Rural Washington – Social and Political Context
Pre-class Syllabus
Winter Quarter 2022

CRN – 20371
Credits – 4-credits
Level – Evergreen Graduate Students
Faculty – Stephen H. Buxbaum, MPA
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First Meeting – Friday, February 25, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. – via Zoom

Course Description:
Tensions between rural and urban communities in Washington State have been growing for decades, due in part to competing visions of natural resource, social, and environmental policies. Understanding the special needs, issues, and interests of rural Washington can be helpful to public managers who are working to develop policies and implement programs, projects, and services equitably across the state. Part of our weekend sessions will be spent hearing from administrators and local elected officials about the special challenges they face in doing the public’s business in rural areas.

Learning Objectives:

- Consider how the state’s geography and demographics influence public policy and administration.
- Gain practical knowledge about delivering programs, projects and services in rural areas of Washington State.
- Explore the history of how rural areas of Washington developed.
- Learn how to assemble information about the unique demographic, political, economic and social features of rural Washington.

Some Reasons to consider learning about rural Washington’s history and political economy:

- Rural Washington will continue to play a decisive role in the formulation of state-wide policies due to the tensions between progressive and conservative perspectives. Two recent examples are Referendum 88 (2019), intended to restore affirmative action policies, and Initiative 976 (2019) intended to limit motor vehicle taxes and fees designed to support transportation infrastructure. In both cases, rural areas of the state voted in a united front in support of conservative agendas.
- Climate change initiatives will continue to involve rural areas of the state in terms of the production of green energy, carbon sequestration projects, and forest fire control and prevention. Finding common ground between rural and urban interests related to climate change is critically important if Washington is to meet its carbon neutrality goals.
All urban counties in Washington State have large areas that are decidedly rural in nature and include constituencies that share perspectives and political preferences that match rural counties. The tensions that exist between rural and urban counties across the state also exist within urban counties.

This course is intended for graduate students who are pursuing professions in public management, non-profit management, and public policy in Washington State. Your faculty’s primary objective is to add value to your academic and professional work by enhancing your understanding of civic life in Washington State. The course is crafted from a practitioner’s point of view and based upon thirty-five plus years of direct experience working at the local, state, and federal levels of governments, including six years spent as Executive Director of the Washington State Rural Development Council, executive and sub-cabinet appointments to the State’s Timber Team, Salmon Recovery Team, Co-Chair of the Governor’s Farm Worker Housing Interagency Work Group, and Chair of the Governor’s Interagency Council on Homelessness - spanning the administrations of Governors Gardner, Lowry, Locke, and Gregoire.

Communication with Faculty:

The best way to contact me is by email: buxbaums@evergreen.edu
You are welcome to schedule individual Zoom sessions with me – appointment by request, including evening and weekend hours if that works best for your schedule. I appreciate the opportunity to speak directly (through the medium of Zoom) about your professional and academic interests. My availability is limited until after January 3, 2022.

Methods of Instruction:

Remote Learning platforms will be used to deliver all instruction for this course. I will use Canvas to deliver assignments, course materials and to receive student work. Online class meetings will be conducted using Zoom. You must be able to access and use both Zoom and Canvas to take part in this class.

Students should be prepared – either using their own or the College’s electronics/computers – to access the internet for the purposes of research and reading assignments. Assignments will include reading from public access internet-based sources, newspapers and journals and web sites in addition to materials posted directly to the course Canvas site. Audio and video files will also be used as part of our instructional materials.

To successfully participate in this program, students will need a quiet, personal workspace, and a computer with internet access and audio/video capability.

Advertised Schedule

Students should check their calendars to be certain that they can be available for class sessions via Zoom, plus independent (asynchronous) work within the time parameters of the schedule below. Our online class time will fall within the advertised schedule – online classes (conducted using Zoom) will not take-up the entirety of the listed times (read on past the advertised schedule for more specific information about scheduling).
Online Zoom sessions will last approximately 40 minutes per sitting – with stretch breaks and at least one longer 15-minute break during every morning, afternoon, and evening instruction period. Saturday sessions will include a one-hour lunch break. Our online class meeting schedule is:

- **Friday, February 25**, 6 pm - 9 pm
- **Saturday, February 26**, 9 am - 4 pm
- **Sunday, February 27**, 9 am - Noon

- **Friday, March 4**, 6 pm - 9 pm
- **Saturday, March 5**, 9 am - 4 pm
- **Sunday, March 6**, 9 am - Noon

See further below for a summary of assignment due dates and reading and writing required to be completed prior to our online class sessions. Complete information about times for online class sessions will be posted to our Canvas web site which will open no later than noon Sunday, January 2, 2022, for enrolled students.

**Location**

Class sessions will be on-line. Your faculty is based in Olympia, Washington near the Capitol Campus. Internet disruptions due to weather or other issues may possibly impact delivery of course materials. In the unlikely event of a disruption, efforts will be made to notify students of alternative plans via text, email and phone.

**Overview of Assignments and Class Activities – including pre-class work**

The schedule below serves as a close approximation of our online Zoom session meeting times and assignment due dates – times and assignment due dates will be posted to Canvas well in advance. Anticipate that our meeting times will generally fall within the parameters outlined below – we will not be going “overtime.” Our final schedule will be posted to Canvas when our site is opened.

