

**PLSC 565: Local Governments and Politics**  
**Winter 2017**  
**(CRN 26324)**

Arnold Fleischmann  
Pray-Harrold 601M  
734.487.3113, [afleisch@emich.edu](mailto:afleisch@emich.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 2:15-3:15  
Thursday: 4:45-5:30  
and by appointment

**Focus of the Course**

The primary goal of this course is to understand the context – political, historic, demographic, spatial, and economic – within which U.S. local governments operate. PLSC 565 also functions as a gateway for those taking the local government concentration in the MPA program. It will be more “academic” than most of the other courses in the sequence: PLSC 625 is normally taught by a practitioner and concentrates on management issues at the local level; PLSC 580 will examine development policies and strategies as they relate to the local economy, quality of life, and sustainability; PLSC 645 examines the relationships among governments at all levels and between governments and nonprofits; and PLSC 655 looks at planning and politics at the local level. There are also related courses in Geography, and Urban & Regional Planning, and the College of Business.

Some of you have completed several core MPA courses. Others might be in PLSC 540 or PLSC 578 this semester; both courses are good complements to our work. Comparable background in planning, geography, sociology, or economics can also serve you well.

**Assignments & Evaluation**

Your grade includes critical essays (4 @ 10%), a policy brief (40%) with accompanying synopsis and presentation (5%), and discussion (15%). Grading is done on a 0-100 scale with the following thresholds: A = 93, A- = 90, B+ = 87, B = 84, B- = 80, and letter grades below 80 (almost never needed in graduate classes) having cutoffs with comparable second digits.

Written work must conform to the author-date format for references and parenthetical citations used in public administration and political science journals. This is slightly different from *The Chicago Manual of Style*, but you will find it used for readings in this syllabus. Poor writing may be penalized up to one letter grade; late work will be penalized one letter grade per 24 hours and prorated for fractions thereof.

**Reading.** We will use a mix of books, book chapters, journal articles, and material from research organizations, professional associations, and the mainstream media. Each week includes both required reading followed by supplementary reading, which can be critical for doing a good job on your essays.

There are two required books:

- Oliver, J. Eric. 2012. *Local Elections and the Politics of Small-Scale Democracy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gallagher, John. 2013. *Revolution Detroit: Strategies for Urban Reinvention*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Journal articles should be accessed from the [Halle Library web site](#) using the “Journals by Title” search tab, usually accessing the current publisher’s site rather than JSTOR. Material from outside

organizations is available at their web sites or on CANVAS; book chapters will be posted to CANVAS. Reading assignments might be changed during the semester.

**Discussion.** Think of our weekly seminar like a staff meeting in terms of your preparation and participation. There will be limited class time devoted to lectures. You are expected to come prepared and to participate so that we can best understand each week's reading. I will give you an overview to each section of the course, as well as questions each week to guide the following week's class.

Merely describing what you have read is minimally acceptable graduate work. Identifying strengths and weaknesses in a study, presenting competing alternatives or evidence, and laying out a reading's implications for policy, governing, or management are the skills that differentiate excellent from ordinary discussion in grading. There is a work sheet for reading articles in CANVAS. It is a Word document that you can download and fill in. You should use it regularly in preparing to discuss assigned journal articles.

With the exception of a few weeks, we will use the beginning of each class to highlight significant trends or events that local managers should know about. These will be drawn mainly from the preceding week's news, including professional outlets (see suggestions at the end of the syllabus). Anyone can bring up items by posting them to the place provided in CANVAS by the day before class. I will send reminders about posted items, including questions about the reading's implications for local governments.

**Essays.** You will write four essays covering different sections of the course. Each essay is worth 10 percent of your grade and is due in paper and electronic forms at the start of the class when we discuss it. Guidelines are in CANVAS.

**Policy Brief.** This report is an analysis of a local service/process or some federal or state urban program. It must cover both an overview of the service, process, or program and its status in a specific jurisdiction (municipality, township, or county). Detailed guidelines are posted to CANVAS, including deadlines for preliminary steps, which are also listed below.

**Important EMU Policies.** Disability accommodations must be arranged through the Disability Resource Center: <https://www.emich.edu/drc/>. Policies on academic honesty are administered by the Student Conduct Office: <http://www.emich.edu/studentconduct/index.php>. Especially because this is a seminar in a graduate program, plagiarism will result in a grade of zero on the assignment in question.

