

**The Evergreen State College MPA Program Tacoma
Policy, Finance, and Budgeting for Public Administration
Spring 2020**

**Wednesdays, 5p-9p, Saturday June 6, 2020 9am-end
Lecture meets in 105**

Seminar rooms: 105 (Lianna); 207 (Doreen)

See Canvas site for up-to-date topics, schedule and assignment information

Faculty	Email	Office Hours
Lianna Shepherd	Email through Canvas only	By appointment
Doreen Swetkis	swetkisd@evergreen.edu	By appointment

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 final class in first year core will provide an introduction to policy analysis, policymaking, budgeting, and financial management. These topics and related skills are fundamental to public administration. We engage in policy analysis to rigorously examine public problems and critique possible solutions; try to craft our preferred solutions into effective laws and programs through a mastery of the policymaking process; generate (through taxes) then allocate public funds to these programs and track how these funds are spent. Ultimately, budgets reflect a society’s policy choices and values—or at least the choices made on behalf of society. As public administrators, we may be pulled in at any point in this process, so it is necessary to have reasonably strong skills in each of these areas.

Learning objectives:

1. Examine, place in context, and evaluate contemporary ideas about, and practices in, budget, finance and policy processes.
2. Develop an understanding of differing approaches to policy analysis and apply them;
3. Be introduced to financial management for public and nonprofit administration;
4. Develop and improve basic policy and budget development skills and capacities, including the visual depiction of data and/or complex ideas and information;
5. Improve skills in critical thinking, writing, speaking, visualizing and presenting.

Course Equivalencies for Evaluation:

3 credits Public Policy

3 credits Public and Nonprofit Finance and Budgeting

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 [Office of the Governor's 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: It is vitally important that you read and understand assignments before you begin to write. Some assignments have very specific requirements. Some are intentionally a bit more open to interpretation and to creative responses. Clear understanding of your goals when writing is important to avoiding frustration.

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, on a 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.

Holidays for Reasons of Faith or Conscience: Please inform us in writing within the first two weeks of class if you will miss specific class sessions because of holidays of faith or conscience, or for an organized activity conducted as part of a religious denomination, church, or organization. If you let us know within that time frame, we will offer you reasonable accommodations, and the absence(s) will be excused. For more information, please refer to the Evergreen policy at: <https://www.evergreen.edu/policy/holidays-reasons-faith-and-conscience-students>

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](#).

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. Yet we acknowledge the limited, key situations where these devices are necessary. These situations include: accessing the Canvas site when course materials are being explained; workshops where laptops help teams track requirements and output; practical exercises in class where spreadsheets or other templates are needed; and individual situations where accommodation must be made through technology.

In short, **put away your devices** (laptops, phones, tablets) except when otherwise instructed (we recognize that some may be accessing readings electronically and will use a device in seminar). If an emergency requires you to track activity on your phone, please inform a faculty member.

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 this section of the [MPA Student Handbook](#) for more information), 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.

Other Expectations of Students and Faculty: We commit to promoting a cooperative, supportive atmosphere within the community; giving everyone opportunity for self-reflection and expression; using high standards in reading the text and in preparing our papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; handling all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; respecting our differences; discussing 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. 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 via email or other acceptable forms of documentation, from all participants in the activity (i.e., guest speakers, faculty, students registered in the class) and would need to give a reasonable time period in advance of the recording (usually 5 business days). Written consent would need to be obtained before the recording begins. Any of the participants have the right to deny this request.

Incident 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: Evergreen email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. You are responsible for checking Evergreen email and our course Canvas site regularly.

REQUIRED TEXTS FOR THE QUARTER

(from Fall Quarter) Shafritz, Jay. M. & Albert C. Hyde. (2016). *Classics of public administration, 8th edition*. Nelson Education.

Bardach, Eugene & Eric Patashink. (2015). *Practical Guide to Policy Analysis: The Eightfold Path to More Effective Problem Solving*. (4th or 5th Editions) SAGE/CQ Press.

