

**Schar School of Policy and Government
George Mason University
PUAD 759- Issues in Local Government Administration
Spring 2019**

Instructor Information:

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Course Purpose, Organization and Objectives: This course will explore local government purpose and functions in the United States. Relationships between different levels of government and issues/challenges currently facing local government will be the focal point. There will be an emphasis on the issue in Northern Virginia and the Metropolitan Washington area.

The course is designed to give the student an understanding of the role of local government in the context of the State and Federal framework and to gain an appreciation for the fact that democracy happens at the local level in the way that is most immediately meaningful to people.

Students are expected to come to class prepared to participate actively in discussions about the assigned readings, concepts and issues. Students will be expected to apply assigned reading materials to situations and issues in their own professional lives and to share these experiences with the class. A portion of several class sessions will be devoted to case studies, where students will work in groups to analyze major current policy challenges facing local government and present their findings to the class.

Course Requirements: Students in the class will submit two short issue papers (3 to 5 pages) and one longer analytical paper (10 to 15 pages). The papers will be based on independent research and will each build on a topic to be selected by the student. The first paper will present and define an issue facing local government. The second paper will explore the context of the issue and look at how the issue is being handled in other jurisdictions around the Country. The third and final paper will explore a range of solutions/alternatives to the issue or problem and make specific recommendations for how solutions can be effectively implemented in a local jurisdiction. Each paper should incorporate concepts and models discussed in class and the assigned literature.

In addition to the three papers, there will be other assignments that will not be formally graded, but that will count towards class participation. These assignments are due by Tuesday evening in advance of Thursday's class.

Grading: Grades will be based on the two short papers (20% each) the analytical paper (40%) and class participation (20%). Any assignment not submitted by the specified due date will receive a 10% deduction for each 24 hour period it is late.

Honor Code: George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/> for more detailed information. The core presumption of the code is that all written work is your own work. Proper citation of material taken from other published work is required.

Special Needs: Anyone who requires special accommodations due to a documented disability must identify themselves at the beginning of the course so appropriate arrangements can be made.

Student Challenges: Any concerns with attendance or completing assignments on time should be raised as soon as they are known.

Required Reading:

Urban Issues, Selections from CQ Research, 8th edition

Managing Local Government Services, ICMA Press, Stenberg and Austin (Available as PDF e-Document from ICMA's website)

Other articles as listed for each class date

Suggested Resources: Metro Newspapers – The Washington Post and Washington Times as well as newspapers dedicated to local jurisdictions, e.g., the Potomac Local. Governing Magazine and its on-line version, “Governing Daily”, “Stateline Daily” produced by the PEW Trusts and student memberships in ICMA and ASPA.

Course Schedule: The class meets every Thursday from January 24 to May 2, 2019, except, Thursday, March 14, 2019 (Spring Break). Class topics and assignments are as follows:

January 24 - Orientation and Introductions.
Review of Syllabus and overview of class.
Discussion of issues currently facing local governments in Metropolitan Washington.
Example of issue matrix – Solid Waste
Discussion of structure of local governments in the United States.
Changing Demographics in our region

January 31 - Discussion of intergovernmental relations and regional governance.

Discussion of Dr. John Nalbandian's work (University of Kansas) regarding values and public issues.

Assignment: Write a one-page summary of the structure of a state/local government in the United States. Several will be picked to present to the class.

Reading Assignment:

Chapters 1 and 2, Managing Local Government Services

Governing Magazine (April 2016) – Alan Ehrenhalt – *The Shaky Edifice of Federal Power*

Governing Magazine (June 2016) – Daniel C. Vock – *How Obama Changed the Relationship between Washington, the States and the Cities*

Governing Magazine (June 2017) – Natalie Delgadillo – *Can States and Cities Really Uphold the Paris Climate Deal?*

Governing Magazine (May 2017) – Alan Ehrenhalt – *Is Syracuse Necessary?*

Governing Magazine (April 2017) – Daniel C. Vock – *The End of Local Laws? War on Cities Intensifies in Texas*

