



Local Government

PUBAFRS 5030

3 Credit Hours

Autumn 2021

HYBRID COURSE

In-Person Session: Mondays 9:35 – 10:55 Hayes Hall 005

Online Content: Weekly Carmen Modules

Instructor: **Jennifer Teal, MPA**
Senior Consultant – Raftelis

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Office Hours: By appointment. Conducted over Zoom.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to provide students with a basic introduction to the legal framework, common structures, and functions of local governments in the United States. This course concentrates on the powers, responsibilities, structures, financing, management, and functions of local governments, with a particular focus on common general-purpose local governments: municipalities, and counties. It also includes a limited overview of school districts, townships, and special purpose districts. Ohio local governments will be the primary focus of the course, although examples of structures and functions from throughout the United States will be discussed as well.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Understand the historical development and constitutional and statutory underpinnings of local governments in the United States.
- Understand intergovernmental relations between local governments and state and federal governments.
- Identify the basic organizational and management structures of general-purpose local governments in the United States.
- Understand the core functions of general-purpose local governments and the roles and responsibilities of their elected and appointed officials.
- Recognize the primary sources of local government revenues and major expenditure categories by each type of local governmental unit.

- Become knowledgeable of current opportunities and challenges confronting local government elected and appointed officials in Ohio and other states.
- Develop an understanding of a variety of common local government functions, including public safety and law, social and community services, infrastructure and utilities, and planning and development.
- Appreciate the challenges local government elected officials and public administrators and managers confront and gain an increased knowledge of local government career opportunities.
- Further develop research and analysis, oral and written communication, presentation, and briefing skills through class participation and by working on assigned papers and research projects. The team research project also will enhance skills related to working with other professionals and employees in the workplace.

REQUIRED BOOK

Nelson, Kimberly L. & Stenberg, Carl W. (2018) *Managing local government: an essential guide for municipal and county managers*. CQ Press. (ISBN: 9781506323374)

Students can access textbook information via the Barnes & Noble bookstore website: <https://ohiostate.bncollege.com> as well as from their BuckeyeLink Student Center. This information is disseminated by B&N to all area bookstores. You may buy from a store of your choice and/or shop for books (always use ISBN# for searches) online.

ADDITIONAL READINGS & RESOURCES

In addition to the assigned text, supplemental reading assignments will be posted on the Carmen website. A preliminary listing of these assignments is included in the *Course Outline* section of the syllabus. Additional reading material and resources may be assigned throughout the semester.

Students are encouraged to follow local government news in local and national newspapers such as The Columbus Dispatch, The New York Times, and The Washington Post.

MODE OF DELIVERY

This course will use a hybrid delivery model that blends synchronous in-person (live) instruction with online learning content. We will meet in-person for a required weekly session during our scheduled class meeting time (Mondays from 9:35 am to 10:55 am in Hayes 005). Online learning content will be divided into weekly modules that are released at least one week ahead of time. These modules will include links to reading assignments, videos, discussion prompts, and related assignments. Apart from our in-person meetings, you may schedule your efforts freely throughout the week as you keep pace with weekly due dates.

COVID Considerations

While the hope and expectation is that this course will meet in-person for the live instruction sessions throughout the semester, the instructor is prepared to pivot to synchronous (live) Zoom sessions in the event of illness, quarantine, or campus-wide change in policy.

In the event of student illness or quarantine, please follow the University's disability accommodation process, described in the *Covid Process SLDS Statement* below.

WORKLOAD/COURSE EXPECTATIONS

On average, students are expected to spend two hours outside of class for every one credit hour spent in class. Given that this is a 3-credit hour course, you can expect to spend an average of nine (9) hours per week on this course including live class sessions, participating in online learning content, completing readings, and working on assignments.

