

PADP 7500: Local Government Management

Spring 2025

*University of Georgia
School of Public and International Affairs
Department of Public Administration and Policy*

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Class Schedule: Tuesdays, 7:00 PM to 9:50 PM
Class Location: Baldwin Hall, Room 301
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM; or select an online or in-person meeting time at <https://calendly.com/zeemering>

Course Description

This class will introduce students to local government operations and service delivery. The semester is designed to bring theory and practice together in the classroom. We will begin the class with an overview of structure and operations of local government in the United States, and we will think about three major themes relevant to our discussions this semester. *This semester, our themes include metropolitan complexity, budget competition, and transparency.* We begin each class with guest speakers with direct supervisorial responsibility for the public services under discussion. Topics covered include city management, governing boards, clerk, public works, public safety, public works, planning, economic development, parks, recreation, and public health. This is a graduate seminar. Beyond the reading, students will have responsibility for facilitating class discussions with guest speakers. Through this approach, students will leave the class with perspectives on local government administration informed by the academic literature and the real world challenges of public administration.

Student Learning Objectives

- ✓ Review three major themes for contemporary local government management, and use public administration theory as a lens to better understand local government services
- ✓ Review the role of professional management in local government with an emphasis on council-manager government and the work of chief administrative officers
- ✓ Introduce students to the primary departments and service delivery responsibilities of local governments
- ✓ Develop professional writing and oral presentation skills through class assignments

Integration with MPA Competencies

This elective contributes to student development within at least two MPA program competencies. Students should consider how at least one class assignment illustrates personal development of program competencies for the portfolio process at the end of the MPA program.

First, students will learn to lead and manage in public governance, specifically in the context of local government. This includes an understanding of the legal and institutional context in which local government managers operate and the norms and professional standards of council-manager government in the United States. Management insights also come from the many local government professionals who will share their expertise with students in class.

Second, students will learn to engage with a diverse workforce and society. Our readings challenge students to think about serving diverse constituencies, offer strategies for effective public engagement, and highlight approaches for more equitable service delivery.

UGA’s ICMA Student Chapter

While joining the ICMA Student Chapter is not required for PADP 7500, you may find the free membership beneficial. ICMA provides a variety of resources to its members online, and student members have access to career coaching and other professional resources. You also receive a discount in the ICMA bookstore, where the textbook for this class may be purchased.

To join ICMA visit: <https://icma.org/become-member>. The membership code for free ICMA membership as a UGA student is **UGA2024PIT**. To get information about events from our campus ICMA student chapter, you can also sign up through the UGA [Involvement Network](#).

Required Books

Students are required to have access to the following book, which is available from the campus bookstore and numerous online retailers. If you are a student member of the ICMA, you may order the book at a discounted price at the ICMA bookstore website.

Nelson, Kimberly H. and Carl W. Stenberg, eds. 2021. *Managing Local Government Services: The Challenge of Change*, 4th edition. Washington, DC: ICMA Press. ISBN: 978-0-87326-439-6.

E-Learning Commons and Online Resources

In addition to the required textbooks, additional reading is posted in a folder in the E-Learning Commons. Students can access online information about our class at <http://elc.uga.edu>. Graduate students should become familiar with searching for journal articles and books using the library’s holdings and electronic databases. Many journals are free to you through your status as a student at the University of Georgia, and you should make use of these resources.

Assignments and Grading

Assignments will be evaluated using a point system, with 100 points possible for the class. The following scale will be used to assign letter grades in this class:

100 – 94 points	A	86.9 – 83 points	B	75.9 – 70 points	C
93.9 – 90 points	A-	82.9 – 80 points	B-	69.9 – 60 points	D
89.9 – 87 points	B+	79.9 – 76 points	C+	59.9 – 0 points	F

The syllabus provides a short summary of the assignment requirements for PADP 7500. Students should consult detailed instructions for each assignment in ELC, including evaluation rubrics and submission instructions.

1. *Class Discussion Contributor*: Each student must sign up for two weeks in which they will be responsible for having a question prepared for the question and answer period of our panel with local government professionals. This helps contribute to our class by ensuring that

several select students have reflected upon the reading and are prepared to ask questions that link our reading to our guest panel discussion. *Students who sign up for question leadership must coordinate in advance to make sure each student makes a distinct contribution to the discussion.* This is a credit/no-credit participation exercise worth 20 points (10 points for each week of responsibility).

