Local Government Management

This class examines the challenges of governing urban areas from a public management perspective. As an applied class in a professional degree program, the focus is on developing enlightened practitioners able to mix insights gained from theory, professional practice, and independent research. Critical thinking skills are stressed, as are strategies for producing positive community change. The course content will benefit students with a range of goals, whether they seek careers as academic researchers, analysts, consultants, or managers. The class content could also benefit those considering careers as elected officials, policy advocates, and journalists.

Required Textbooks:


Please notify the instructor immediately, if you have problems getting these books. *Additional readings will be available weekly on the Vista course home page.*

Learning Objectives:

Comprehend the unique role that societies play in the world economy and the important role of leaders in efforts to address societal problems.

Know the structural characteristics of local governments in the United States, including the roles and responsibilities of both elected and appointed officials (assessed by the midterm and final.)

Apply your knowledge of structure to assess the challenges faced by public managers, elected officials, and citizens when seeking to change and/or improve government policies and outcomes (assessed by class discussions, the position paper, and the midterm and final.)

Comprehend and apply strategies, tools, technologies, processes, and ideas that can help overcome structural and other challenges that impede effective community leadership (assessed by class discussions, the position paper, and the midterm and final.)
Apply knowledge of performance management and evaluation to addressing local government issues (assessed by class discussions, the position paper, and the midterm and final.)

Comprehend and apply the writing and analytical skills needed to be an active participant in the local government management environment (assessed by the position paper and the midterm and final.)

As described here, this syllabus provides a plan for this class. There may be errors that need to be corrected at some point, and deviations in this plan may occur for any number of reasons, illness, the weather, et cetera.

This online syllabus is a dynamic document and it will be updated as the need arises. I recommend that students review the syllabus online rather than printing and keeping an original. Students will be notified of any changes, of course, but it is easy to lose track of these events across a lengthy semester.

Office Hours:

I will hold formal office hours from 2pm-4pm on Monday in room 316 of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies. Meetings can also be scheduled at a mutually convenient time. I will also be answering questions via telephone during office hours. You can reach your instructor by telephone at (404) 939-1235. Stay on the line, if I am away, and you will get my voice mail. This is a Google Voice number, and it rings multiple phones, emails me messages, et cetera. There is no need to call multiple numbers to reach me. Electronic mail can be sent via the Internet to gstreib@gsu.edu. Online office hours are available on request for students with access to a computer and a headset microphone.

Effective Email Communication:

Email has become our primary mode of communication, and needs to be done well. Consider these basic requirements as essential when communicating with your instructor.

- Many issues play out over a span of time, and they should be confined to a single email thread. That is, always respond to the previous email, and always make sure that the previous emails remain intact.
- Pick one email address at the start of class for me and for yourself and stick with it. I can find your emails easier if they all come from the same place. Likewise, spreading your correspondence with me across several email accounts does not help me to understand you better.
- Do not send the same email and/or attachments to me multiple times. I make it my job to keep track of your correspondence. Multiple mailings are not necessary. Reminders when you do not hear from me are welcome.
- I certainly prefer that you use an email address with some portion of your name in it. GSU gives you such an ID, for example.
- You should always use a signature that gives your contact information, should I need additional information. Your signature should list other email addresses, if you are sending emails to me from multiple accounts.
- You need to use subject lines that say something meaningful. Imagine someone revisiting this topic a month later. Will the subject line help me to find this email at a later point in time? I think that we will both benefit from these simple practices. Class issues often span 3-4 months.
It is essential that students submit all of their classwork work using uLearn.

The 8351 Class on the Web:

Using uLearn benefits everyone by speeding up the grading process, keeping all class documents in one convenient place, and giving students more information about their class performance. Help make it work!

The uLearn assignment tool shows your submitted files, and you can even view them. There is no reason to ever submit the wrong file or wonder if your file was actually submitted. Learn the features of the assignment drop box. What you see as a submitted file is what I get, and I have never encountered an exception to this rule. You have the ability to make sure that you have submitted the right file, and there is no need to bog down the grading process with duplicate submissions or incorrect files.