## Seminar Schedule

### Part 1: The Local Government Setting

#### Week 1: January 5

##### **Overview of the Course and Some Urban “Basics”**

- The scope and variety of American local governments (from the *Census of Governments*). Go to the Census Bureau’s page [“Lists and Structure of Governments”](#) and then to the box for the “Number of Governments” menu. Start with Table 2 and the compare it to Tables 1 and 4.

##### **Local Government Challenges and Perceptions**

- Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. 2013. [“State Governments Viewed Favorably as Federal Rating Hits New Low”](#) (April 15).
- Ford School of Public Policy, Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP). 2016. [“Michigan Local Leaders’ Doubts Continue Regarding the State’s Direction”](#) (July).
- Martin, Lawrence L., Richard Level, and Jena Caley. 2012. ‘The ‘New Normal’ for Local Government.’ *State and Local Government Review* 44:special issue (August): 17-28.

#### Week 2: January 12

##### **Lecture: A Brief History of Urban America**

##### **The ‘Place’ of Local Government in U.S. Politics**

- Oliver: chap. 1.

##### **A Brighter Urban Future?**

- Ehrenhalt, Alan. 2012. *The Great Inversion and the Future of the American City*. New York: Knopf: Prologue (pp. 3-21). [CANVAS]
- Frey, William. 2016. [“U.S. Growth Rate Hits New Low as Migration to the Sun Belt Continues.”](#) Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, Metropolitan Policy Program (December 23).

##### **Supplementary Reading:**

- Bradley, Jennifer. 2015. [“The Changing Face of the Heartland: Preparing America’s Diverse Workforce for Tomorrow.”](#) Brookings Essays (March). Washington: Brookings Institution.
- Frey, William. 2014. *Diversity Explosion*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press: chap. 1. [CANVAS]
- Glaeser, Edward. 2011. *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Florida, Richard. 2005. *Cities and the Creative Class*. New York: Routledge. [Florida’s views on economic development have spawned a cottage industry, lots of consulting for him, and a gaggle of critics.]
- Kneebone, Elizabeth. 2014. [“The Growth and Spread of Concentrated Poverty, 2000 to 2008-2012.”](#) Washington: Brookings Institution (July).

**Week 3: January 19**

**Essay #1 due at the start of class.**

**The Past, Present, and Future of Urban Michigan**

- Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). 2012. [“Retrenchment and Renewal: The Economic and Demographic Outlook for Southeast Michigan Through 2040.”](#) Detroit: SEMCOG (March).
- Gallagher: all.
- Bomey, Nathan, and John Gallagher. 2013. [“How Detroit Went Broke,”](#) *Detroit Free Press* (September 13).

Supplementary Reading:

- Bomey, Nathan. 2016. *Detroit Resurrected: To Bankruptcy and Back*. New York: W.W. Norton. [Bomey will deliver a lecture on campus during winter semester, date TBA.]
- Sugrue, Thomas J. 2005 [1996]. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Maraniss, David. 2015. *Once in a Great City: A Detroit Story*. New York: Simon & Schuster [interesting narrative of events in Detroit during 1962-1964].

**Part 2: Political Participation at the Local Level**

**Week 4: January 26**

**Local Elections: Who Runs and Who Votes?**

- Oliver: chaps. 2-3.

Supplementary Reading:

- Hajnal, Zoltan, and Jessica Trounstine. 2014. “What Underlies Urban Politics? Race, Class, Ideology, Partisanship, and the Urban Vote.” *Urban Affairs Review* 50:1 (January): 63-99.
- Carr, Jered B., and Antonio Tavares. 2014. “City Size and Political Participation in Local Government: Reassessing the Contingent Effects of Residential Location Decisions Within Urban Regions.” *Urban Affairs Review* 50:2 (March): 269-302 [based on a survey of Michigan residents about voting, contacting, and attending public meetings].
- Gerber, Elizabeth R., and Justin H. Phillips. 2003. “Development Ballot Measures, Interest Group Endorsements, and the Political Geography of Growth Preferences.” *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (October): 625-639.

**Week 5: February 2**

**Essay #2 due at the start of class.**

**Local Elections: Campaigns and Outcomes**

- Oliver: chaps. 4-6.
- Schaffner, Brian F., Matthew Streb, and Gerald Wright. 2001. “Teams Without Uniforms: The Nonpartisan Ballot in State and Local Elections.” *Political Research Quarterly* 54 (March): 7-30.

