a change in the teaching team spring quarter, with Doreen Swetkis rotating onto the Olympia 1<sup>st</sup> Year Core teaching team, and Dr. Spencer Brien rotating onto the Tacoma team.

**Required Reading for Winter:**

We are using three texts for our work this winter. The two books that are underlined are available as free eBooks through The Evergreen State College Library or Summit. You can access them by logging into your library account with your Evergreen ID. Online access through the library will allow you to read assigned content online, or you can download PDF sections provided you are mindful of page limits imposed by the publishers (details online for each book). The books may need to be requested from Summit, which takes 5 days, so please plan accordingly. Our texts are:

- Robert Cooper III. (2024). *Equity-Minded Systems Thinking for Leadership, first edition*. Cognella. ISBN: 9798823341998
- Linda A. Hill. (2017). *HBR 10 Must Reads for New Managers*. Harvard Business Review Press. ISBN: 978-1-63369-302-9.
- Rosemary O'Leary. (2019). *The ethics of dissent: Managing guerrilla government, third edition*. CQ Press. ISBN: 9781506346359

All other required readings and media will be posted on Canvas.

<b>Week and Module</b>	<b>Required Readings</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Week 1 (1/10): Systems Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Cooper III book (all)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● None</li></ul>
Week 2 (1/17): Design Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Readings/podcasts on Canvas</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Team Contract (group)</li><li>● HW 1</li></ul>
Week 3 (1/24) Organizational Theory I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Readings/podcasts on Canvas</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● HW 2 &amp; 3</li></ul>

Week 4 (1/31): Cooperatives (Guest Speaker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings on Canvas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HW 4</li> </ul>
Week 5 (2/7): Organizational Theory II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings/podcasts on Canvas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field Journal (individual)</li> <li>• HW 5</li> </ul>
Week 6 (2/14): TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings/podcasts on Canvas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HW 6</li> </ul>
Week 7 (2/21): TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings/podcasts on Canvas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data-Driven DEI Assignment (individual)</li> </ul>
Week 8 (2/28): TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings/podcasts on Canvas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Org. Analysis (Group)</li> </ul>
Week 9 (3/6): TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings/podcasts on Canvas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HW 7</li> </ul>
Week 10 (3/13): Practice Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>None</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Presentation (group)</li> </ul>
Week 10 Saturday (3/16): Final Presentations and Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading posted to Canvas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Organizational Analysis (group)</li> <li>• Presentation (group)</li> </ul>
Evaluation Week (3/18-3/22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation Conferences w/seminar faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self Evaluation and Faculty Evaluation</li> </ul>

**Participation and Engagement:** Your participation will be evaluated based on the depth of your own engagement with class material and how well you support other students' learning and contribute to a collaborative spirit of investigation. This means moving a discussion forward by both sharing your questions and reflections, and by listening well to other students and following up with additional questions, reflection, and elaboration. If you find yourself struggling to find ways to contribute, please talk to your faculty about strategies for increasing your participation (we all need support). Students enter our learning community with differing perspectives and experiences. These differences are a strength if we remember that the collective goal is to develop a deeper understanding of the material and our world. We do not need to agree with one another, but we do need to hear each other's thoughts and questions and maintain a safe environment for respective inquiry.

**Assignments**

Over the course of the quarter, you will complete multiple assignments. Unlike fall quarter, there will be both individual and group assignments. The final product will be a group organizational analysis. An organizational analysis is a document that paints a picture of an

organization's structure and behavior. It also analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of an organization.

### 1. Team Contract (Group assignment)

**Purpose:** The team contract lays out how the team will approach the project and hold each other accountable. A team plan also allows group members to examine their strengths and areas for growth as a team member.

**Instructions:** Fill out the team contract document as a group. Instructions for how to fill out the team contract are included in the document posted in Canvas.

### 2. Field Journal (individual assignment)

**Purpose:** Last quarter we familiarized ourselves with quantitative data via *Counting: How We Use Numbers to Decide What Matters* by Deborah Stone. This quarter we will begin our familiarization with qualitative data. This type of research has a long history of use in public administration. The primary goal of a field journal is for you to document your observations of human behavior, processes, and environment in our public forums.