I will sometimes send work back to students and offer the opportunity to produce a revision. Watch for new activity on your submitted tab and your graded tab. Returned files show up under submissions...bearing a (2), (3), etc., depending on the version, and you can retrieve comments on your graded work using the graded tab.

Midterm and the Final Exam:

There will be a midterm and a final exam in this class. Both exams are take-homes in a traditional essay format with multiple questions to answer. Time limits vary, and you will find more information about deadlines in the class outline. Completed midterm exams should be in the range of 9-12 double-spaced pages (in total). Good final exams are in the 6-8 page range. You will have a good idea of what will be required on both exams before you see them, but the basic requirements are good writing, analytical thinking, and knowledge of the book reading assignments. Indeed, a knowledge of the class readings matters to the extent that students should have at least 5 direct (cited) references to assigned readings in each individual exam question.

Class Participation:

There are two classroom-related assignments, as shown below:

Class Participation: The goal is to make each class so interesting that students will be sad to miss them, and we will all need to pull together to make this happen. High levels of student participation are essential. Thus, class participation will be 20% of your grade. Class attendance is the foundation for good participation, and there will be a sign up sheet available at the end of each class to record your attendance. Good participation links a class content with class discussions, current events, and past experience. This participation requirement need not be a burden, as this is a very interesting class, addressing most of the major issues of the day in one way or another. Stay informed, keep up with the class readings, and get engaged.

Class Leadership Assignment: Every student will be required to lead off two class discussions by providing their own critical assessment of an article, web page, case, or video (as assigned by your instructor). No presentation may exceed 5 minutes, and distilling out the most important information is part of the job. The goal of the leader is to assess the utility of the ideas presented for research and practice, highlight any
unreasonable assumptions, and identify any lingering issues, and/or strengths. These leadership opportunities will be listed a Google docs sign-up sheet available on the uLearn home page--first-come, first-served.

Each class leadership opportunity is worth up to 25 points, and a written summary of your thoughts is also required--short and to the point (just like your presentation). Your complete summary must be posted on uLearn--no exceptions.

Class Paper:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Paper Assignment</th>
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<td>The goal of a position paper is to present a compelling opinion on a local issue; in the context of this class, position papers will take the form of a recommendation for action. Position papers typically establish a justification for a single specific action or a range of suitable options. Professional local government managers typically present a range of options and leave it up to elected officials to make the final choice. Your approach to this paper should suit your interests and goals.</td>
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The key to success is often developing a thorough understanding of the issue or program that you want to address as well as alternate points of view. In keeping with the action orientation of this class, students must interview at least two community leaders who can enhance their understanding of divergent views about their topic and/or the practicalities of any solutions are considering.

General discussions of position papers can be found on the Internet, of course, and we will also have a couple of readings in class on this subject. Assume a broad audience of elected officials, concerned citizens, and other relevant stakeholders. Thus, you need to provide some information about the topic you address so those not directly involved will understand the logic of your argument.

You should understand that this is expected to be a very well written paper. Several drafts will be needed to get this right. Clear writing is expected, of course, but you must also present a convincing argument. Leadership in local government affairs requires the ability to make a convincing case, and learning how to do this will be an important part of this course.

Excellent papers will build off the class writing tips and use a higher level cognitive skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Your goal is to convince, rather than to inform. Students sometimes stress the human impact of their issue or problem, and this is relevant, but why is action justified? You need not present a budget, but any proposed solution for a public problem must acknowledge resource limitations.
Your finished paper should be roughly 8 to 10 double spaced pages in length. One complete document should be submitted that includes your title, name, the date and page numbers. Also, include your name on the electronic file name.

Students are also responsible for a 5 minute presentation with the goal of presenting a compelling case for action to our classroom audience. The time limit will be strictly enforced. Students will present four at a time, and the presentations will be followed by a panel style question and answer session.

Doctoral students appear in this class on occasion, and they will be given the latitude to determine the type of paper that they would like to write with or without the interview component.