Governing Magazine (January 2017) – Alan Greenblatt – *'Sanctuary Cities' Just the Start of Mayors' Opposition to Trump*

Governing Magazine (August 2019) – Maura Dolan – *Court Deems Trump's Sanctuary Cities Policy Unconstitutional But Allows it Outside of California*

Governing Magazine (October 2018) – Alan Ehrenhalt – *How Cities Became the New Laboratories of Democracy*

Governing Magazine (December 2018) – Donald F. Kettl – *'Jenga Federalism': Trump's Method for Undoing Obama's Policies*

February 7 – Discussion on local government policy making and implementation and local government budget and finance.

Assignment: Do on-line review of budget documents from local jurisdictions in Northern Virginia. Write a one-page summary of your findings and come prepared to discuss similarities and differences regarding how they implement their policy choices within the budget.

Reading assignment:

Chapter 3-4, Managing Local Government Services

Public Administration Review (December 2010) – Joyce & Pattison, *Public Budgeting in 2020: Return to Equilibrium, or Continued Mismatch between Demands and Resources?*

Governing Magazine (June 2014) – Liz Farmer – *The 7 Deadly Sins of Public Finance*

Governing Magazine (May 2017) – Mike Maciag – *How Much Do States Rely on Federal Funding?*

Governing Magazine (February 2017) – Mike Maciag, J.B. Wogan – *With Less State Aid, Localities Look for Ways to Cope*

Governing Magazine (August 2017) – Mike Maciag – *How Driverless Cars Could be a Big Problem for Cities*

February 14 - Current events review; questions on reading assignment; and, discussion of public safety issues.

Assignment: Do a current events review of a public safety issue currently in the news and write a one page summary taking into account the issues discussed to date in class and the reading assignment.

Reading Assignment:

Chapters 12, 13 and 14, Managing Local Government Services

Chapter 5, 6, 7 and 8, Urban Issues

Governing Magazine (July 2017) – John Buntin – *The Cop Next Door*

American City and County Magazine (April 2017) – Derek Prall – *Better Behavior on Both Sides of the Badge*

February 21 – Discussion of Transportation issues in local government: road construction and maintenance, public transit, alternative forms of transportation, pedestrian access and devolution.

Assignment: Nalbandian case study on transportation- answer questions in a one-page summary
First paper due

Reading Assignment:

APWA Reporter (July 2016) – Sam Yagmaie, *The gas tax is running out of gas! What alternative is sustainable?*

Governing Magazine (May 2017) – Daniel C. Vock – *Raising the Gas Tax Is No Longer Taboo in Many States*

Governing Magazine (July 2017) – Daniel C. Vock – *On Infrastructure, California Goes Back to Basics*

Governing Magazine (March 2017) – Noel Popwell – *The Wrong Way to Pay for Our Roads and Bridges*

Governing Magazine (April 2018) – David C. Vock – *The Four-Letter Word Changing Daily Commutes*

Governing Magazine (June 2017) – Stephen Goldsmith – *A Better Way to Manage How We Get Around*

Guest Speaker: Marty Nohe, Supervisor, Prince William County, Chairman of Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

February 28 – Discussion of land use: residential vs. commercial vs. open space; regulatory enforcement – zoning, plan review and building code; development, infill and redevelopment.

Assignment: Do a current events review or discuss a land use issue in the jurisdiction where you live that is currently before the elected body and do a one page summary taking into account the issues discussed to date in class and the reading assignment.

