LOCAL GOVERNANCE

This class introduces a professional perspective on addressing local issues and urban problems. We approach local governments as critical to our individual and collective futures and study the skills, management tools, and processes that can produce better decisions and help assure intended outcomes. Course materials draw from public administration, political science, policy, management, and other subjects. The class content is ideal for students interested in local government careers and those interested in the myriad of business and policy issues that manifest in local settings.

Required Textbook/Top Hat

There is no required textbook for this class. The relevant online resources are substantial. However, we will be using the Top Hat (www.tophat.com) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones, tablets, and laptops. There is a cost for students.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview, which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

Top Hat will send an invitation to you by email. If do not receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website: https://app.tophat.com/e/047353
Note: our Course Join Code is 047353.

Top Hat will require a paid subscription, and you can learn about subscription options here: www.tophat.com/pricing.

Should you need assistance with Top Hat at any time, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in-app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

I will use Top Hat to track attendance, assess class participation, and manage quizzes. Students will be able to revisit quizzes and past lectures on the Top Hat homework page. However, students in class paying attention will always have the inside track. Do not make the mistake of thinking that your Top Hat subscription is optional.
Learning Objectives

- Know the structure of local governments in the United States: Assessed by class participation, weekly quizzes, the case assessment, and the final exam.

- Can describe the leadership structure of local governments and the roles of elected officials and administrators: Assessed by class participation, Top Hat, the case assessment, and the final exam.

- Learn how local administrators can achieve effective community leadership and help enhance the effectiveness of the governing body: Assessed by class participation, Top Hat, the case assessment and presentation, and the final exam.

- Learn how to enhance local government policy implementation and the role of performance management and evaluation: Assessed by class participation, Top Hat, the case assessment, and the final exam.

- Understand the intergovernmental environment and the different interconnections between local governments, state governments, and the federal government: Assessed by class participation, Top Hat, the case assessment, and the final exam.

- Enhance the writing and analysis skills needed to be an active participant in the local governance environment: assessed by the case presentation and assessment, and the final exam.

- Investigate and gain specialized knowledge about a local government problem or issue that relates to career and/or personal interests: assessed by the case assessment, and the final exam.

- Gain experience working with a team of students to solve local government problems: assessed by the case presentation, and the final exam.

As described here, this syllabus gives a class plan. There may be errors that need correcting at some point, and deviations in this initial plan may occur for any number of reasons, illness, the weather, etcetera.

Office Hours

I will hold formal office hours on Tuesday from 3:00 until 4:15 in room 316 of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies—beginning the first week of class. We can also try to schedule meetings at other mutually convenient days and times. You can reach me by telephone at (404) 939-1235 most all the time. Stay on the line, if I
am away, and you will get my voice mail. This Google Voice number rings multiple phones, emails me messages, et cetera. There is no need to call multiple numbers to reach me. Other than calling me, emailing me from the iCollege course page is the most effective way to communicate.

**Class on the Web**

This course may offer more online elements than others, so students need to be aware of some of the possible differences. Avoid surprises!

**iCollege Commitments**

The iCollege page is the organizational control center for the 4301 class. You can find everything you need on that site. [This page link might work for you.](#)

I consider the news page (the top-left column on the front page) and the [Questions and Updates](#) bulletin board (communications/discussions) to be essential sources for course information. I will post updates in these places, and you will miss out if you are not checking them occasionally. I use the [Local Government Blog](#) page lots and those posts give added relevance to our class content. The blog postings are relevant to your classwork and will help you do well on Top Hat quiz and discussion questions.

**I suspend assignment deadlines if there is an iCollege outage.** Never worry about this. There is no need to contact me! Your basic access to iCollege is something you need to investigate. Make sure everything works before your college workload intensifies.

**Submitting Class Assignments**

You must submit all of your work in iCollege, and there are no exceptions. All submitted files must be in Word format. I will return materials not saved in Word format. I also require that every submitted file include your name in the file title.

The iCollege assignment tool shows your submitted files, and you can even view them. There is no reason submit the wrong file or wonder if your submission was successful. I always read the most recent submissions up until assignment deadlines have passed. Submit work and then double-check your submission. I will sometimes send work back to students and offer the opportunity to produce a revision or resubmit an assignment, but revising work does not always lead to a higher grade. Submitting an assignment is not a trial run.

I grade most assignments using [Turnitin](#), which runs inside iCollege. Many students believe that they do not need to use Turnitin, and this a serious error in judgment. The fact that you got away with plagiarism in the past does not prepare you for this class. I
find plagiarism often, and there are consequences. Grammarly checking does not do the same job. Otherwise, I would not tell you to use Turnitin.