Supplementary Reading:

- Carr, Jered B., and Antonio Tavares. 2014. "City Size and Political Participation in Local Government: Reassessing the Contingent Effects of Residential Location Decisions Within Urban Regions." *Urban Affairs Review* 50:2 (March): 269-302 [examines Oliver's claims with survey data from Michigan cities and finds mixed support for Oliver].
- McNitt, Andrew Douglas. 2010. "Tenure in Office of Big City Mayors." *State and Local Government Review* 42:1 (April): 36-47.
- Trounstein, Jessica, and Melody E. Valdin. 2008. "The Context Matters: The Effects of Single-Member versus At-Large Districts on City Council Diversity." *American Journal of Political Science* 52:3 (July): 554-569.
- Adams, Brian E. 2012. "Citizens, Interest Groups, and Local Ballot Initiatives." *Politics & Policy* 40:1 (February): 43-68.
- Roscoe, Douglas D. 2014. "Yes, Raise My Taxes: Property Tax Cap Override Elections." *Social Science Quarterly* 95:1 (March): 145-164.

### Part 3: Government Institutions

#### Week 6: February 9

##### Local Government Structure

- Svara, James H. 1985. "Dichotomy and Duality: Reconceptualizing the Relationship Between Policy and Administration in Council-Manager Cities." *Public Administration Review* 45:1 (January/February): 221-232. [This is one of the "classic" works on government structure and the politics-administration dichotomy.]
- Frederickson, H. George, Gary Alan Johnson, and Curtis Wood. 2004. "The Changing Structure of American Cities: A Study of the Diffusion of Innovation." *Public Administration Review* 64:3 (May/June): 320-330.
- Krebs, Timothy B., and John P. Pelissero. 2010. "Urban Managers and Public Policy: Do Institutional Arrangements Influence Decisions to Initiate Policy?" *Urban Affairs Review* 45:3 (January): 391-411.

Supplementary Reading:

- Carr, Jered B. 2015. "What Have We Learned about the Performance of Council-Manager Government? A Review and Synthesis of the Research." *Public Administration Review* 75:5 (September/October): 673-689.
- Choi, Cheon Geun, Richard C. Feiock, and Jungah Bae. 2013. "The Adoption and Abandonment of Council-Manager Government." *Public Administration Review* 73:5 (September/October): 727-736.
- Kropf, Martha, Timothy Vercellotti, and David C. Kimball. 2013. "Representative Bureaucracy and Partisanship: The Implementation of Election Law." *Public Administration Review* 73:2 (March/April): 242-252.
- Smith, Adrienne R., Beth Reingold, and Michael Leo Owens. 2012. "The Political Determinants of Women's Descriptive Representation in Cities." *Political Research Quarterly* 65:2 (June): 315-329.

**Week 7: February 16**

**Essay #3 due at the start of class.**

**Dealing with the States and the Feds**

- Bowman, Ann O'M., and Richard C. Kearney. 2012. "Are U.S. Cities Losing Power and Authority? Perceptions of Local Government Actors." *Urban Affairs Review* 48:4 (July): 528-546.
- Sapotichne, Joshua, Erika Rosebrook, Eric A. Scorsone, Danielle Kaminski, Mary Doidge, and Traci Taylor. 2015. "Beyond State Takeovers: Reconsidering the Role of State Government in Local Fiscal Distress, with Important Lessons for Michigan and its Embattled Cities." East Lansing: Michigan State University, Cooperative Extension Service (August). [CANVAS]
- Nickels, Ashley E. 2016. "Approaches to Municipal Takeover: Home Rule Erosion and State Intervention in Michigan and New Jersey." *State and Local Government Review* 48:3 (September): 194-207.

Supplementary Reading:

- Mills, Sarah, and Christopher Gore. 2016. "Public and Local Government Leader Opinions on Environmental Federalism: Comparing Issues and National Contexts." *State and Local Government Review* 48:3 (September): 165-174.
- Wood, Curtis. 2011. "Exploring the Determinants of the Empowered U.S. Municipality." *State and Local Government Review* 43:2 (August): 123-139.
- Leland, Suzanne M., and Kurt Thurmaier, editors. 2010. *City-County Consolidation: Promises Made, Promises Kept?* Washington: Georgetown University Press.

