The Context of Public Administration—TACOMA
Fall 2019

**Lecture meets in Room 104
Seminar rooms: 104 & 207
See Canvas for up-to-date schedule and assignment information**

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TESC MPA MISSION STATEMENT

"Be the Change"

Our students, faculty and staff create learning communities to explore and implement socially just, democratic public service. We *think* critically and creatively; *communicate* effectively; *work* collaboratively; *embrace* diversity; we *value* fairness and equity; *advocate* powerfully on behalf of the public; and *imagine* new possibilities to accomplish positive change in our workplaces and in our communities.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of 1st year Core is to identify and explore the fundamentals of governing and administering for the public good. In the fall quarter, we examine the foundations of democracy and public service by investigating the enduring issues for public administrators. We will increase our understanding of the political, social, cultural, and economic contexts of public administration. Our goal is to gain an understanding of how practitioners can apply theories of public administration through praxis. We will analyze the roles and responsibilities of public administrators and their institutions at all sectors of governing. In Winter quarter we will examine the knowledge and skills needed to practice democratic public administration. Spring quarter we examine the policy and fiscal foundations of doing public service.

Key questions:
- What is public administration as a field of study?
- Who are public administrators and who is the public?
- Why does public administration matter? What are the enduring issues and why?

Learning objectives:
- Develop the foundations of critical analysis and critical thinking
- Understand the history and tradition of public administration
- Recognize systemic inequity in the public sphere
- Develop the ability to work effectively in teams

EXPECTATIONS

Format of Assignment Submissions: Unless otherwise stated, all papers should be typed, double spaced, 12 point font, and follow APA format and citation style. All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors. Follow the Federal Plain Language Guidelines for writing that is clear, concise, and accessible. If you require it, please contact the Graduate Writing Assistant. Sometimes your faculty will ask you to work with the Graduate Writing Assistant; if so, you are required to do so to the satisfaction of your faculty member.

Review Assignment Requirements Thoroughly Before Drafting Submissions:
This may sound obvious, but it is vitally important that you read and understand assignments before you begin to write. The pressure to just start writing can be irresistible at times. Don't! Canvas is used for course documents specifically because it enables changes as the course evolves during the quarter. Some assignments have very specific requirements. Some are intentionally a bit more open to interpretation and to creative responses. Clear understanding of your goals is important to avoiding frustration – yours and the faculty's.

Late assignments: Are not accepted without prior (to deadline) approval by your seminar faculty member. Multiple late assignments put you at risk for no credit.

Participation & Attendance: Students are required to attend each class meeting in its entirety. Participation includes focusing on class content, being engaged in class and seminar, listening to others, taking notes, completing class interactive exercises, avoiding distractions, and listening to and interacting with guest speakers. If an absence is unavoidable, *faculty must be notified prior to a class and/or seminar absence. After one absence per quarter, make-up work may be assigned at faculty discretion, case-by-case.* Make-up work must be completed by the end of the quarter for course credit. Multiple absences put you at risk for no credit.

Use of Electronic Devices: The class is participatory and the learning community is dependent upon people being present to what is happening in class. Research shows that using electronic devices can be distracting and deleterious to the learning experience and to the learning community. Further, research suggests that typing notes

on a keyboard rather than writing out longhand results in shallower processing of the concepts. Therefore, we highly recommend that students put away laptops and tablets during lecture, and opt for the old-school method of taking pen to paper. It is ***required*** that phones be silent and put away. If an emergency requires you to track activity on your phone, please inform a faculty member. Also, please do not have laptop screens up during guest lectures; it creates a physical barrier between you and the front of the room and can be distracting to the speaker(s).

Teamwork: The expectations of students as individuals applies to expectations of individuals in project teams as well. Each team member is expected to behave as part of a learning community. The division of labor in teams should respect differences among members while ensuring maximum participation of all team members. Conflicts with the team should be resolved by team members to the greatest extent possible. It is not the role of faculty to adjudicate conflicts within teams unless they involve violations of college policies.

Credit: Students will receive 6 graduate credits at the end of the course if all requirements have been satisfactorily completed. Students will be evaluated based upon their progress towards the learning objectives, assessed from classroom, seminar, and assignment performance. **No partial credit or incompletes will be awarded**. Full loss of credit decisions will be made by the faculty team. Full loss of credit for two terms of core may result in dismissal from the MPA program. Academic dishonesty and plagiarism (i.e., using another's work as your own, see MPA Student Handbook for more), failing to complete one or more assignments, completing more than one assignment late, or multiple absences may constitute denial of credit and/or dismissal from the MPA program. Failing to meet course requirements (ex. not completing one or more assignments, completing one or more assignments late, or multiple absences) may constitute denial of total credit at the discretion of the faculty team. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the quarter.