I also provide a Turnitin Test Bed assignment. This is a private space where you can experiment with Turnitin. You will find this assignment at the bottom of the drop box.

**The Online Syllabus**

This class does not use paper products. Even the syllabus is a dynamic electronic document. I update it when needed, and it is always current. The syllabus is the last word on many class issues. Thus, you may miss out if you print the class syllabus. I inform students about significant changes, of course, but I make many small tweaks across each semester.

**Weekly Quizzes and Discussion Questions**

The Top Hat software will define our interactions in this course. Discussion, quiz questions, and attendance taking will have considerable influence over your final grade. These are some assessment approaches you will see:

- I can ask discussion questions, which count toward your attendance/participation score. These may or may not be anonymous (though you will be able to tell).
- I can ask multiple-choice questions. These apply toward your quiz score. I will share item responses in class but not individual names. The main thing you need to know about quiz items is that they will have limited availability. Some items may be limited to class or homework; Other items may appear in class and then show up later in homework.
- I can take attendance at any time, and I will usually take attendance multiple times in each class.

**The Case Assessment Assignment**

Many classes will feature a case discussion that begins with a student presentation. You must complete these two tasks to receive full credit for the case assessment assignment:

1. Prepare a short case assessment where you assess a case problem and make at least one recommendation. What should the leader do? Follow the [Case Assessment Guide](#). Your assessment should not exceed 3 single-spaced pages in length.
2. Participate in a team presentation of no more than 10 minutes in length. Each group presents a case response as a team, but the case assessments are individual work and they receive individual grades.

The case assessments are due before the start of the following class, though the first group will have an extra week to complete their assessments. Like this:
The date you see on iCollege is for all assignments; this is not your deadline. Everyone submits the same assignment, which beats the alternative.

**The Case Assessment Presentation**

Each presentation team should involve 5-7 students. The teams must confer, but there is no requirement that everyone agree on the problems or solutions addressed. *Students named as non-participants will not receive credit. Please let me know about any slackers!*

Students have some latitude concerning when they present and forfeit all presentation points if they do not show up. I will make exceptions in extreme cases that involve hospitalization, the death of a close family member, and the like. Even then, though, a student missing a presentation must submit a 10-slide PowerPoint show that addresses the grading criteria below, and this cannot be the same presentation made by the team. Students missing their case presentation will do more work, at best. They may end up with a zero.

- My presentation standards parallel the case assessment guide (see the link above) right down the line. Your group can present a consensus view or work alternate perspectives into your presentation. Do not focus on the case story. *Defend your problem definition, your decision criteria, and your recommendation for at least one lead actor in the case.*

For grading purposes, each presentation team will supply a sign-in sheet with the names of all students participating and presenting. *No sheet=no credit.*

**The Final Exam**

There will be a final exam in this class based on the case assessment format. You will receive a case to analyze, and your response must be a case assessment. You should take this to mean that you will not do well in this class without mastering the case assessments.

**Plagiarism or Cheating**

Students need to do their own work. Students plagiarizing or cheating in any form will face disciplinary action that could result in receiving an “F” in this course, suspension, or expulsion from the University. *Your instructor will act on evidence of plagiarism.* It is the student’s responsibility to know what plagiarism is and when it happens:

Plagiarism is presenting another person’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without
acknowledgment, including the summarizing of the work of another student. Plagiarism often involves a failure to footnote AND quote the paragraph, sentences, or phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when forbidden. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one’s reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. It is also plagiarism to reuse material prepared for other courses. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the proper ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.¹

Areas that may need more clarification include the following:

- You may not reuse material developed for other classes.
- **You may not collude with other students (or anyone else, for that matter) on the development of your work for this class. You may not pay (or otherwise employ) an editor, for example.**
- You cannot copy blocks of text from other sources and submit this work as your own; just adding a footnote does not solve the problem. **Direct quotations require quotation marks AND a footnote. (Using the Word footnote feature is a class requirement.)**

Grammarly and Turnitin check for material copied from the Internet, but Turnitin is the best tool for this job.

**Grading Weights and Measures**

Students must earn 900+ points to receive a grade of "A," 800+ points to earn a "B," and 700+ points to earn a grade of "C." I only give incomplete grades for nonacademic reasons when a student has made advance arrangements. In this class, a B is the expected grade for competent work. The A grades show excellence. **The class writing tips, the case assessment guide, and the policy-thinking model are the foundation for my definition of “A” work in this class.**

¹ See Section 409/Instructional Information.
I will give plus and minus grades when a grade is 15 points from an adjacent grade. For example, a final point total of 815 or less is a B-. Likewise, a score of 885 or above is B+. An A+ is possible for work of extraordinary quality across the entire class.

