

Public Procurement

Summer 2026 (July 30 – September 2)

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, value fairness and equity, advocate powerfully on behalf of the public, and imagine new possibilities in order to accomplish positive change in our workplace and in our communities.

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Delivery: Remote

This course is self-paced and work is done asynchronously - there will be no regular class meetings.

The contents for course will be available on canvas on July 30, 2026. The course is organized in three modules with various self-paced activities.

- Module 1: July 30 – August 12
- Module 2: August 13 – August 26
 - Contract analysis assignment is due August 26
- August 27 – September 2
 - Request for Proposal (RFP) assignment is due September 2

Course Description: An important contemporary administrative issue is the delivery of public goods and services. This course will review how governments deliver services, primarily focusing on procurement and contracting and the resulting delivery networks. As Laurence O’Toole proclaims “*Those tasked with public management must often seek to operate on structurally uncertain terrain, firmament that can include ties with patterns of not-for-profits and profit-seeking entities as well as multiple formally governed institutions*”. Public sector organizations form working relationships with communities, other governments, nonprofit, and for-profit firms through contracts. The course will discuss the tools managers need to form, operate, terminate, or transform these contracts and purchasing agreements. Students will

examine contracting environments of their own interests and understand the dynamics, technical, and political aspects of contracting with different types of vendors in public service delivery networks.

Learning objectives and student competencies:

1. Describe the roles, organization and functions of public procurement and contracting.
2. Explain the steps in the procurement and contracting cycles, and analyze the stakeholder relationships inherent in each of these steps.
3. Be able to understand and evaluate how cultural, social, political, economic, and legal environments impact public contracting.
4. Be able to understand and explain the importance of ethics and professionalism in public service contracting.

Required Readings

Books: THE REQUIRED TEXT IS AVAILABLE AS FREE EBOOKS FROM The Evergreen State College LIBRARY!

Cohen, Steven & William Eimicke (2008). *The responsible contract manager: protecting the public interest in an outsourced world*. Georgetown University Press.

Suggested Readings

Brown, M., Potoski, T., and David Van Slyke (2013). *Complex contracting*. Cambridge University Press.

Cooper, Phillip (2002). *Governing by contract: challenges and opportunities for public managers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press.

****Additional Readings will be posted on the course Canvas site.****

Summer 2026 schedule (Faculty may alter schedule and reading assignments)

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
Module 1	The basics and background: Ethics and contracting in democratic settings	Cohen & Eimicke, Chapters 1-4 (Part I)
Module 2	Managing contractors	Cohen & Eimicke, Chapters 7,8 (Part III) Contract analysis assignment is due (August 20)
Module 3	Contracting and procurement in practice: Washington State	Guidelines for local governments in Washington State (MRSC) RFP assignment is due at the end of the summer session (September 2)!

Student Assignments / Basis of Evaluation

1. *Participation in asynchronous learning activities (discussion posts)* – Students must be prepared to engage in asynchronous discussions after having completed the assigned readings.

If you are unable to participate in the required asynchronous discussion posts, please notify the instructor to find a way to make up the work. Students will be required to participate in discussions (asynchronous posts) that reflect readings, class discussions, and other course related work. These asynchronous discussion entries are a chance for you to reflect on what we are learning and to comment on professional development throughout the course.

2. *Contract analysis* – Find a public agency contract (you should be able to locate some from online databases). How do public managers specify the contractual obligations? Below are some of the features that public managers may specify when drafting a contract:

- a. Vendor tasks (the nature and scope of work)
- b. Outcome measures (performance-based criteria, etc)
- c. Vendor qualifications
- d. Payment schedules
- e. Contract duration (short or long term)
- f. Incentives and sanctions (rewards and punishments)
- g. Renewal provisions
- h. Reporting requirements

To complete the assignment, select a contract from a public agency of your choice (can be federal, state, local, or a Tribal government). Describe the vendor based on what information is available: type of vendor, capacity, experience, etc. (look up the vendor online). Identify what features have the public managers specified (from the list above). It is possible that not all features are specified (more incomplete contract). Similarly, it is possible that there are additional features that are specified that are not listed above. For example, the use of subcontractors, and other parties in the process.

3. *Request for Proposals Assignment (RFP)* – This assignment requires students to take on the role of public managers and draft a Request for Proposals (RFP). Students will create an RFP that:
 - a. Provides a clear statement of a project (service)’s purpose.
 - b. Presents a system or process.
 - c. Identifies the perceived need and any other background information that may be appropriate.
 - d. Explains what the contract is intended to accomplish.

Templates, and sample RFPs, will be provided on canvas.

Course Policies

Format: Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments should be typed, double spaced, 12 point font, and follow APA format and citation style (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.

Participation and attendance: Students are required to participate in asynchronous discussion posts in a timely manner and within the established deadlines.

Late assignments: Turning in assignments late is unacceptable. However, if there is an unavoidable need to turn in an assignment late, the student should contact the faculty no later than the original assignment due date to discuss options. Parameters are left to the discretion of the faculty on a situation-by-situation basis. Late assignments must be completed by the revised due date to ensure full receipt of course credit.

Credit: Students will receive two 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. Full loss of credit decisions will be made by the faculty. 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.

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 the2 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. While Evergreen moves toward putting religious holidays into the online campus calendar, check the University of Washington's [religious holidays calendar](#).

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 TESC](#).

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.

Evaluation: A written self-evaluation and faculty evaluation are required for credit. All final evaluations are to be submitted via my.evergreen.edu. Evaluation conferences may occur in-person, over zoom, or over the phone.

Multiculturalism and 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 including but not limited to race, ethnicity, color, nationality, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, class, sexual orientation, age, religion, (dis)ability, and veteran status.

Technology use and learning styles: We all have different ways of acquiring new knowledge. Therefore, faculty will actively work towards providing information in multiple formats: tactile, auditory, visual, experiential, etc.

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 and 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.

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](#).

Communicating: Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. Students are responsible for checking their Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.