

Course Information:

PA 6344 Seminar in Local Government Management
Wednesdays 4-7:45
MPA in City Hall Cohort

Professor Contact Information:

Dr. Doug Watson
Douglas.watson@utdallas.edu
Phone: 972-883-4907
Office: WT 1.206
Class Hours: Wednesdays 4-7:45

Course Description:

Local governments in the United States play an important role in our democratic system. Since they are not mentioned in the United States Constitution, they are creations of state governments and can only do what state law authorizes them to do either through charters or general law. They are responsible for the provision of varied services directly to citizens, such as land use planning, law enforcement, water and sewer services, and recreation. Local governments are also the place in our democratic system where citizens have the most direct contact with elected and appointed officials on numerous issues. For these and other reasons, local government managers operate in a complex legal and political environment.

There is no single established way for local governments to organize to carry out their duties. Most states allow cities and counties to choose by referendum one of several alternate forms of government spelled out in state law. However, by practice, there are now two dominant forms of local governments- the mayor-council and the council-manager. There are numerous variations on these two forms, however. Both are organizational arrangements that allow for the political and managerial functions of local government to take place.

Within this legal and political environment, the services provided by local governments must be delivered to the citizens of a city or county. Both the method and quality of service delivery are usually determined by managers who are hired by elected officials. The management of cities and counties has become increasingly professional over the past several decades. How the professional staff delivers services to the public within the political environment in which it works will be the topic of much discussion in this course.

In this course, we will examine the questions of structure of local government, the roles of key elected and appointed officials, and numerous issues that face local government managers today. Officials who are involved in local government policy and management will be in class to share with you their experiences and expertise.

Student Learning Objectives:

Expectations: To maximize the opportunities for a productive class, each student is expected to do the following:

- Attend all classes and be on time. If you cannot attend class or are going to be late, please let me know by e-mail or phone in advance.
- Complete all assignments on time.
- Do your share of the assigned work as a member of a group.
- Make an active contribution to the class discussions.
- Submit work of graduate-level quality.

Course Requirements

Active Participation- This course is a seminar and depends on your active participation in class. That means that you have to read the assignments carefully and come to class prepared to share your opinions and insights with other class members. Attendance is very important since the class meets only once per week. If you know you will not be able to attend, please let me know in advance via e-mail or telephone. More than two absences may affect your final grade.

Journal Articles- You will be required to find two journal articles from peer-reviewed academic journals, such as *Public Administration Review*, *State and Local Government Review*, *Public Performance Review*, or *Review of Public Personnel Administration* on topics we are discussing. Summarize the main points of the journal article in approximately three pages, be prepared to present your report to the class, and turn in the article and the summary. One will be due in the first five weeks of the course, and the second during the next five weeks of the course. Each will be worth five points of your final grade.

Attendance at Local Governing Body Meeting- You are required to attend two meetings of local government councils, boards, or commissions and to write an analysis of your experience. The first meeting should be one of the city councils of the cities in the MPA in City Hall program, preferably one of the two other cities and not the one for which you work. Please be prepared to discuss in class a brief summary of the agenda items, the nature and tone of the discussion, the decisions made, and the votes on the major items. You should identify the key participants, the roles they played in the meeting, and the way they interacted. Was there apparent conflict among the elected officials? Was there any citizen involvement in the meeting and, if so, what was the nature of it? How did the professionals (city manager, city attorney, department heads) perform at the meeting? Did you perceive them to be competent and knowledgeable? For one of the two meetings, please prepare a paper of approximately 5-7 pages, typed and double-spaced. Please attach newspaper clippings of the meeting, a copy of the agenda, and any other pertinent information.

In the News- Local government issues are given extensive coverage in the newspaper and other media every day. Over the course of the semester, please bring to class at least five articles from the print media that relate to an important issue in local government management. When you present your news article, discuss how it relates to the course readings. Preferably, please find articles that deal with elected officials, city managers, or department heads facing tough issues or questioning.

Course Project- You will be responsible for researching and writing a case study on a project or problem that one of the local governments has faced or is facing currently. It can involve a political problem that has confronted a local government administrator or can be about a major infrastructure project or social program that addresses community needs. You should interview the people involved in the situation and research documents or media reports on it. Remember that your case study is an objective report and should not advocate one position or the other if there are opposing factions. The case study will be written in three segments over the semester and the final paper of 10-12 pages will be turned in on the date shown on the class schedule below. I will ask different students to tell the class about their research after the three due dates. The following segments must be turned in on the dates shown on the syllabus.

1. The first segment will be the introduction to the case study. It will include a description of the local government, including size, location, form of government, and the administrative and political key players. In the introduction, you should describe the problem or situation that the local government faced in sufficient detail that the reader understands your topic.
2. The second segment will be the telling of the story of your problem or project. What alternatives were considered? Why was the path chosen by the local government or the key players rather than an alternate option? What was the outcome?
3. The third segment will include a discussion of the lessons learned and the conclusion. What does this case teach public administrators? Why is it important? What would you have done differently if you were the decision-maker?