**Instructions:** 4 - 5 pages of content, double spaced.

Attend a public meeting in person or on Zoom (ex. Legislative floor debate, Legislative committee hearing and testimony, City Council meeting, County Committee hearings, Planning Commission, Port Commission, Non-Profit Board meeting, Tribal Government public meeting, School Board meeting, etc.). Observe the actions or inactions of leadership and the democratic situation. Attend any public meeting, **but do not pick a meeting that is linked directly to your employment or that you have attended before.**

Write a narrative description of your experience that explains where you went, background about the organization, and what you learned from the meeting. Additionally, respond to the following questions:

- **Problem identification:** What problems were identified? Were they addressed? What are some of the facts surrounding the problems? What critical issues contributed to the problems?
- **Recommendations:** Were recommendations made and, if so, by whom? What were the recommendations to address the problems? How effective do you think these recommended actions will be in alleviating the problems?
- **Funding:** Who funded the meeting?
- **Leadership observations:** Who did you identify as leaders and why? What leadership qualities did you observe?
- **Observing the room:** What was the physical space like and how did it impact the meeting? Who was in attendance? What did you notice about the audience members and their body language/reactions?

- **Audience participation:** Did the audience participate, and if so, how?
- **Inclusive practices:** Were there impacted or potentially impacted individuals or groups that were not present, or not included in the conversation/decision?
- **Democracy observations:** What democratic actions or comments were made?
- **Making connections:** How do your observations connect to any of the readings so far in the MPA program? As a public administrator, did this experience cause you to think differently about your own work, how you present to elected officials or decision-makers, and/or how to include the public in your work?

### 3. Assignment: Data-Driven DEI

**Purpose:** Over the last few years, DEI+ work has been moving from margin to center in our public agencies and nonprofit organizations. This difficult but rewarding work requires examination and action at the individual, organizational, and systemic levels.

**Instructions:** Read the entire excerpt from *Data-Driven DEI* by Pinkett on our Canvas site, answer the six questions on page 6 and use that information to craft your personal DEI Mission and Vision statements. Then turn your examination on your organization and answer the six questions on page 14 and craft your organizational DEI mission and vision statements. There is no required page length, but the expectation is that you will be thorough and thoughtful in your reflections and introspection.

### 4 & 5. Organizational Analysis Paper Draft and Final: Outsiders' Perspective (Group assignment)

**Note:** A thorough organizational analysis paper would take several months to complete. Such an undertaking would require surveys, interviews, and focus groups with staff, leadership, and clients. An exhaustive organizational analysis would involve culling through mountains of internal documents, records of decisions, mandates, policies, and budgets. You are not doing this! Your task is to conduct what would be "phase 1" of an organizational analysis: the outsiders' perspective. You will use only publicly available resources and likely end up with more critical questions than definitive answers.

**Purpose:** Conduct an organizational analysis of a public, non-profit, or Tribal government organization. The goal of the assignment is to expand your skills at organizational assessment and provide insights into the realities of life in organizations. ***You should select an organization for which no one in the group currently works or volunteers.*** This assignment will be completed in teams of 3 students. Secondary and tertiary data collection is required. You will not be interviewing anyone from the organization. The faculty will build in some dedicated group time during our in-class sessions, but students should expect to meet regularly outside of class time to complete this project.

**Instructions:** 15 pages max of content. Does not include title page, reference page, or appendices. You will be assigned a group Week 1 of winter quarter. *Only one person from each*

*group needs to upload the assignment to Canvas or submit a hard copy.*

Step 1: Get the basics.

- Write your own definition of an organization. This definition will guide the focus of your analysis. (Ex. structure, staff, leadership, managers, boards, mission, policies, programs, clients, funders)
- Select a public, non-profit, or Tribal government organization to analyze.
- Gather some initial background information (publicly available) to ensure you have access to sufficient basic information about the organization (org chart, funding sources, mission, population served, etc.).

Step 2: Write an organizational analysis that covers the following elements.

- Mission and/or vision, brief history, population served and public need(s) addressed, key budget information, organizational structure/chart, staffing.
- What is the organization/agency known for and what are its key accomplishments? Based on your assessment as outsiders, what does the organization/agency do well and where has it fallen short? Is it known for any innovations? How productive are its relationships with other levels or parts of government and/or non-profit organizations? Is it democratic in form and action (explain)? What are its relationships to other sectors and/or organizations? Is the organization prepared for the future? Responding to these questions will involve a search of secondary resources (government reports, news media, academic research, org memos, press releases, and other background documents/materials publicly available). Select an organization that has information readily and publicly available.
- What are the challenges the organization is currently facing? (These could be challenges of strategy, budget, program implementation, management or some combination).
- Explain your team's recommendation for how the organization should address the main challenge it faces along with evidence supporting your recommendation, incorporating relevant readings from the past two quarters to support your recommendations.

**6. Presentation (In Person Practice Presentation Weds. Week 10; In-Person Final Presentation Saturday, Week 10)**

**Instructions:** Presentation: 10 minutes. Q&A Session: 5 minutes. Total: 15 minutes. All draft presentations must be submitted through Canvas. A visual aid is required for the presentation.

