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Master of Public Administration Program

## Doing Democratic Public Administration (DDPA) Winter 2026 Olympia Cohort

MPA 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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### Class Meetings & Locations:

Thursdays 6:00 – 8:50 pm SEM II 1105; SEM II 2105

Saturday, January 24, 9:00 am – 3:50 pm, SEM II 1105 OR Zoom (link on Canvas)

Course Canvas page: <https://canvas.evergreen.edu/courses/7822>

Office hours are by appointment.

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### Faculty:

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### Course Description:

As the second course in the Master of Public Administration’s core curriculum, Doing Democratic Public Administration focuses on the process of managing public and nonprofit organizations effectively within a democratic framework. Building on the foundation established in The Context of Public Administration, this course will develop your skills in three key areas.

First, we will examine the methods and approaches to effective cooperation and collaboration, both within and across organizations. More than ever, public and nonprofit organizations thrive on a combination of effective teamwork and well-functioning hierarchy. Moreover, successfully addressing major public problems often requires collaboration between multiple public and private sector actors.

Second, we will build some of the skills needed to set goals, develop a plan of action, and make decisions for how an organization will fulfill its mission. These skills are central to any organization’s strategic planning process.

Finally, we will examine the nature and process of organizational change. In doing so, we will

learn the skills needed to engage ethical questions that confront public and nonprofit organizations and to make and navigate change effectively. By the end of this quarter, you will have demonstrated your ability to:

- Manage a high functioning team
- Assess and make decisions about an organization's goals and structure
- Plan for collaboration across organizations
- Develop introductory organizational analysis skills

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## Course Credit Equivalencies

2 - Team Building

4 - Organization Theory

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## Course Materials

### Books

You are not required to purchase books for this course.

The main course text is a free e-book (available through Evergreen's Library):

Rainey, Hal G., Sergio Fernandez, and Deanna Malatesta. 2021. *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations: Essential Texts for Nonprofit and Public Leadership and Management*. 6th edition. Available at <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/esu/detail.action?docID=6637768>

All other course readings will be available on the course Canvas page.

### Hardware and software

You will need a laptop computer capable of connecting to Evergreen's Wi-Fi 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](http://my.evergreen.edu)

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## Participation, 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. Three or more 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.

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## Teamwork

The expectations of students as individuals applies to expectations of individuals in project teams as well. Each team member is expected to behave as part of a learning community. The division of labor in teams should respect differences among members while ensuring maximum participation of all team members.

Conflicts with the team should be resolved by team members to the greatest extent possible. It is not the role of faculty to adjudicate conflicts within teams unless they involve violations of college policies. Throughout the quarter, you will write and receive regular peer feedback team evaluations via ITP Metrics (The Individual and Team Performance (ITP) Lab at University of Calgary). These are research-backed evaluations designed to help you understand your personal strengths and challenges and assess team health to help manage conflicts throughout the quarter as you are working on your team assignments. You are expected to complete all peer and team evaluations that are sent via email and use them with your group.

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## Weekly Assignments: Pre-class Reading Responses

After you complete the reading for each class session, you will 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.

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## Professional Development Activities and Reflection

Over the course of the quarter, you will participate in a minimum of 12 hours of events that will enhance your development as a public and nonprofit administration professional:

### Saturday Session

Navigating Local Government (January 24, 9 am – 4 pm). This will be a joint session with the Tacoma campus' first year MPA students. We will hear from a series of speakers who will share their experiences as professionals working in local government in Washington.

### Workforce planning for an organization (Group Assignment)

After reading Joan Pynes' chapters on Strategic Human Resources Management and Planning (Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, available on canvas):

**Conduct a gap analysis** for your organization by completing the workforce planning questions on Canvas.

**Step 1:** Present the organization's current workforce profile (supply analysis)

**Step 2:** Outline a viable future workforce profile (demand analysis).

**Step 3:** (gap analysis), identify gaps (shortages) and surpluses (excesses) in staffing and skill levels needed to meet future functional requirements.

**Step 4:** Develop a strategy for workforce transition.

Your reflection paper is due by **Thursday, March 5 5:59pm**.

### Job Description (Individual Assignment)

After completing your group workforce planning assignment, create a job description based on your findings. You will also write a 250-300 word memo to leadership justifying the position supported by your findings. Due by **Thursday, March 5 5:59pm**.

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## Organizational Analysis (Group Project)

A thorough organizational analysis would take many months or even years 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 a cursory organizational analysis: the outsiders' perspective. You will use only publicly available resources and likely end up with more critical questions than definitive answers.

An organizational analysis reviews the organizational structure of a public or nonprofit organization; assesses the strengths and weaknesses of this structure; and recommends changes to its structure that will make it more effective in fulfilling its mission. The final product will be a document of at least 3500 words (about 15 pages double-spaced,

excluding references, appendices, and title page) that:

- Describes the organization's mission and history, programs, budget, and organizational structure
- Provides an assessment of the organization's Strengths / Weaknesses / Opportunities / Threats (SWOT analysis)
- Makes a recommendation for a specific change the organization could make to its structure or plans that would improve its effectiveness in fulfilling its mission.

### **Instructions:**

Teams should form within your seminar by the start of week 3.

