



O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs
SPEA-568 Management of Local Government Services
Spring 2025 Semester
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Updated 1/13/2025 – in Red
Updated 1/14/2025 – in Purple

Mitchell Berg, Ph.D.
Clinical Associate Professor
e-mail: bergmi@iu.edu
Office: SPEA 375B
Phone: 812-855-6034 (O)
218-850-4885 (C)

Office hrs. TBD
Please contact the professor to schedule a meeting time.
Class Meeting: M and W 12:45-2:00 p.m. (BH)325

Course Bulleting Synopsis

This course covers the professional management of core municipal services. It is intended to prepare administrative generalists with the knowledge and skills needed to oversee program managers responsible for the delivery of those services through readings, case studies, field visits, guest practitioners, discussions, written assignments, and group presentations.

Course Description

This course covers the professional management of local communities, with particular attention to delivering core services. Readings and case studies will focus on local government management relating to leadership, planning, and operations.

The course addresses the management of those responsible for four core municipal services found in most cities in the US: i.e., police, fire, public works, parks, culture, and recreation. It will familiarize students with the basic practices, vocabulary, and values of professional government service management and the complexities of the field through readings, case studies, field visits, guest practitioners, discussions, written and oral assignments, and group presentations. The course will also provide students interested in careers in public service, whether in government, working at the local level for a nonprofit agency, or as a consultant, with insights into how administrative generalists learn about, interact with, and supervise subject matter experts.

Learning Outcomes and Competencies

Upon completing this course, you should be able to:

1. Articulate and apply the values of professional government management, emphasizing the role of the chief administrative officer in the delivery of services.
2. Understand and explain core regional and local government services in the language of citizens and policymakers.
3. Articulate and apply the basic management skills and techniques used in planning, delivering, and evaluating local government services.
4. Articulate and apply the principles of equity and inclusion to the delivery of local government services.
5. Communicate professionally in writing, work collaboratively, and make a professional presentation.
6. Understand sufficiently the work of professional local government managers to decide whether to pursue this career.
7. Understand how to apply for jobs, how to interview, and what skill sets you will need to gain an entry-level professional position in local government management or a related field.

International City/County Management Association Membership

If you are interested in a career in local government management, I urge you to join the O'Neill Local Government Management Association, which includes a complimentary membership in ICMA. The cost is \$15. Membership provides full access to the association's website www.ICMA.org, including articles and other publications, and a directory of all members worldwide.

For International Students

We will focus on local government services delivery and management in the US, which differs significantly from how these services are delivered in much of the world. This makes US local government service delivery different, not better. International students should feel comfortable adapting assignments to your nation's governance and service delivery system or pointing out where lessons learned may not be applicable. I welcome suggestions for adapting this course to your needs and circumstances.

Required Materials and Readings

Nelson, K.H. and Stenberg, C. Managing Local Government: The Challenges of Change. 4th Edition, 2021 ICMA press
Sculley, S. Greedy Bastards. 2020. Lion crest Publishing

Grades and Grading

All assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale. Letter grades for each assignment and for the final grade calculation will be based on the following conversion table:

A+ 100—97 A 96.9—93 A- 92.9—90
B+ 89.9—87 B 86.9—83 B- 82.9—80
C+ 79.9—77 C 76.9—73 C- 72.9—70

Item Points and Percent of Final Grade

	Total pnts.	%
Assignments	30	20%
Group project	42.5	28%
Interview	15	10%
Teach a class - special project	15	10%
Book review	15	10%
Final Project and Presentation	17.5	12%
Career plan	5	3%
Peer evaluation	10	7%
Total	150	100%

Assignments and online individual and group responses

All assignments, and online individual and group responses support the learning outcomes and competencies identified in this syllabus.

All assignments are posted on Canvas and must be submitted on Canvas when completed.

Team class project:

There are two class periods dedicated for students to teach and present on a local government core service. The students are expected to lead the class and prepare a resource page.

Book Critiques: In these assignments, you will describe, analyze, and critique significant themes and concepts found in the assigned books as distinguished from a mere *description* or a summary of its contents. You are expected to identify the learning outcomes supported by these assignments and cite other materials covered in the course.

Choose one of these books to read:

Prepare a 3 -5 -5-page (single-spaced) analysis of Greedy Bastards, by Sheryl Sculley a book about the uphill battle of turning around the City of San Antonio from a manager's perspective. The specifics of the assignment are on Canvas.

