

Spring 2024 • Classroom: Online

PSPA 630

Local & Metropolitan Government

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Course Description

Discussion of the operational and administrative aspects of local and metropolitan government in the United States, including design and structure, municipal law, finance, administrative organization, local political systems, and intergovernmental relations. — NIU Graduate Catalog

The course asks students to study and apply the broad legal, political, and administrative attributes of local government in the U.S. The course surveys the evolution of local government, forms of government, municipal services, local politics, local elections, reform movements, urban bureaucracy and organizations, urban policy, and the intergovernmental laws that empower local governments.

Managers are asked to step into a highly complex network of interconnected systems that form a city or metropolitan region. The better a manager understands those systems and the limitations or opportunities they place on their city, the better a manager can do their job. This course is not about management per se; rather, it is about the systems that a manager operates within.

Course Objectives

- Explain and explore the history of towns, cities and municipalities, and, the development of forms of local government including council-manager government and other legal platforms for local governance.
- Understand the legal relationships between state and local governments with an emphasis on state-local relations in Illinois.
- Describe and analyze the relationship between politics and administration in the local government setting and apply relevant theoretical frameworks to assess current problems in local government.
- Describe, analyze, and offer recommendations on local government administration, service delivery and collaboration.
- Assess trends in metropolitan policy and governance through the lens of Chicago's metropolitan region.
- Describe and analyze mechanisms for democratic interactions, anchorage and civic engagement in local government.

Textbooks

Required

There is one required text for this course.

- Miller, David Y. and Raymond Cox. 2014. *Governing the Metropolis: America's New Frontier*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Additional readings will be distributed via [Blackboard](#).

Assignments

Assignment	Points	Percent
Discussion Boards (7 × 10)	70	10%
Weekly Check-ins (7 × 10)	70	10%
Case Analysis 1: Adoption of Home Rule	100	14%
Case Analysis 2: Responding to Preemption	100	14%
Case Analysis 3: To Cooperate or Not	100	14%
Building Municipal Capacity Paper	200	29%
Building Municipal Capacity Presentation	50	7%
Total	690	—

Participation

Discussion boards

Each week, you will be presented with an issue relevant to that week's topic to discuss. These discussions are meant to mirror in-class discussion of the topic.

Weekly Check-in

Every week, after you finish working through the content, I want to hear about what you learned and what questions you still have. This should be ≈150 words. That's fairly short: there are ≈250 words on a typical double-spaced page in Microsoft Word (500 when single-spaced).

I will grade these check-ins using a check system:

- ✓+: (11.5 points in gradebook) Response shows phenomenal thought and engagement with the course content. I will not assign these often.
- ✓: (10 points in gradebook) Response is thoughtful, well-written, and shows engagement with the course content. This is the expected level of performance.
- ✓-: (5 points in gradebook) Response is hastily composed, too short, and/or only cursorily engages with the course content. This grade signals that you need to improve next time. I will hopefully not assign these often.

Notice that is essentially a pass/fail or completion-based system. I'm not grading your writing ability, I'm not counting the exact number of words you're writing, and I'm not looking for encyclopedic citations of every single reading to prove that you did indeed read everything. I'm looking for thoughtful engagement, that's all. Do good work and you'll get a ✓.

Case Analyses

During the class, you will complete three (3) staff memos about different topics.

Case #1: Adoption of Home Rule

You will prepare a staff memo about the process and pros and cons of adopting home rule. The purpose of the memo is to inform the Board of Trustees about the procedure necessary to adopt and the powers gained. This is an informational memo. This memo is due on April 7 at 11:59pm.

Case #2: Responding to Preemption

You will prepare a staff memo recommending a course of action to the city manager and Board of Trustees on how to respond to the state prohibiting action in a certain policy area (that is demanded by your residents). This memo is due on April 21 at 11:59pm.

Case #3: To Cooperate or Not

You will prepare a staff member recommending whether to cooperate with a neighboring municipality on a regional project. This memo is due on May 5 at 11:59pm.