**Part 4: The Local Policy Process**

**Week 8: March 2**

**Stages in the Policy Process**

- Jones, Bryan D. 1982. "Assessing the Products of Government." In *Analyzing Urban-Service Distributions*, edited by Richard C. Rich, 155-169. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books. [CANVAS]

**Agenda Setting**

- Liu, Xinsheng, Eric Lindquist, Arnold Vedlitz, and Kenneth Vincent. 2010. "Understanding Local Policymaking: Policy Elites' Perceptions of Local Agenda Setting and Alternative Policy Selection." *Policy Studies Journal* 38:1 (February): 69-91.
- Leckrone, J. Wesley, Michelle Atherton, Nicole Crossey, Andrea Stickley, and Meghan E. Rubardo. 2015. "Does Anyone Care about the Poor? Redistribution in Mayoral Policy Agendas." *State and Local Government Review* 47:4 (December): 240-254.

Supplementary Reading:

- Feiock, Richard C., James C. Clingmayer, Christopher Stream, Barbara Coyle McCabe, and Shamima Ahmed. 2001. "Political Conflict, Fiscal Stress, and Administrative Turnover in American Cities." *State and Local Government Review* 33 (Spring): 101-108.

- Gerber, Elisabeth R., and Daniel J. Hopkins. 2011. "When Mayors Matter: Estimating the Impact of Mayoral Partisanship on City Policy." *American Journal of Political Science* 55:2 (April): 326-339.
- Cooper, Christopher A., Anthony J. Nownes, and Steven Roberts. 2005. "Perceptions of Power: Interest Groups in Local Politics." *State and Local Government Review* 37:3 (Fall): 206-216.
- McCabe, Barbara Coyle. 2011. "Homeowners Associations as Private Governments: What We Know, What We Don't Know, and Why It Matters." *Public Administration Review* 71:4 (July/August): 535-542.
- Hock, Scott, Sarah Anderson, and Matthew Potoski. 2013. "Invitation Phone Calls Increase Attendance at Civic Meetings: Evidence from a Field Experiment." *Public Administration Review* 73:2 (March/April): 221-228.

### **Week 9: March 9**

#### **Policy Adoption**

- Nelson, Kimberly L., Gerald T. Gabris, and Trenton J. Davis. 2011. "What Makes Municipal Councils Effective? An Empirical Analysis of How Council Members Perceive Their Group Interactions and Processes." *State and Local Government Review* 43:3 (December): 196-204.
- Heidbreder, Brianne, Nathan Grasse, Douglas Ihrke, and Brian D. Cherry. 2011. "Determinants of Policy Conflict in Michigan Municipalities." *State and Local Government Review* 43:1 (April): 32-45.
- Yang, Kaifeng, and Sanjay K. Pandey. 2011. "Further Dissecting the Black Box of Citizen Participation: When Does Citizen Involvement Lead to Good Outcomes?" *Public Administration Review* 71:6 (November/December): 880-892.

#### Supplementary Reading

- Cooper, Christopher A., H. Gibbs Knotts, and Kathleen M. Brennan. 2008. "The Importance of Trust in Government for Public Administration: The Case of Zoning." *Public Administration Review* 68 (May-June): 459-468.
- Shipan, Charles R., and Craig Volden. 2012. "Policy Diffusion: Seven Lessons for Scholars and Practitioners." *Public Administration Review* 72:6 (November/December): 788-796.

### **Week 10: March 16**

#### **Providing Local Services**

- Osborne, David, and Ted Gaebler. 1992. *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley: Appendix A (pp. 332-348) [a classic of the "reforming government" movement of the 1980s and 1990s].
- Warner, Mildred E., and Amir Hefetz. 2008. "Managing Markets for Public Service: The Role of Mixed Public-Private Delivery on City Services." *Public Administration Review* 68:1 (January/February 2008): 155-166.
- International City/County Management Association. 2007. "Profile of Local Government Service Delivery Choices, 2007." Washington: ICMA. [CANVAS]

#### Supplementary Reading:

- Sclar, Elliott D. 2000. *You Don't Always Get What You Pay For: The Economics of Privatization*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

- Hefetz, Amir, and Mildred Warner. 2012. "Contracting or Public Delivery? The Importance of Service, Market, and Management Characteristics." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 14:2 (April): 289-317.
- Ammons, David N., and William C. Rivenbark. 2008. "Factors Influencing the Use of Performance Data to Improve Municipal Services: Evidence from the North Carolina Benchmarking Project." *Public Administration Review* 68:2 (March/April): 304-318.

**Week 11: March 23**

**Economic Development**

- Leigh, Nancy Green, and Edward J. Blakely. 2017. *Planning Local Economic Development: Theory and Practice*. Los Angeles: Sage: chapters 8 and 9.
- ICMA. 2014. "Economic Development 2014 Survey Results" [CANVAS].
- Katz, Bruce, and Jennifer Bradley. 2013. *The Metropolitan Revolution: How Cities and Metros Are Fixing Our Broken Politics and Fragile Economy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press: chapter 6 ("The Rise of Innovation Districts").