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 6, 8, Managing Local Government Services

Chapter 3, Urban Issues

Governing Magazine (May 2016) – Zach Patton – *The Miami Method for Zoning: Consistency over Chaos*

Governing Magazine (July 2017) – Scott Beyer – *The City Where Retail and Residences Actually Mix Well*

Governing Magazine (July 2017) – Alan Ehrenhalt – *How Much Can Cities Do About Walkability*

Governing Magazine (June 2017) – Mike Maciag – *Population Growth Shifts to Suburban America*

Governing Magazine (November 2018) – David Kidd – *Fixer Uppers; Empty and dilapidated houses are a problem for most cities. Baltimore is trying some innovative ways to deal with it*

March 7 – Discussion of education and economic development

Assignment: Interview a teacher in a local public school district and do a one-page paper on what they believe are the most important issues facing education today

Reading Assignment

Chapters 1 and 2, Urban Issues

Chapter 7, Managing Local Government Services

Governing Magazine (June 2017) – Liz Farmer – *Nation's Least-Funded Schools Get What They Pay For*

Governing Magazine (November 2018) – Paul Roberts, Benjamin Romano – *Cities and States Offered Amazon Billions to Win HQ2. Did it Matter?*

March 14 – Spring Break

March 21 – Discussion of governing and community engagement including communication with citizens and social media

Assignment: Watch a local Board/Council/Committee meeting and submit a 1-2 page summary of observations about policy development/implementation, politics and administration. This exercise will not be graded, but will form the basis for class discussion

Reading Assignment:

p.189-191, Managing Local Government Services
Governing Magazine (July 2015) – Alan Ehrenhalt – *Why Political Machines Were Good for Government*
Changing Landscapes in Constituent Communication: A Guide for Elected Leaders – A Publication of the Schar School of Policy and Government
(Developed by the Northern Virginia Public Service Fellows Fourth Cohort – George Mason University)
Governing Magazine (April 2017) – Myung J. Lee – *Bridging the Disconnect Between the People and Their Governments*
Governing Magazine (November 2018) – Alan Ehrenhalt – *When Citizen Engagement Becomes too Much*

March 28 – Discussion of human services

Assignment: Nalbandian case study on nursing home- answer questions in a one-page summary

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 11, Managing Local Government Services
Chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12, Urban Issues
Governing Magazine (October 2018) – Mattie Quinn – *Mental Breakdown; This country has never had an effective public policy toward mental illness. In Chicago, things seem to be getting even worse*

Guest Speaker: Sarah Henry, Director of the Area Agency on Aging, Prince William County

April 4 – Discussion of personnel/human resources/human capital.

Assignment: Second paper due

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 5, Managing Local Government Services
Center for Retirement Research at Boston College (January 2015) – Alicia H. Munnell, Jean-Pierre Aubry and Geoffrey T. Sanzenbacher – *Recruiting and Retaining High-Quality State and Local Workers: Do Pensions Matter?*
National Association of Counties – County News (May 2017) – Robert Lavigna – *Study Finds Weak Employee Engagement*

April 11 – Discussion of public works and environment. In class presentation and discussion of Chesapeake Bay TMDL case study

Assignment: Research the following website to prepare for in class discussion of Chesapeake Bay TMDL case study: <https://www.epa.gov/chesapeake-bay-tmdl/>

Write a one-page summary of the issues you believe are central to saving the Chesapeake Bay

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 9 10, Managing Local Government Services

Chapter 4, Urban Issues

Governing Magazine (June 2017) – Jill Eicer – *Is it Time for an Infrastructure Garage Sale?*

April 18 – Discussion of outsourcing, privatization and non-profits.

Assignment: Write a one-page summary of those local government functions in your jurisdiction that should and those that should not be outsourced or privatized. Why and why not.

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 15, Managing Local Government Services

Governing Magazine (June 2015) – Charles Chieppo – *When Privatization Isn't an Option*

Governing Magazine (October 2016) – Liz Farmer – *Privatization May Be Worsening Inequality*

April 25 – Discussion of organization and leadership.

Assignment: Write a one-page summary regarding a leader you have known in your life and why their leadership style appealed to you. It does not have to be a work situation.

Final paper due

Reading Assignment:

Chapter 16, Managing Local Government Services

Governing Magazine (February 2007) – Robert D. Behn – *Public Purpose and Public Leadership*

Governing Magazine (April 2014) – Robert J. O'Neill Jr. – Why the Cult of Personality is the Wrong Leadership Model for Government

May 2 - Summation of course material.

Assignment – Write a one-page summary of your findings in your three papers. Come prepared to share your findings with the class.