You will be able to check your scores as this class progresses on both Top Hat and iCollege. I grade assignments worth over 100 points on a 100-point scale so that you can better evaluate your performance. A weighted point total is always live on iCollege (though without Top Hat scores until the end of the class); just divide your current score (from Top Hat and iCollege) by the number of available points.

### Policies on Late Assignments and Revisions

Some students neglect Top Hat discussion and quiz items. They eventually go away and you lose those points. In addition, I will drop students from this class who are inactive up through the roll verification process. *Missing work may get you dropped from this class.*

- There is a defined late penalty for the case assessments. They lose 10% when submitted during the following class or on the day following that class; papers more than 24 hours late lose 25%.

Assignment submissions have become a negotiation process; do not expect that opportunity in this class. I do not encourage resubmissions, because students should focus on doing their work correctly the first time. That said, students sometimes deserve a second chance. In this class, **Students who receive a score below 70 are eligible for one revision on the case assessment.** There are no other opportunities for revising work.

### Start Networking!

I try to focus on developing the professional skills of my students, and networking is a part of that picture. I encourage students to use LinkedIn, and to add me to their professional network. You may find other faculty on LinkedIn, and other students and practitioners in your interest areas.

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COURSE OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

Class One, August 21
Introduction to the Course

Goals: Learn about why local government knowledge is essential! Also, we will do student introductions and review class objectives. Welcome to the class!

More substantively, we will review the how to use Turnitin and Grammarly. Using these tools is required and you need to know how to use them. Complaining about access or software issues or misunderstandings down the line will get you nowhere.

Readings: You will find readings on the iCollege home page for class one.

Tip: Read the syllabus carefully. I appreciate students who point out types and other types of mistakes! Make sure you fully understand how your grade calculations.

▪ Students who come ready to tell the class the workings of Grammarly in Word and Turnitin in iCollege will have an advantage on our first quiz.

Additional Task: Review the blog postings on iCollege.

Class Two, August 28
The Rise of the Modern City

Goals: Learn about the evolution of cities, forms of local government, and the role of appointed public managers in our local political institutions.

Readings: You will find readings on the iCollege home page for class two.

Additional Task: Review the blog postings on iCollege.

There is no class next week. Enjoy your Memorial Day!
Class Three, *September 11*

*The Work of Local Public Managers*

Goals: Learn about the job of being a local government manager. What skills do local government managers need? What challenges do they face? Where is the line between administration and politics?

Readings: You will find readings on the iCollege home page for class three.

Additional Task: Review the blog postings on iCollege.

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Class Four, *September 18*

*Critical Thinking Skills for Public Managers*

Goals: Learn the essential steps in developing a case assessment.

Readings: You will find readings on the iCollege home page for class four.

Additional Task: Review the blog postings on iCollege.

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Class Five, *September 25*

*Three Perspectives on Public Manager Responsibilities*

Learn about three approaches to making local government decisions and justifying action.

Readings: You will find readings on the iCollege home page for class five.

Additional Task: Review the blog postings on iCollege.

Case Presentation One Tonight. *Remember that students presenting first get an extra week for these first case assessments. Their assessments are due before class seven begins.* Assessment submissions during class seven and/or one day late lose 10%; a paper more than one day late loses 25%.
Class Six, October 2
Writing Review and Help Session

Class is online this evening. We will prepare a case assessment for our first case. Most of your class grade is entangled with assessment writing, so this is an important class. Being online will allow me to share all aspects of the case assessment development process. Attendance will be taken, of course, and Top Hat will be used. We will start class 45 minutes later to accommodate students who may be tied up on campus with an earlier class.

To join us online, look at the menu at the top of the class home page for PMAP 4301 and select “Communications” and “Blackboard Collaborate.” Imminent sessions will display automatically. You can find out about upcoming sessions by using the filter tool available on the Online Rooms page. Toggle to “Upcoming Sessions,” for example.

- Start getting ready for this session at least 45 minutes early. We will start at 8pm to give you that extra time. Loading the software the first time can take longer than you might think and students occasionally struggle with the technology needed to talk. I will ask students to leave if they are not able to talk when the session starts. I will be around 15 minutes before the session begins to help guide people through any talking challenges.

Class Seven, October 9
Intergovernmental Relationships

Goals: Learn about the state of relationships between competing local governments and other levels of the federal system.