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 you DO NOT currently work for. This assignment will be completed in teams of 5 students.

### **Step 1: Get the basics.**

- Write a teamwork plan, templates will be provided. Due Week 3!
- 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 org 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. A visual 1 pager is required as a cover-page to the background section.
- What is the organization known for and what are its key accomplishments? Based on your outsiders' assessment, what is the organization good at 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? 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).

### **Step 3: Recommendation**

- How should the organization address the main challenges it faces along with evidence supporting your recommendation.

You will complete this project as a member of a team. **You should select an organization for which no one in the group currently works or volunteers.** You will draw on secondary sources for the organizational analysis. Do not conduct interviews with anyone at 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.

**Team contract due January 22 by 5:59pm.**

**Draft Org Analysis Feb 12 by 5:59pm.**

**Final Draft due Feb 26 by 5:59pm.**

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### **Decision Making Environment in Collaborative Governance Networks (Group Project)**

Develop a “map of the policy field” within which your organization finds itself. A map of the policy field (or decision-making environment) helps clarify relationships among major institutions and key stakeholders, while allowing you to see how these relationships affect the flow of power and resources within the network your organization is situated in. By developing a policy field map of the decision-making environment, is helpful in clarifying the competitive and collaborative forces within the network. See Figure 5.1 in Bryson’s text for an example. on **Thursday, March 12.**

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### **Evaluation**

To receive credit, students are required to write 1) a self-evaluation and 2) a seminar faculty evaluation. All final evaluations are to be submitted via [my.evergreen.edu](https://my.evergreen.edu). Evaluation conferences may occur over the phone or Zoom and should be scheduled with your faculty. For more information about evaluations, see the section, “The Evaluation Process” at <https://www.evergreen.edu/our-learning-approach/narrative-evaluations>.

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### **Credit**

Students will receive **6 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 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.

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## 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.

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## Course Policies

**Student Work:** You are accountable for the work you submit. Within the classroom, all student work, conduct, and expectations are outlined in the student code of conduct, the MPA student handbook, our class syllabus, and our classes social conduct. Ultimately, you are responsible to your public. All graduate work can be considered practice for the practice of public administrations and hence help develop professional habits, embodying expected standards, and containing useful information that is trustworthy.

**Due Dates:** Assignments are due 5:59pm Thursdays. See Canvas.

**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.

**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.

**Human Subjects Review (HSR):** *Students will NOT collect original data for this class.*

**AI:** The use of AI is permitted on a class-by-class 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 \(1\)\(a\) Academic Dishonesty](#)).

If an assignment or activity in our class involves the use of AI, I 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. Using AI to write your assignments is prohibited. ADA considerations of AI are to be requested through [Access Services](#).

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

**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. Students may request resource writing assistance from faculty and/or the Graduate Writing Assistant. You can contact our writing support at: EvergreenWritingAssistant@gmail.com ; 360-867-6820 ; LAB I, Room 3016. Also, a guide to student writing at Evergreen can be accessed through the campus Writing Center: <https://inkwellpublication.wordpress.com/>

**Writing Style:** Washington State has "plain talk" guidelines for all documents, websites, and publications that are public facing. As public administrators in Washington, you are encouraged to follow these guidelines. <https://governor.wa.gov/issues/efficient-government/plain-language/plain-language-guidelines>.

**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.

**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. 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 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 & 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 TESC](#)**

**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. 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:** In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check with for announcements of campus closures. Students can call the main campus line 360-867-6000 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 the start 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.

**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 Tribal governments, Tribal organizations, or Indigenous 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 the students and faculty involved.

### Winter Schedule (Faculty may alter schedule)

These topics and reading assignments may change throughout the course of the quarter, depending on our speed and interests. Changes will be announced in class.

Week	Topic, readings, assignments
Week 1 January 8	Managing public organizations: how we got here, where are we going <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required readings:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rainey Chapters 1, 2, 4</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommended readings:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rainey Chapters 3, 5</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 2 January 15	Team building I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required readings:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Denhardt, Denhardt, and Aristigueta Chapters 6, 7</li> <li>○ Rainey Chapter 10, 11</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 3 January 22	Team building II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required readings:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Denhardt, Denhardt, and Aristigueta Chapters 10, 11</li> <li>○ Rainey Chapter 12</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Due: Teamwork plan</li> </ul>
Saturday class January 24	Navigating Local Government

Week 4 January 29	Organizational structure and setting organizational goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rainey Chapters 6, 8</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 5 February 5	Decision making, management, and organizational change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Argyris "How to teach smart people how to learn"</li> <li>○ Schön's <i>Reflective Practitioner</i> on Reflection in Action</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 6 February 12	Dissent and organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ O'Leary (2017) + case study</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 7 February 19	Assessing the organizational environment - SWOT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bryson Chapter 5</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 8 February 26	Organizational change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rainey 13, 14</li> <li>○ Denhardt, Denhardt, and Aristigueta, Chapter 12</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 9 March 5	Collaborative governance: organizations within networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Koliba Chapter 3</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 10 March 12	Collaborative governance: organizations in adaptive systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Koliba Chapter 7</li> </ul> </li> </ul>