

# Public Engagement in the Internet Era

Mondays, 6:00 PM - 8:50 PM

Location: Online

Faculty: Jeffrey Callen, MPA, PhD

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## Mission Statement

Our students, faculty and staff create learning communities to explore and implement socially just, democratic public service. We think critically and creatively; communicate effectively; work collaboratively; embrace diversity; we value fairness and equity; advocate powerfully on behalf of the public; and imagine new possibilities to accomplish positive change in our workplaces and in our communities. "Be the change."

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## Description

Though the Internet Era has provided unparalleled opportunities for democratic society, we see increasing polarization in public discourses. The course, Engaging the Public in the Internet Era surveys different ways the Internet has fostered democratic discourse and also is a tool in instigating social discord. Topics will include, but are not limited to, e-government, social media, advocacy, accessibility, crises response, public information, and Big

Data, online innovations in collaboration, and the use of the internet in spreading disinformation. We will also may be considering how emerging technologies, such as AI, may be assistive or disruptive to contemporary online practices of democratic governance.

In this class, students will help determine what topics are important to them in which ways. Hence, the class may shift directions based on current events and opportunities, advances in technology, and should be responsive to contemporary public discourses.

The class includes a synchronous online class time (Mondays 6-8:50) and an asynchronous component in which students will learn, find, test, evaluate different tools for online engagement.

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## Learning Objectives

- Understand the important role of public administrators facilitating public engagement for a healthy democracy.
- Develop knowledge, skills, and abilities to effectively engage and collaborate with the public in a digitally mediated environment.
- To select, develop, host, and evaluate public engagement opportunities in an online environment.
- To strengthen ones advocacy through ethics, accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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## Required Texts

There is no textbook for this class. All readings and material are available on the course's Canvas site.

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## Schedule and Assignments

The schedule, assignments, and assignment guidelines, are available on the course's Canvas site. The Canvas site will be opened to students before the beginning of the quarter.

### Weekly Writings:

Students will submit a 1-2 page memo and a "1-pager" for 5 of 8 weekly topic prompts. These assignments will follow a template that students create.

### Seminar:

Students will individually, or in groups, help lead one seminar session on a topic of their choice.

### Final Project:

Working solo or in groups, students will present and submit a project proposal for an online public engagement campaign. In developing the proposal, students will participate in, evaluate, and test different online tools for online public engagement.

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## Course Expectations and Policies

The class will follow The Evergreen State College MPA Policies and Student Handbook which is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/mwcnkeux>.

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## Participation

Attendance, in entirety for each session, is required and means more than simply being present during our sessions: Be fully present. Fully present, for the class, is arriving and leaving on time; having readings and assignments for the session completed before arriving; participating; and taking care of your self.

There is no one way to participate: Class activities, writings, and discussions; paying attention, listening, and encouraging an environment of respect; not creating or participating in distractive or disrespectful behavior; being an active listener; meeting out of scheduled class time; contributing appropriate and relevant content to class meetings; and many more. The recognition of the plurality of ways to participate is not limited to the classroom and, I hope, will carry on into your practice of public administration.

Taking care of yourself is also an important practice of being a public administrator to build and nurture healthy relationships with members of the public and also within your place of work.

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## Format

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. Students may request resource writing assistance from faculty and/or the Writing Center.

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## Trauma/Trigger Statement

The Evergreen State College MPA program covers a variety of challenging topics of race, equity, culture, crimes, discrimination, colonization, intergenerational trauma and other potentially difficult topics. We acknowledge certain events may trigger an emotional response. Faculty's responsibility is to maintain a positive learning environment for all students in the program. Addressing these experiences are not faculty members' primary area of expertise and we ask that students seek support in advance as needed, if desired.

To help ensure that we all have a shared set of expectations and understanding, Faculty have been advised to explain the process to follow certain proactive steps to manage triggered responses by students.

1. Cover the syllabus and potential conversations in detail to ensure students are aware of possible topics that may evoked a triggered response. This is to ensure that when known triggering material is going to be covered we encourage students to do what they need to do take care

of themselves (take a break, step out).

2. If the student is triggered, please support the student to step out of class for a time to regain composure and to seek additional resources if necessary (counseling, Access Services).
3. In the case of disruption, Faculty have been advised to refer students to the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities (a.k.a. Conduct).
4. If the student disrupts class, this will be handled by Faculty according to the syllabi, conduct and conflict resolution, the social contract Links to an external site. and the student conduct code.
5. If efforts to manage together do not reduce the disruption by the student, let the student know you are going refer the situation to Lori Johnson in conduct for assistance.

We look forward to working with all of you as a learning community and will do our best to facilitate an engaging and productive process.

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## Evaluation

A written faculty evaluation is required for credit. Students are highly encouraged to use their own self-evaluation to reflect and summarize their individual learning over the quarter. Evaluation conferences are optional and may occur in person or over the phone and can be requested by either student or faculty. All final evaluations are to be submitted via our online evaluation

system no later than two weeks after Evaluation Week.

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## 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 is to be understood as: aiming to promote constructive community discourse about issues of culture, power, and differences.

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## 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 classroom environment. Surfing the internet, checking social media, reading e-mail, playing with cell phones are not appropriate behaviors in a learning community. Consult your seminar faculty to discuss technology use and learning style options.

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## Reasonable Accommodations

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.

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## Permission to Record Lecture, Workshop and Other Similar Discussion

If a student in class would like to obtain an audio or video recording of another participant in class speaking, discussion, lecture or other related communications in class, and this falls beyond the scope of Reasonable Accommodations (see above), then this student would need written permission, in writing, via email or other acceptable forms of documentation, and would need to give a reasonable time period in advance of the recording; usually a week (5

business days) and written consent would need to occur before the recording begins. Participants have the right to deny this request.

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## Conduct & 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. It is imperative that any issues, questions, comments and/or concerns are brought to the attention of the Faculty. The disruption of the learning community is detrimental and by working with Faculty, these issues can be addressed and managed. If there are additional concerns that are not being addressed by Faculty after a good faith attempt is made then alternatives can be explored unless there is an immediate fear that the resolve is detrimental to the ability of the student and their learning community. 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

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## 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.

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## Communicating

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic, communication norms have evolved and are subject to change due to various reasons. **Students' Evergreen email is the primary means of communication between students and faculty.** Canvas will be used for posting readings and assignments. Canvas is not to be used for Student to Faculty communication. Students are responsible for checking their Evergreen email and Canvas regularly. Faculty will notify students of any changes to the schedule.