Chen, Greg G., Lynne A. Weikart & Daniel W. Williams, Editors. (2014). *Budget Tools: Financial Methods in the Public Sector 2nd Edition*. CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1483307701.

Machiavelli, Nikolo. (1513). *The Prince* (any edition). Free online:
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1232/1232-h/1232-h.htm>

Meadows, Donella H. (2008). *Thinking in Systems: A Primer*. Free online version here:
https://www.academia.edu/40342397/Thinking_In_Systems_A_Primer_by_Donella_H.-Meadows

Rubin, I. (2019). *The Politics of Public Budgeting: Getting and Spending, Balancing and Borrowing*. (7th, 8th or 9th editions). CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1544325057.

Stone, Deborah. (2011). *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making* (2nd or 3rd Editions) W.W. Norton & Company.

Additional Readings posted to Canvas.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1: Policy Memo

Purpose: The ability to write a strong and concise policy memo is an 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: Select an issue of your choosing 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. 1 page maximum, single spaced, including an executive summary; do not use APA format.

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

Assignment 2: Analyzing a Policy Dilemma

Purpose: In *Policy Paradox*, Stone presents many dilemmas facing the development and implementation of policy.

Instructions: In 2-3 pages, double-spaced, pick a dilemma identified in *Policy Paradox* and link it to your own organizational experience. Be thorough in your reflection and follow APA.

Key Skills: Critical analysis and writing, creative synthesis of seemingly disparate concepts, developing praxis (i.e., linking the theoretical with the practical).

Assignments 3: Draft Literature Review

Purpose: Literature reviews, a standard in academic writing, also serves as a useful approach to writing for the practitioner. For example, in a grant proposal, researching and writing the “justification of need” section can be approached in a similar fashion. Literature reviews are just that—a review of the literature (i.e., books, academic journals, legitimate in-depth news articles) on a particular topic. The idea behind a literature review is that one needs to know what aspects of a topic have already been addressed, whether the research was sound, where there may be gaps in the research, etc.

Instructions: In 4-5 pages, double-spaced, and building on your research from your annotated bibliography from fall quarter, begin writing a literature review that continues to tackle the same “Big Question” in public administration. ***The number of sources for the draft literature review should include at least 5 sources.*** Follow APA.

Key Skills: develop an understanding of the history and background of an issue; demonstrate analytical ability; develop ability to critique a complex issue; illustrate ability to synthesize information from diverse sources into a holistic product.

Assignment 4: Budget Case Analysis

Purpose: The case approach is widely used in the study of administration. It allows you to apply administrative concepts that we have studied thus far to an actual situation.

Instructions: In 3-4 pages, double-spaced, analyze the budget case provided on Canvas. Your case analysis papers must 1) define what you believe is the major problem presented by the case, 2) discuss the budgetary decision that has to be made, 3) assess the options, and 4) link the case to the readings for the week (beyond the case). Case posted on Canvas.

Key skills: Critical thinking skills, fiscal and budgetary analysis skills, distill complex concepts into concise logical and persuasive statements.

Assignment 5: Memo: Justify Slashing Budget by 10%

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 approach 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, single spaced, including an executive summary. Your assignment is to write a memo that outlines your recommendation for cutting the public agency’s budget from the case posted to Canvas for this assignment. You must concisely justify your recommendation. Incorporate more than one of our readings into your analysis (cited in footnotes). Not APA.

Key Skills: Distill complex concepts into concise logical and persuasive statements; practice concise and targeted writing; practice budget justification skills; communicate a difficult decision.

Assignment 6: Developing a Budget Spreadsheet

Purpose: Budgets are everywhere when working for the public and nonprofit sectors, from developing a small program budget for a funding proposal, to being the manager of a multi-million dollar public works infrastructure improvements project that requires consistent budgetary adjustments.

