

The Evergreen State College
Master of Public Administration Program

Syllabus

Updated January 5, 2018

“Legislative Policymaking”

A two-credit elective
Winter Quarter, 2018

Adjunct Faculty:

**Karen Fraser, MPA, University of Washington
Retired Washington State Senator**

Contact information:

karenfrasertesc@comcast.net and 360-250-6261

Use this contact information only. Do NOT use Faculty TESC email or “Canvas”.

Classroom dates and times

Friday, February 23, 5-9 pm
Saturday, February 24, 9-5 pm
Sunday, February 25, 9-5 pm

Class location

Seminar 2 Building, Room E-3109

PLUS Legislative meetings:

Students are expected to attend a minimum of three legislative committee meetings or Floor Sessions during the 2018 Session of the Washington State Legislature, which begins January 8 at Noon.

An optional tour of the Washington State Legislative Building and Capital Campus will be scheduled sometime during the quarter

CONTENTS OF THIS SYLLABUS

	<u>Page</u>
I TESC’s MPA Mission Statement	2
II Course Description -- Summary	2
III Learning Objectives	2
IV <u>Class Assignments Summary</u>	3
1. WRITE a memo to faculty	
2. READ and familiarize yourself with selected documents and websites	
3. WRITE short summaries of at least 3 legislative meetings	
4. WRITE a legislative history of an actively considered bill	
V Class Expectations	4

I TESC MPA MISSION STATEMENT

“Be the Change”

Our students, faculty and staff seek to create learning communities to explore and implement socially just, democratic public service. We seek to *think* critically and creatively; *communicate* effectively; *work* collaboratively; *embrace* diversity; *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.

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II COURSE DESCRIPTION -- SUMMARY

The course will introduce students to the role, processes, and political context of the Legislative Branch in state government. It will include the basic formal and informal processes by which legislation is considered, the types of actions available to the Legislature, the role of federal and state constitutions in shaping the role of the Legislature, the intergovernmental political context of the Legislature (federal, state, tribal, local, international agreements), the political accountability of the Legislature, the role of elections in shaping the legislative process, methods for tracking and researching legislation, how to read legislative documents, and the role of citizens in shaping and influencing the legislative process. Many highly experienced practitioners will be invited to class to share their experiences and expertise.

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III LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students should develop or improve their ability to think about, discuss, and engage in the legislative process by learning about:

- The role and context of the Legislature in state government, including its relationships with the Executive and Judicial Branches.
- The basic formal and informal procedures for considering bills, including budgets, in the Legislature.
- How to research and track legislation.
- The intergovernmental context of the legislative process (Federal, tribal, state, and local governments and international agreements).
- How political accountability occurs.
- The role of elections in shaping the work of the Legislature.
- Intergovernmental relationships between federal, state, tribal and local governments as they affect the legislative process.
- Federal and state constitutional relationships as they affect the legislative process.
- The State Enabling Act, as it affects the legislative process, particularly public lands, tidelands, and the State Constitution.
- The distinctions between constitutional, statutory, and administrative law.
- How citizens can influence the legislative process.
- How state agencies interact with the Legislature.
- Key legislative documents and how to read them.

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IV CLASS ASSIGNMENTS SUMMARY

Additional information will be emailed.

1. **WRITE an introductory memo to Faculty.**

Due: Second week of January. No later than Saturday, January 13.

Please briefly describe:

- Your interest in taking this class: what are the most important things you hope to get out of it?
- Your educational, professional, political, and/or volunteer background that is relevant to the class.

This is to assist Faculty in keeping the class oriented toward students' priority interests.

2. **A. READ/BROWSE THROUGH documents listed on the "Reading and Familiarization List" which Faculty will email to you.**

AND

B. WRITE a brief, informal diary listing what you read/browsed through and your quick reactions to each.

Due: February 20. (Want you to have looked at these before the class sessions.)

3. **WRITE a 1-2 page summary report on at least three legislative meetings YOU ATTENDED in per during the 2018 Legislative Session.** May be a committee hearing, a committee work session, a Rules Committee meeting, or a Floor Session. Seek to attend a variety.

Find schedules on Washington State Legislature web page. I will also send periodic information.

Due: By the end of the quarter.

4. **WRITE the history of a piece of legislation actively considered by the Washington State Legislature in 2018 or in recent years.** It **MUST** have passed at least one chamber. Focus on the legislative process by which it was considered and moved through the Legislature.

Due: 1) Selection of legislation and general outline due by February 28.

2) Final paper due last week of the quarter.

Some "MUSTS" for this Assignment:

- Use the Legislative Web Page, the Public Disclosure Commission web page, TVW archives.
- Interview at least one participant engaged in the bill consideration process.
- Comment on how concepts presented in class might or might not apply.
These include: specific steps the bill followed in the legislative process; what the "values controversy" is about, per the Robinson chapter commentary; arguments for and against and who was on each side; US Constitution; Federalist Paper 10; State Enabling Act; State Constitution; roles of US government, tribal governments, and local governments; election processes; Public Choice Theory; state budget; role of the Governor; roles of other statewide elected officials; roles of lobbyists, roles of citizens, roles of media.