Evaluation: A written self-evaluation and seminar faculty evaluation are required for credit. All final evaluations are to be submitted via our online evaluation system no later than one week after the last class. Evaluation conferences may occur in person or over the phone and should be scheduled with your seminar faculty. Evaluations are considered "submitted" only when posted through the College portal.

Accommodations: are provided for any student who desires them through Access Services, the Graduate Writing Assistant, and the Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning Center. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (867-6348 or 6364). Information about a disability or health condition is regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's Students With Disabilities Policy here.

Other Expectations of Students and Faculty: We commit to promoting a cooperative, supportive atmosphere within the community; give everyone opportunity for self-reflection and expression; use high standards in reading the text and preparing our

papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; handle all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; respect our differences; and, discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved.

We abide by the social contract, the student rights & responsibilities and the non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC.

All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the MPA program.

Guest Policy: Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during class time and seminar meetings with approval from course faculty in advance of each requested visit. It is the host student's responsibility to contact the faculty with details about the requested guest visit and await approval. Prospective students may visit one class meeting without advance faculty approval, but must notify faculty that they are present prior to the beginning of class. All guests must abide by all social contract, conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines as aforementioned in this syllabus. Per faculty discretion, guests may be asked to leave and not permitted to return to class if these guidelines are violated in any way including behavior that disrupts the learning community. All guests are expected to minimize their participation in class and seminar discussions.

Permission to Record Lecture, Workshop and Other Similar Discussion: If a student in class would like to obtain an audio or video recording of another participant in class speaking, discussion, lecture or other related communications in class, and this falls beyond the scope of *reasonable accommodations*, then this student would need written permission, in writing, via email or other acceptable forms of documentation, and would need to give a reasonable time period in advance of the recording; usually a week (5 business days) and written consent would need to occur before the recording begins. Participants have the right to deny this request.

Inclement Weather: In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check with television, web pages, and radio stations for announcements of campus closures. Students can also call the main campus line 867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Since many students in the program travel from relatively distant locations, faculty may decide to cancel class even if campus is open. If we do this we will send an all-class email by 3:00 pm. If you've not already done so, sign up to receive alerts about campus closing or other emergencies here.

Communicating with Each Other: Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. You are responsible for checking your Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.

<u>READINGS</u>

Behn, Bob. (2012). The craft of memo writing. *John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.*

Bullard, Robert D. (2000). *Dumping in Dixie: Race, class, and environmental quality.* 3rd Edition. Westview Press.

Rabow, J., Charness, M. A., Kippermann, J., & Radcliffe-Vasile, S. (2000). *William Fawcett Hill's learning through discussion.* Waveland Press.

Paul, R., & Elder, L. (2006). *The miniature guide to critical thinking: Concepts & tools.* Dillon Beach, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking.

Salamon, Lester. M. (2015) *The resilient sector revisited: The new challenge for nonprofit America. 2nd Edition.* Brookings Institution Press.

Shafritz, J. M., & Hyde, A. C. (2016). *Classics of public administration.* 8th Edition. Nelson Education.

Other readings posted to Canvas

ASSIGNMENTS

ITP Metrics Assessments and Reflective Questions
- Personality (Week 2)
- Leadership (Week 3)
- Conflict Management (Week 4)
- Peer Feedback (Week 5)
- Team Dynamics (Week 6)

Purpose: For several weeks this quarter, you will complete regular evaluations via ITP Metrics (The Individual and Team Performance (ITP) Lab at University of Calgary). These are research-backed evaluations designed to help you understand your personal strengths and challenges and assess team health to help manage conflicts in your assigned team work.

Instructions: *You are expected to complete all ITP Metrics evaluations* that are sent via email. After each evaluation, carefully read your own customized report, and then answer the **reflective questions** provided on Canvas. This is for your own self-assessment only. While you must complete these questions, *they will not be graded.*

Key Skills: professional self-awareness, emotional intelligence, team building

Critical Thinking Paper
(Week 1)

Length: 2-3 pages double spaced, plus references. Use APA format for references and cite all of your sources.