Supplementary Reading:

- Opp, Susan M., Jeffery L. Osgood Jr., and Cynthia R. Rugeley. 2014. "City Limits in a Postrecessionary World: Explaining the Pursuit of Development Policies after the Great Recession." *State and Local Government Review* 46:4 (December): 236-248.

**Week 12: March 30**

**Essay #4 due at the start of class.**

**Collaboration**

- Hilvert, Cheryl, and David Swindell. 2013. "Collaborative Service Delivery: What Every Local Government Manager Should Know." *State and Local Government Review* 45:4 (December): 240-254.
- LeRoux, Kelly, and Jered B. Carr. 2007. "Explaining Local Government Cooperation on Public Works: Evidence From Michigan." *Public Works Management & Policy* 12 (July): 344-358.
- McGiverin-Bohan, Kellie, Kirsten Gronbjerg, Lauren Dula, and Rachel Miller. 2016. "Local Officials' Support for PILOTs/SILOTs: Nonprofit Engagement, Economic Stress, and Politics." *Public Administration Review* 76:6 (November/December): 951-963.

Supplementary Reading:

- Rusk, David. 2013. *Cities Without Suburbs: A Census 2010 Perspective*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

**Week 13: April 6**

**Policy Brief Presentations**

[Note: The schedule might be modified to spread out presentations over more weeks.]



## Part 5: The Urban Future

### Week 14: April 13

#### What's Down the Road?

- Bomey, Nathan, John Gallagher, and Mark Stryker. 2014. "[How Detroit Was Reborn: The Inside Story of Detroit's Historic Bankruptcy Case.](#)" *Detroit Free Press* (November 9) [some of the chapters will be more useful than others].
- Ammons, David N., Karl W. Smith, and Carl W. Stenberg. 2012. "The Future of Local Government: Will Current Stresses Bring Major Permanent Changes?" *State and Local Government Review* 44:special issue (August): 64-75.

#### Supplementary Reading:

- Nelson, Kimberly L. 2012. "Municipal Choices during a Recession: Bounded Rationality and Innovation." *State and Local Government Review* 44:special issue (August): 44-63.

**April 20: Policy Brief due by 6:00 PM (hard and electronic copy)**

## HELPFUL WEB SITES

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### *Selected News Feeds*

<i>Governing</i> (free subscription and daily news feed)	<a href="http://www.governing.com/">http://www.governing.com/</a>
Brookings Institutions Cities & Regions	<a href="https://www.brookings.edu/topic/cities-regions/">https://www.brookings.edu/topic/cities-regions/</a>
Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program (research and bi-weekly newsletter)	<a href="http://www.brookings.edu/about/programs/metro">http://www.brookings.edu/about/programs/metro</a>
CityLab	<a href="http://www.citylab.com/">http://www.citylab.com/</a>
Center for Michigan ( <i>The Bridge</i> )	<a href="http://bridgemi.com/">http://bridgemi.com/</a>

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### *Professional Organizations*

Citizens Research Council of Michigan	<a href="http://crcmich.org/">http://crcmich.org/</a>
International City/County Management Association	<a href="http://icma.org/en/icma/home">http://icma.org/en/icma/home</a>
National League of Cities	<a href="http://www.nlc.org/">http://www.nlc.org/</a>
U.S. Conference of Mayors	<a href="http://www.usmayors.org/">http://www.usmayors.org/</a>
Michigan Municipal League	<a href="http://www.mml.org/home.html">http://www.mml.org/home.html</a>
Michigan Municipal Executives (new name)	<a href="http://www.mme.org/">http://www.mme.org/</a>

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### *Government Agencies*

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments	<a href="http://www.semCog.org/">http://www.semCog.org/</a>
U.S. Census Bureau	<a href="http://www.census.gov/#">http://www.census.gov/#</a>
U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development	<a href="http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD">http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD</a>

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### *Research Sites*

Google Scholar	<a href="http://scholar.google.com/">http://scholar.google.com/</a>
Pew State and Consumer Initiatives	<a href="http://www.pewstates.org/">http://www.pewstates.org/</a>
Data Driven Detroit	<a href="http://datadrivendetroit.org/">http://datadrivendetroit.org/</a>
U-M Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy	<a href="http://closup.umich.edu/">http://closup.umich.edu/</a>