



Course Syllabus: Municipal Government

POLS 3443-101

Fall 2020

Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10:00am-10:50am

PY 209

Contact Information

Dr. Jeremy F. Duff

Office: 211 O'Donohoe

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 2:00pm-3:00pm

Tuesday and Thursday: 11:00am-12:00pm

E-mail: jeremy.duff@msutexas.edu

Course Description

This course focuses on two main areas of municipal government. First, the course is an examination of the history, theory, and terminology that forms the foundation of local government. Second the course serves as an introduction to the career of the local government manager. Therefore, there are two main learning objectives for the course. First, students will learn the history and theory behind the purpose, development, and changing landscape of local government. Second, students will be introduced to the role of the local government manager, and learn why managers are important, how they can effectively do their jobs, and why a career in local government can be prosperous and fulfilling.

Textbooks

Managing Local Government: An Essential Guide for Municipal and County Managers. Kimberly L. Nelson and Carl W. Stenberg. CQ Press, 2019.

Disclaimer

Everything in this syllabus is subject to change due to the changing landscape of adapting to COVID-19.

Course Delivery

This course has been planned as a fully face-to-face course. The class will meet in its regularly scheduled room but will utilize social distancing and an assigned seating chart. The university plans to transition to fully online after Thanksgiving and we will hold our final virtually.

I will use D2L for posting syllabi, course communication, course schedule, attendance, and the gradebook. There will be some online office hours announced through D2L. You should regularly check D2L and the email hosted

via D2L for important course information. In the event of increased incidence and risk of COVID-19 that results in the university moving back to a shelter-in-place mode, the course instruction will transition to fully online. More instructions will be given at that time.

Any requests to become a fully online student in an in-person class have to be made to me and Disability Support Services (DSS).

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2018-19](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty is cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Grading

The three exams will count 45% (15% each) toward your final grade. 15% of your grade will be made up of your participation in the municipal government simulation. Your grade for this part of the course will consist of my evaluation of your participation as a whole in the simulation as well as your completion of the assignments associated with the simulation. The last 30% of your grade will be your policy memo and presentation.

Table 1: Grade Scheme

Cut Off	Grade
90-100%	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
Less than 60%	F

Student Responsibilities

Readings

The readings serve as a point of departure for lectures and discussions. Therefore, it is imperative that each student completes the assigned reading before a topic is taken up in class. Remember, the readings are a point of departure from class lectures. You will be held accountable not only for my discussion in lecture, but also for anything in the textbooks that may not be covered in lecture or discussion.

Attendance and Classroom Safety Procedures:

Facemasks are required for students. Students without masks will be sent to the Dean's office for a mask. Students refusing to wear masks will be asked to leave class. Desks are spaced 6 feet apart. I will take attendance every day and there will be a seating chart. Students are required to sit at the same desk every class period. Students need to sanitize their hands before and after class. Additionally, students need to clean off their desk areas (paper towels and cleaner will be provided) before leaving class.

Class attendance is strongly encouraged. It has been my experience that those who do not attend class tend to have a difficult time with the course and generally receive lower grades. During the simulation, I will take attendance, and attendance will be considered when evaluating your participation.

Participation

Students should feel free to raise questions concerning the readings, the instructor's discussion, and the comments of other students. Participation enhances course quality.

Policy Memo and Presentation

Students will prepare a policy memo and presentation from the perspective of a city manager, or department head, 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 (jeremy.duff@msutexas.edu) with 3-4 sentences explaining the issue no later than the beginning of class on October 1, 2020, to receive approval.

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.

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 Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. One hard copy of the brief will be submitted to the instructor in class on November 23, 2020. Individual presentations will be held on December 2 and 4, 2020.

Simulation

Students will participate in a city government simulation. More details will be given later. Each student will play a different role. Your ability to adequately

play the role, complete the assignments that are required, and your overall participation in the simulation will determine your grade.

Required Examinations

There will be three required examinations. The scheduled examination dates are as follows (these will not change):

Exam 1: September 30, 2020

Exam 2: November 6, 2020

Final Exam: December 9, 2020 (10:30am-12:30pm)

Exams for this course will be conducted in D2L. They will utilize the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor for testing. In order to install these programs, you will need the following:

- A desktop computer or laptop other than a Chromebook.
 - Chromebooks **are not** compatible with the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor.
 - Apple iPads may be used for quizzes and exams, but these are not advised for any assignment with a written component.
 - Mobile phones and similar devices are not compatible with the required programs.
- A working webcam on the computing device used for the exam.

A limited number of webcams and laptops with cameras are available for check-out through the MSU Texas Moffett Library.

Respondus

Exams will be administered through D2L, however, you will be monitored during exams by Respondus. Respondus is a live online proctoring service that will monitor you while you take your exam through D2L. When you login to take the exam, Respondus will run you through some tests to get you set up to take the exam.

This also means that for exams, students will not be allowed to use their books, notes, or anything else. Respondus has been instructed on this policy and will notify me if a violation occurs. Students who violate this policy will receive a grade of zero on that particular exam.

If for any reason you are not comfortable with using the Respondus service, then you should drop the class. Respondus is not optional.

Basic Policies

Make-up Policy

If a student has a University-approved excuse and if the instructor is notified in writing, prior to the examination or assignment, and the student can provide official documentation to validate the excuse, arrangements for a make-up may

be made. If a student fails to do any of these things, the student will receive a zero for the exam or assignment. Official documentation does not include a letter from the Dean of Students Office. You must provide me with actual documentation that validates the excuse and clearly demonstrates that you were unable to complete the assignment (or exam) by the due date. If a student fails to notify the instructor, or provide the proper documentation, the student will receive a zero for the assignment (or exam). For COVID related illnesses, this policy still holds. In order to receive an excused absence for a COVID related illness a student must present an official doctors note that verifies the student received a positive COVID test and must be quarantined. If this occurs, the student will be allowed to make up missed work due to the illness.

