

## **Context of Public Administration**

Public/Non-Profit Admin & Public Policy  
(PNAPP)

**Olympia Cohort**

**1<sup>st</sup> year Core, Fall 2021**



**evergreen**

YOUR WAY TO THE WORLD

Master of Public Administration Program

### **Class Meeting Times:**

**Orientation Session: September 25, 9am to 4pm**

### **First Class:**

**Thursday, September 30, 6:00 to 8:30pm**

### **Regular Class Schedule:**

**All Thursday Evenings During Fall Quarter 6:00pm to 8:30pm (except November 25)**

### **Additional Meeting (devoted to Fall Project presentations):**

**Saturday, December 4, 9:00am to 4:00pm**

### **Faculty Teaching Team:**

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**This is an online class that requires synchronous and asynchronous participation.** The synchronous component includes Zoom Video meetings on Thursday evenings each week of the fall quarter (from 6:00 to 8:30 pm) plus two Saturday classes: Orientation Session on September 25, and time dedicated for fall project presentations on December 4.

### **Pre-Class Assignments**

There is a limited, yet critical, amount of pre-class work to be completed during the first week of the quarter. These assignments are described below, and in more detail on our Olympia Cohort Canvas site. In summary, the pre-class work entails a careful review of this syllabus, completion of a student survey, and review of our Canvas site. Canvas will be open by Noon on September 25, 2021.

During our first class together on September 30, time will be provided for your clarifying questions. In the meantime, please contact us via email if you have a concern or question that is time sensitive.

### **Fall 2020 Course Description:**

The purpose of 1st year Core is to identify and explore the fundamentals of governing and administering for the public. A substantial part of our work fall quarter will be to examine the foundations of public service by investigating the enduring issues that public administrators face as they conduct the public's business. We will work together to increase our collective understanding of the political, social, cultural, and economic contexts of public administration. Our goal is to gain an understanding of how to apply theories of public administration in our day-to-day work.

Historical and theoretical awareness helps public administrators discern the environment, or context, within which they must work. This awareness requires advanced critical reasoning skills. Therefore, a key part of our work fall quarter will be to develop and advance our skills to think critically and reason effectively. Consequently, we have established two learning competencies for fall quarter that each have an associated set of learning objectives. The learning competencies are meant to clarify what results we want our learning community to achieve by the end of the quarter. The associated objectives further clarify what our focus will be for each competency area.

### **Learning competencies (LC):**

*LC - 1* Become familiar with the histories, traditions, and context of public service and expand our understanding of the systemic inequities and exclusionary policies that have been incorporated into our public institutions. This includes being able to articulate the evolution of governance in terms of the “who, why, and how” of its emergence and what principles and assumptions have supported this evolution and their implication for the future of public service.

#### LC - 1 Learning Objectives:

- Explore and investigate the historical, ethical, political, and cultural settings and conditions that have influenced and complicated the delivery of public policies, programs, projects, and services.
- Become familiar with the dimensions of public and nonprofit governance (policy arenas, decision making arenas, management and organization theories, performance, and civic engagement)
- Critically examine the roles and responsibilities of public administrators and their institutions
- Compare and investigate the boundaries between public and private sector management
- Learn to conduct historical research and analysis.
- Learn to access and effectively use web-based data and information

*LC 2* Advance and develop new skills in critical analysis and critical thinking.

#### LC - 2 Learning Objectives:

- Learn to use criteria for evaluating reasoning (arguments)
- Learn how to set public programs, projects, and services in context historically and in terms of their supporting assumptions and biases.
- Learn to be effective problem solvers
- Learn to analyze and assess research

### **Course Credit Equivalencies for Fall Quarter:**

2 - Critical Reasoning & Analysis

4 - Public & Nonprofit Administration – history and practice

See below for more information regarding credit requirements and how to successfully fulfill program expectations.

