Western University
Department of Political Science
Issues in Local Government
Public Administration 9917L
Summer 2023

June 12-16, 9am-4pm daily
Social Science Centre 7210
Writing retreat rooms: SSC 7200; 7251

Instructor: Joe Lyons
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Course Objectives: This is the capstone course in the MPA program. The objectives are two-fold. First, the course allows students to get constructive feedback on their MPA research projects in progress. Second, the course provides a venue for students to review and apply what they have learned in other courses, by discussing a selection of topics related to local government.

Course Organization: The course will consist of a combination of student presentations, guest speakers, and class discussions. Students will also be able to take advantage of ‘writing retreat’ sessions, as assigned below.

Readings: There is minimal reading in this course. Selected readings have been assigned to introduce topics covered by guest speakers. All assigned readings will be available through Western Libraries or the course’s OWL site. Assigned reading should be done before the class in which it is to be discussed.

Course Requirements:

1. Class Participation. Two items make up the class participation grade:
   a. Attendance and Participation. You must attend all class and presentation and/or writing retreat sessions and participate during discussions. Students are expected to ask questions and provide feedback on their peers’ presentations and to engage with the instructor and guest speakers. If you are unable to attend a class, you should advise the instructor in advance.
   b. Presentation Discussant. Each student will be assigned as a discussant to a peer’s presentation. In your role as discussant, you are expected to ask two thoughtful and helpful questions about the presenter’s research project. Discussant assignments (names in brackets) are included in the presentation schedule below.

2. Writing Retreat Progress. Students will send an email to the instructor at the beginning of the week (by end of day on the Monday) setting out realistic goals for their assigned writing retreat sessions during the week. They will send a follow-up email to the instructor at the end of the week (by end of day Friday) outlining the progress that they made during the week and roughing
out a schedule for completing the rest of their research project by their assigned deadline. As part of this follow-up email, students will also provide a self-assessment (out of 5) based on how productive they feel they were during their writing retreat sessions.

3. Presentation on Research Project. Students will prepare a short presentation – no more than 12 minutes – on their final research project. This presentation is an opportunity for you to receive constructive feedback on your research project from the instructor and your peers. It also gives you practice presenting research in a way that is interesting and engaging, which is a skill itself. The group benefits from learning about important and emerging issues in local government.

The content of your presentation will vary depending on how advanced your project is and when you plan to complete. In general, I expect you to: (a) provide background information on your topic and explain why it is important; (b) state your research question(s); (c) briefly outline your research design; (d) present a couple of highlights of what you have done so far and what you still need to do; and (e) tell us about some challenges/issues/problems that you are facing. PowerPoint facilities will be available.

Since a major purpose of the presentation is to allow for critical feedback, it is in your interest to acknowledge and discuss any significant challenges that you have faced. The goal is to get as many helpful comments and suggestions as possible. Others may have faced similar challenges, so the group is a good sounding board.

**Evaluation:**
1. Class Participation: 50%
   - Attendance and Participation (40%)
   - Presentation Discussant (10%)
2. Writing Retreat Progress 5%
2. Presentation on Research Project: 45%

**Program and University Policies**

**Enrollment Restrictions:**
Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in the Local Government Program, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student’s home program.

**Statement on Academic Offences:**
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

**University Services**

**Accessible Education Western (AEW):**
Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.
Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

Health/Wellness Services:
Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Course Schedule and Required Readings

Monday, June 12, Morning Session

9-10 Introduction and Organization

10:30-noon Deconstructing Excellent Research Reports

Reading: Review either Dan Ditaranto’s or Jeff Loney’s research report – available on OWL

Monday, June 12, Afternoon Session

1-2 Guest Speaker: Ann Mitchell, CAO, Medicine Hat, AB


2:30-4 Research Report Presentations: Leadership and Internal Organizational Dynamics

Francesco S. How CAOs in Ontario perceive their role (Graham Taylor)

Kelly Sutton The (under) representation of Women as CAOs (Lisa Brooks)

Amy Thompson Retention of rural local government staff (Adam Betteridge)
Rob Axiak  Effects of employee total reward programs on attraction, retention, and culture (Paolo Staffieri)

Writing retreat (1): Erin Aldridge, Daniel Cardoso, Jon-Paul McGonigle, Meaghan Vader