As everyone registered for the course is receiving 5000-level credit, coursework requirements (e.g., reading, participation, and assignments) will be the same for both undergraduate and graduate students. To recognize the differences in education experience between graduate and undergraduate students, and to ensure equity, assessment (grading) will be done separately. The same standards will be used, but undergraduate work will be assessed independently from, and without consideration of, the work of graduate students. For all assignments that share a common due date, all undergraduate work will be assessed before graduate work is assessed so the grader evaluates each group with the critical, analytical, and writing expectations appropriate for each education level.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

Regular class attendance and participation is a crucial aspect of this course. Attendance will be taken for each in-person session, and excessive absences will adversely affect your final participation grade.

INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK AND RESPONSE TIMES

- **Class announcements:** I will send all important class-wide messages through the Announcements tool in Carmen. Please check your [notification preferences](#) to ensure you receive these messages.
- **Individual and group messages:** I will send individual and group messages to course participants using the Carmen Conversations (Inbox) function. Please check your [notification preferences](#) to ensure you receive these messages.
- **Grading and feedback:** For large assignments you can generally expect feedback within 7 days.
- **Email:** I will reply to emails within 24 hours on days when class is in session at the University.
- **Office hours:** You can always bring questions about course content, assignments, or policies to my office hours. Office hours will take place over Zoom and must be scheduled in advance.
- **Carmen discussions:** I will check and reply to messages in the discussion boards at least once mid-week and once at the end of the week.

GRADING

The course is graded A-E, with the weighted distribution outlined in the *Course Requirements and Evaluation* section below.

A	100% to 93%	B+	< 90% to 87%	C+	< 80% to 77%	D+	< 70% to 67%
A-	< 93% to 90%	B	< 87% to 83%	C	< 77% to 73%	D	< 67% to 60%
		B-	< 83% to 80%	C-	< 73% to 70%	E	< 60% to 0%

The course grade is designed to show the overall level of engagement and quality of work performed by each student. If you believe that any grade was not proper, you may provide a written communication explaining why you believe the grade was incorrectly assigned within one week of receiving the graded assignment back. Each appeal will be considered, and if a re-grade is performed, the entire assignment will be re-graded. The final grade may be greater, less, or equal to the original grade.

Students may not submit coursework for prior courses as work for credit in this course. Written work may be evaluated for originality using a resource such as Turnitin to ensure that students only submit original work.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Graded assignments may come in three forms, and students should note the expectations for each in the descriptions of our class assignments below:

- **Independent Work (↑):** Strictly non-collaborative, original-individual work. You may discuss this assignment only with your instructor. Discussions with other individuals, either in person or electronically, are strictly prohibited.
- **Collaboration Required (↑↑↑):** An explicit expectation for collaboration among students either in-class or outside (i.e., group work).
- **Optional-Collaboration (↑↑):** Students are permitted, but not required, to discuss the assignment or ideas with each other. However, all submitted work must be one’s original and individual creation.

Assignment Name	Points / Weight	Assignment Type
Class Participation	15%	↑ ↑↑
Course Foundations Learning Assessment	10%	↑↑↑
Local News Brief	10%	↑
Public Meeting Summary Paper	15%	↑
Adopt-a-Government Responses	20%	↑
Local Government Research Project		
Research Plan	5%	↑
Presentation & Discussion	10%	↑ ↑↑
Research Paper	15%	↑
TOTAL COURSE POINTS		

Class Participation - 15% ↑ ↑↑

Throughout Semester

To gain a full understanding of the course objectives, it is essential to complete the assigned readings, attend each live class session and participate in live and online class discussions. Students who regularly attend and actively participate will ultimately be in a better position to perform well on their assignments and demonstrate mastery of the course content. This class will include several guest speakers, who are professionals and experts from a variety of local governments and organizations throughout central Ohio and the country. Attendance and active participation during these sessions will provide students with invaluable knowledge about local government issues and trends, and opportunities for networking and relationship building that can benefit students well beyond their time in this class. Good, active participation entails actively listening, responding to questions (both verbally and in the chat), asking thoughtful questions, and demonstrating interest in and understanding of the material being discussed.