### **Brief Look Ahead for the Olympia Cohort:**

**Winter quarter**, we will examine the knowledge and skills needed to practice democratic public administration through policies and organizations. Part of our work each week during winter quarter will involve working in teams and advancing and learning how to effectively collaborate for the common good. We will draw directly from issues under consideration by the Washington State Legislature during the Second Session of the 2021 – 2023 Biennium.

**Spring quarter**, we will examine the budgetary and fiscal aspects of public service and public goods. Key to our work spring quarter will be to learn about the potential sources and uses of the resources needed to carry out the public's business. We will examine how federal, state, and local resources are being deployed and consider the implications in terms of equity, social justice, and democratic public administration.

### **Continuing Themes and Project Continuity:**

The structure of our curriculum is intended to build upon two primary themes: *strategic planning and action*; and *transformational public service*. Both themes related to the MPA mission:

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. “Be the change.”

Your faculty are committed to making positive change happen, which some public administrators might refer to as our *operationalizing* our mission. Our primary investment is adding value to your current and future work as agents for positive change. Our chosen themes for the 2021-'22 Olympia Cohort are meant to reinforce our intention and lead to a progression of knowledge and skill building that will serve you well in your present and future academic and professional work.

### **Strategic Planning and Action:**

Each quarter, students will complete projects that relate directly to the theme of strategic planning and action. During fall quarter we will focus on thinking strategically. Your quarter-long project (see more details below) will end in your creating an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) of programs, projects, and/or services that are directly a part of an area of public service that you have chosen and are personally interested in. A SWOT analysis is often used as the first step in a strategic plan intended to achieve specific results or to drive an institution or organization's mission. Winter quarter will include teamwork focused on strategic policy analysis and development. Spring quarter will focus on the implementation and funding of strategies that are intended to bring about measurable change.

### **Transformational Public Service:**

Throughout the year we will be exploring and defining what transformational public service is. Part of our work together will focus on our paying attention to how we each individually are positioning ourselves to succeed in our public service careers. Some of every week during each quarter will be invested in reflecting and capturing what we are learning and how our perspectives and perceptions are changing. Part of our exploration will also involve hearing directly from public

service practitioners so that we can learn from their real-world experience doing the public's business.

### **Required Reading for Fall:**

We are using two texts for our work this fall – sections of each will also be used during winter and spring quarters. Both of the books below are available as free eBooks through The Evergreen State College Library. You can access them by logging into your library account with your evergreen ID. Online access through the library will allow you to read assigned content online, or you can download PDF sections provided you are mindful of page limits imposed by the publishers (details online for each book). We will demonstrate how to access these resources if you are not able to. Our primary texts for fall are:

Anheier (2014). *Nonprofit Organizations: Theory, Management, Policy*. 2nd Edition. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0415550475 \*used all year\*

Paul & Elder (2019). *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools*. 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. ISBN: 978-1538134948 \*used all year\*

Regarding the Paul and Elder *Guide to Critical Thinking* – this is a fairly inexpensive guide which you may find is worth purchasing for easy access. It can be purchased through the Greener Bookstore on the Olympia campus. They can provide books through the mail or with contactless pickup. It's also available directly from the [Foundation for Critical Thinking](#) and can be ordered online. Their web site has additional valuable links and information.

Additional reading and source material will be available electronically on our Canvas web site. The following four articles will be used to meet our learning objectives regarding the history and practice of public administration:

Henry, Nicholas. "Paradigms of Public Administration." *Public Administration Review*, vol. 35, no. 4, [American Society for Public Administration, Wiley], 1975, pp. 378–86, <https://doi.org/10.2307/974540>.

Nabatchi, Tina, et al. "Public Administration in Dark Times: Some Questions for the Future of the Field." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory: J-PART*, vol. 21, Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. i29–43, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40961916>.

Raadschelders, J.C "A Coherent Framework for the Study of Public Administration." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory: J-PART*, vol. 9, no. 2, [Oxford University Press, Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, Inc., Public Management Research Association], 1999, pp. 281–303, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1181808>.