Purpose: This is not just a summary of the readings. According to Paul & Elder's, *Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking*, critical thought means that you assess the assumptions and positions of yourself and between people in groups and organizations. This practice is important to managers and leaders because it helps us understand how we co-create and socially construct our perspectives in relation to each other.

Instructions: Using the tools and approach described in Paul & Elder's, *Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking,* critically assess and synthesize ***all*** of the readings for Week 1. With that said, remember that these readings occurred in historical context. Therefore, your critique should be about the deeper issues that have salience today.

Key Skills: Demonstrate knowledge of the assigned readings; illustrate ability to synthesize information from diverse sources into a holistic product; make connections between assigned readings to reveal new insights on the topic; explain the various strengths and weaknesses of the authors' arguments.

Op-Ed: Democratic Governance
(Week 3)

Purpose: Op-eds allow professionals to communicate to a broader audience, with the intention of making a strong claim or suggestion. While they are commonly published in newspapers and online sources, they have the added benefit of reaching your stakeholders, such as policy makers, by directing attention to issue important to you.

Instructions: Write an op-ed piece for submission to [The News Tribune (200 words)](#) or [The Seattle Times (650 words)](#), or another local newspaper of your choosing. The topic should be any issue related to the topic of public administration and democratic governance. To be effective, this should be an issue that is local, timely, and of interest to the community. Consult the resources posted to Canvas for guidance on how to write an effective op-ed.

Key Skills: persuasive writing for a general audience, very concise and targeted writing, make connections between personal view and potential community need.

Washington Data Book
(Week 5)

2 pages

Purpose: Understanding how public administrators develop and use data is central to applied practice.

Instructions: This assignment asks you to go find that data and select a dataset that you can use as the basis for explaining data concepts.

- Go to the [Washington State Data Book](#) and, based on your interests, download one of the data tables in Excel. Make sure to save it to your computer.
- Open the data table and make sure you can see all the tabs.
- Select one of the tabs with data.

Based on your understanding of the concepts presented, tell an *interesting* written story about the data on this tab. Use these guiding questions to focus on the key aspects of the data you are presented with. You may not use secondary sources to tell your story, instead use the data set alone to construct a narrative around what you're seeing.

- What is the most important single piece of information? Why?
- What is the maximum value, and what does it mean in plain language?
- What is the minimum value, and what does it mean in plain language?
- What are the median and mean values, and what does that mean?
- What kind of visualization would be the most effective for telling the story of this data? Why?

Key Skills: Practice abstract reasoning and illustrate critical thinking.

Policy Memo (Bullard)
(Week 6)

Purpose: The ability to write a strong and concise policy memo is one of the most important skills for policy practitioners in all fields. Instead of describing and analyzing the readings, you are using the readings to make a recommendation to a decision maker.

Instructions: Your assignment is to write a policy memo on the topic of your choosing based on the content of the book *Dumping in Dixie* by Robert Bullard. You may write from one of the case studies presented in the book, or how the issues raised in the book apply in Washington, but make a clear connection to the content of the book. ***1 page maximum, single spaced, including an executive summary, do not use APA format***

Select one issue and write a targeted policy memo to a specific policymaker identifying the problem and providing a recommendation. Use a memo style heading and include an executive summary of 3 sentences maximum. For guidance on policy memo writing, see the posted reading in Canvas from Behn (2012) and also the Harvard Kennedy School Communications Program and the USC Libraries Research Guides.

Key Skills: Distill complex concepts into concise logical and persuasive statements; practice concise and targeted writing; demonstrate ability to problem-solve and think critically.

Non-Profit Decision Memo
(Week 7)

Purpose: We use "cases" or real-world examples of administration to practice assessing the dilemma or question on the table and then practice making recommendations. This can also help us to build on decisions that worked before or avoid repeating decisions that did not work in the past.

Instructions: ***1 page maximum, single spaced, do not use APA format***
1. TWO OPTIONS: Read the case posted to Canvas and pick an issue where you think there needs to be change, *or* pick an issue in your own nonprofit organization (where you work, have worked, or volunteer) where you want to see change.
2. Pick your audience: to whom should you address your analysis and recommendation?
3. With your audience in mind, summarize the problem, outline the recommended resolution complete with an action plan and timeline for implementation, list the goals of

the change, address obstacles and benefits of the proposal, and note other organizations with which to potentially collaborate.
4. Incorporate information from the Salamon text into your memo.

