

# Course Syllabus - Local Government Management PADP 7500

Spring Semester 2017  
Wednesdays 6:50 – 9:50 PM  
Classroom: 3rd floor conference room, Lucy Cobb  
201 N. Milledge Avenue  
Office Hours: By Appointment (scheduled via email)

Instructor: Dr. Laura Meadows  
Office: Lucy Cobb 215  
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## **Course Objectives**

The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the practice of local government management. Key issues in several functional areas of local government service will be highlighted, and professionals either now or recently involved in the practice of local government management will serve as resource persons for the course. In addition to the substantive coverage of the course, it is also designed to help students determine whether they want to pursue a career in local government and how their skills, interests, and education might align with a career in local government.

Note: This course was originally organized by Dr. Del Dunn, who has held many roles at UGA including that of Vice President for Instruction, Director of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG), and is currently Regents Professor Emeritus in the School of Public and International Affairs. He was originally assisted in the design of the course by Mr. Harry Hayes, a CVIOG faculty member who will be assisting with the course this semester. Ms. Mara Register, also a CVIOG faculty member, assisted with the current iteration of the course. Both Mr. Hayes and Ms. Register enjoyed long and distinguished local government management careers before joining CVIOG. Their contributions are greatly appreciated.

There are no prerequisites, corequisites, or cross-listings for this course.

## **Textbooks**

### **Primary Materials**

Newell, C. (Ed.). (2004). *The effective local government manager* (3rd ed.). Washington, D.C.: ICMA Press. ISBN: 0873261437.

Stenberg, C. & Austin, S. (Eds.). (2007). *Managing local government services: A practical guide*. Washington, D.C.: ICMA Press. ISBN: 0873267095.

*Note: These books provide the best overview of local government available but are no longer in print. There are a few used copies available online. If you are unable to purchase a used copy, electronic versions are available from [icma.org](http://icma.org).*

*You may want to consider becoming a member of ICMA to enjoy a discounted rate on publications. Additional benefits of membership include the biweekly ICMA Newsletter, job postings, and networking opportunities. Contact Kristen Hill ([Kristen.hill25@uga.edu](mailto:Kristen.hill25@uga.edu)) to join the local student chapter.*

## **Supplementary Materials**

### *Practitioner Guides*

Perry, J. (2010). *Blueprint for building community: Leadership insights for good government*. Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse.

Powell, O. (2002). *City management: Keys to success*. Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse.

### *Skills*

Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (2011). *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in* (Upd Rev ed.). New York: Penguin Books.

Smith, C. (2015). *Writing public policy: A practical guide to communicating in the policy-making process*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.

Strunk, W. & White, E. B. (1999). *The elements of style* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Pearson.

Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S. (2010). *Difficult conversations: How to discuss what matters most* (10<sup>th</sup> anv upd ed.). New York: Penguin Books.

## **Additional Resources**

Helpful websites for your work include but are not limited to: [cviog.uga.edu](http://cviog.uga.edu), [icma.org](http://icma.org), [nlc.org](http://nlc.org), [naco.org](http://naco.org), [accg.org](http://accg.org), and [gmanet.com](http://gmanet.com). Setting a Google alert for “local government” should also be helpful.

In addition to the required textbooks and websites listed above, there are a number of good publications for students to consider when preparing for midterm and final projects, presentations, and class engagement. These include *Governing Magazine* (published by *Congressional Quarterly*), *Public Management* (published by the International City/County Management Association), and the *Public Administration Review*. These and other research-oriented journals are available as e-journals at [www.libs.uga.edu](http://www.libs.uga.edu).

## **Course Format**

The course is generally divided into four sections. The first four weeks will consider the general functions of local government management, the place of local government in the federal system, and the manager’s relationships with the governing board, citizens, interest groups, and the media. The next three weeks will be devoted to the internal management functions of government under the general category of management support services such as legal affairs, finance, and human resources. The next five weeks will generally focus on services provided by local government. The final three weeks will be devoted to student presentations and a discussion of the future of local government.