Your participation grade for this course is a subjective grade comprised of the following elements: attendance, class discussion, contributions to online discussions, group work, in-class activities, and overall engagement.

Course Foundations Learning Assessment – 10% 🚩

In-Class September 13

A brief, collaborative learning assessment will take place on September 13 which will assess student understanding of the foundational materials covered during the first weeks of class, as well as provide students with an opportunity to evaluate their ability to be successful in the course prior to the withdrawal deadline. This interactive assessment will be open book/open note, and scoring will be provided by the scheduled class session.

Local News Brief – 10% 🚩

Multiple Dates (To be Assigned August 30)

For this individual assignment, students should identify one or more recent (i.e., within the last 2-3 weeks) news story related to local government programs, initiatives, successes, or challenges. This assignment includes the following components:

1. **Presentation of the news item to the class:** On the assigned date, students will provide a brief (approximately 5 minute) presentation of the news item to the class. This presentation should describe the news item (or items), identify the issues being discussed in the news item(s), why the issue is important, and discuss how the issue relates to what we have learned as a class so far. Presentations may include visual supports, such as slides, brief videos, etc. Links to all cited news items should be included for the class to reference.
2. **Facilitation of online class discussion on the news item:** Students should craft a discussion post in Carmen that includes links to all relevant sources and 3-5 discussion questions for the class related the news item(s) being presented and actively participate in the discussion that follows that week.

Adopt-A-Government – 20% 🚩

Throughout Semester

At the beginning of the semester, students will choose a general-purpose local government within the United States to use as a case study throughout the course. This can be the student's hometown or a community the student wishes to learn more about. Throughout the semester, students will be expected to independently research and discuss how the content being explored in the course relates to their selected local government. Discussion prompts will be posted in a dedicated thread in each content module on Carmen with student responses posted in that thread by the next in-person class session unless otherwise specified. Students should cite any resources used to formulate their responses. Each Adopt-a-Government discussion question will be worth 5 points, with the bottom 3 response scores not counted as part of the student's grade.

Public Meeting Summary Paper – 15% 🚩

Due November 1

One of the best ways to learn about how local governments operate is to spend time watching them in action. Students will be expected to attend (virtually or in-person) a public meeting of a general purpose local government's legislative branch (i.e., Township Trustees, City Council, County Board of Commissioners) during the semester and write a 3-5 page paper describing the organization and one policy issue being discussed during the meeting they attended.

The paper should include the following information about the local government and the public meeting:

- Name of local government organization observed

- Date, time, and location of public meeting (a copy of the meeting agenda should be included as an attachment/appendix to the paper and should not be included in the 3-5-page requirement)
- Brief description of the legal and organizational structure of the local government (i.e., statutory vs. home rule, Council-Manager vs. Mayor-Council, etc.)
- Identification and discussion of **one** policy issue being introduced and/or voted on by the legislative body
 - What is the issue being discussed?
 - Who brought the issue forward?
 - What local government staff and departments are involved in the issue?
 - Is the issue contentious (i.e., are there opposing views being expressed, what are they?)
 - What was the ultimate disposition of the issue (i.e., voted on, tabled, etc.)?

Students may use outside resources to learn more about the issue being considered, noting that most local government websites include tools for searching current prior agendas and meeting minutes, legislative history for ordinances, and staff reports on issues on the agenda.

Students should plan ahead to identify the local government whose public meeting they wish to attend and ensure that there is a meaningful agenda planned for that meeting date. Currently, many public bodies are meeting virtually, using Zoom or another online format. Research the entity's meeting platform ahead of time to ensure that you can view the meeting without issues. While multiple students may attend/view the same meeting, this is an individual assignment and students are expected to complete these papers independently.

Local Government Research Project – 30%

Multiple Phases/Due Dates

Each student will complete an individual research project on an emerging issue in local government. This research project provides students with the opportunity to develop a detailed understanding of the chosen issue and as well as the opportunity to strengthen and cultivate effective research, presentation and writing skills. These projects also will provide the entire class with the opportunity to learn from one another on issues that may otherwise not be covered in class.