Observations of Municipal Services Reports

To better understand core services and the work of frontline employees, you will be required to interview a department head of an LGU and a front-line employee of that department. You will be responsible for writing out a 2-to-3-page single-spaced paper summarizing the interview. Instructions on how to complete the paper response will be added to Canvas.

Group project/Final.

This course will examine the operations of a city's core management structure and develop strategies for their City Administrator and department managers and supervisors to develop a succession plan and set of policy recommendations to ensure the organization can operate in an efficient, equitable, effective, and economical manner. The group and final project are expected to be completed in a memo format and meet the rigorous standards of professional writing, including the lack of any spelling, punctuation, grammatical, or sentence structure errors. The default setting should be 11-point serif font, 1" margins, single-spaced. See files posted on Canvas on Professional Communications. Additional information on this assignment will be provided in Canvas.

Professional Conduct, Civility, and Academic Integrity

The MPA is an applied degree intended to prepare you for a professional career in public service. Therefore, you are expected to behave as a professional. Professional endeavors and learning occur best in a climate characterized by intellectual diversity, respect for each other, and the contributions of each person.

While civility and professional decorum must be learned and practiced, the world in which public sector managers work also entails criticism, argument, challenge, and confrontation. Learning to respond or cope is also a necessary professional skill.

The O'Neill Student Honor Code focuses on ethical behavior and conduct, including, but not limited to, coursework inside and outside of O'Neill. <https://studentcode.iu.edu/>

Use of AI (such as ChatGPT) in this class. Using AI (such as ChatGPT) to assist in completing assignments will be allowed in the following ways:

- *To form a basis of understanding of assignments, case scenarios, and group projects. However, if you are using any AI, you must produce a copy of what you found, and submit this with your assignment. Also, if you are referencing or copying directly from AI you must properly cite which AI tool was used.*

If you use AI in an unauthorized manner, you will be committing plagiarism* and will be subject to penalties in this class and sanctions by Indiana University.

***Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else's work, including the work of other students, as one's own. *Any ideas or materials taken from another source* for either written or oral use *must be fully acknowledged* unless the information is common knowledge. What is considered "common knowledge" may differ from course to course. <https://studentcode.iu.edu/responsibilities/academic-misconduct.html>. (emphasis added)

Note Selling: Several commercial services have approached students regarding selling class notes/study guides to their classmates. Selling the instructor's notes/study guides in this course is not permitted. Violations of this policy will be reported to the Dean of Students as academic misconduct (violation of course rules). Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment for which the notes/study guides are being sold, a reduction in your final course grade, or a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities. Additionally, you should know that selling a faculty member's notes/study guides individually or on behalf of one of these services using IU email, or via Canvas may also constitute a violation of IU information technology and IU intellectual property policies; additional consequences may result.

Materials: The faculty member teaching this course holds the exclusive right to distribute, modify, post, and reproduce course materials, including all written materials, study guides, lectures, assignments, exercises, and exams. While you are permitted to take notes on the online materials and lectures posted for this course for your personal use, you are not

permitted to re-post in another forum, distribute, or reproduce content from this course without the express written permission of the faculty member. Any violation of this course rule will be reported to the appropriate university offices and officials, including to the Dean of Students as academic misconduct.

Course Policies:

1. Attendance

Regular class participation is essential because much of this course material will entail group work, in-class discussions and presentations, guest practitioners, and instructor presentations. Always reach out to me and your group, ahead of time if possible if you feel you will need to miss a class. Regardless, you will be responsible for your portion of the group's work, along with any presented materials that are due on the date that you are absent from class. I understand that occasional absences may occur because of sickness, religious observance, or a necessary appointment; no documentation is needed. As a result, prolonged absences and poor group participation may negatively impact your final grade.

2. Late Assignments, case scenarios, papers, memos, group projects and exams

Any assignments, case scenarios, etc. must be turned in by the due date, as established in the Syllabus and/or Canvas. If you however foresee that you will need to submit an assignment late, you must write before the due date to the instructor, and the instructor must provide a written response back. Any late assignments, case scenarios, etc. not meeting this expectation will have 10% of their grade deducted every day the paper is late.

3. Technology Use

Technology is welcome in the class, but please refrain from using the internet or texting for personal use.

4. Late Withdrawal.

NOTE: The auto-W deadline is NO LONGER THE LAST DAY OF CLASS (as it was during and post-Covid). After the auto-W deadline, withdrawal will be significantly limited, and you will need permission to withdraw and must meet requirements established by O'Neill.