2. *Public Meeting Reflection Essay:* Virtually attend or watch two governing board meetings for municipal governments online or through local cable access. Compare and contrast the roles and interactions of a) professional public managers, b) elected officials, and c) members of the general public during the meeting. Reflect upon these dynamics in the context of our readings on governing boards. **This assignment is due February 11, 2025 at 7 PM and is worth 20 points.**
3. *Case Study Memos:* Each week, our class will ask students to assess practical problems facing local governments through case studies and primary document review. Two of these case studies will require students to develop analysis and recommendation memos. Details are available in the assignment information sheet. Each memo is worth 10 points.
 - **Case study memo #1 is due March 11, 2025 at 7:00 PM in ELC.**
 - **Case study memo #2 is due April 8, 2025 at 7:00 PM in ELC.**
4. *Local Government Engagement and Reflection Essay:* Students should extend their learning outside the classroom by participating in one of the following events outside of class. Students will reflect upon the engagement activity through the lens of the major themes discussed in PADP 7500 this semester. Reflection essay instructions can be found in ELC. The assignment is worth 20 points. **The reflection essay must be completed by Wednesday, April 22, 2025 at 7 PM.**
 - *GCCMA Spring Conference in Athens:* The Georgia City-County Managers Association will be meeting in Athens this March. The student registration rate is \$50, and the Department often provides some registration assistance.
 - *Wastewater Treatment Field Trip:* Attend the optional wastewater treatment field trip on Friday, April 11, 2025. Sign-up is required in advance. Be prepared to participate in discussion during the field trip.
 - *ICMA Student Chapter Event:* The ICMA Student Chapter holds events throughout the year. Attending an event during the spring semester will fulfill this participation credit.
5. *Final Exam:* A take-home final exam provides an opportunity to synthesize learning from the semester. Students will receive four exam questions at the final class meeting. Select two out of four questions to answer, with an estimated exam writing time of four hours. **The take-home exam must be submitted on ELC by 11:59 PM on Tuesday, May 6, 2025.**

Expectations and Guidelines

All of the University's expectations for your conduct as a student apply in this class.

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://honesty.uga.edu/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.

Plagiarism: Our capacity to learn and synthesize knowledge within the public administration profession depends upon our ability to build on the foundation of existing knowledge and research. Recognizing and documenting the work of others is critical for all students, but especially for graduate students. When writing, students must take great care in how they reference ideas and information sources. Never use someone else's words or ideas in your writing without proper attribution. Serious penalties exist for academic misconduct and plagiarism. Students should read and be familiar with the following resources:

- UGA Academic Honesty Policy: Plagiarism
https://honesty.uga.edu/Academic-Honesty-Policy/Prohibited_Conduct/
- UGA Libraries Research Guide: Writing and Citing
<http://www.libs.uga.edu/researchguide/writing/index.html>

Mental Health and Wellness Resources: If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).
- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.
- Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

Electronic Devices: Silence all phones and other electronic noise-making devices while you are in the classroom. Save text messages and emails for the break or after class. Please limit browsing of material unrelated to class to minimize distractions for your colleagues.

Attendance and Accommodations: Active engagement in the classroom is critical for the success of graduate students; however, this semester brings unique constraints due to health precautions, family and childcare demands, and the potential for illness. You are responsible for staying up to date on class content. If you fall ill, please communicate with the instructor so that we can make appropriate accommodations. If health concerns develop and you require an accommodation, please reach out to the instructor and/or the Disability Resource Center (DRC) on campus, as appropriate. The DRC can be reached at drc@uga.edu or 706.542.8719.

Class Discussion: Complete the reading assigned for each class meeting and be prepared for discussion. Make sure everyone has an opportunity for input. We are interested in each person's contribution, so please understand if I ask for brevity or a conclusion to a chain of discussion.

Late Assignments: Timely submission of work is important for the student's success and for the instructor's ability to provide feedback. For assignments with deadlines, late assignments will be accepted up to 14 days after the deadline for a twenty percent point penalty. No late final exams may be submitted, and no work will be accepted after the final exam deadline. Students encountering unexpected problems during the semester may talk with the instructor about an

alternate submission deadline if events outside of class temporarily limit their ability to complete course work.

