

# CONTEXT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (OLYMPIA) FALL 2025

## **FACULTY**

Jeffrey Callen, Ph.D.  
[jeffrey.callen@evergreen.edu](mailto:jeffrey.callen@evergreen.edu)

Michael Crow, Ph.D.  
[crawm@evergreen.edu](mailto:crawm@evergreen.edu)

Office hours are by appointment

## **CLASS LOCATION & MEETING TIMES**

Thursdays 6:00 – 8:50 pm, Seminar II C1105  
Saturday, November 1, 9:00 am – 3:50 pm, Seminar II C1105 OR Zoom (link on Canvas)  
Saturday, November 15, 9:00 am – 3:50 pm, Seminar II C1105  
Course Canvas page: <https://canvas.evergreen.edu/courses/7439>

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

As the first course in the Master of Public Administration program's core curriculum, Context of Public Administration explores the fundamentals of governing and administering for the public good. In this course, we examine the foundations of democracy and public service by evaluating some of the enduring issues for public administration professionals. In the first half of this quarter, we will investigate core principles for how public administration professionals serve the public. We will do this using the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) Code of Ethics (<https://www.aspanet.org/ASPA/ASPA/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics.aspx>) as a starting point.

In the second half of this quarter, we will investigate key institutions and principles for how public and nonprofit workplaces function. To do this, we will evaluate cornerstones such as the civil service system; the opportunities and dilemmas created by hierarchical organization; and differing ways to exercise leadership in an agency or organization. In addition, through both halves of this quarter, you will deepen your ability to think and write critically about enduring public and nonprofit sector dilemmas. By the end of this course, you will have demonstrated your ability to:

- 1) Apply key principles of ethical public administration in decision-making
- 2) Critically evaluate choices in organizing and managing public and non-profit staff
- 3) Exercise effective leadership in public and nonprofit workplaces

## COMMUNICATIONS

The faculty encourage and expect contact from you over the quarter. The easiest way to reach us is by e-mail ([jeffery.callen@evergreen.edu](mailto:jeffery.callen@evergreen.edu) and [crawm@evergreen.edu](mailto:crawm@evergreen.edu)). You may also make an appointment with either of us for a one-on-one Zoom conference or phone call.

We use Evergreen's e-mail and the course Canvas system to conduct course business. If you do not use Evergreen's e-mail system, please be sure to forward messages from this account to the e-mail account that you use. We will also place course assignments, handouts, PowerPoint slides, and other course materials on the course Canvas site.

## COURSE MATERIALS

**Books:** All course readings will be available as e-books at Evergreen's Library (<https://www.evergreen.edu/library>) or on Canvas. You are not required to purchase books for this course.

**Hardware and software:** You will need a laptop computer capable of connecting to Evergreen's Wifi network for some class sessions. Chromebook laptops are also available for checkout from Evergreen's library (<https://libguides.evergreen.edu/things/chromebook>). We will make use of Microsoft's Office Suite and Microsoft Copilot (Microsoft's AI platform) for some of our work. All Evergreen students have access to Microsoft Office and Copilot through the Microsoft 365 suite, which is accessible via your student login at [my.evergreen.edu](https://my.evergreen.edu)

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS, CREDIT, AND EVALUATIONS

You will be evaluated in this course based on your progress in meeting the course objectives described above, as assessed by the following assignments and requirements. Per MPA program policy, no partial credit may be earned in this course. To earn full credit for the course, students must satisfactorily complete all the following requirements:

**Course Participation:** One of the primary objectives of this class is to develop your ability to critically evaluate programs and policies. In class sessions and activities, we will engage in activities such as discussion and group work that will call on you to apply new ideas from the reading to policy problems. Thus, it is important for you to come to the class prepared to participate by having studied the assigned reading. Your participation will be assessed on the following criteria:

--- *Attendance:* Students are required to attend each class meeting. Attendance is especially important in this course since you must apply concepts and skills from prior class sessions to develop new skills in later class sessions. Missing a class, then, will significantly jeopardize your performance. If an absence is unavoidable, faculty must be notified prior to the absence. **After one absence, make-up work may be assigned at**

**faculty discretion, on a case-by-case basis.** Make-up work must be completed by the end of the quarter for course credit. Multiple absences put you at risk for no credit.