Some excellent sources of information for this Assignment:

- Washington State Legislature web page. **A MUST !**
- Television Washington (TVW) Archives. They have video and/or audio recordings of all committee meetings and Floor action, many press conferences, many speeches, and much more.
- Public Disclosure Commission web page. They have information about: which lobbyists are working for and against specific bills and how much they are paid and how much they spend; elected officials and candidates' financial disclosure and campaign contributions; state agencies' legislative liaison activities; and more.
- The Legislative Information Office: 360-786-7573 or 1-800-562-6000 or support@leg.wa.gov
- Interview as many as possible individuals who are engaged in the bill consideration process: legislators, legislative staff, lobbyists, public agencies, state elected officials, lobbyists, local governments, citizens, others. MUST interview at least one.
- Candidate and issue campaigns relevant to the issue, if any.
- News media of all kinds---local, regional, state, national---newspapers, TV, radio, web, etc.
- Political party web pages. Check both state and local party web pages for their issue priorities and commentaries.
- Senate and House Republican and Democratic web pages, for their issue priorities and commentaries.
- Washington State Secretary of State web page, which has maps of legislative districts and voting data.
- Access.wa.gov---the main web page of Washington State government, which has vast information about all agencies.
- Web pages, newsletters and other information from advocacy organizations.
- Google, Wikipedia, etc.

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V CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Materials provided by Faculty. Faculty will provide students with multiple documents relating to class subjects. Most will be provided by email. For some documents, students will be asked to find them by themselves online or elsewhere. Students are expected to read *and think* about their content, and to incorporate their reflections about them into class discussion and the bill research assignment.

Format of Assignment Submissions: Written assignments may be submitted by paper or email. All papers must meet assignment parameters. All written work must be presented in a style easily read by a very busy public official. This means using headings, bullet points, charts, etc. MUST cite sources of information, using either the Chicago Style or the American Psychological Association Style. All written work must be of high professional quality, grammatically correct, clear, and without spelling or punctuation errors. Failure to meet these expectations may result in written work being returned for improvement and/or the student being directed to work with the Graduate Writing Assistant. Students may, on their own, request resource writing assistance from faculty and/or contact the Graduate Writing Assistant.

Late assignments. Please discuss with faculty.

Participation and Attendance. Students are required to attend and participate in each class meeting. Participation includes focusing on class content, being engaged in class discussions, actively listening to others, taking notes, avoiding distractions, actively listening to and dialoging with the guest speakers, and avoiding dominating class discussions. If an absence is unavoidable, please notify faculty in advance. Make-up work may be assigned at faculty discretion.

Use of Electronic Devices. The course is mostly paperless. Most reading material will be sent by email. Some handouts will be provided at class sessions. Computers, or other electronics, used during class should be for class purposes only, such as for note-taking or researching subjects being discussed. Students should keep in mind that the class is participatory and that the learning community is dependent upon people being present and engaged in what is happening in class. Please turn off cell-phones.

Credit. Students will receive two graduate credits at the completion of the course if all course requirements have been satisfactorily completed. Academic dishonesty and plagiarism (see MPA handbook), failing to complete one or more assignments, completing more than one assignment late, or multiple absences may constitute denial of total credit. Students will be evaluated based upon their progress towards the learning goals---assessed from classroom participation and assignment performance. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the term.

Evaluation. Written self-evaluations and a faculty evaluation are required for credit at the end of the quarter.

Multiculturalism and Diversity. Faculty and students should work toward weaving multiculturalism and diversity throughout our learning in readings, lectures, seminars, and group projects.

Learning Styles. Faculty should endeavor to provide information in multiple formats. Please discuss with faculty desired learning style options and/or personal challenges.

Accommodations. These are provided for any student who desires them through a working relationship with Access Services, the Writing Center, 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.

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 materials and preparing our papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; handling all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; respecting our differences; and discussing any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved.

We abide by the social contract, the student conduct code, and the non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC. See the College's Student Conduct webpage for more information.

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. Many highly experienced guests will be invited to class, and thoughtful interaction with them is highly encouraged. Please welcome them, and treat them and their contributions to the class with respect and appreciation. Generally, students are requested to NOT bring guests to class. For any exceptions, please consult Faculty.

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, 360-867-6000, to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Since many students travel from relatively distant locations, faculty may decide to cancel a class even if the campus is open. If this occurs, you should receive an all-program email by 3 pm. If you've not already done so, please sign up to receive alerts about campus closing or other emergencies [here](#). Feel free to also call the Adjunct Faculty, Karen Fraser, at 360-250-6261.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FACULTY AND CLASS MEMBERS:

For this class, Faculty will RECEIVE STUDENT EMAILS ONLY AT this email address, which is used solely for this class:

karenfrasertesc@comcast.net

Adjunct will SEND EMAILS to class members ONLY at their TESC email addresses.

(Reason: This faculty member is NOT trained in the use of TESC IT systems.)

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TESC 18 Syllabus 2