Assignment Expectations: Through this project, the student should demonstrate a detailed understanding of a complex issue or concept of current importance to local governments in the United States. Students are expected to utilize primary source documents and provide their own analysis of the chosen topic, not simply summarize the treatment of the issue in the media. As a part of their analysis, students should thoroughly explain the issue and why it is important for local governments today. Students should include a case study of a local government that has worked to address the issue and evaluate the effectiveness of that local government's chosen approach. Students should also identify recommendations for potential policy solutions to address the issue being evaluated.

Group vs. Individual Effort: Due to the varied research interests of course participants, there is a reasonable likelihood that students may select similar or related topics. If this happens, the instructor will coordinate with each student to ensure that different case study examples are chosen.

Presentations will be scheduled by topic area, and all students researching a common topic will have their presentations scheduled for the same class session. Rather than prepare a single,

shared presentation, students presenting on a common topic may choose to *coordinate* their individual presentations to maximize the learning opportunity for others.

In this context, *coordination* may include discussing research ideas with one another, sharing relevant articles or other resources with one another, agreeing upon the order in which individual case studies will be presented, and collaborating on the development and moderation of discussion questions for the class. The instructor may participate in the planning for such a coordinated presentation to ensure an equitable and meaningful learning experience. Grading for all phases of the research project will be on an individual basis.

The Local Government Research Project is comprised of three deliverables:

1. Research Plan – 5% †

Due September 20

The purpose of the research plan is to identify and scope the topic to be researched, and the individual student's plan for research and analysis. During the live class session on September 20, the instructor will meet briefly with each student to discuss their proposed topic and research plan and provide feedback on the proposed scope and direction of the project. The research plan should be 1-2 pages in length and may be provided in either a detailed outline or narrative format. It should include an identification of the proposed topic, potential resources, case study ideas, and a brief description of the importance of the issue in the context of current events and/or course content.

2. Presentation & Discussion – 10% 📢

Multiple Dates in November (To be assigned by September 27)

Individual presentations should be approximately 10 minutes in length, and include a visual digital component such as PowerPoint, Prezi, or a similar medium. Brief video clips or other graphics may be included. The presentation should provide an overview of the research topic, a detailed description of the case study portion of the research, and a brief discussion of potential policy solutions to address the issue.

In addition to the presentation, each student (or group of students collaborating on a shared topic) should facilitate an online discussion of their topic on Carmen following their presentation. This will include posting any relevant links or resources to a dedicated discussion thread created by the instructor, posing 3-5 discussion questions for the class to engage with, and actively participating in the discussion that follows.

Please see the preceding section titled Group vs. Individual Effort for expectations related to collaborative presentations.

3. Research Paper – 15% †

Due November 29

The research paper is an individual assignment and should be well organized and clearly written. The content of the paper should include the following:

- A clearly written introductory section that describes the issue being researched and outlines the approach that the author will take to explain and analyze the issue.
- An understanding of the local government context – i.e., why is this topic important for local governments and how does the topic tie in with the content of the course.
- Critical analysis of the issue and potential policy options for addressing it.

- A local government case study that demonstrates the importance of the matter and/or potential approaches for addressing it.
- A well-crafted conclusion that summarizes the analysis or findings of the author.

The body of the paper should be 6-8 pages in length. The body of the paper may not include any table, graph, or other graphic that takes up more than 25% of the page. All sources should be cited appropriately, using the [APA citation style](#). A bibliography of sources used and web links to newspaper articles and similar sources used in the preparation of the paper should be included (but is not part of the 6-8 page requirement). The paper may also include optional appendices that include tables, graphs, charts, or other exhibits that are referred to in the body of the paper.

Extra Credit 🙋👥💬

TBD

From time to time, the instructor may provide opportunities for students to earn a limited amount of extra credit. Such opportunities will be announced at least a week in advance, both in class and using the Announcements on Carmen.