--- *Collegiality*: Showing respect for your peers by being in class on time, staying through the entire session, focusing on class content, respecting the views of others in class discussion, and listening to and engaging in dialogue with guest speakers.

--- *Preparation*: Completing reading before class, coming to class prepared with assignments and reading materials, and active participation in discussion and small group work.

--- *Engagement out of class*: Our class sessions are not the only opportunity to discuss course ideas with the faculty. We want to know if you are having trouble with the material and what you like and don't like about the course. You may reach the faculty by e-mail or phone or schedule an in-person or Zoom chat session.

**Pre-class Reading Responses:** After you complete the reading for each class session, you may be asked to prepare a response of about 500 words (1-2 pages double-spaced) to a question, problem, or prompt about that reading assignment. These responses will often serve as a starting point for discussion in class. Your pre-class reading responses are due by the beginning of class on Thursday at 6 pm. You must complete at least five of these responses on time to earn credit in this course.

**Analytic Essays:** You will complete two assignments that require you to apply the analytical tools that you learned over the course to a problem in public administration. You will have one week to prepare a 1250-1750 word (5-7 pages, double-spaced) response to each question. You will receive the first question by Sunday, November 2 and your response will be due on **Sunday, November 9**. You will receive your second essay question by Thursday, December 11 and it will be due on **Thursday, December 18**.

**Literature Review and Oral Presentation:** The practice of public administration requires that one be able to analyze, make connections between, and draw conclusions from the work of other professionals. You will demonstrate your skill at this by completing a literature review of at least 2500 words (10 pages double-spaced) that addresses a question or ongoing debate about one of the topics from the course syllabus.

A literature review does not merely summarize a set of readings on a topic. Rather, it must analyze by comparing and contrasting approaches to the topic and drawing conclusions about a research question posed by the readings. Your review should aim to draw on the scholarly, professional, and journalistic literature to describe and evaluate possible answers to this research question, drawing on public administration theory, approaches or methods. The final version of your literature review will be due on **Sunday, December 7**.

You will complete the literature review assignment in stages:

- 1) *Proposal with annotated bibliography*: A paragraph explaining your research question and an annotated bibliography will be due on **Sunday, October 26th**.
- 2) *Draft and mini-conference*: On **Saturday, November 15**, we will hold our course mini-conference. Each student should be prepared with a presentation of no more than 10 minutes and to manage a 5-minute question and answer session on their research findings. Students will also be expected to provide feedback on the oral presentations of their peers. A draft of your review is also due that day.
- 3) *Final paper*: Your final literature review is due on **Sunday, December 7th** and should incorporate peer and faculty feedback on your draft.

**Evaluation:** Students must complete a self-evaluation and faculty evaluation and must participate in an evaluation conference with the faculty member. The evaluations must be submitted using the My Evergreen system ([my.evergreen.edu](http://my.evergreen.edu)).

### **SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS**

Assignments should be submitted on Canvas using the electronic submission feature. It is your responsibility to assure that faculty have received your work on time. We recommend both uploading your assignment to Canvas and emailing it to your faculty to ensure it is received on time.

*Review Assignment Requirements Thoroughly Before Drafting Submissions:* It is vitally important that you read and understand assignments before you begin to write. The pressure to just start writing can be irresistible at times. Don't! Canvas is used for course documents specifically because it enables changes as the course evolves during the quarter. Some assignments have very specific requirements. Some are intentionally a bit more open to interpretation and creative responses. Clear understanding of your goals is important to avoiding frustration.

*Format of Assignment Submissions:* All papers will be submitted as requested by your seminar faculty member. All papers must meet assignment parameters and cite works using the 7. All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors.

*Late Assignments:* Are not accepted without prior (to deadline) approval by your seminar faculty member. Multiple late assignments put you at risk for no credit.

## **AI POLICY**

The use of AI is permitted on a faculty-by-faculty basis.