Building Municipal Capacity Project

In groups, students will act as external consultants employed by a Council of Government (COG). The COG is concerned about their member organization's ability to implement increasingly complex policy solutions to networked problems. The COG wants your group to develop strategies to increase municipal capacity.

Paper

Your group will develop a white paper recommending strategies to increase municipal capacity.

Project definition. Groups will prepare a memo defining "municipal capacity" and how to measure it. The purpose of this memo is to provide the scope of the recommendations in the full project. This memo is due on March 31 at 11:59pm.

Strategy white paper. Consistent with your group's definition of municipal capacity, your group will develop a white paper proposing strategies to increase municipal capacity. The white paper will include several strategies and your groups will rank these strategies in order of their impact and/or feasibility. The final version of the white paper is due on May 10 at 11:59pm.

Presentation

Groups will prepare a 10-12 minute presentation describing strategies to increase municipal capacity. Presentations will be on May 7.

Course Policies

Communications

Course announcements will be made via email so it is imperative that you check your e-mail daily. "I didn't get the email" is never a valid excuse. The most effect method of communicating with me is using email; however, you are also encouraged to [schedule a meeting](#) at my office or a phone call.

Late Assignments

All course assignments are due at 11:59pm unless otherwise noted. Course policy is that late work will not be accepted. That said, you should always turn in your work, even if late. Generally, you will receive at least partial credit for late work, depending on the assignment. This is better than receiving a 'o' on the assignment. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned due date, unless otherwise specified. For students who contact the instructor before the assignment deadline regarding extenuating circumstances constituting an emergency, the instructor will consider those circumstances and evaluate whether an accommodation can and should be made based on equity, fairness, and compassion. However, an accommodation should not be considered a matter of right in such circumstances.

Lauren's Promise

I will listen and believe you if someone is threatening you. Lauren McCluskey, a 21-year-old honors student athlete, [was murdered on October 22, 2018 by a man she briefly dated on the University of Utah campus](#). We must all take action to ensure that this never happens again.

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

If you are experiencing sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking, please report it to me and I will connect you to resources or call [NIU's Counseling and Consultation Services](#) (815-753-1206).

Any form of sexual harassment or violence will not be excused or tolerated at Northern. NIU has instituted procedures to respond to violations of these laws and standards, programs aimed at the prevention of such conduct, and intervention on behalf of the victims. NIU Police officers will treat victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking with respect and dignity. Advocates on campus and in the community can help with victims' physical and emotional health, reporting options, and academic concerns.

Accessibility

If you need an accommodation for this class, please contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible. The DRC coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities. It is located in the Campus Life Building, Suite 180, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 or drc@niu.edu.

Also, please contact me privately as soon as possible so we can discuss your accommodations. Please note that you will not be required to disclose your disability, only your accommodations. The sooner you let me know your needs, the sooner I can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Name and Pronoun Statement

Class rosters and University data systems are provided to faculty with the student's legal name and legal gender marker. As an NIU student, you are able to change how your preferred/proper name shows up on class rosters. This option is helpful for various student populations, including but not limited to: students who abbreviate their first name; students who use their middle name; international students; and transgender students. As a faculty member, I am committed to using your proper name and pronouns. We will take time during our first class together to do introductions, at which point you can share with all members of our learning community what name and pronouns you use, as you are comfortable. Additionally, if these change at any point during the semester, please let me know and we can develop a plan to share this information with others in a way that is safe for you.

Should you want to update your preferred/proper name, you can do so by looking at the following guidelines and frequently asked questions:

- https://www.niu.edu/regrec/preferred_proper_name/index.shtml
- https://www.niu.edu/regrec/preferred_proper_name/preferrednamefaq.shtml

Academic Integrity

The following statement is from the NIU 2017-18 Graduate Catalog:

“Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated, for example, if they copy the work of another or use unauthorized notes or other aids during an examination or turn in as their own a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university.¹

The university has adopted additional policies and procedures for dealing with research misconduct among its students, faculty, and staff. The guidelines, entitled Research Integrity at Northern Illinois University, are available in department offices, in the office of the dean of the Graduate School, and online at www.niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/I2.shtml, and pertain to the intentional commission of any of the following acts: falsification of data, improper assignment of authorship, claiming another person's work as one's own, unprofessional manipulation of experiments or of research procedures, misappropriation of research funds.