Roberts, A., "Bearing the White Man's Burden: American Empire and the Origin of Public Administration," *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance*, Volume 3, Issue 3, September 2020, Pages 185–196, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ppmgov/gvz018>

Web Sites – a wide selection of online sources will be used for this class. Primary web sites include the following:

*Washington State Office of Financial Management State Data Book* - <https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/statewide-data/washington-state-data-book>

*Municipal Research Services Center (MRSC)* - <http://mrsc.org/Home.aspx>

Washington State Archives - <https://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/>

Legislative History - Historic Archives - [https://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/leg\\_history.aspx](https://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/leg_history.aspx)

## **Methods:**

This program has been designed to meet the demands of living during the Covid-19 pandemic. Your faculty are primarily classroom-based teachers – we like to work in person. We are all doing our best to adapt, nonetheless, we are still experimenting, and we are open and interested in receiving student input as the quarter progresses. We are always looking for ways to best meet the needs of each new learning community that we set out to work with. Therefore, we strongly expect both ourselves and our students to do their best to practice patience, grace, and compassion. We are very confident that we will be able to learn a lot together. We view learning as a relational pursuit – it takes a community.

What follows is a summary of all our primary written assignments for fall quarter.

### Pre-class Introductory Statement

At the start of the quarter, all students will complete a short introductory statement that will help to clarify their initial individual learning goals as related to the course's learning objectives. Your statement will consist of your responses to a list of questions posted to our Canvas site are due to be posted in the assignment portal on our Canvas site no later than 9:00am on Wednesday, September 29 (day prior to our first class). Our Canvas site will be open by Noon on September 25.

### Weekly Written Learning Summations

As we progress together as a learning community through fall quarter together, students will complete a brief, concise, weekly assessment that documents how their academic progress during the quarter relates to their learning goals. The ***Weekly Learning Forms*** are due by 10:00pm every Sunday evening. The forms are structured to capture short reflections about what you have learned from the assignments and online interaction. These weekly exercises will help prepare you for your final summation/program review assignment to be completed at the end of Week-10 (Thursday, December 9, 2021). They are intended to serve as a means of building discipline and ensuring all of us remain conscious of the results we are each individually and collectively trying to achieve.

## The Context of Public Administration (quarter long individual assignment “fall project”)

Purpose of the fall project:

- Build a broad understanding of the complexity of issues as they reside in the public sector.
- Become familiar with and gain experience using web-based sources of information and data that pertains to delivering public programs, projects, and services.
- Expand skills of research and analysis.

Overview of Fall Project:

Each student will individually assemble information and submit information for comment weekly starting week two and ending with a final presentation week nine. Your final product will reflect what you have learned and how you have expanded your knowledge and understanding of the context within which public administrators work. This work will provide a steppingstone to our exploration of systems and the art of “doing” public administration (winter quarter). This work will also provide a basis for our further exploration of strategic planning and implementation processes. Your final product will not be an exhaustive analysis of your topic area – at several points in your research you will have to limit yourself to what is doable within the assignment framework and timeline. Each week you will complete a step that will contribute to your final product (due week nine). There will be opportunities during our Thursday online class sessions to share information about your work, receive peer and faculty feedback, and gain insights from the work of your colleagues. On the last day of Week 9, you will share what you have learned with your colleagues in a short presentation (Saturday, December 4).

### Critical Analysis and Reading Response Questions

Most weeks will include one or more articles, assigned passages from our primary texts, and/or video and audio clips. You will complete written analyses for each of our viewing, reading, and listening assignments based on the analysis template in Paul and Elder’s *Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools*. Some of these writing assignments will also include specific reading response questions that we will use to start our weekly small group seminar discussions. These writing assignments are intended to be short. Your responses should be limited to approximately three to six pages per assignment, double spaced.