Instructions: Use Excel (or any spreadsheet program of your choice) to prepare two spreadsheets. The first spreadsheet should be a one-year operating budget for a nonprofit organization (imaginary or real) or government department/agency. Show your assumptions about service expenditures and personnel costs for your organization. The second should be a balance sheet for the organization that shows Assets (by category), Liabilities and fund balances. **(Example spreadsheets will be posted on the course website).**

Key skills: Learn budgeting development, practice budget justification skills, and how to work with a spreadsheet program.

Assignment 7: Final Literature Review

This paper should be your completed literature review, building on the draft you submitted for Assignment #3, above. 9-10 pages, double-spaced, follow APA formatting. Assignment #3 Purpose and Key Skills applies. Use the sources from your annotated bibliography, and include an additional 9-10 sources **for the final literature review** (for a total of approximately 15 sources).

Assignments 8 & 9: State Budget & Financial Analysis Paper & Poster

Purpose: Many state governments are struggling because they are being asked to consistently do more with less, repair/replace expensive aging systems, and respond to initiatives “for the public good”, set forth by elected officials and other branches of government. States are reacting to their respective budget challenges in a variety of ways.

Instructions: In 6-8 pages, double-spaced, not including title page or references, select a state other than Washington and perform a thorough analysis of its state budget and overall operations. Our goal is for each student to cover a different state (chosen during class time). Describe its revenue system, and compare it to the [Principles of a High Quality Revenue System](#) model.

- What does it do well, and where is it weak?
- What are the major categories of expenditure?
- How would you characterize the scope and approach of state government—limited? Expansive?
- Is there anything innovative about the state’s approach to budgeting and/or financial management?
- Is there any sense of the state identifying and emphasizing strategic priorities?
- What is the overall state of their fiscal health at this time—what size deficit (or surplus if they’re lucky) is projected, and what approaches are being considered to manage or reduce it?
- What is the state’s long-term fiscal outlook?

In addition to the analysis, prepare a professional poster summarizing the results of your analysis (**additional details on this assignment will be provided in class**).

Key Skills: develop fiscal and budgetary analysis skills; learn from other government bodies outside of the region; learn to read, interpret graphs, charts, and other data visualizations; develop data presentation skills.

Schedule Subject to Change

DATE	TOPIC/ACTIVITIES	READINGS	WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT
Week 1 4/1	Systems Thinking	Meadows (all)	None
Week 2 4/8	Policy & Politics	Stone, <i>Policy Paradox</i> , Parts I & II; Kingdon: <i>Agendas, Alternatives & Public Policies</i> (in S&H)	Assignment 1: Policy Memo
Week 3 4/15	Policy Analysis & Design	Stone, <i>Policy Paradox</i> , Parts III & IV; Bardach, <i>Practical Guide to Policy Analysis</i> (all)	Assignment 2: Policy Dilemma
Week 4 4/22	Policy & Power	Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> (all); Reading on Canvas	Assignment 3: Draft Literature Review
Week 5 4/29	Budget Analysis	Rubin, Chapters 1-3; Chen, Weikart & Williams: Modules 1-4, Appendix B & Appendix C	Assignment 4: Budget case analysis
Week 6 5/6	Tools of Budgeting	Rubin, Chapters 4-6; Chen, Weikart & Williams: Module 10-12	Assignment 5: Budget cut memo
Week 7 5/13	Budgeting as a Political Process	Rubin, Chapters 7-9; Chen, Weikart & Williams: Modules 13-16	Assignment 6: Budget Spreadsheet
Week 8 5/20	Nonprofit Financial Management	Chen, Weikart & Williams: Modules 23-26	None
Week 9 5/27	Critical Stuff: Financial Management & Monitoring for Public & Nonprofit Agencies	Lindblom: <i>The Science of Muddling Through</i> (in S&H); TBD	Assignment 7: Final Literature Review
Week 10 6/3	Taxing & Spending	TBD	None
Saturday June 6 9am-end	Course Wrap-Up	None	Assignments 8 & 9: Poster & State Analysis
June 8-12	Evaluation Week	None	Evaluations