

Doing the Public's Business – Preliminary Syllabus, Fall Quarter 2013 (2 credits)¹

Special Expenses: None. All case studies and readings will be provided electronically.

Instructor: Stephen Buxbaum, email: buxbaums@evergreen.edu

IMPORTANT NOTE: Your instructor will be in Taiwan for the Asia Pacific Cities Summit from September 5 through September 15, 2013. During this time he will be generally unavailable by email. Please look for responses to class inquiries early in the week of September 16.

Course Description:

This course explores how public programs, projects and services are conceived, approved, funded and financed; using case studies about environmental, infrastructure and affordable housing projects and activities. Students will learn about how resource allocation decisions are made, how public value is determined and how levels of government work with and sometimes against each other as they take action to meet public needs.

Learning Objectives:

- Investigate the political systems and processes used to decide how public resources are allocated.
- Examine the role of the public administrator in determining how the public's resources are deployed at different stages in carrying out the public's business.
- Explore methods used to articulate the need for public resources.
- Explore methods for assessing the ability and capability of an organization to complete a transaction that is in the interest of the public.
- Investigate how public projects, services and programs are determined to be ready to proceed.
- Investigate how the performance of a public investment is measured.
- Consider and practice using a framework for making resource allocation decisions using concepts that assess need, capacity, agreement and results.

Methods and Assignments

We will draw from readings, case studies, films and internet resources as we work together to intensively review how public managers navigate the sometimes conflicting, sometimes paradoxical work that must be done in order to do the public's business. Class sessions will be interactive, combining presentations by the instructor and guests with seminar style discussions and systems thinking exercises. Please check your academic/work/life schedules to be certain you can participate fully at every class. **There is no option for partial credit or an incomplete.** Students will provide a short paragraph addressing their background and interests relative to the course material to be shared verbally during the first class and provided in advance by email to Stephen no later than 5 p.m. Sunday, November 3rd. Students are required to complete a short paper (three to five pages) due Sunday, November 10th by email to Stephen (see preliminary guidance on this below – final instructions will be posted to Moodle).

Please note: Students are required to use Moodle and email for assignments and distribution of class materials - including case studies.

¹ Our Moodle site will have the most up to date information on schedules and assignments. Look for Moodle availability by September 29th, 2013.

Doing the Public's Business Credit Requirements (2 credits)

For credit in this class, students are required to:

1. Complete all the assigned readings.
2. Attend the Friday evening (6 to 10 p.m.) and weekend (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) classes, November 15 through November 17, 2013.
3. Actively participate in class discussions, exercises and triad/seminar team work.
4. Complete all written assignments – including worksheets to be completed during classroom exercises and seminars. Evaluation sheets will be provided to students and are to be completed and turned in at the end of each class.
5. All students are required to complete a short paper that discusses the skills, knowledge and abilities that are required of successful public managers. Papers should be reflective and descriptive of the students own experience, observations and perceptions about how public programs, projects and services are and should be managed. Final short, one to two paragraph epilogues to your papers will be due on the last day of class that incorporate lessons learned from class discussions, instructor presentations and reading. Papers must be emailed to Stephen by Sunday, November 10th.
6. Consistent with MPA program requirements, students will prepare a self-evaluation and an evaluation of the instructor. Students should include in their self evaluation at least one important lesson or idea that has influenced their thinking relative to the course's learning objectives. Student/faculty evaluations are optional and I usually do not conduct them for 2 credit classes. If there is a strong interest in having an evaluation conference it can be completed in person, over the phone or via email exchange as per a mutually agreed upon approach in keeping with the college's established evaluation deadlines. It's the responsibility of the student to schedule and come to agreement with the instructor regarding the method for conducting the evaluation by end of class on November 17, 2013.

MPA Standards of Conduct: *Having 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 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 – plagiarism will result in a full loss of credit for the class.*

About the Instructor:

Stephen Buxbaum has more than thirty years of management experience in the non-profit and public sectors focusing on community and economic development programs and policy. His background includes extensive work on farmland preservation, sustainable agriculture and water conservation beginning in the 1970's and '80's. He has worked at local, state and federal levels of government both in Washington State and Washington, D.C. As an executive manager for the state of Washington, he oversaw financing of hundreds of affordable housing, community facilities and public works projects. During his career he has managed some of Washington State's most successful grant and loan programs, including the Housing Trust Fund and the Community Development Block Grant program. In 2005, he received a fellowship to attend Harvard University's program for senior executives in state and local government. In 2006, he was appointed to chair the Governor's Interagency Council on Homelessness. Now, in addition to managing his consulting business, he teaches part-time for Evergreen's Masters of Public Administration Program. In November 2009 he was elected to serve on Olympia, Washington's

City Council. He was elected by his peers to serve as Olympia's Mayor Pro Tem (Deputy Mayor) from April 2010 to December 2011. He was elected Mayor of Olympia in the 2011 General Election and assumed office on January 3, 2012 (term ending December 31, 2015).

Doing the Public's Business (2 credits) Fall Quarter, 2013 Preliminary Daily Schedule and important deadlines:

Sunday, November 3, by 5 p.m. - Pre-class work assignment:

Write a short paragraph (*no more than one page*) describing your background and interests relative to the course material. Email due to Stephen by 5:00 p.m. November 3rd.

Assignment due Sunday, November 10 to Stephen via email:

Three to five page paper that discusses the skills, knowledge and abilities that are required of successful public managers. Papers should be reflective and descriptive of the students own experience, observations and perceptions about how public programs, projects and services are and should be managed. One of the central questions we will explore during our weekend intensive is whether or not public managers have unique responsibilities. How does a public manager determine value? Is the value proposition for a public manager primarily about efficiency, or public benefit, or social justice? Who is a public manager most responsible to? How do public managers work with the sometimes conflicting, yet necessarily overlapping realities of politics, operational needs and value? Your first paper will be an examination and self-reflection on these issues.

Friday, November 15, 6-10 p.m.

Introductions, subject overview and expectations presented by instructor. Instructor presentation: Defining terms and becoming familiar with the landscape of public programs, projects and services.

Assignment handed out in class: short paragraph to be reviewed in preparation of seminar discussion on November 16.

Saturday and Sunday, November 16 and 17, 9a.m to 5 p.m.

Instructor presentations and class discussion on: 1) Authorizing environments, 2) practical guide to framing a managers responsibility in assessing need, capacity, agreement and results; 3) case study discussions and in-class written assignments. Guest presentations about the politics of state, local and federal programs, projects and services are scheduled throughout this weekend. Instructions will be provided for completing the short paper assignment that is due Sunday the 17th on Saturday the 16th.

PLEASE NOTE: topics and timeframes may change to accommodate the scheduling of guest speakers. All case studies will be available electronically to class participants on Moodle. Final Syllabus and Moodle access will be provided to registered students by or before end of the day September 29, 2013.