If a graduate student fails to maintain the standards of academic or professional integrity expected in his or her discipline or program, the student's admission to the program may be terminated on recommendation of the student's major department. A statement on students' rights to the products of research is available in department offices, in the office of the dean of the Graduate School, and online at www.niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/I11.shtml.”

Ethics: In case it is not yet crystal clear, there is zero tolerance for plagiarism in this course, this program and this university. Anyone who violates the ethical imperative to cite the work of others that is used in writing course papers is subject to an F for the course and possible dismissal from the university. If in doubt, cite the source, whether a quotation or a paraphrasing of someone else's work. I am happy to provide advice on how to cite works in specific situations. Use the Turabian style manual for all paper citations.

¹https://catalog.niu.edu/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=2110&hl=%22plagiarism%22&returnto=search#acad_inte

The English Department's statement on Plagiarism is direct and to the point: www.engl.niu.edu/composition/guidelines/plag.shtml. I recommend you take the online tutorial available from the NIU website to be sure you understand the rules and principles writingtutorial.niu.edu/writingtutorial/style/plagiarismo1.html.

Course Outline

Week 01, 03/18: The Local Government Landscape

Topics: Local governments; home rule; local govt spending/employment

- David Y. Miller and Raymond Cox *Governing the Metropolitan Region: America's New Frontier* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014)., Chapter 1, 2, and 5.
- Ann O'M. Bowman "The State-Local Government(s) Conundrum: Power and Design," *The Journal of Politics* 79, no. 4 (2017): 1119–1129.
- Christopher B. Goodman "Local Government Fragmentation: What Do We Know?" *State & Local Government Review* 51, no. 2 (2019): 134–144.
- Jesse J. Richardson "Dillon's Rule Is from Mars, Home Rule Is from Venus: Local Government Autonomy and the Rules of Statutory Construction," *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 41, no. 4 (2011): 662–685.

Home rule in Illinois

- James M. Banovetz "The Status of Illinois Home Rule, Part I: Home Rule Cities and the Voters," *Illinois Municipal Review* (2002): 53.
- James M. Banovetz and Thomas W. Kelty "The Status of Illinois Home Rule, Part II: Home Rule and Taxes," *Illinois Municipal Review* (2003).
- James M. Banovetz and Thomas W. Kelty "The Status of Illinois Home Rule, Part III: Do Home Rule Communities Levy More Property Taxes?" *Illinois Municipal Review* (2003): 55.

Week 02, 03/25: Form & Structure of Local Government

Topics: Local government forms; service delivery requirements; linkages to performance outcomes

- Miller and Cox *Governing the Metropolitan Region.*, Chapter 4.
- J. Edwin Benton "County Service Delivery: Does Government Structure Matter?" *Public Administration Review* 62, no. 4 (2002): 471–479.
- J. Edwin Benton et al. "Service Challenges and Governance Issues Confronting American Counties in the 21st Century: An Overview," *State and Local Government Review* 40, no. 1 (2008): 54–68.
- H. George Frederickson, Gary Alan Johnson, and Curtis Wood "The Changing Structure of American Cities: A Study of the Diffusion of Innovation," *Public Administration Review* 64, no. 3 (2004): 320–330.
- Civic Federation. 2021. [An Inventory of Local Governments in Illinois](#).

