

NONPROFIT LEADERS CONFERENCE DOING DEMOCRATIC PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ---TACOMA (CRN 20201) WINTER 2026

FACULTY

Michael Crow, Ph.D.
crawm@evergreen.edu

Olga Inglebritson, Ed.D.
Olga.Inglebritson1@evergreen.edu

Office hours are by appointment

CLASS LOCATION & MEETING TIMES

Wednesdays 6:00 – 8:50 pm TAC 218

Saturday, January 24, 9:00 am – 3:50 pm, TAC 218 OR Zoom (link on Canvas)

Course Canvas page: <https://canvas.evergreen.edu/courses/7850>

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

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
- Evaluate and manage organizational change

COURSE CREDIT EQUIVALENCIES

- 2 – Team Building
- 4 – Organization Theory

COMMUNICATIONS

The faculty encourage and expect contact from you over the quarter. The easiest way to reach us is by e-mail (Olga.Inglebritson1@evergreen.edu and 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: You are not required to purchase books for this course.

The two main e-books (available as e-books through Evergreen's Library) are:

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>

O'Leary, Rosemary. 2020. The Ethics of Dissent: Managing Guerilla Government. 3rd ed. Available at https://alliance-evergreen.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ALLIANCE_EVSC/1qa5k1c/alma99900482994701845

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 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

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. 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.

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 Wednesday at 6 pm. You must complete at least five of these responses on time to earn credit in this course.

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 Olympia 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.

Webinars and podcasts: Outside of class time, you will participate in listen to at least 5 hours of webinars or podcasts of your choice that make you more familiar with the practice of public and nonprofit administration. The American Society of Public Administration hosts webinars, podcasts, and other events available for free on its E-Learning site (<https://aspanet.org/ASPA/ASPA/Events/E-Learning/E-Learning-Portal.aspx?hkey=639c82ad-2875-47bc-9e2d-cc67f736042d>). You may also participate in other webinars or podcasts that enhance your professional development in public administration so long as they are not required as part of another MPA course. Faculty will announce additional webinars and events that are appropriate for this assignment in class.

After completing your Saturday and webinar participation, you will submit a reflection essay of at least 1000 words on your experience. Your reflection paper is due no later than **Friday, March 20**.

Analytic Essays: You will complete two assignments that require you to apply the analytical tools that you learned over the course to problems in public and nonprofit 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, February 1 and your response will be due on **Sunday, February 8**. You will receive your second essay question by Sunday, March 8 and it will be due on **Sunday, March 15**.

Organizational Analysis (Group Project): 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

You will complete this project as a member of a faculty-assigned team of 3-4 students. **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.

Your team will complete the organizational analysis in the following steps:

- 1) Team contract:** Your team will prepare and submit a document that describes the roles of each team member and how you plan to hold each other accountable (instructions are posted on Canvas). **Due Sunday, January 18.**
- 2) Organizational background:** Your team will submit a background paper of at least 3 pages (750 words) on your organization that describes its mission, history, programs, and basic internal structure (such as an organization chart). **Due Sunday, February 1.**
- 3) Draft paper:** Your team will submit a complete draft of its organizational analysis by **Sunday February 22.**
- 4) Final paper:** Your team will submit its final organizational analysis paper at our class mini-conference on **Wednesday, March 11.** Your team should be prepared with a presentation of no more than 10 minutes and to manage a 5-minute question and answer session on your findings.

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).

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: : Unless otherwise stated, all papers should be typed, double spaced, 12 point font, and follow a standard citation and referencing style such as APA

(<https://apastyle.apa.org/>). All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors (Purdue University's Online Writing Laboratory provides useful resources here: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>). Follow the Federal Plain Language Guidelines (<https://digital.gov/guides/plain-language>) for writing that is clear, concise, and accessible. Sometimes your faculty will ask you to work with a writing assistant; if so, you are required to do so to the satisfaction of your faculty member.

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 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 \(1\)\(a\)](#). 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) 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

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

Date	Topic and reading assigned
Wednesday, January 7	<p>Bureaucratic Success and Failure Recommended: McRay, Why Nonprofit Overhead Matters: Debunking the Overhead Myth Once and For All" (https://www.501c3.org/why-nonprofit-overhead-matters-debunking-the-overhead-myth-once-and-for-all/)</p> <p>Will view UnCharitable in class</p>
Wednesday, January 14	<p>Team-building Rainey, Chap. 12, "Teamwork: Understanding Communication and Conflict in Groups" Denhardt, et.al., Chapter 10, "Working in Groups and Teams"</p>
Sunday, January 18	Team Contract Due
Wednesday, January 21	<p>Evaluating Hierarchies Coase, "The Nature of the Firm" Eisenhardt, "Agency Theory: An Assessment and Review"</p>
Saturday, January 24	Navigating Local Government (Joint Session with Olympia)
Wednesday, January 28	<p>Setting Organizational Goals Rainey, Chapter 6, "Organizational Goals, Effectiveness, and Performance" Centers for Disease Control, "Evaluation Guide: Writing SMART Objectives" Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972), "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice"</p>
Sunday, February 1	Team Organizational Background Due
Wednesday, February 4	<p>Decision-making and Management Rainey, Chapter 7, "Formulating and Achieving Purpose: Power, decision Making and strategy" W.K. Kellogg Foundation, excerpts from "Logic Model Development Guide: Using Logic Models to Bring Together Planning, Evaluation, and Action." https://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/Programs/Public-Health-Infrastructure/KelloggLogicModelGuide_161122_162808.pdf</p>
Sunday, February 8	Analytic Essay 1 Due

Wednesday, February 11	<p>Workplace Values and Culture Rainey, Chapter 10: Understanding People in Public Organizations: Values, Incentives, and Work-Related Attitudes Meier (2023), "Representative Bureaucracy and Social Equity: Bias, Perceived Fairness, and Efficacy" Leslie, "The Wisdom of Crowds? Groupthink and Nonprofit Governance"</p>
Wednesday, February 18	<p>Dissent in an Organization O'Leary, The Ethics of Dissent (chapters 1-4)</p>
Sunday, February 22	Team Organizational Analysis Draft Due
Wednesday, February 25	<p>Dissent and Organizational Change O'Leary, The Ethics of Dissent (chapters 5-7) Fernandez and Rainey, "Managing Successful Organizational Change in the Public Sector" Walker, "When is it Ethical to Resign in Protest?" https://afsa.org/when-it-ethical-resign-protest</p>
Wednesday, March 4	<p>Collaborative Governance Rainey, Chapter 14, "Advancing Public Management through Collaboration" Kania and Kramer, "Collective Impact" Weaver, "Solving the Puzzle of Collaborative Governance"</p>
Wednesday, March 11	<p>Course Mini-Conference Team Organizational Analysis due at 6 p.m.</p>
Sunday, March 15	Analytic Essay 2 Due
Friday, March 20	Professional Development Reflection Essay Due