Short Summaries and Class Discussions- You will work as a member of a group that will have assigned readings, as shown on the attached schedule. Your group will be asked to present a concise summary of the key points of the assigned articles and your group will lead the discussion in class on it. Group members will need to communicate prior to the class on your individual roles in your shared responsibility for the presentation. In addition, you will write a several page summary that you will turn in as your individual work which will be graded. Three 4-5 page summaries are due during the semester with each worth 10 percent of your grade.

Class Speakers- We will have several local government elected officials and appointed professionals to speak to the class this semester. Please be prepared to ask questions of the speakers, specifically on topics that we are studying.

Grading Policy:

Examinations and Grading- There will be a mid-term exam and a final exam, as shown on the class schedule. Your grade will be based on the following:

Individual work-	Final exam	20 percent
	Journal reviews	10 percent
	Major paper	20 percent
	Council meeting reports	20 percent
Group work-	Readings and Discussion	30 percent

Required Texts:

Wendy L. Hassett and Douglas J. Watson, *Civic Battles: When Cities Change Their Forms of Government*

Douglas J. Watson and Rollin J. Watson, *Spending a Lifetime: The Careers of City Managers*

Scott Lazenby, *Playing with Fire*

One of the following:

Mike Stanton, *The Prince of Providence*

Mike Royko, *Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago*

Rudolph W. Giuliani, *Leadership*

UTD Required Content for Syllabus:

Student Conduct & Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained

in the UTD publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork

to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grade Policy

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of **F**.

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:
The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22
PO Box 830688
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688
(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities

Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address given below. Additional information is available from the office of the school dean.
(http://www.utdallas.edu/Business_Affairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm)

Assignments and Course Schedule:

Module 1- Introduction and forms of local government
May 16, 23, and 30

Group 1

Gurwitt, "The Lure of the Strong Mayor"

Gurwitt, "Politician or Professional? The Debate Over Who Should Run our Cities Continues"

Blodgett, "Beware the Lure of the Strong Mayor"

Group 2

Montjoy and Watson, "A Case for Reinterpreted Dichotomy of Politics and Administration as a Professional Standard in Council-Manager Government," in *PAR* 55-3:231-239.

Group 3

Svara, "Dichotomy and Duality: Reconceptualizing the Relationship Between Policy and Administration in Council-Manager Cities," *PAR* 45-1:221-232

Group 4

Montjoy & Watson, "Within Region Variation..."

Group 5

Frederickson, *et al.*, "The Changing Structure of American Cities..."
Frederickson, *et al.*, "Municipal Reform in Mayor-Council Cities: A Well-Kept Secret"

All Groups

Hassett and Watson, *Civic Battles: When Cities Change Their Forms of Government*

Course Project, Installment 1 due on May 23

First Journal Review Article due on May 30

Module 2- The role of elected officials

June 6 and 13

Group 1

Wikstrom, "The Mayor as a Policy Leader in the Council-Manager Form of Government," *PAR* 39-3: 270-276

Group 2

Svara, "The Shifting Boundary Between Elected Officials and City Managers in Large Council-Manager Cities," *PAR* 59-1: 44-53

Group 3

Svara, "Redefining Leadership..."

Group 4

Wheeland, "A Profile of a Facilitative Mayor:..."

Group 5

Watson & Hassett, "Conflict Comes to Daphne"

For the class discussions on the following books, please identify 10 interesting events or lessons learned to share with the class.

Groups 1 and 2

Stanton, *The Prince of Providence*

Groups 3 and 4

Mike Royko, *Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago*

Group 5

Rudolph W. Giuliani and Ken Kurson, *Leadership*

*Class Speaker: Mayor Pat Evans of Plano on June 13
Reports on City Meetings*

Module 3- The role of professional managers

June 20 and 27, July 11

Group 1

Bosworth, "The Manager *Is* a Politician," *PAR* 18-3: 216-222

Group 2

Stillman, "The City Manager: Professional Helping Hand, or Political Hired Hand?" *PAR* 37-6: 659-670

Group 3

Watson and Hassett, "Long-Serving City Managers: ..." *PAR* 63-1

Group 4

Watson and Hassett, "Career Paths of City Managers..." *PAR* 64-2

Group 5

Hassett, "Career Advancement Choices of Female Managers..."

All Groups

Watson and Watson, *Spending a Lifetime, The Careers of City Managers-
June 27*

Lazenby, *Playing with Fire- July 11*

*Class Speakers: City Manager Tom Muehlenbeck Plano June 27
City Manager Bill Keffler Richardson June 20
City Manager Bill Dollar Garland*

Course Project, Installment 2 due on June 20

No Class on July 4

Second Journal Review Article due on July 11

Module 4- Miscellaneous Topics

July 18 and July 25

All Groups

Hartman, Homer, and Reff, "Human Resource Management Legal Issues"

Rubin, "Shoot at Everything that Flies, Claim Everything that Falls"

Feiock, "Rational Choice and Regional Governance," Journal of Urban Affairs, Vol. 29, No. 1: 47-63.

Class Speakers to be announced

Reports on Council Meetings

Discussions on Course Projects

Course Project, Installment 3 and Complete Paper due on July 25

Final Exam on July 25