Week 03, 04/01: Metropolitan & Regional Governance

Topics: Regionalism, broadly; councils of government; RIGOs; informal regionalism

- Miller and Cox *Governing the Metropolitan Region.*, Chapters 6-10.
- Michael Howell-Moroney "The Tiebout Hypothesis 50 Years Later: Lessons and Lingering Challenges for Metropolitan Governance in the 21st Century," *Public Administration Review* 68, no. 1 (2008): 97–109.
- Jay Rickabaugh "Regionalism with and Without Metropolitanism: Governance Structures of Rural and Non-Rural Regional Intergovernmental Organizations," *The American Review of Public Administration* 51, no. 2 (2021): 155–164.

Week 04, 04/08: State-Local Intergovernmental Relations

Topics: State-local intergovernmental relations; intergovernmental conflict; unfunded mandates; preemption

- Miller and Cox *Governing the Metropolitan Region.*, Chapter 3 and 11.

- Christopher B. Goodman, Megan E. Hatch, and Bruce D. McDonald “State Preemption of Local Laws: Origins and Modern Trends,” *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance* 4, no. 2 (2021): 146–158.
- William D. Hicks et al. “Home Rule Be Damned: Exploring Policy Conflicts Between the Statehouse and City Hall,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51, no. 1 (2018): 26–38.
- Katherine Levine Einstein and David M. Glick “Cities in American Federalism: Evidence on State-Local Government Conflict from a Survey of Mayors,” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 47, no. 4 (2017): 599–621.

Week 05, 04/15: External Influences on Local Government

Topics: Elections; urban sprawl; population growth; climate change/sustainability

- Christopher Warshaw “Local Elections and Representation in the United States,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 22, no. 1 (2019): 461–479.
- Thomas J. Nechyba and Randall P. Walsh “Urban Sprawl,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18, no. 4 (2004): 177–200.
- George Galster “Why Shrinking Cities Are Not Mirror Images of Growing Cities: A Research Agenda of Six Testable Propositions,” *Urban Affairs Review* 55, no. 1 (2019): 355–372.
- Aaron Deslatte, Michael D. Siciliano, and Rachel M. Krause “Local Government Managers Are on the Frontlines of Climate Change: Are They Ready?” *Public Administration Review* 83, no. 6 (2023): 1506–1511.

Week 06, 04/22: Metropolitan Governance & Service Delivery Approaches

Topics: Contracting out; shared services; collaboration

- Germà Bel and Mildred E. Warner “Inter-Municipal Cooperation and Costs: Expectations and Evidence,” *Public Administration* 93, no. 1 (2015): 52–67.
- Austin M. Aldag and Mildred Warner “Cooperation, Not Cost Savings: Explaining Duration of Shared Service Agreements,” *Local Government Studies* 44, no. 3 (2018): 350–370.
- Serena Y. Kim et al. “Updating the Institutional Collective Action Framework,” *Policy Studies Journal* 50, no. 1 (2022): 9–34.

Week 07, 04/29: Community Governance at the Micro Scale

Topics: Local government consolidation; public participation; appointed volunteers in local government; homeowners associations

- Suzanne Leland and Kurt Thurmaier “Political and Functional Local Government Consolidation: The Challenges for Core Public Administration Values and Regional Reform,” *The American Review of Public Administration* 44, no. 4_suppl (2014): 29S–46S.
- Katherine Levine Einstein, Maxwell Palmer, and David M. Glick “Who Participates in Local Government? Evidence from Meeting Minutes,” *Perspectives on Politics* 17, no. 1 (2019): 28–46.
- George W. Dougherty and Jennifer Easton “Appointed Public Volunteer Boards: Exploring the Basics of Citizen Participation Through Boards and Commissions,” *The American Review of Public Administration* 41, no. 5 (2011): 519–541.
- Barbara Coyle McCabe “Homeowners Associations as Private Governments: What We Know, What We Don’t Know, and Why It Matters,” *Public Administration Review* 71, no. 4 (2011): 535–542.

Week 08, 05/06: Conclusion, Team Case Presentations, Putting It All Together

- Miller and Cox *Governing the Metropolitan Region.*, Chapter 12.