Doing the Public's Business

Second Summer Session 2010 (2 credits)
Syllabus – [Pre-session Program Overview - see note below]* – May 17, 2010

Primary Catalog Listing: Graduate Studies.
Catalog Cross Listing: Public Administration and Environmental Science.
Prerequisites: good standing as upper division undergraduate or MPA/MES student.
Special Expenses: Approx. $35 for text: Mark H. Moore, Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government.
Instructor: Stephen Buxbaum, email: buxbaums@evergreen.edu

Description: This course explores how public programs, projects and services are conceived, approved, funded and financed; using case studies about environmental, infrastructure and affordable housing projects and activities. Students will learn about how resource allocation decisions are made, how public value is determined and how levels of government work with and sometimes against each other as they take action to meet public needs. Course is intended for MPA or MES students and upper division undergraduates.

Learning Objectives:

- Investigate the political systems and processes used to decide how public resources are allocated.
- Examine the role of the public administrator in determining how the public's resources are deployed at different stages in carrying out the public's business.
- Explore methods used to articulate the need for public resources.
- Explore methods for assessing the ability and capability of an organization to complete a transaction that is in the interest of the public.
- Investigate how public projects, services and programs are determined to be ready to proceed.
- Investigate how the performance of a public investment is measured.
- Consider and practice using a framework for making resource allocation decisions using concepts that assess need, capacity, agreement and results.

Methods and Assignments

We will draw from readings, case studies and internet resources as we work together to intensively review how the public's business is accomplished. Class sessions will be interactive, combining presentations by the instructor and guests with seminar style discussions. Please check your schedule and your calendar to be certain you can participate fully at every class. There is no option for partial credit or an incomplete. Students will provide a short paragraph addressing their background and interests relative to the course material to be shared by the first class (email to Stephen no later than COB Tuesday, August10th). The first assignment is due Monday August 23rd by email to Stephen (written assignments are one page). Please note: there is quite a bit of reading before the first Friday/Saturday class. Students are required to use Moodle and email for assignments and distribution of class materials - including case studies.

* The order of topics explored on the weekends may change to accommodate the needs of one of our speakers. A final syllabus will be posted to Moodle at the beginning of summer session.

Credit Requirements

For credit in this class, students are required to:

1. Complete all the assigned readings.
2. Attend all four classes (two Friday evenings 6 to 8 p.m. and full day classes on two Saturdays) and actively participate in discussions.
3. Complete all written assignments – one page summary of lessons learned from class discussion, instructor presentations and reading applied to a program, project or service of the student's choice; emailed to Stephen by Monday, August 23rd; written responses to seminar questions due end of day to Stephen on Saturday, August 28th.
4. Consistent with MPA program requirements, students will prepare a self-evaluation and an evaluation of the instructor. Students should include in their self evaluation at least one important lesson or idea that has influenced their thinking relative to the course's learning objectives. Student/faculty evaluations can be completed in person, over the phone or via email exchange as per a mutually agreed upon approach in keeping with established summer session evaluation deadlines. It's the responsibility of the student to schedule and come to agreement with the instructor regarding the method for conducting the evaluation by end of class on August 28th.

About the Instructor:

Stephen Buxbaum has more than thirty years of management experience in the non-profit and public sectors focusing on community and economic development programs and policy. His background includes extensive work on farmland preservation, sustainable agriculture and water conservation beginning in the 1970's and '80's. He has worked at local, state and federal levels of government both in Washington State and Washington, D.C. He believes deeply in experiential learning and multi-disciplinary education and has been an active sponsor of Evergreen State College interns in his work in the Pacific Northwest. As an executive manager for the state of Washington, he oversaw financing of hundreds of affordable housing, community facilities and public works projects. During his career he has managed some of Washington state's most successful grant and loan programs, including the Housing Trust Fund and the Community Development Block Grant program which supports housing rehabilitation, economic development and infrastructure projects. In 2005, he received a fellowship to attend Harvard University's program for senior executives in state and local government. In 2006, he was appointed to chair the Governor's Interagency Council on Homelessness. Now, in addition to managing his consulting business, he teaches part-time for Evergreen's Masters of Public Administration program. In November 2009 he was elected to serve on Olympia, Washington's City Council. Since April 2010 he has served as Olympia's Mayor Pro Tem.

Doing the Public's Business   Second Summer Session, 2010 Daily Draft Schedule (2 credits)

Schedule:

Friday, August 13, 6-9 p.m.
Introductions, subject overview and expectations presented by instructor. Consensus decision about Saturday meals and breaks schedule (to pot-luck or not to pot luck…). Instructor presentation: Defining terms and becoming familiar with the landscape of doing the public's business through programs, projects and services. Short seminar covering assigned reading (Mark H. Moore, Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government; Introduction and Parts 1 and 2).

Assignment handed out in class: short paragraph to be reviewed in preparation of seminar discussion Saturday morning.

Saturday, August 14, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Instructor presentations and class discussion on: 1) Authorizing environments, 2) Steps in the process of conception, approval and implementation of projects, programs and services – using a framework for analysis and decision making (Need, Capacity, Agreement and Results). Guest presentation regarding the politics of Washington state's budget process.
Final case study assignments for Friday, August 27 will be made.

Assignment due Monday, August 23 to Stephen via email: One page analysis of a program, project or service of the student's choosing using the Need/Capacity/Agreement/Results framework as previously presented in class.

Friday, August 27, 6-9 p.m.
Reading to be completed: all three case studies. Instructor presentation and brief review of policy framework in the context of case studies (Need, Capacity, Agreement and Results). Class seminar on case studies: "Million Dollar Murray", Cowichee/Tieton waste water treatment and Willipa Bay Spartina Mitigation.

PLEASE NOTE: Infrastructure and environmental issues case studies may vary from those listed above depending on availability of presenters. All case studies will be available electronically to class participants by August 14th.

Saturday, August 28, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Reading to be completed: Part 3 of Moore's Public Value.
Instructor and guest presentations and class discussion: 1) Resource streams: fees, general revenues, financing, 2) Budget cycles: local, federal, state, philanthropic and private.

Class seminar: What is public value? Class discussion drawing from case studies and student papers.

Schedule evaluation conferences.