### Bi-Weekly Analysis – Exploring Theory in Real Time

Unlike many academic and educational programs, part of our Olympia Core program is about current events that are happening day-to-day and week-to-week in “real-time.” This presents a different kind of challenge for organizing our program’s content. Hence, we will balance “book learning” and theory about politics, economics, and public administration, with weekly assignments that require all of us to engage with the unfolding drama of doing the public’s business, “as it happens,” at the local, state, and national level.

According to *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking*, the practice of 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. This also helps us to assume nothing and challenge everything.

While there are many ways to achieve our learning goals, we will be investing significantly in applying the concepts that are summarized in the *Pocket Guide to Critical Reasoning* as directly as possible to current events through critical analysis.

Approximately every other week you will complete an analysis of a recent editorial, article, or white paper that provides an opportunity to research concepts and theories of public policy and administration and evaluate how they are being employed.

**The Schedule of Readings and Writing Assignments is posted on our Canvas site.** Specific instructions and due dates will be provided there.

### **Building Our Online Learning Community:**

Evergreen's Master of Public Administration program tends to attract a vibrant mix of students with a wide range of life experiences, skills, interests, and commitments. Learning communities work best when students get to know one another. Building relationships with peers outside of class can be especially rewarding; but finding appropriate ways to connect during the pandemic makes relationship-building especially challenging.

Please consider creative ways to use technology to collaborate on projects, study with peers, exchange work, or just chat while on break in between interactive sessions. Technology training and online tutorials are available for Zoom, Canvas, and Microsoft 360 (see links on Canvas).

Our online interactive time will generally be kept to a maximum of about 40 minutes at a single sitting. Breaks will be short, and types of activities will vary to keep us engaged and alert. In addition to short stretch breaks, every morning and afternoon and evening weekend session will have a 15-minute break falling approximately at the midpoint of our online program. Your faculty welcomes your ideas to make the most of our class time to connect with your peers and develop our learning community.

### **Participation and Engagement:**

Your participation will be evaluated based on the depth of your own engagement with class material and how well you support other students' learning and contribute to a collaborative spirit of investigation. This means moving a discussion forward by both sharing your questions and reflections and by listening well to other students and following up with additional questions, reflection, and elaboration. If you find yourself struggling to find ways to contribute, please talk to your faculty about strategies for increasing your participation (we all need support in online learning skills). Students enter our learning community with differing perspectives and experiences. These differences are a strength if we remember that the collective goal is to develop a deeper understanding of the material and our world. We do not need to agree with one another, but we do need to hear each other's thoughts and questions.

**Personal Note from Your Faculty:** We believe we should recognize that life during the COVID-19 Pandemic is unique. We want us all to do our very best to practice patience, grace, and compassion. Despite the Pandemic, we are very confident that we will be able to learn a lot together. We view learning as a relational pursuit – it takes a community. We are grateful for this opportunity to come together as a learning community.

## **Expectations and Policies**

### **Written Work:**

Most work will be completed using secondary/existing sources.

Format: Unless otherwise stated, all papers should be typed, double spaced, 12 point font, and follow APA format and citation style. [APA Style <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/index.aspx> Purdue Writing & Grammar Guide <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>] All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors.

Students may request resource writing assistance from faculty and/or the Graduate Writing Assistant. You can contact our writing support at:

EvergreenWritingAssistant@gmail.com ; 360-867-6820 ; LAB I, Room 3016.

Also, a guide to student writing at Evergreen can be accessed through the campus Writing Center:

<https://inkwellpublication.wordpress.com/>

### **Participation & Attendance:**

Students are required to attend each class meeting in its entirety. Participation includes focusing on class content, speaking in class and seminar, listening to others, taking notes, completing class interactive exercises, avoiding distractions, and listening to and dialoging with the guest speakers. If an absence is unavoidable, faculty should be notified prior to a class and/or seminar absence.

After one absence per quarter (Ex. 2 hours accumulated is one absence), make-up work will be assigned by faculty. Makeup work must be completed by the end of the scheduled course to receive course credit. After 9 hours of absences total in one quarter, you may be denied full credit for the course. Also, after reoccurring absences (being late to class; regularly missing an hour of class), you may be denied full credit. Finally, if you do miss a class, you are expected to do the reading for the class meeting missed and turn in any assignments that were due on the class date missed.

