

Introduction to United States Local Governance Summer 2013

**Presented to China University of Political Science and Law (CUPL) in cooperation with
the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) China Center**

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Class Time:

Location:

e-mail

Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to introduce students to the field of public administration as practiced in the United States at the local government level. The focus will be on government organizations and the political context. Course objectives will include the following:

- Understanding the role of government organizations in the United States and the wide variety of structures across and within the states, with emphasis on professional local government as practice in council/manager jurisdictions.
- Understanding how and why the government interacts with the private sector.
- Understanding the issues faced by public administrators in leading and managing local governments in the United States including the political process, decision-making, ethics, and leadership styles.
- Understanding the core functions of organizations including public safety, budgeting and finance, public works, personnel management, and program administration.
- Understanding the trends in United States local government that are creating challenges and influencing changes in the techniques utilized by local government managers
- Understanding the balances and influences of appointed local government officials working with elected policy makers and balancing values of efficiency, representation, social equity, and individual rights.

For the sake of this course, the instructor refers to the term "public administration" to include: (1) how the executive branch of government operates, (2) the implementation of public policy, (3) the attempt to solve societal problems; (4) an endeavor distinct from private-sector activities; (5) the production of public goods and services; and (6) based in law and executing law.

Course Goals

The goals of the course include (1) exposing you to ideas about how United States public administration works and should work; (2) enabling you to think critically about these ideas; (3) requiring you to connect these ideas to practice through the study of real-world examples of public administration successes and failures; and (4) introducing you to the role and challenges faced by a local government manager in the United States today.

Texts Utilized

Richard J. Stillman II, *Public Administration: Concepts and Cases*, 8th edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2000)

The Effective Local Government Manager, edited by Charldean Newell, 3rd Edition (International City/County Management Association, 2004)

John Nalbandian, *Politics and Administration in Local Government*

Teaching Philosophy

We believe that students learn best when they are engaged in material and think analytically about subject matter.

Course Outline by Topics - Tentative Schedule, Subject to Change

Hour 1	<i>Introduction</i>	Introduction to the course, syllabus review, expectations, discussion of traditional public administration values in the United States
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Hours 2-3	<i>The Profession</i>	Defining Public Administration and Public Policy in the context of the profession of a local government manager in the United States: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- introduction to the profession- types of local government structures in the United States- leadership styles- leadership and management- being an ethical and effective leader
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Hours 4-6	<i>Leadership</i>	<p>Achieving effective community leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - community leadership aspects of local government - sizing up one's own community leadership style - community dynamics and the various actors in community politics - citizen involvement - transparency of local government - ICMA's Code of Ethics
Hours 7-9	<i>Effective Governance</i>	<p>Enhancing the governing body's effectiveness; citizen engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the governing body's role - the professional manager's responsibilities - building confidence - maintaining a good work environment - governing body/manager relations; political responsiveness - citizen engagement techniques and tools - understanding and resolving conflict
Hours 10-12	<i>Functions and Policy</i>	<p>Essential management practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organizational design - budgeting and managing financial resources - Policy implementation, productivity, and program evaluation - agenda setting and policy formulation - implementation - Responsibilities and techniques in public safety; transportation; economic development; planning; recreation and cultural services; public works - evaluation and human resources management function
Hours 13- 15	<i>Managing</i>	<p>Leading a manager's life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a manager's motivation - a manager's career - the life of a manager - the ups and downs - the work and life of a manager is "subject to change" - managing in a "goldfish bowl" - promoting social equity - balancing individual rights

Hours 16- 18
*The Future of
Managing*

Governing with less resources and more demands

- doing more with less resources
- diverse communities; civil and uncivil discourse
- engaging the public using traditional as well as modern means
- the changing work force
- intergovernmental relations and public expectations
- managing external relations for the community, communications and community involvement; local government as the convener and facilitator