



## **Course Syllabus: Municipal Government**

POLS 3443-101

Fall 2023

Tuesday and Thursday: 9:30am-10:50am

PY 209

### **Contact Information**

Dr. Jeremy F. Duff

Office: 211 O'Donohoe

Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 8:00am-9:00am

Tuesday and Thursday: 8:30am-9:30am

E-mail: [jeremy.duff@msutexas.edu](mailto: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.

### **Student Handbook**

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2022-23](#)

### **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is cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given).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 60% (20% each) toward your final grade. 30% of your grade will be made up of your participation in the municipal government project. 10% will come from your notes on the guest speaker appearances.

**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.

### 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.

### Municipal Government Project

Students will work in pairs. Each pair 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 discussion with Mr. Fred Tillman the City Manager for the City of Burkburnett. Students will email the instructor (jeremy.duff@msutexas.edu) with 3-4 sentences explaining the issue they have chosen no later than the beginning of class on September 14, 2023, 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 28, 2023. Individual presentations will be held on December 7, 2023.

### **Guest Speakers**

There will be several guest speakers this semester. Each time you will be required to take notes on their discussion and the Q&A time. These notes will be turned in and will counted towards your Guest Speaker Notes Grade.

### **Required Examinations**

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

Exam 1: September 28, 2023

Exam 2: October 31, 2023

Final Exam: December 12, 2023 (8:00am-10:00am)

## **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.

### **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.

## **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism. MSU Texas uses the Turnitin.com Artificial Intelligence detection tool. If Turnitin.com detects that your assignment was completed using AI, you will be given a grade of zero for that assignment.

## **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.

### **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**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Readings/Activities</b>
August 29	Introduction and Overview of the Course No Readings
August 31	Special Guest: Sam Pak Candidate for Wichita Falls City Council
September 5	Special Guest: Fred Tillman Burkburnett City Manager
September 7-12	Managing Local Government in a Dynamic World Chapter 1
September 14-19	US Local Governments in a Historical Context Chapter 2
September 21-26	Types, Functions, and Authority of US Local Governments Chapter 3
<b>September 28</b>	<b>Exam 1</b>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Readings/Activities</b>
October 3-5	Working Across Boundaries Chapter 4
October 10-12	The Career of Local Managers Chapter 5
October 17-19	Roles and Relationships Chapter 6
October 24-26	Enhancing Council-Manager Effectiveness Chapter 7
<b>October 31</b>	<b>Exam 2</b>
November 2-7	Citizen Engagement Chapter 8
November 9	Service Delivery Strategies and Innovation Chapter 9
November 14	The Manager's Toolbox Chapter 10 Special Guest: Fred Tillman Burkburnett City Manager
November 16-21 (November 23 No Class: Thanksgiving Holiday)	Emerging Issues and Management Challenges Chapter 11
November 28	Special Guest: Travis Haggard Director Burkburnett Development Corporation
November 30	Strategies for Economic Development
December 5	Local Boards and Committees
December 7	Presentations
<b>December 12 (8:00am-10:00am)</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>