DUE DATES & LATE ASSIGNMENTS

****While the official late assignment policy is outlined below, please note that I will be flexible regarding deadlines for students who are experiencing illness or other challenges related to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Please contact me as early as possible if you think you may not be able to complete an assignment or participate in the course due to illness.****

All written assignments should be posted to Carmen in the assigned file format no later than 11:59 pm on the designated due date. Any assignments posted after the due date will be considered late and may result in a reduced grade. The more time that passes from the assigned due date, the further the grade may be reduced.

If for any reason you believe that you may not be able to submit an assignment on time, contact the instructor immediately to discuss the situation. Full credit may be available for late assignments at the instructor's discretion and may require official documentation such as a doctor's note.

The University assigned exam date for this course is Monday December 13 from 10:00 am to 11:45 am. While there is no final examination scheduled for this course, no assignments will be accepted for credit after the assigned exam time.

FORMAT STANDARDS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

All formal written assignments, including the **Public Meeting Summary Paper** and **Local Government Research Project** paper should be submitted in .pdf format. Required page counts are based on a standard that includes 11-point Calibri-style font on 8½ x 11-inch paper, with double spacing and one-inch margins. When multiple pages are included in any submission, the pages must be numbered. Student names and email addresses should be included on all submissions. All references should be cited using [the APA style](#).

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Technology Expectations

To be able to participate fully in this course, you will need to utilize a variety of technology skills and equipment. For help with your password, university email, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the Ohio State IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at ocio.osu.edu/help/hours, and support for urgent issues is available 24/7.

Self-Service and Chat support: ocio.osu.edu/help

Phone: 614-688-4357(HELP) TDD: 614-688-8743

Email: servicedesk@osu.edu

Technical Skills

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen: for questions about specific functionality, see the [Canvas Student Guide](#)
- [Zoom virtual meetings](#)

Required Equipment

- Computer: current Mac or PC with high-speed internet connection
- Webcam: built-in or external webcam, fully installed and tested
- Microphone: built-in laptop or tablet mic or external microphone
- Other: a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) or landline to use for BuckeyePass authentication

Required Software/File Formats

- All formal written assignments (except for discussion posts) should be saved in .pdf format and uploaded to Carmen. Word documents and Google Docs will not be accepted.
- Video presentations (narrated slide presentations and/or videos) should be saved in a .mp4 format.
- As a result, students are welcome to create their assignments using the software of their choice if formatting requirements identified in the specific assignments can be met.

Academic Integrity (Academic Misconduct Policy)

The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct may constitute "Academic Misconduct." Sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact the instructor.

Glenn College Diversity Values Statement

The Glenn College is committed to nurturing a diverse and inclusive environment for our students, faculty, staff, and guests that celebrates the fundamental value and dignity of everyone by recognizing differences and supporting individuality. We are dedicated to creating a safe space and promoting civil discourse that acknowledges and embraces diverse perspectives on issues and challenges that affect our community.

Mental Health Statement

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the **Office of Student Life Counseling and Consultation Services (CCS)** by visiting <https://ccs.osu.edu/> or calling 614-292- 5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614--292--5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1--800--273--TALK or at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>. Also, the OSU Student Advocacy Center is a resource to help students navigate OSU and to resolve issues that they encounter at OSU – visit <http://advocacy.osu.edu/>.

Health And Safety Requirements

All students, faculty and staff are required to comply with and stay up to date on all university safety and health guidance (<https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu>), which includes wearing a face mask in any indoor space and maintaining a safe physical distance at all times. Non-compliance will result in a warning first, and disciplinary actions will be taken for repeated offenses.

COVID Process SLDS Statement

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university's [request process](#), managed by Student Life Disability Services. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

FERPA And Privacy In CarmenZoom

Video and audio recordings of class lectures will be part of the classroom activity. The video and audio recording is used for educational use/purposes and may be made available to all students presently enrolled in the course. Please note that you are not allowed to share these recordings. This is to protect your FERPA rights and those of your fellow students.

**Disability Services Statement
Accommodation Policy**

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.