Readings: You will find readings on the iCollege home page for class six.

Additional Task: Review the blog postings on iCollege.

Case Presentation Two Tonight. Presenters must submit their written case assessments prior to the next class. Written assessments submitted during the next class and/or one day late lose 10%; a paper more than one day late loses 25%.
Class Eight, October 16
Collaboration

Goals: You will learn more about collaboration, which is an essential element in many contemporary local government successes. We will also examine how technology can facilitate collaborative efforts.

Readings: You will find readings on the iCollege home page for class eight.

Additional Task: Review the blog postings on iCollege.

Class Nine, October 23
Goal Setting and Strategic Management

Goals: How do we set community goals and implement reforms? You will learn about several popular options for getting this done.

Readings: You will find readings on the iCollege home page for class nine.

Additional Task: Review the blog postings on iCollege.

Case Presentation Three Tonight. Presenters must submit their written case assessments prior to the next class. Written assessments submitted during the next class and/or one day late lose 10%; a paper more than one day late loses 25%.

Purchase this case from Harvard Business Publishing: “Innovating By the Book: The Introduction of Innovation Teams in Memphis and New Orleans.” Students should assess this innovation and address the question of whether other US cities could/should use this approach.
**Class 10, October 30**

**Leading with Technology**

Goals: We will examine the technology responsibilities of local government managers and learn how technology can help to improve local government efficiency and enhance democracy.

Readings: You will find readings on the iCollege home page for class ten.

Additional Task: Review the blog postings on iCollege.

Case Presentation *Four* Tonight. Presenters must submit their written case assessments prior to the next class. Written assessments submitted during the next class and/or one day late lose 10%; a paper more than one day late loses 25%.

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**Class 11, November 6**

**The Performance Revolution**

Goals: You will learn more about the growing importance of performance measurement in local government (and elsewhere), examine some cutting-edge performance measurement innovations, and consider the pros and cons of this managerialist revolution.

Readings: You will find readings on the iCollege home page for class eleven.

Additional Task: Review the blog postings on iCollege.

Case Presentation *Five* Tonight. Presenters must submit their written case assessments prior to the next class. Written assessments submitted during the next class and/or one day late lose 10%; a paper more than one day late loses 25%.

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Class 12, November 13

**Fiscal Challenges for Local Governments**

Goals: What happened to Detroit and Jefferson County, Alabama? We will look at the financial troubles that local governments have faced over the last 10 years and debate future prospects.

Readings: You will find readings on the iCollege home page for class twelve.

Additional Task: Review the blog postings on iCollege.

**Case Presentation Six Tonight.** Presenters must submit their written case assessments prior to the next class. Written assessments submitted during the next class and/or one day late lose 10%; a paper more than one day late loses 25%.

**Purchase this case from Harvard Business Publishing:** “Fears and Realities: Managing Ebola in Texas.” Students should assess actions in this case and make recommendations for handling future contagious disease outbreaks.

**There is no class next week. Enjoy your Thanksgiving Holiday!**

Class 13, November 27

**Policy Thinking Revisited**

Goals: We will learn about the problems of human thinking and explore some possible solutions that can add to what we already know about critical thinking.

Readings: You will find readings on the iCollege home page for class eleven.

Additional Task: Review the blog postings on iCollege.

**Case Presentation Seven Tonight.** Presenters must submit their written case assessments prior to the next class. Written assessments submitted during the next class and/or one day late lose 10%; a paper more than one day late loses 25%.

**No late work or revisions will be accepted after this class.**
Class 14, December 4
Final Exam Review and Prep Session

We will review the most important issues, concepts, and materials from this class. I will also present the final exam and we will discuss some draft questions.

Students access this online session and other online meetings through our iCollege page. Look at the menu at the top of the class home page for PMAP 4301 and select “Learning Tools” and “Online Rooms.” Imminent sessions will display automatically. You can find out about upcoming sessions by using the filter tool available on the Online Rooms page. Toggle to “Upcoming Sessions,” for example.

- Start getting ready for this session at least 45 minutes early. We will start at 8pm to give you that extra time. Loading the software the first time can take longer than you might think and students occasionally struggle with the technology needed to talk. I will ask students to leave if they are not able to talk when the session starts. I will be around 15 minutes before the session begins to help guide people through any talking challenges.

The goal for this session is to improve your final exam performance.

The Final Exam

The final exam will be available at 5:00pm on December 5 and due by 2pm on December 12. Note: You must submit your exam on the iCollege home page. No late assignments, please!!!