Communication with the Instructor: If you have questions or if there are topics you would like to discuss in greater detail, schedule an appointment with me through my calendar: www.calendly.com/zeemering. When you schedule with me, you will receive a Zoom meeting link for our conversation, or you may opt to meet in-person in Baldwin Hall. If the available meeting times do not align with your schedule, contact me by email so that we can identify a good meeting time.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence: The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) is acceptable for assignments, but students should take great caution. While generative AI may aid you with the reformulation of sentences and paragraphs for writing clarity, be aware that these systems often construct inaccurate responses, including false citations to non-existent academic work. You are responsible for the academic integrity of your work, thus inaccurate or false citations, false information, and errors in analysis will result in grade penalties. Generative AI assistance may not be used for the final examination.

Students with Dependent Children: As a parent, I understand that sometimes our plans for childcare fall through. In the event of an unanticipated need, you are welcome to bring a dependent child to class, as long as we can continue a quiet and constructive learning environment.

Disabilities and Accommodations: If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>

Syllabus and Schedule Changes: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. The instructor will communicate changes in writing through your UGA email account.

Theme Readings for PADP 7500

To link our discussions about municipal services to broad theoretical themes in public administration, we will return to three themes throughout the semester. These readings will provide context for those ongoing discussions. You should read all three selections as the semester progresses.

Metropolitan Complexity

Hanlon, Bernadette, John Rennie Short and Thomas J. Vicino. 2010. *Cities and suburbs: New metropolitan realities in the US*. New York: Routledge. Pg. 85-111.

Budget Competition

Tang, S.-Y., Callahan, R.F. and Pisano, M. 2014. *Using Common-Pool Resource Principles to Design Local Government Fiscal Sustainability*. *Public Administration Review* 74 (6): 791-803.

Transparency

da Cruz, N. F., Tavares, A. F., Marques, R. C., Jorge, S., & de Sousa, L. 2015. Measuring Local Government Transparency. *Public Management Review* 18 (6), 866–893.

**PADP 7500: Local Government Management
Schedule – Spring 2025**

Week 1: Welcome and Overview (January 7, 2025)

Readings:

- *Managing Local Government Services*, Chapter 1 (Stenberg): Meeting the Challenge of Change

Week 2: Scope and Structure of U.S. Local Government (January 14, 2025)

Readings:

- Hill, Melvin B., Jr. 2001. Georgia. In “Home Rule in America: A Fifty-State Handbook,” edited by D. Krane, P. N. Rigos, and M. B. Hill.
- Carr, Jered B. 2015. What have we learned about the performance of council-manager government? A review and synthesis of the research. *Public Administration Review* 75 (5): 673-689.

Week 3: Preparing for a Career in Local Government (January 21, 2025)

Readings:

- *Managing Local Government Services*, Chapter 2 (Nelson): The Local Government Manager
- Webb Farley, Kathryn, Beth Rauhaus, and Robert Eskridge. 2020. Gender representation, professional experiences, and socialization: The case of city managers. *Public Personnel Management* 50 (1): 56-83.

Week 4: Intergovernmental Context & Public-Private Partnerships (January 28, 2025)

Readings:

- *Managing Local Government Services*, Chapter 3 (Stenberg): Collaborating Across Boundaries
- Schragger, Richard C. 2021. Localism all the way up: Federalism, state-city conflict,, and the urban-rural divide. *Wisconsin Law Review*, p. 1283.
- Zeemering, Eric S. 2021. Local politicians' advice networks and the prospect of metropolitan civil society. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 43 (1): 201-217.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2019.1599293>

Week 5: Council Governance (February 4, 2025)

Readings:

- Krebs, Timothy B. and John P. Pelissero. 2003. City Councils. In “Cities, Politics and Policy: A Comparative Analysis,” edited by J. P. Pelissero. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Available online at UGA Library: <https://sk.sagepub.com/cqpress/cities-politics-and-policy/n7.xml>
- Yuan, Meng and Scot Schraufnagel. 2020. Two-dimensional legislative conflict: Unique implications for the effectiveness of local councils. *Local Government Studies* 46 (5): 780-799.