Key Skills: Distill complex concepts into concise logical and persuasive statements; practice concise and targeted writing; demonstrate ability to problem-solve and think critically.

Annotated Bibliography of One Big Question in Public Administration
(Week 9)

Purpose: Annotated Bibliographies are used in both the academic and practitioner setting. They allow readers who want further information an easy way of determining which source materials cited in a document (whether research paper or policy brief) are relevant to their interests.

Instructions: Imagine you were asked to provide an answer to the Big Question you picked in Week 4. What sort of information would you use to answer that question? This bibliography should be the information you would use if you were asked to write a policy brief or research paper on this topic. Using APA citation cite the source then underneath provide a 5-10 sentence summary of the source and an assessment of the source's usefulness in answering your Big Question. Purdue Owl provides a sample of an APA annotated bibliography. There is no length requirement for this assignment, but it should include 10 sources, 8 of which should be from a peer-reviewed journal.

Key Skills: Concise explanation of complex ideas, targeted analysis, and the ability to conduct informed library research.

Policy Role Play (Presentation)
(Week 10)
Purpose: The objective is to get you to explore a policy issue deeply and really engage in and respond to arguments.

Key Skills: This classroom debate is designed to allow you to strengthen your skills in the areas of leadership, interpersonal influence, teambuilding, group problem solving, and oral presentation.

Instructions: Debate topics and position statements are outlined below. Students will work with their teams, assigned at the beginning of the course and on the 5th week of class will be given their topic. All group members are expected to participate in the research, development, and presentation of your debate position.

You are expected to prepare both sides of the debate, in other words the affirmative and the negative, for your topic. In week 5, we will draw lots to determine which team will actually debate the affirmative and the negative. You will find that by preparing both

sides of the debate, you will be much better able to predict the arguments of your opponents. This is a classroom debate. The materials your team will need to prepare in advance are:

- Introductory speeches for both sides of the issue.
- Short answers to every major argument that you can predict for either side.
- A list of questions to ask your opponents.
- Evidentiary support for your main arguments.
- An explanation of how the issues in the debate relate to the course themes.

These materials will be due on the on the day of the debate.

DEBATE PROCEDURE

The debate will take the form of timed individual and/or group statements and responses:

- 3 minute affirmative opening statement
- 3 minute negative opening statement
- 1 minute work time
- 2 minute affirmative response
- 2 minute negative response
- 1 minute negative closing statement
- 1 minute affirmative closing statement

Prior to the start of each debate, each team is to write its team name, and debate position on the whiteboard behind them. The audience will be given an evaluation form at the beginning of each debate and provide scores for both team. A final debate "winner" will be announced at the end of class.

DEBATE GUIDELINES

1. Team members may speak either from their desks or from the podium, as they desire.
3. While a team is not required to use all of the time allocated to each debate component, speakers must stop immediately when the allocated time runs out.
4. Team members are prohibited from speaking to the audience or the opposing team except at the times specifically allocated to them. Thus, there can be no immediate, reciprocal interchange of comments between the teams.

Participation: All group members are expected to participate in the research, development, and presentation of your debate position. Preparation will require substantial research.

Rehearsal: Time spent rehearsing will directly correlate with the group's success. Without rehearsal it will be impossible to adequately defend the position statement and the opposing side's rebuttal within the time allowed.

Group Evaluation Forms: Each group member is to confidentially complete and turn in an evaluation of their group members. A faculty evaluation will not be assigned until an evaluation from each group member has been received.

Portfolio Turn-In: Each group will submit a folder organized in an orderly fashion containing the following:
- Each group member's name and group topic.
- Copies of PowerPoint or visuals.
- The division of workload to include research, preparation, and presentation.
- Introductory speeches for both sides of the issue.
- Short answers to every major argument that you can predict for either side.
- A list of questions to ask your opponents.
- Evidentiary support for your main arguments.
- An explanation of how the issues in the debate relate to the course themes.

Evaluation: Your final debate evaluation will be based on:
- Your work with your debate team throughout the course, including evidence of preparation well in advance.
- Your performance in the debate, which includes not just your speaking style, but your evidence, your analysis, and your ability to think critically about the material.
- The research materials that your team submits immediately after your debate as a group.
- The evaluations you submit for your teammates and that they submit for you, due on XXXXX
- The critique you provide of the other debates you observe, due XXXXX.

Course Equivalencies for Evaluation:
4 - History & Context of Public & Nonprofit Administration
2 - Public Policy