

Veterans Policy - Syllabus

The Evergreen State College
Master of Public Administration
Fall 2018, October 5-7 2018
(Fri 5pm-9pm, Sat/Sun 9am-5pm)
Location: Seminar II, E-2109

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Course Description

Exploring public policy through the lens of veterans policy can provide a unique perspective on public policy, whether or not one is a veteran, because veterans policy touches on so many different policy areas. This program will provide a broad overview of specific public policies affecting veterans including veterans disability benefits programs, higher education and vocational training, health care, housing and homelessness, employment, and the unique policies and programs meant to address the different challenges American Indian veterans and women veterans often face. This program will examine and analyze the intersection of federal, state, and local policies meant to help veterans reintegrate into general society after their military service and help them heal the visible and invisible wounds of war.

Questions to Consider:

- Are veterans policies accomplishing their desired goals?
- Are these policies serving an increasingly diverse veterans population?
- Who is providing leadership on veterans issues?
- How does one become involved in effecting veterans policy?

Learning Objectives

1. Explore veterans policy issues as an example of public policy in federal, state, and local government
2. Establish a broad understanding of the many public policy areas affecting United States military veterans and their families
3. Develop in depth knowledge of particular veterans policy issues
4. Advancing critical thinking skills through exploration and analysis of veterans' policy issues, further developing verbal communication skills and reasoning through classroom engagement and discussion

Readings and Media

- Hassan, A., Flynn, M., & Astor, R. (2012). *A National Veterans Covenant: Community as the Catalyst and Resource*. Los Angeles, CA: University of Southern California School of Social Work, <http://cir.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/2013-04-A-National-Veterans-Covenant-Full-NEWcover.pdf>
- Lazier, Raun (2017). *A National Veteran Policy Field of Study to Guide Policy Development, Program Investments, and Improve Outcomes*. American Society for Public Administration, PA Times, <https://patimes.org/national-veteran-policy-field-study-guide-policy-development-program-investments-improve-outcomes/>
- Robinson, J., Littlefield, P., Schleuning, A. *Transforming Veterans' Experiences During Military-To-Civilian Transition: Gaps and Opportunities*. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Center for Innovation, https://www.socalgrantmakers.org/sites/default/files/resources/VACI%20State%20of%20MCT_04192017%20%281%29.pdf
- *Serving The Nation's Veterans*, Our American States Episode 21 (Podcast), National Conference of State Legislatures, <http://www.ncsl.org/our-american-states/2017/11/09/serving-the-nations-veterans-oas-episode-21.aspx>

Student Work and Expectations

- **Prior to class**
 - Students should interview one or two veterans (family, friends, students or co-workers) by asking them what types veterans issues are important to them and why, and what veterans policies, programs, and/or benefits they would like to see improved. Faculty will assist students with connecting with veterans who have agreed to be interviewed if students do not know any veterans personally.
 - Students should document their interviews by developing a summary outline (1-2 pages) of their interviews and be prepared to discuss their results with the class. The veterans who are interviewed may remain anonymous and students will not be asked to share the names of those whom they interviewed.
 - Students should read Raun Lazier's article *A National Veteran Policy Field of Study to Guide Policy Development, Program Investments, and Improve Outcomes* and be prepared to discuss this article on the first evening of class.
- **During the course**
 - Students will write a reflective journal that connects course learning with their own analysis of various policy topics, and how their understanding of the policy topics that are most important to them may have evolved during the course.

- Students will prepare a proposal (individually or in small groups) to explore a single veteran policy issue which they would like explore more in depth, and describe how they would affect change, and brief the class in an oral presentation on Day 3.
- **Class participation**
 - Students are expected to participate in the full course including seminar discussion and presentations.
 - Students will prepare written self-evaluations that summarize the outcomes of their coursework, and learning and faculty evaluations that provide thoughtful and critical feedback on the instructor and the veterans policy program itself.
- **Final assignment – Due Monday October 15, 5pm by email**
 - Students will write a paper that should further explore their research proposal presented to the class at the end of Day 3. This paper should identify and briefly explore the issue/challenge, identify any rules, regulations, and existing programs associated with the issue, and present the solution they propose to address how the issue will impact transportation in the future. The paper should be 2-3 pages typed, single spaced, 12-point font and follow APA format. All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors.

Outline and Schedule

- **Friday October 5, 5pm-9pm**
 - Introductions and course overview
 - Review learning objectives and schedule
 - Student presentations on the results of veteran interviews
 - Seminar on veterans policy topics, *A National Veteran Policy Field of Study to Guide Policy Development, Program Investments and Improve Outcomes*
 - Review of Federal and State Laws: Who is a veteran?
 - Veterans Demographics: Snapshots and Trends
- **Saturday October 6, 9am-5pm**
 - Lecture – Veterans Agencies and Organizations: Roles of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, State Veteran Agencies, Local Government Veterans Programs, Non-profit Veteran Service Organizations
 - Seminar – National Conference of State Legislatures Task Force on Military and Veterans Affairs podcast
 - Lecture/Case Study – Accreditation of Tribal Veterans representatives and Tribal Veteran Service Officers, Rule change to 38 C.F.R. §14.627, §14.628, §14.629
 - Guest Speaker/Panel – Women Veterans

- Seminar – Military-To-Civilian Transition, *Transforming Veterans’ Experiences During the Military-To-Civilian Transition: Gaps and Opportunities*
- Individual and Small Group Work – exploring policy areas of specific interest
- **Sunday October 7, 9am-5pm**
 - Learning Recap/Seminar, *A national Veterans Covenant: Community as the Catalyst and Resource*
 - Lecture – Washington State County Veterans Programs, Advisory Boards, and Tax Levy Authorization; RCW 73.08.010, RCW 73.08.035, RCW 73.08.080
 - Case Study and Guest Speaker – Eligibility for Washington State County Veterans’ Assistance Programs RCW 73.08.005
 - Guest Speaker/Panel – Tribal Veterans Representatives and Tribal Veteran Service Officers
 - Individual and Small Group Work - developing veterans policy research proposals
 - Student presentations on their research proposals and strategies for effecting change

Course Evaluation and Credit

A written self-evaluation and faculty evaluation are required for credit. All final evaluations are to be submitted via my.evergreen.edu. Students will receive 2 graduate credits at the completion of the quarter if all course requirements have been satisfactorily completed. Plagiarism, missing class, failing to complete assignments and completing assignments late may be grounds for denial of credit. No Partial credit will be awarded. Incompletes will not be offered. Credit denial decisions will be made by the faculty.

About the Faculty

Steven J. Gill serves as the Veteran Services Administrator and Tribal Liaison for the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs and has more than 15 years of experience working with programs and services serving veterans and their families. Steven’s background includes management experience in the private and public sectors including program and policy development, finance and operations, strategic planning, performance management, project management, grant writing, human resources, leadership development. Steven is a U.S. Army veteran who has been recognized for his leadership in the veterans community having received the Washington State Governor’s Award for Leadership in Management and the Governor’s Award for Customer Service. Steven received his Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Master of Public Administration from The Evergreen State College.