Additional information

Counseling and Psychological Services

For information about services offered to students by CAPS: <http://healthcenter.indiana.edu/counseling/index.shtml>

TimelyCare

Indiana students have free, 24/7 access to virtual mental health care services with TimelyCare. Students do not need insurance to access TimelyCare services. <https://www.iu.edu/mental-health/find-resources/timely-care.html#0>

Religious Observation

According to the Office of the Dean of Faculties, any student who wishes to receive an excused absence from class must submit a request form available from the Dean of Faculties for each day to be absent. This form must be presented to the course instructor by the end of the second week of this semester. A separate form must be submitted for each day. The instructor will fill in the bottom section of the form and then return the original to the student. Information about the policy on religious observation can be found at the following website: <https://policies.iu.edu/policies/aca-59-accommodation-religious-observances/index.html>

Accessible Educational Services (formerly Disability Services for Students)

Securing accommodations for a student with disabilities is a responsibility shared by the student, the instructor, and the AES Office. For information about support services or accommodations available to students with disabilities, and for the procedures to be followed by students and instructors: <https://studentlife.indiana.edu/student-support/iub-aes/index.html>

Sexual Harassment

As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. Title IX and our Sexual Misconduct policy prohibit sexual misconduct. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help.

If you are seeking help and would like to talk to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with:

- i. The Sexual Assault Crisis Service (SACS) at 812-855-8900
- ii. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 812-855-5711
- iii. Confidential Victim Advocates (CVA) at 812-856-2469
- iv. IU Health Center at 812-855-4011

For more information about available resources: <http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/help/index.html>. It is also important to know that federal regulations and University policy require me to promptly convey any information about potential sexual misconduct known to me to our campus' Deputy Title IX Coordinator or IU's Title IX Coordinator. In that event, they will work with a small number of others on campus to ensure that appropriate measures are taken, and resources are made available to the student who may have been harmed. Protecting a student's privacy is of utmost concern, and all involved will only share information with those who need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist. I encourage you to visit <http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/help/index.html> to learn more.

Commitment to Diversity: Find your home and community at IU.

Asian Culture Center

Address: 807 East Tenth Street, Bloomington, IN 47408

Phone: 812-856-5361

Email: acc@indiana.edu

Website: <https://asianresource.indiana.edu/index.html>

First Nations Educational & Cultural Center

Address: 712 E 8th St., Bloomington, IN 47408

Phone: 812-855-4814

Email: fnecc@indiana.edu

Website: <https://firstnations.indiana.edu/contact/index.html>

Jewish Culture Center

Address: 730 E 3rd St., Bloomington, Indiana 47401

Phone: 812-336-3824

Website: <https://iuhillel.org/iu-jewish-culture-center>

LGBTQ+ Culture Center

Address: 705 E 7th St., Bloomington, Indiana 47408

Phone: 812-855-4252

Email: glbtserve@indiana.edu

Website: <https://lgbtq.indiana.edu/contact/index.html>

La Casa Latino Culture Center

Address: 715 E 7th St., Bloomington IN, 47408

Phone: 812-855-0174

Email: lacasa@indiana.edu

Website: <https://lacasa.indiana.edu/>

Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center

Address: 275 N Jordan Ave Bloomington, Indiana 47405

Phone: 812-855-9271

Email: nmgrad@indiana.edu

Website: <https://blackculture.indiana.edu/index.html>

Syllabus Disclaimer: This syllabus may be changed as needed throughout the semester. I will notify you as early as possible during class and by Canvas if I make a change. In addition, practitioners may be rescheduled to accommodate their availability. While I have made every effort to accurately identify assignments and dates and match them to files posted on Canvas, errors occur. Do not hesitate to inform me if you think this has happened; I will notify all students of the correction.