### **Late Assignments:**

Turning in assignments late is unacceptable. If there is an unavoidable need to turn in an assignment late, the student should contact their faculty no later than the original assignment due date and propose an alternative due date for completion. It is up to the individual faculty to decide whether to accept the assignment on the proposed date. Late assignments must be completed by an agreed upon revised due date to ensure full receipt of course credit.

### **Credit:**

Students will receive 6 graduate credits if all course 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. Plagiarism (i.e., using other

peoples' work as your own) may result in total loss of credit for the class and may result in dismissal from the MPA program. See the MPA Handbook and College statement on academic honesty for more information. 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. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the quarter.

### **Evaluation:**

Student's course self-evaluation and evaluation of faculty are required for credit.

### **Multiculturalism & Diversity:**

Faculty and students will actively work towards contextually weaving multiculturalism and diversity throughout our learning as related to readings, lectures, seminar, and group projects. In a learning community students and faculty share the responsibility for the teaching and learning environment. Multiculturalism and diversity are defined as: aiming to promote constructive community discourse about issues of culture, power, and differences.

### **Technology Use & Learning Styles:**

We all have different ways of learning. Faculty will actively work towards providing information in multiple formats: tactile, auditory, visual, experiential, etc. However, we are limited to means appropriate for the virtual classroom environment. Surfing the internet, checking social media, reading e-mail, playing with cell phones during our online sessions are not an appropriate use of class time. Consult your faculty to discuss technology use and learning style options.

**Reasonable Accommodations** will be provided for any student who qualifies for them through a working relationship with Access Services. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (867-6348 or 6364). If the student is already working with the office of Access Services, the faculty should have received a letter clearly indicating the student has a disability that requires academic accommodations. If any student has a health condition or disability that may require accommodations to effectively participate in this class, please do the following: **Contact Access Services to receive a letter of accommodation prior to the start of class.** Information about a disability or health condition will be regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's Students with Disabilities Policy.

### **Conduct & Conflict Resolution: Please refer to the MPA Student Handbook:**

<https://www.evergreen.edu/mpa/studenthandbook/conflictresolution>

Discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved (so long as the concerned party feels safe doing so). Possessing respect for others is fundamental to an open, free, and educational dialogue. All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom and learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MPA program. All students will be held accountable for maintaining the highest of academic standards.

We will abide by the social contract: WAC 174-121-010 College philosophy.

We will abide by the student conduct code (including academic integrity and plagiarism): Chapter 174-123 WAC, Student Conduct Code & Grievance/Appeals Process:  
<http://www.evergreen.edu/studentaffairs/student-conduct>

We will abide by the non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC

**Guest policy:**

Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during our virtual 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 of first year Core 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 handbook. 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.

**Inclement Weather:**

In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check for announcements of campus closures or service disruptions that might prevent our online class sessions. Students can call the main campus line 360-867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Faculty may decide to still hold class virtually or may cancel a class meeting even if campus is open if there are substantial regional internet service disruptions. Faculty will do their best to provide information to students in the event of an online class cancelation; including sending an all-class email prior to the start of class and posting notice on our Canvas site. Students are responsible for checking email and ensuring viable online access options are available to them.

Communicating: Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. Students are responsible for checking their Evergreen email and Canvas regularly – minimally once each weekday and weekend.

**Use of Student Work Posted to Canvas:**

Students post their work to an online learning platform known as “canvas”. Our class canvas site is accessible to faculty and students registered for this course only. The work students post on canvas is their private intellectual property and may not be used or distributed without their expressed consent. Some work may also be owned by governments, organizations, or communities. Their informed and voluntary consent would also need to be obtained for use and appropriate cultural protocols would also need to be followed.

**Audio or Video Recording:**

No audio or video recording may occur during class without the informed and voluntary consent of the students and faculty involved.