All presentations should adhere to the following guidelines:

- All photographs or graphs/charts should be cited with their source.
- Accessibility: contrast (dark background, light font), limit red and green (color blindness), font size, readability, universal design accessibility.  
<http://www.vetpd.qld.gov.au/resources/pdf/universal-design-checklist.pdf>
- If using a video, it must be no more than 2 minutes.

We will grade the oral presentations in terms of the following criteria:

- Organization and sense of purpose
- Command of project problem, methods, findings and recommendations
- Effective use of PowerPoint and other visual aids
- Use of appropriate language and public speaking skills
- Effective response to audience questions

## **7. Leadership Exercises (Individual Assignments)**

**Purpose:** These assignments serve two functions. 1) To complement the team-building skills that will be needed to complete the organizational analysis. 2) To critically examine the role of leadership in public and non-profit organizations.

**Instructions:** These assignments, HWs 1-7 will be completed asynchronously and directions for each assignment can be found in Canvas.

### **Expectations and Policies**

**Written Work:** Most work will be completed using secondary/existing sources.

**Format:** Unless otherwise stated, all papers 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.

Also, a guide to student writing at Evergreen can be accessed through the campus Writing Center: <https://inkwellpublication.wordpress.com/>

**Participation & Attendance:** Students are required to attend each 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 the missed class.

After one absence per quarter (Ex. 3 hours accumulated is one absence), a make-up presentation on the work missed will be assigned by faculty. Makeup work must be completed by the end of the scheduled course to receive course credit. After 6 hours of absences total in one quarter, you may be denied full credit for the course. Also, after reoccurring absences (being late to class; regularly missing an hour of class), you may be denied full credit. Finally, if

you do miss a class, you are expected to do the reading for the class meeting missed and turn in any assignments that were due on the class date missed.

**Late Assignments:** Turning in assignments late is unacceptable. If there is an unavoidable need to turn in an assignment late, the student should contact their faculty no later than the original assignment due date and propose an alternative due date for completion. It is up to the individual faculty to decide whether to accept the assignment on the proposed date. Late assignments must be completed by an agreed upon revised due date to ensure full receipt of course credit.

**Credit:** Students will receive 6 graduate credits if all course 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 partial credit or incompletes will be awarded. Full loss of credit decisions will be made by the faculty team. 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:** Student's course self-evaluation and evaluation of faculty are required for credit, and evaluation conference attendance.

**Multiculturalism & 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 are defined as: aiming to promote constructive community discourse about issues of culture, power, and differences.

**Technology Use & Learning Styles:** We all have different ways of learning. Faculty will actively work towards providing information in multiple formats: tactile, auditory, visual, experiential, etc. However, we are limited to means appropriate for the virtual classroom environment. Surfing the internet, checking social media, reading e-mail, playing with cell phones during our online sessions are not an appropriate use of class time. Consult your faculty to discuss technology use and learning style options.

**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 to effectively participate in this class, please do the following: **Contact Access Services to receive a letter of accommodation prior to the start of class.** Information about a disability or health condition will be regarded as confidential. Please refer to Evergreen's Students with Disabilities Policy.

**Conduct & Conflict Resolution: Please refer to the MPA Student**

**Handbook:** <https://www.evergreen.edu/mpa/studenthandbook/conflictresolution>. 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: <http://www.evergreen.edu/studentaffairs/student-conduct>

We will abide by the non-discrimination policies and procedures at Evergreen.

**Guest policy:** Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during our class time and seminar meetings *with approval from course faculty in advance of each requested visit*. It is the host student's responsibility to contact the faculty with details about the requested guest visit and await approval.

Prospective students may visit one class meeting of first year Core without advance faculty approval but must notify faculty that they are present prior to the beginning of class. All guests must abide by all social contract, conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines as aforementioned in this handbook. Per faculty discretion, guests may be asked to leave and not permitted to return to class if these guidelines are violated in any way including behavior that disrupts the learning community. All guests are expected to minimize their participation in class and seminar discussions.

**Inclement Weather:** The Evergreen-Tacoma campus follows the school closure notice of the Tacoma Public School District. If Tacoma Public School District is closed due to severe weather conditions we will also be closed. However, if the start of school is delayed for the Tacoma Public School District the Evergreen-Tacoma campus will start classes at our usual time.

**Communicating:** Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. Students are responsible for checking their Evergreen email and Canvas regularly – minimally once each weekday and weekend.

**Use of Student Work Posted to Canvas:** Students post their work to an online learning platform known as “Canvas”. Our class canvas site is accessible to faculty and students registered for this course only. The work students post on canvas is their private intellectual property and may not be used or distributed without their expressed consent. Some work may also be owned by governments, organizations, or communities. Their informed and voluntary consent would also need to be obtained for use and appropriate cultural protocols would also need to be followed.

**Audio or Video Recording:** No audio or video recording may occur during class without the informed and voluntary consent of all students, guests, and faculty involved.