Schedule of Assignments – Subject to limited change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

Date	Topic and Readings	Assignment
Week 1 (1/13)	Course Introduction Introductions Review of Syllabus Introduction to the profession In-class discussion on what are government services; and what might be considered a “core government service.” <i>Read Chapters 1 and 2</i>	Complete the intro by 1/19 (5 pts)
W1 (1/15)	What type of LGU services would you like to explore Discuss the Succession plan assignment. Discuss professional associations related to supporting career and professional development. The future of local government management	
Week 2 (1/20)	No Class	
W2 (1/22)	Local Management 101 <i>The key skills you need as a Manager/Administrator</i> <i>The 4 E's of public management</i> <i>Strategic Planning</i> <i>Chain of Command</i> <i>Discussion role of the groups for the succession plan</i> ICMA Code of Ethics	Ethics memo due by 1/26 10 pts
Week 3 (1/27)	Running the Administration Department Learn about the finance and budgeting process and HRM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Capital planning</i> • <i>Debt service</i> • <i>Succession planning</i> Read Chapters 5 and 6	
W3 (1/29)	Guest Speaker: Nate Thorne, Assist Town Manager Plainfield, IN Work in groups	Submit an outline and task list of the project by 2/2 5 pts.
Week 4 (2/3)	<i>Tour of Bloomington Fire Hall (2/3) – 300 E. 4th Street</i> Read Chapter 10	
W4 (2/5)	<i>Fire Department overview.</i> <i>Guest speaker(s): Brent Anderson, Fire Chief, Town of Plainfield (2/5)</i>	Respond to self-reflection by 2/9 5 pts. Update project management/task sheet. 2/9

Week 5 (2/10)	Overview of Sheriff's Department Read Chapter 9 Work in groups	Submit a draft of the Introduction and Problem Identification Section by 2/16 10 pts.
W5 (2/12)	911 Services Guest Speaker: Renee Tomlinson, 911 Director, Town of Plainfield (2/12) Read Chapter 11	Complete the interview assignment by 2/16 15 pts. (LO 1-5)
Week 6 (2/17)	Catch up/work in groups	Submit presentation for special topics class by 2/18 15 pts.
W6 (2/19)	Public Works Overview Guest speaker: TBD Read Chapter 12	
Week 7 (2/23-3/1) T and TH	Tour of Plainfield fire station (2/28).	Submit reflection questions by 3/2 5 pts.
Week 8 (3/3)	Police Department Overview Guest Speakers: Bloomington, IN- PD Chief Michael Diekhoff and Alexandria, MN Chief Scott Kent (3/5)	
W8 (3/5)	Special Topic: TBD	Submit a Comprehensive Department Overview and Gap section by 3/9 10 pts.
Week 9 (3/10)	Service Delivery NPM Alternative service delivery Contracting Read Chapter 4	
W9 (3/12)	Guest Speaker: Dave Engstrom, City Administrator Lake St. Croix Beach, MN. and Chase Burton, Town Manager Yorktown, IN.	

Week 10 (3/16- 3/22)	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK	
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W11 (3/24)	Public Utilities (LO 2) <i>Water, Sewer, Electricity, Garbage, and Recycling</i> <i>Benefits of Municipal Utilities</i> <i>Effective Utility Management</i> <i>Other Governance Models for Municipal Utilities</i> <i>Watch YouTube Video: How Recycling Works: Behind the Scenes at the MRF</i> <u>(86) How Recycling Works: Behind the Scenes at the MRF - YouTube</u> <i>YouTube Video: Where Does All Your Trash Actually Go?</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKLOVUZxlmI Guest Speaker: TBD	
W11 (3/26)	Work in groups.	Submit presentation for special topics class by 3/30 15 pts.
Week 12 (3/31)	Special Topics: TBD	
W12 (4/2)	Work in groups	Submit Strategies and Action Steps III of the group succession plan by 4/6 10 pts.
Week 13 (4/7)	Tribal Governments	
W13 (4/9)	Work in group	Book critique due by 4/13 15 pts.
Week 14 (4/14)	Tour of Switchyard Park (4/14) Hsiung Marler - 1601 S Rogers St – everyone to meet in front of the Pavilion. Read Chapter 15	Submission of group draft report by (4/20) 7.5 pts.
W14 (4/16)	Parks and Recreation Guest Speakers: Tim Street, City of Bloomington, IN Parks and Recreation Director.	Self-reflection assignment due by 4/20 5 pts.
Week 15 (4/21)	Career Exploration Guest panel: Hannah Walker (4/21) and others TBA	
W15 (4/23)	Career Exploration (continue) Careers in the field Managers-in transition Class wrap-up	Submit career plan (LO 6,7) by 4/27 5 pts.
Week 16 (4/28)	Work in group	
Week 16 (4/30)	Presentations	Presentations are due the day before your presentation.

		10 pts.
Week 17 (5/4-5/10)	Final due	Submit the final succession plan by 5/7 7.5 pts. Submit self-peer evaluation by 5/7 10 pts.