Week 6: Clerks and Records Management (February 11, 2025)

Assignment Deadline: Public Meeting Reflection Essay (7:00 PM – ELC)

Readings:

- Chapter 3 (Dolan): The Clerk – This chapter is on ELC from a prior edition of *Managing Local Government Services*
- Stratton, C. and D. Carter 2023. Locating information systems in the freedom of information process. *Government Information Quarterly* 40(2): 101807.
- Review the *City Clerk Handbook* from the Georgia Municipal Association:
<https://www.gacities.com/Resources/GMA-Handbooks-Publications/City-Clerk-Handbook.aspx>

Week 7: Budget and Local Government Performance (February 18, 2025)

Readings:

- *Managing Local Government Services*, Chapter 5 (Afonso): Local Government Budgeting Basics
- Afonso, Whitney. 2021. Planning for the unknown: Local government strategies from the fiscal year 2021 budget season in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *State and Local Government Review* 53 (2): 159-171.

Week 8: Information Technology Management (February 25, 2025)

Readings:

- *Managing Local Government Services*, Chapter 7 (Tufts): Strategic Information Technology Investments in Local Governments.
- Norris, Donald F., Laura Mateczun, Anupam Joshi, and Tim Finin. 2019. Cyberattacks at the grass roots: American local governments and the need for high levels of cybersecurity. *Public Administration Review* 79 (6): 895-904.

SPRING BREAK (March 4, 2025)

NOTE: The Georgia City-County Managers Association (GCCMA) spring meeting takes place in Athens, Georgia March 5 – 7, 2025. Students can register at a reduced rate. Notify the instructor if you are attending so we can notify you of special networking opportunities for UGA MPA students.

Week 9: Parks & Recreation Services (March 11, 2025)

Assignment Deadline: Case Study Memo #1 (7:00 PM – ELC)

Readings:

- *Managing Local Government Services*, Chapter 15 (Bocarro and Barcelona): Parks and Recreation
- Cheng, Yuan (Daniel). 2019. Exploring the role of nonprofits in public service provision: Moving from coproduction to cogovernance. *Public Administration Review* 79 (2): 203-214

Week 10: Police (March 18, 2025)

Readings:

- *Managing Local Government Services*, Chapter 9 (Brunet): Police Services
- U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division. 2015. Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department. Washington, DC. Available Online: https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/03/04/ferguson_police_department_report.pdf
- Ammons, David N. and Joshua S. Edwards. 2008. Misrepresentation of staffing standards for police. *State and Local Government Review* 40 (3): 186-194.

Week 11: Planning (March 25, 2025)

Readings:

- *Managing Local Government Services*, Chapter 8 (Just): The Role of Planning in Local Government
- Quick, Kathryn S. 2021. The narrative production of stakeholder engagement processes. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 41 (3): 326-341.

Week 12: Economic & Community Development (April 1, 2025)

Readings:

- *Managing Local Government Services*, Chapter 14 (Morgan): Community and Economic Development
- Morgan, Jonathan Q., Michele M. Hoyman, and Jamie R. Call. 2019. Everything but the kitchen sink? Factors associated with local economic development strategy use. *Economic Development Quarterly* 33 (4): 267-278.

Week 13: Public Works (April 8, 2025)

Assignment Deadline: Case Study Memo #2 (7:00 PM – ELC)

Readings:

- *Managing Local Government Services*, Chapter 12 (Hart): Public Works
- Kim, Jiseul and Carol Ebdon. 2020. Asset maintenance practices and challenges in U.S. counties. *Public Works Management and Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1087724X20937715>

Optional Field Trip – Friday, April 11, 2025, 2:30 PM – 4:00 PM

North Oconee Water Reclamation Facility, Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County

150 N. Oconee Access Road, Athens, Georgia

If you choose to attend, please sign-up in class. The rain date for the field trip is April 18.

Week 14: Fire and Emergency Medical Services (April 15, 2025)

Readings:

- *Managing Local Government Services, Chapter 10 (Nelson): Fire and Emergency Medical Services*
- *Henderson, Alexander C. and Jessica E. Sowa. 2018. Retaining critical human capital: Volunteer firefighters in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Voluntas 29: 43-58.*

Week 15: Public Health and Human Services (April 22, 2025)

Assignment Deadline: Local Government Engagement and Reflection Essay (7:00 PM – ELC)

Readings:

- *Managing Local Government Services, Chapter 13 (Benavides): Health and Human Services*
- Benavides, Abraham David, and Julius A. Nukpezah. 2020. How local governments are caring for the homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic. *American Review of Public Administration* 59 (6-7): 650-657.

Reading Day (April 29, 2025)

Week 16: Exam (May 6, 2025)

The final take-home exam must be submitted through ELC by 11:59 PM on Tuesday, May 6, 2025.