Each week will feature a panel of distinguished local government practitioners from across the state who have graciously agreed to give their time for the benefit of students. The format of each class will include a self-introduction to the panelists by each class member, followed by presentations by each guest panelist. Following the presentations, the class will engage with the panelists through a facilitated question-and-answer session. Students are expected to listen attentively and to ask questions or make comments during this session.

## **Course Requirements and Grading**

To be effective in one's career, and especially as a local government manager, a professional needs to aspire to the following attributes: 1) to be consistently present and on time, 2) to be a good listener, 3) to be an organized and persuasive writer, 4) to be an effective presenter, and 5) to be able to engage in meaningful discussions with a broad set of peers and constituents, both individually and in group meetings. Grading in this course will reflect these elements.

### **Class Participation (20%)**

Attendance and punctuality are expected. As stated previously, some of the most esteemed local government practitioners in the state have agreed to be panelists. Out of respect for the guest panelists and because it is common practice in small group meetings, laptops and other mobile devices will not be allowed for note taking. It is expected that all students display active listening and engage in each question-and-answer session. In lieu of a question, a thoughtful comment will suffice. Individual participation will be recorded and quality as well as the frequency of comments and questions will be noted by the instructor. Class participation by all students will add tremendously to the overall value of the course.

### **External Research Abstracts (5% each, 15% total)**

Each student will do additional research on the week's topic at three points throughout the semester. Due dates for each student will be assigned during the second class session. Students should locate a few articles from reputable and recent external sources, choose the most interesting, and provide a summary. Summaries should include what the article is about, why it is important, and how it builds on the required reading from the textbooks.

These summaries should be a maximum of two double-spaced pages with one inch margins using 12-point font. A citation should be included at the top of the page and should follow the reference list style of the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Summaries will be emailed to the instructor (lmeadows@uga.edu) by 12:00 pm on the Monday preceding the assigned class. These abstracts will be posted on eLC and are required reading for other students prior to class.

### **Midterm Project: Issue Brief (20%)**

Students will research an issue and present the information they believe most relevant to local government decision making. Students will select a topic by drawing on issues raised in the course to date. Students will write from the perspective of a department head or assistant manager of a local government and will address the brief to his or her city/county manager using memo-style formatting with a summary and subheadings as needed. Information related to writing memos, including format, is available on eLC. Students may create an argument and provide options and recommendations but are not required to do so for this assignment. Focus should be given to identifying which information is most important and providing an efficient summary. *Examples of possible topics include, but are not limited to: wellness programs, requiring physical fitness assessments for police, retirement plan offerings, recruiting millennials, educational stipends and training opportunities, application of open records laws to police body camera footage, and whether to use state contract or conduct a request for proposals.*

The brief will incorporate course readings, information gleaned from class presentations, and reputable and recent external sources. Briefs will be a maximum of six double-spaced pages with one inch margins using 12-point font. All references will follow the guidelines found in the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. One hard copy of the brief will be submitted to the instructor in class on March 1.

### **Final Project: Policy Memo (30%) & Class Presentation (15%)**

Local elected officials are often in part-time roles and may not have administrative expertise. They rely on their appointed manager or administrator to provide them with the information they need to make informed decisions. For the purposes of this assignment, students may wish to choose a specific local government for the setting of the assignment in order to provide context such as existing ordinances, state law, political climate, and guidance from the charter. Students may wish to attend a meeting of the governing body to listen to presentations and review the materials from agenda packets that are often posted online.

Students will prepare a policy memo and presentation from the perspective of a city or county manager guiding a council or commission in a decision-making process. Students will select an issue based on personal interest that reflects the contemporary practice of local government management. Students will email the instructor (lmeadows@uga.edu) with 3-4 sentences explaining the issue no later than the beginning of class on March 15 to receive approval. *Examples of possible topics include, but are not limited to: social media and free speech of employees, improving service delivery through functional consolidation, accessing grants and other resources for economic development, overcoming traffic congestion, replacing water delivery infrastructure, strategies for lowering the community's ISO rating, information technology security, establishing performance measures for one or more service, and financial strategies for reducing debt and unfunded liabilities.*

The structure and format of the policy memo should be crafted to effectively convey the relevant information but must include a summary, background, options, analysis (which may include potential costs, legal considerations, and public awareness efforts), and any other necessary subheadings. Competing perspectives on the issue should be explored as well as potential future developments around the topic. The memo should conclude with a recommendation and implementation suggestions. Information related to writing memos, including format, is available on eLC.