Plagiarism or Cheating:

Students need to do their own work in this class. This is essential to mastering the knowledge and skills that we cover. Students plagiarizing or cheating in any form will face disciplinary action that could result in receiving an “F” in this course, suspension, or expulsion from the University. Make no mistake, your instructor will act on evidence of plagiarism. If a student is ever unclear as to what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, regarding work on written or oral presentations, please consult the student handbook and/or your instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to know the meaning of plagiarism and when it occurs. The following is reprinted from the GSU Student Handbook:

Plagiarism is presenting another person’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgement, including the summarizing of another student’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the faculty member. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one’s reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. It is also plagiarism to reuse material you prepared for different courses in the same program. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

Areas that may need more clarification are the use of material from other classes and collusion on homework assignments. You are not allowed to submit work done in other classes for a grade in this class—whole past projects or significant parts. Nor can you submit work work that incorporates significant contributions from others as your own (and hiring an editor could constitute a violation.). More information about the GSU plagiarism policy can be found here.

Grading:
Final course grades will be determined as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Component</th>
<th>Available Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Leadership Assignment</td>
<td>2*25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position Paper</td>
<td>250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>50</td>
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1000

Students must earn 900+ points to receive a grade of "A," 800+ points to earn a "B," and 700+ points to earn a grade of "C." Incomplete grades will only be given for nonacademic reasons when advance arrangements have been made. In this class, a B is the expected grade for good, competent work. Grades in the A range are reserved for excellent work. Excellent work goes beyond the minimum in some important way. Plus and minus grades will be used in this class for final course grades when a grade is within 15 percent of a lower or higher grade. For example, a final point total of 815 or less is a B-. Likewise, a score of 885 or above is B+. An A+ is possible for work of extraordinary quality across the entire class.

You will be able to check your scores on the class home page. Grades on the exams and the written assignments will be presented on a 100 point scale, so that you can better evaluate your performance. A weighted point total will be provided around the middle of the course, which will allow you to see how well you are doing.

Policy on Late Assignments:

Achieving our class goals requires steady progress, and penalties for late work help to keep everyone current. The grade on any assignment turned in more than 10 minutes after the deadline (by my time) will be reduced one half of a letter grade (5 percent). There will be another half letter grade reduction for each additional 6 hour period, up to a 50% reduction. I will accept late work at any point in the class with a 50% penalty. You are always better off completing assignments, no matter how late they are. I will make allowances for technical problems and personal issues, but certainly not on a recurring basis. Note that late assignments can be submitted on uLearn up till the very end of the class. There is no need to send them via email.

PMAP Career Services Office:

The Department of Public Management and Policy (PMAP) provides career support services to all current PMAP students and alumni. Students are invited to meet with Dr. Maggie Tolan, the Director of Academic Programs and Alumni Affairs, to discuss resume
writing, interviewing, job searching, internship development, and networking. To see what career panels, career fairs, and events are available this semester, please visit: http://aysps.gsu.edu/paus/career.html. Make the most of your education by utilizing these great resources. Students are encouraged to arrange an individualized appointment with Dr. Tolan by emailing: mtolan@gsu.edu. Her office is located in room 328 in the PMAP Department.

PMAA Community Network:

The PMAA Community Network (PMAA:CN) student organization aims to connect Public Management & Policy (PMAA) students, faculty and alumni through social functions, speakers and other events while enhancing the academic and social experiences of students in Public Management and Policy. The student organization is open undergraduate and graduate students.

Start Networking!

I try to focus on developing on the professional skills of my students, and networking is a part of that picture. I encourage students to use LinkedIn, and to add me to your professional network. You will likely find other faculty on LinkedIn that you know and other students and professionals in your interest areas. There is also a PMAP network, an MPA/MPP network, Governing Magazine group, et cetera.

COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

Class One, January 12

Introduction to the Course

Goals: Student introductions and a review of the class objectives. Welcome to the class!

Tip: Make sure that you read the syllabus carefully. Students who tell me about typos or confusing passages are much appreciated.

Note: Please complete the Local Government Student Data Sheet, if you have not done this already. You will find it on the uLearn page in a variety of formats.