Tuesday, June 13, Morning Session

9-11 Lessons Learned and Looking to the Future
Meagan Melling  Supporting the mental health of health care providers during pandemics (Deanne Friess)
Michael Macauley  Evaluating the current state of municipal strategic planning in Ontario (Bourhan Hasbini)
Owen Jaggard  Ontario’s Municipal Modernization Program and the adoption of information and communication technology in small and rural municipalities (Erin Aldridge)
Lisa Brooks  Effects of the pandemic on municipal approaches to digital transformation (Meaghan Vader)

Writing Retreat (2): Rob Axiak, Tyson Cragg, Raysso Omar, Billy Strathdee, Amy Thomson

11:30-12:30 Guest Speaker: Sheila Bassi-Kellett, CAO, Yellowknife, NWT
Reading: Sheila Bassi-Kellett. 2023. “Diversity from bottom to top: The city manager and workplace diversity.” In The Role of Canadian City Managers: In Their Own Words, eds. Fenn, McIntosh, and Siegel, 131-40. Toronto: UTP.

Tuesday, June 13, Afternoon Session

Billy Strathdee  Inter-municipal cooperation in the Ottawa-Gatineau region (Francesco Santaguida)
Adam Betteridge  Managing supplemental greenhouse lighting in Ontario (Michael Macaulay)

Writing Retreat (3): Lisa Brooks, Deanne Friess, Brianna Hammer, Bourhan Hasbini, Owen Jaggard

2:30-3:30 Guest Speaker: John Elvidge, Clerk, City of Toronto, ON

**Wednesday, June 14, Morning Session**

9-10:30 **Research Report Presentations: Issues in Local Elections and Representation**

Erin Aldridge  
Trustee candidate spending and English public school board electoral outcomes in Ontario (Owen Jaggard)

Brianna Hammer  
District size and candidate emergences in local elections (Billy Strathdee)

Graham Taylor  
Ontario police service board appointment process reforms (Meagan Melling)

**Writing Retreat (4):** Adam Betteridge, Francesco Santaguida, Kelly Sutton

11-noon  
Guest Speaker, Paul Schmidt, Associate Director, Western Writing Support Centre

**Wednesday, June 14, Afternoon Session**

1-2 **Program Debrief**

2:30-4 **Research Report Presentations: Issues in Housing**

Deanne Friess  
Effects of different approaches to infill development on the planning approval process (Tyson Cragg)

Rayssso Omar  
Affordable housing supports for newcomer refuges in London, Ontario (Brianna Hammer)

**Writing Retreat (5):** Michael Macauley, Meagan Melling, Paolo Staffieri, Graham Taylor, Adam Betteridge, Francesco Santaguida

**Thursday, June 15, Morning Session**

9-10:30 **Research Report Presentations: Issues in Housing cont’d**

Daniel Cardoso  
Social housing strategies of municipal service system managers in Ontario (Jon-Paul McGonigle)
Bourhan Hasbini: The City of London’s efforts to promote the development of affordable housing (Rob Axiak)

**Writing Retreat (5.5):** Michael Macauley, Meagan Melling, Paolo Staffieri, Graham Taylor, Kelly Sutton

11-noon  
Guest Speaker: Andy Sancton, Professor Emeritus, Western University


**Thursday, June 15, Afternoon Session**

1-3pm  
**Research Report Presentations: Municipal Policy Issues II: Choices and Innovations**

Tyson Cragg: The economic and environmental impacts of alternative-propulsion transit buses (Daniel Cardoso)

Paolo Staffieri: How income tax policies affect social assistance recipients transitioning from Ontario Works to employment (Raysso Omar)

Jon-Paul McGonigle: Setting user fees for recreation and sport services in Ontario’s largest municipalities (Amy Thomson)

Meaghan Vader: The adoption and implementation of municipal social procurement policies (Kelly Sutton)

**Writing Retreat (3.5):** Lisa Brooks, Deanne Friess, Brianna Hammer, Bourhan Hasbini, Owen Jaggard

3:30-4  
**Wrap-up and Goodbyes**

**Friday, June 16, Morning and Afternoon Sessions**

9-4  
**All Day Writing Retreat** (students may work at a location of their choosing – the classroom and writing retreat rooms will remain available. The instructor will be available for consultation, either in person or virtually by Zoom)