**Canvas Site Opens** – Our class Canvas site will be opened to all enrolled students by Noon on **Sunday, January 2, 2022**. Canvas will be our primary means of delivering course materials, conveying assignments, and uploading work.

**First Written Assignment Due** – A short, one-page or less, introduction explaining your background and interest in the course material is due by **10:00 p.m. Monday, January 10, 2022**. Instructions will be provided on Canvas for this assignment. I use information from this assignment to refine program materials to match the issues and interests that are most important to you. This is a required assignment and must be completed in order to remain enrolled.

**Second Written Assignment Due** – A short, 3-to-5-page paper is due by **10:00 p.m. Monday, February 21, 2022**. Complete instructions for this assignment will be available on Canvas. The purpose of this assignment is to introduce you to online data and information resources about rural Washington communities. Your pre-class work will provide context for our weekend class presentations, seminars and discussions with local administrators. In summary, you will individually research a group of four rural Washington cities and counties using sources made available via Canvas. Your final product will be a short analysis of the current strengths,
weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by your assigned jurisdictions. Students will initially conduct research independently for this assignment, and then will work in triads to share insights and questions when we convene as a class for our first weekend together. During both weekends we will work together to broaden our knowledge of rural Washington’s history, current economic climate, tax base, demographics, organizational capacity, political tensions, and infrastructure.

**Pre-class Reading** – In addition to the on-line research and reading you will complete for your written assignment due February 21; you will need to complete the required course reading prior to the start of our first class. All required reading material will be available electronically on Canvas.

**Independent Work Due Between Weekend Sessions** – Prior to our second weekend together students will have additional independent work to complete, including viewing and listening to video and audio clips (total of less than 40 minutes in length), and a selection of short articles to read and reflect upon prior to the weekend. All reading and audio and video materials will be provided via Canvas and the Evergreen Library (no additional costs to student). Students will have a few short questions to respond to in writing (one to two pages total) prior to our second weekend together – **due by 6:00 p.m. Friday, March 4, 2022.**

**Final Assignment and Evaluations Due** – A written final summation of your learning, consisting of responses to a series of short questions provided to you in advance, is due by **10:00 p.m. Sunday, March 6, 2022.** Your self-evaluation and an evaluation of your faculty should be posted electronically to the college’s web site by the end of evaluation week on March 18, 2022. The due dates for evaluation materials listed are meant to be final deadlines. You are encouraged to complete your evaluations as soon as possible after the course is complete.

Evaluation Conference – On-line evaluation conferences are welcomed, but optional. Dates for short Zoom session conferences will be available online via Canvas. Students interested in an online evaluation conference need to schedule there meeting prior to the end of the day on Sunday, March 26, 2022. Conferences may be scheduled for a mutually agreeable time prior to the end of evaluation week.

**Required Reading and Other Course Materials:**

There are no textbooks that need to be purchased for this course. Chapters and excerpts from the following texts will be used along with other short articles to set context for our work together. All these texts are available as e-books through the Evergreen Library. PDFs of our readings will be posted to Canvas:


Scholarship Online: August 2018. This book is available as an E-Book via the Evergreen State College Library. We will be using short chapter excerpts from this text, which will be available on our Canvas site.

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

- Municipal Research Services Center (MRSC) - http://mrsc.org/Home.aspx
- United States Census Bureau; https://data.census.gov/cedsci/
- Select County and City Web Sites

**Credit Requirements:**

Four credits will be awarded to students who successfully fulfill program expectations. To receive full credit, students will be expected to:

- Fully participate in all Zoom and Canvas discussions and activities. Be prepared to discuss key ideas from the readings during our online Zoom class meetings.
- If you anticipate that you may have a problem fully participating in all the online sessions, please contact your faculty in advance to see if there is the possibility for compensating for a missed session.
- Complete all online Canvas assignments throughout the quarter.
- Meet basic expectations for each assignment as outlined in assignment descriptions.
- Complete all assignments in a timely manner – if a deadline must be missed, students should notify and consult with faculty prior to the date/time due unless they are prevented to do so by an extreme situation. Notification to faculty of missed due dates must be accompanied by a proposed new date due. It is up to your faculty to approve alternative due dates for late work.
- Participate fully and support our learning community and actively engage in all group activities. (See section below on participation.)
- Submit a written self-evaluation and faculty evaluation after the course is complete (see deadlines on Canvas). Students have an option to attend an end-of-quarter evaluation conference (via Zoom).
Participation and Engagement:

Your participation will be evaluated not only based on the depth of your own engagement with class material, but also on how well you support other students' learning and contribute to a collaborative spirit of investigation and shared learning. 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.

The Evergreen State College and Other Course/Program Policies:

COVID-19:  
Please refer to canvas and email for up-to-date information and refer to https://evergreen.edu/covid19 for additional information regarding The Evergreen State College.

Communicating:  
Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. Students are responsible for checking their Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.

No incompletes will be awarded for this course.  
Full loss of credit decisions will be made by the faculty. 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.

Reasonable Accommodation:  
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 faculty before class and Contact Access Services to receive a letter of accommodation. Information about a disability or health condition will be regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC’s Students with Disabilities Policy.

Conduct and conflict resolution: Discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved (so long as the concerned party feels safe doing

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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.

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