The memo will incorporate course readings, information gleaned from class presentations, and reputable and recent external sources. Memos will be a maximum of twelve double-spaced pages with one inch margins using 12-point font. Data tables or other meaningful appendices may be included beyond the twelve pages if needed to support the narrative. All references will follow the guidelines found in the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. One hard copy of the brief will be submitted to the instructor in class on April 26.

Individual presentations will be held during class time on April 12 and 19. Students should present as if presenting to a council or commission. This will include background information on the topic, possible options to pursue, analysis of the options (potential costs, legal considerations, and public awareness efforts), and recommendation for action and implementation. The presentations will last a maximum of ten minutes, followed by a maximum of five minutes of discussion with the class and instructor. PowerPoint or other visual aids may be utilized but are not required. Timing will be tightly enforced to allow enough time for all presentations and engagement from all class members. A random drawing will be held to determine date and order of presentation. Feedback received from the class presentation should help inform the final paper.

Expectations for both the paper and the presentation are that they are organized in thought, well reasoned, and well written or articulated. Both should synthesize information received from class panel discussions, assigned readings, and individual research.

### **Grading System**

The plus/minus letter grading system (i.e., A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F) is the official grading system approved by the Board of Regents and the only grading system approved for the University of Georgia. The assignment of letter grades in a course is the responsibility and discretion of the instructor.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students who have a disability that requires accommodations should contact the Disability Resource Center to discuss their needs and obtain appropriate paperwork. The instructor cannot make special accommodations for students with disabilities unless students have completed the appropriate paperwork to register with the Disability Resource Center.

### **Academic Honesty**

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy>. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

The University of Georgia defines **academic honesty** as "performing all academic work without plagiarism, cheating, lying, tampering, stealing, giving or receiving unauthorized assistance from any other person, or using any source of information that is not common knowledge without properly acknowledging the source." **Academic dishonesty** is defined as "performing, attempting to perform, or assisting any other person in performing any academic work that does not meet this standard of academic honesty."

According to the policy's **prohibited conduct**, "No student shall perform, attempt to perform, or assist another in performing any act of dishonesty on academic work to be submitted for academic credit or advancement. ***A student does not have to intend to violate the honesty policy to be found in violation.*** For example, plagiarism, intended or unintended, is a violation of this policy." The policy also states, "Any behavior that constitutes academic dishonesty is prohibited."

### **Contact Information for Mr. Hayes:**

Mr. Harry Hayes  
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**The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.**

## Course Outline

Date	Class Topic and Assignments Due	Reading Assignment - The Effective Local Government Manager	Reading Assignment - Managing Local Government Services
January 11	Introduction – Class Requirements; Forms of Local Government		Chapters 1 & 2
January 18	Careers in Local Government Management	Chapter 1 & 8	Chapter 3
January 25	Manager – Governing Board Relations	Chapter 3	
February 1	Citizens, Interest Groups, & the Media	Chapter 2	
February 8	Legal Issues in Local Government Administration		Chapter 2 (again)
February 15	Local Government Finance, Budgeting, Purchasing, Information Technology	Pages 130-149	Chapter 4
February 22	Human Resources & Personnel Systems	Pages 113-130, 148	Chapter 5
March 1	Planning & Community Development - <i>Midterm paper due</i>	Chapters 4 & 6	Chapters 6,7,8
March 8	No Class – Spring Break		
March 15	Economic Development - <i>Final project topics must be submitted for approval</i>	Chapter 4 (review)	Chapter 7
March 22	Developing An Effective Infrastructure		Chapter 9
March 29	Public Safety		Chapters 12, 13, 14
April 5	Parks, Recreation, & Beautification		Chapter 10
April 12	Class Presentations		
April 19	Class Presentations		
April 26	Future of Local Government - <i>Final Paper Due</i>	Chapter 7	Chapters 1, 15, 16