Students should assume that the use of AI is not permitted in a class unless the faculty have explicitly stated otherwise and provided clear guidelines for its use. Additionally, students should not assume that what is allowed in one class applies to all classes. Inappropriate and/or prohibited use of AI can be considered academic dishonesty under The Evergreen State College's Student Conduct Code [WAC 174-123-170 \(1\)\(a\)](#) (Links to an external site) If an assignment or activity in our class involves the use of AI, we will provide specific guidelines and expectations for its use on a case-by-case basis. At a minimum, you will be required to document and attach your research and writing strategies, all prompts used, and a copy of the resulting conversation.

Included in Evergreen's Microsoft 365 suite is an AI chatbot, Copilot. If logged in through your Evergreen Microsoft 365 online account, Copilot does not share your information and hence has privacy that others do not.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Cheating, plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity standards will not be tolerated. Any student turning in work that is in violation of Evergreen's academic integrity standards will automatically receive a No Credit in the course and the matter will be referred to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for disciplinary action. Please be aware that including material generated by an artificial intelligence tool in work turned in for academic credit without appropriate citation or attribution is considered to be academic dishonesty. An overview of academic integrity standards and the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities are available at <https://www.evergreen.edu/offices-services/student-affairs/student-rights-responsibilities>

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

Your success in this class is important to the faculty, and it is the policy and practice of The Evergreen State College to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact one of your faculty privately as soon as possible, so that we can discuss with the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (360) 867-6348; [accessservices@evergreen.edu](mailto:accessservices@evergreen.edu)) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. For more information, please visit the Access Services website at <https://www.evergreen.edu/offices-services/access-services-for-students-with-disabilities>

Washington State law (RCW 28B.10.039) requires that institutions of higher education accommodate students by allowing two days of absence and make-up work for religious holidays per year. We will refer to Washington's Council of Presidents religious holiday calendar for guidance: <https://councilofpresidents.org/resources-2/holiday-observance-calendar/>

### **BAD WEATHER POLICY**

If weather or other event makes it difficult or impossible for the class to meet in-person at our scheduled class times, the faculty may change the format for the class to remote instruction, with the class meeting occurring over Zoom. The faculty will make every effort to make you aware of this change at the earliest possible time.

If it is likely that many students or faculty will be affected by a power or internet outage, faculty may choose to cancel a class session entirely. If we do this we will make every effort to send an all-class email by 3:00 pm. If you've not already done so, sign up to receive alerts about campus closing or other emergencies [here](#).

### **GUEST POLICY**

Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during 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. All guests must abide by all social contract, conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines as aforementioned in this syllabus. At faculty discretion, guests may be asked to leave and not permitted to return to class if these guidelines are violated, including behavior that disrupts the learning community. All guests are expected to minimize their participation in class and seminar discussions unless invited to do otherwise.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE SQUAXIN TRIBE FOR THE OLYMPIA CAMPUS OF THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE**

We gratefully acknowledge and honor the Squaxin Island Tribe, upon whose traditional homelands the Evergreen State College Olympia campus is situated. For thousands of years, their ancestral families lived and thrived here. They named Budd Inlet Steh-Chass, and Eld Inlet where the campus is located Squi'Aitle. Today, the Squaxin Island Tribe continues to live on and steward the lands and waters of the Southern Salish Sea.

We also gratefully acknowledge the Puyallup Tribe whose traditional lands Evergreen's Tacoma Campus is located upon.

We respect and acknowledge the Squaxin Island and Puyallup Tribes, and other Tribes across the Americas, and their many contributions to The Evergreen State College (in support of education,

Tribal sovereignty, environmental stewardship). This acknowledgement is one small step toward respect and collaboration with the aim of uplifting the voices, cultures and histories of the Tribes of these lands and waters.

### **OTHER EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY**

We commit to promoting a cooperative, supportive atmosphere within the community; give everyone opportunity for self-reflection and expression; use high standards in reading the text and preparing our papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; handle all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; respect our differences; and, discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved.

**We abide by the social contract, the student conduct code and the non-discrimination policies and procedures at The Evergreen State College.**

All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the MPA program.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Please refer to the course Canvas site (<https://canvas.evergreen.edu/courses/7439>) for the weekly schedule of topics and reading assignments.