Class Two, January 19

The Rise of the Modern City

Goals: Learn about the evolution of cities, forms of local government, and local responsibilities.

Readings: The class readings for tonight will be available on uLearn. There will also be an opportunity for students to sign up for a class leadership role.
Additional Tasks: Review the blog postings on uLearn.

Class Three, January 26

The Profession of Local Government Management

Goals: Explore different views on political and administrative roles and relationships in the modern city.

Readings: The Effective Local Government Manager, Chapter 1. You will also find at least one additional reading on uLearn, and you have the option of signing up for a class leadership role.

Additional Tasks: Review the blog postings on uLearn.

Class Four, February 2

Building Successful Communities

Goals: Ways to get things done in a time of gridlock and polarized politics.

Readings: The class readings for tonight will be available on uLearn. There will also be an opportunity for students to sign up for a class leadership role.

Additional Tasks: Review the blog postings on uLearn.

Class Five, February 9

Providing Effective Community Leadership

Goals: Learn more about the community leadership role of city managers.

Readings: The Effective Local Government Manager, Chapter 2. You will also find at least one additional reading on uLearn, and you have the option of signing up for a class leadership role.

Additional Tasks: Review the blog postings on uLearn.

Class Six, February 16

Intergovernmental Relationships

Goals: Learn about the state of relationships between competing local governments and other levels of the federal system.

Readings: The class readings for tonight will be available on uLearn. There will also be an opportunity for students to sign up for a class leadership role.
Additional Tasks: Review the blog postings on uLearn.

**Class Seven, February 23**

**Midterm Exam**

Exam: Your exam will be available on uLearn by 10:00am, and it is due by 12 noon on the 27th.

Tip: Carefully consider the writing tips discussed in the last class and remember that it is very important that you display a knowledge of the class materials.

**Class Eight, March 9**

**Enhancing the Governing Body's Effectiveness**

Readings: Goals: Learn how to enhance the effectiveness of a governing body.

Readings: *The Effective Local Government Manager, Chapter 3. You will also find at least one additional reading on uLearn, and you have the option of signing up for a class leadership role.*

Additional Tasks: Review the blog postings on uLearn.

**Class Nine, March 16**

**Promoting the Community's Future**

Goals: Learn how to advocate effectively to enhance a community's future.

Readings: *The Effective Local Government Manager, Chapter 4. You will also find at least one additional reading on uLearn, and you have the option of signing up for a class leadership role.*

Additional Tasks: Review the blog postings on uLearn.

**Class 10, March 23**

**Essential Management Practices**

Goals: Learn about the tools and practices that help local governments to perform effectively.

Readings: *The Effective Local Government Manager, Chapter 5. You will also find at least one additional reading on uLearn, and you have the option of signing up for a class leadership role.*

Additional Tasks: Review the blog postings on uLearn.
Class 11, March 30

Policy Implementation, Productivity, and Program Evaluation

Goals: Learn how to achieve excellence in local government service delivery.

Readings: The Effective Local Government Manager, Chapter 6. You will also find at least one additional reading on uLearn, and you have the option of signing up for a class leadership role.

Additional Tasks: Review the blog postings on uLearn.

Class 12, April 6

Relating to Other Organizations

Goals: Learn about the relationships between local governments and other organizations.

Readings: The Effective Local Government Manager, Chapter 7. You will also find at least one additional reading on uLearn, and you have the option of signing up for a class leadership role.

Additional Tasks: Review the blog postings on uLearn.

Your last chance to submit your class leadership presentation notes, which are required for a grade—12 noon on April 10.

Class 13, April 13

Position Paper Presentations

Focus on convincing the class with your position paper presentation. We will do two groups of 4-5 each night, with a break after each group for questions and discussion.

Class 14, April 20

Position Paper Presentations

Focus on convincing the class with your position paper presentation. We will do two groups of 4-5 each night, with a break after each group for questions and discussion.

Your paper must be submitted by 12 noon on April 24.

Final Exam, Will be available at 10:00am on April 27 and due by 11pm on April 30th. Note: You must submit your exam on the uLearn home page.