

**PUAD 759**  
**ISSUES IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATION**

Department of Public and International Affairs  
George Mason University

Dr. Sheldon Edner  
Fall Semester, 2003

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course examines the issues facing local government policy makers and administrators. It seeks to explore both a range of issues and their specific nature. The emphasis is on identification and problem solving; recognizing that these issues change over time and may require evolving answers.

CLASS SESSIONS: Class sessions will be conducted in seminar format. Students are expected to utilize reading resources in class discussions and participate effectively in the consideration of issues, concepts, tools and theoretical ideas. The discussions will build from concepts to application in understanding national policy making processes. Students are expected to be self-directed learners and participants, challenging the materials and instructor with regard to the utility and long-term value of the course content.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Students will write two short (3-5-page) papers and one longer analytical paper (10-15 pages). The concept papers and analytical paper are subsets of an overall product. Each student will choose an issue area that they are interested in as a focal point for the concept and analytical papers. The concept papers will seek to define the issue area and current solutions being utilized to deal with it nationally. The analytical paper will seek to examine the issue in the context of either Fairfax County or another Washington area local government jurisdiction chosen by the student. In this manner, the papers will build successively on work completed and allow for the progressive development of the overall effort. The analytical paper will seek to determine how the chosen local government is dealing with the issue (or not) and what the barriers and opportunities are to a solution for the chosen jurisdiction. The student will make recommendations for possible solutions.

Concept papers are think pieces in which allow the writer to explore the utility of course ideas and concepts as applied to a selected issue. The first paper will identify the core dimensions central to the chosen issue area. The second paper will identify the approach(es) being utilized nationally in resolving the problem. The papers are due as indicated on the syllabus. The instructor will grade and return them the week after they are due. To the extent possible each student will present each paper to the class. When the papers are returned a significant portion of that class session will be devoted to discussing means for improving performance and sharing examples of good approaches to writing on policy topics. In addition the instructor will explain

and clarify grading criteria and assessments to help students identify strategies and options for improving their performance, even where they are already producing “A” work.

The final analytical paper will apply ideas and materials utilized in the first two papers to the analysis and solution of a problem facing a local government. The paper should be appropriately documented and reflect both the existing professional literature and popular sources. It will be presented verbally at the end of the course.

GRADING: Grades will be based on the two short papers and analytical paper. The short papers will comprise 40% of the course grade (20% each). The analytical paper will constitute 60% of the grade.

All written assignments will be evaluated by the instructor and returned with comments. Students are encouraged to review the instructor’s comments and any comments made during class discussion. The basis for grades should be clear. If the student does not understand the basis for the grade assigned, he/she is strongly encouraged to consult with the instructor for clarification.

CLASS SCHEDULE: The course meets every Wednesday evening as indicated below.

REQUIRED READING:

There are six books available at the bookstore.

Morgan and England	<u>Managing Urban America</u> , 5 <sup>th</sup> ed., Chatham House, 2002
Greene	<u>Cities and Privatization: Prospects for the New Century</u> , Prentice-Hall, 2002
Wiewel and Persky	<u>Suburban Sprawl: Private Decisions and Public Policy</u> , ME Sharpe, 2003
Berman	<u>Local Government and the States</u> , ME Sharpe, 2003
White, et. al.,	<u>Financing Economic Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</u> , ME Sharpe 2003
Orfield	<u>American Metropolitcs: The New Suburban Reality</u> , Brookings, 2002

RECOMMENDED READING:

Bowman and Kearney	<u>State and Local Government</u> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed., Houghton Mifflin, 1996
Ferman	<u>Challenging the Growth Machine</u> , University of Kansas Press, 1997
Lewis	<u>Shaping Suburbia</u> , University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996
Orfield	<u>Metropolitcs</u> , Brookings, 1997

Burns

The Formation of American Local Governments:  
Private Values in Public Institutions, The Oxford  
University Press, 1994

### COURSE SCHEDULE

August 27 <sup>th</sup>	Introductions and Overview of Course Reconsideration of Design
September 3 <sup>rd</sup>	What is local government: Institutions and trends  Reading: Morgan and England, Chaps. 1-6
September 10 <sup>th</sup>	Surveying the Issues: The National and Local Perspective  Reading: Consult association newsletters, public affairs newsletters, New York Times, Washington Post, etc. Write a short paper (1-2 pages, ungraded) summarizing what you found.
September 17 <sup>th</sup>	Defining the local context?  Reading: Berman, Chaps. 1-6
September 24 <sup>th</sup>	88,000 variations on a theme: Are there any glittering generalities?  Reading: Berman, finish
October 1 <sup>st</sup>	Local Government: Is regionalism the answer?  Reading: Orfield, Chap 1-6  <b>First Concept Paper Due</b>
October 8 <sup>th</sup>	Citizens, Neighborhoods, and Equity: Political and Economic Democracy at the Sub-city level?  Reading: Handout
October 15 <sup>th</sup>	Presentation and discussion of first paper.
October 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Sprawl and Growth  Reading: Wiewel and Persky, Chap 1-4

October 29 <sup>th</sup>	Sprawl and Growth Redux Reading: Wiewel and Persky, finish
November 5 <sup>th</sup>	Economic Development and Growth Reading: White, Chap 1-4
November 12 <sup>th</sup>	Economic Development Reading: White, finish <b>Second Paper Due</b>
November 19 <sup>th</sup>	Presentation of Second Paper
November 26 <sup>th</sup>	Thanksgiving Break
December 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Presentation of Analytical Papers
December 10 <sup>th</sup>	Presentation of Analytical Papers <b>Analytical Paper Due – Submission By E-mail</b>

### **ACCOMODATION**

If a student needs an accommodation for the purposes of completing course requirements, the student should discuss this with the instructor at the beginning of the term so that appropriate action can be taken.

### **HONOR CODE POLICY**

The Honor Code policy endorsed by the members of the Department of Public and International Affairs relative to the types of academic work indicated below is set out in the appropriate paragraphs.

- 1) Quizzes tests and examinations. No help may be given or received by students when taking quizzes, tests or examinations, whatever the type or wherever taken, unless the instructor specifically permits deviation from this standard.
  
- 2) Course Requirements: All work submitted to fulfill course requirements is to be solely the product of the individual(s) whose name(s) appears on it. Except with permission of the instructor, no recourse is to be had to projects, papers, lab reports or any other written work previously prepared by another student, and except with permission of the instructor no paper or work of any type submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of any course in the Department of Public and International Affairs. No assistance is to be obtained from commercial organizations, which sell or lease research help or written papers. With respect to all written work, as appropriate, proper footnotes and attribution are required.