Exams, Assignments, and Grading

I will only discuss a grade with you in my office or via email. I will not discuss a grade with you before or after class in the classroom, in the hallway, outside by my car, or over the phone. I want you to take time to look over your exam thoroughly, outside of the classroom before you make an argument for a different grade. Any discussion of exam grades should take place within my office hours or via email if you are not able to attend the scheduled office hours. If you feel that you and another student provided similar or equal answers to an exam question and you received a lower grade on that question, then both students must come to the assigned office hours with their exams in order for me to evaluate the answers equally and fairly. Keep in mind that in some cases I may lower the grade of the other student and not raise yours after reviewing both answers, if I feel that the situation deems it necessary.

Taking Exams Early

Only under extraordinary circumstances will a student be allowed to take an exam early. Only university approved excuses, death in the family, illness, etc. will be considered for taking an exam early.

Wikipedia

At no time will a student be allowed to use Wikipedia as a source for any project or paper in my class. If it is determined that Wikipedia was used as a source for a project or paper, the student will be given a grade of zero automatically.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism in any form is unacceptable. Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor.

In all of your assignments, including your homework or drafts of papers, you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution. "Proper attribution" means that you have fully identified the original source and extent of your use of the words

or ideas of others that you reproduce in your work for this course, usually in the form of a footnote or parenthesis.

As a general rule, if you are citing from a published source or from a web site and the quotation is short (up to a sentence or two) place it in quotation marks; if you employ a longer passage from a publication or web site, please indent it and use single spacing. In both cases, be sure to cite the original source in a footnote or in parentheses.

This is not limited to direct quotations. Any time you use material from a published source, whether quoting directly, borrowing from it, or paraphrasing, you can only do so with proper attribution.

If you are not clear about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or examination, be sure to seek clarification from me.

Finally, you should keep in mind that as a member of the campus community, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors and will be evaluated on your own merits. So be proud of your academic accomplishments and help to protect and promote academic integrity at MSU. The consequences of cheating and academic dishonesty – including a formal discipline file, possible loss of future internship, scholarship, or employment opportunities, and denial of admission to graduate school – are simply not worth it.

Any paper or assignment that is found to be plagiarized will be given a grade of zero and will be reported through the proper channels according to the guidelines provided in the MSU Student Handbook.

Late Assignments

I do not accept late assignments, papers, exams, quizzes, or anything else. If it is late, it will receive a grade of zero. If you miss an assignment because you arrive to class late, you will receive a grade of zero on that assignment.

Syllabus Test

First, do not mention this to any other student in the class. Second, for five points extra credit on the first exam, email to me the funniest meme you have ever seen. It needs to be "clean." I will show these in class. Do not send anything inappropriate, explicit, or of a sexual nature. Email the meme to me by 5:00pm, September 4, 2020.

Cellphones

These should be turned off when entering the classroom, unless prior arrangements have been made with me concerning a family emergency. At no time will you be allowed to look at your cellphone during an exam or quiz. If you are observed looking at your cellphone once an exam or quiz has been handed to you, you will automatically receive a grade of zero for that exam or quiz.

General Behavior

Students are expected to act like responsible adults. There should be no talking while I am lecturing or while another student is answering a question or sharing their opinion on the subject matter of the class. If this occurs, students will be warned and if the disruptive behavior continues you will be removed from the class.

Student Honor Creed

As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so. As students at MSU, we recognize that any great society must be composed of empowered, responsible citizens. We also recognize universities play an important role in helping mold these responsible citizens. We believe students themselves play an important part in developing responsible citizenship by maintaining a community where integrity and honorable character are the norm, not the exception. Thus, we, the Students of Midwestern State University, resolve to uphold the honor of the University by affirming our commitment to complete academic honesty. We resolve not only to be honest but also to hold our peers accountable for complete honesty in all university matters. We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any unauthorized material in examinations, or to present, as one's own, work or ideas which are not entirely one's own. We recognize that any instructor has the right to expect that all student work is honest, original work. We accept and acknowledge that responsibility for lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty fundamentally rests within each individual student. We expect of ourselves academic integrity, personal professionalism, and ethical character. We appreciate steps taken by University officials to protect the honor of the University against any who would disgrace the MSU student body by violating the spirit of this creed.

Written and adopted by the 2002-2003
MSU Student Senate.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 397-4140.

Campus Carry Statement

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at [Campus Carry Policy Website](#).

Course Schedule

Date	Readings/Activities
August 24	Introduction and Overview of the Course No Readings
August 26-28	Managing Local Government in a Dynamic World Chapter 1
August 31-September 4	US Local Governments in a Historical Context Chapter 2
September 7	No Class Labor Day
September 9-14	Types, Functions, and Authority of US Local Governments Chapter 3
September 16-21	Working Across Boundaries Chapter 4
September 23-28	The Career of Local Managers Chapter 5
September 30	Exam 1
October 2-7	Roles and Relationships Chapter 6
October 9-14	Enhancing Council-Manager Effectiveness Chapter 7
October 16-21	Citizen Engagement Chapter 8
October 23-28	Service Delivery Strategies and Innovation Chapter 9
October 30-November 4	The Manager's Toolbox Chapter 10
November 6	Exam 2
November 9-13	Emerging Issues and Management Challenges Chapter 11
November 16-20	Local Boards and Committees

Date	Readings/Activities
November 23	Strategies for Economic Development
November 25-27	No Class Thanksgiving Holiday
November 30-December 4	Catch-up and Review
December 9 (10:30am-12:30pm)	Final Exam