

The University of Illinois at Chicago
College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs (CUPPA)
Graduate Program in Public Administration

COURSE SYLLABUS

**THE INTERNET AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
(PA 463)**

Fall Semester 2010

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COURSE OVERVIEW

Since the early 1990's, we have witnessed the evolution of the Internet from amazing innovation to an indispensable part of our lives. Whereas the Internet once offered exciting new opportunities for delivering information and services to the public, it has now become a necessary and even expected facet of public sector operations, under the umbrella known as "e-Government" or "digital government." The Internet, the World Wide Web, and related technologies have now become strategic tools that allow governmental organizations to make both internal and external operations more efficient and productive. Along with this evolution of the presence of the Internet in the public sector has come a host of new possibilities, challenges and issues which public administrators continue to encounter. And as the Internet continues to become engrained in American (and global) society and culture, governmental organizations continue to redefine their role within that framework.

The Internet and Public Administration focuses upon the overall concept of e-Government, and the applications of the Internet and the World Wide Web within the public sector (as well as their impact upon both governments and constituents). The course is meant to provide a historical, technical and practical framework for public administrators to better understand the opportunities and challenges associated with e-Government and the use of the Internet. Topics to be discussed include:

- An introduction to the Internet and to Web-related technologies, including a review of technical concepts and the history of the Internet; how these technologies have been adopted and are being used in the world and in the public sector; and the latest trends;

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- An introduction to the overall concept of e-Government, including how e-Government is changing the relationships between constituents, governments and organizations, and administrators (as well as a review of best practices);
- A discussion regarding innovation in the public sector, and the associated challenges and opportunities;
- A comprehensive review of the major policy issues involving the Internet and e-Government, including accessibility; the digital divide; privacy and security; social media; doing business; and others;
- The use of the Internet as a transformative tool, and its impact upon the improvement of governmental processes and services;
- The impact of the Internet upon the framework of democratic institutions and citizen participation; and,
- A practical analysis of website design and creation, including website-related concepts and stylistic principles; the development of a website from inception through production and maintenance; and an introduction to HTML.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND FORMAT

This course will be taught completely **online** and will be largely **asynchronous**, meaning that it will be largely self-directed. Students will be able to sign on to the course on the days and times that are convenient to them. The course will be conducted almost exclusively on the Blackboard website; this is where the weekly lectures will take place as well as the weekly class discussions.

There will also be some **synchronous** (real-time) elements to the class as well, including three (3) real-time online events throughout the semester, during which time specific course material will be covered and students will have the opportunity to directly interact with the instructor and with their fellow students. Students will be required to participate in a minimum of two (2) of the three events as part of their overall grade. A schedule of the three (3) real-time events will be posted at the beginning of the semester, along with further instructions.

Each week throughout the semester, lecture presentations will be uploaded to the Blackboard website on the designated "formal" class day and time (Wednesdays at 7:00 PM CST). Students will be responsible for viewing presentations, as well as answering Weekly Discussion Forum questions that will be posted each week along with the presentations. Responses will be posted to the Blackboard Discussion Board. In addition to these responses, students will also be required to respond to a minimum number of postings of their classmates each week, thereby generating the "class discussions" that will serve as the "core" for the class.

The weekly lectures are essentially PowerPoint presentations and accompanying audio commentary which are then compiled using a special e-Learning software package into a

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set of Web-based media files. To access the lecture, students will simply need to click on the corresponding file that is posted on the course Blackboard site. Depending upon the topics covered during the given week, the lectures can range from one to two hours in length. Students will have the ability to watch the lectures at any time convenient to them; the lectures will stay on Blackboard for the duration of the course, and can be reviewed as many times as desired.

This course will be **reading intensive**. Weekly reading assignments (involving the required textbooks as well as articles and other material) will be posted to Blackboard. Students will be expected to have completed their readings prior to the beginning of the designated class day and time.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Online courses depend upon student participation in order to be successful!

Therefore, class participation is **required**, and will constitute 30% of the grade for the semester. For the most part, participation will take the form of posting responses to the three weekly class questions (which will be posted as “threads” in Weekly Discussion Forums on the Discussion Board), as well as posting comments to three of the responses of other students (in other words, each student will be required to post a minimum of **six** items to the Weekly Discussion Forum each week). All postings – both original postings as well as comments on the postings of others – will be eligible for a certain amount of points each week. These points will ultimately be factored into the final grade for the semester.

Student will have from 7:00 PM CST Wednesday (the designated class day/time) until 6:59 PM CST the following Sunday in order to provide their minimum three responses to the weekly class questions. Also, students will have until 11:59 PM CST the following Tuesday in order to post their minimum three comments to other students’ responses. The deadlines for posting both responses as well as comments are staggered in order to allow the students to have enough time to read through all of the Weekly Discussion Forum responses and to come up with thoughtful comments.

The following scale will be used to grade postings:

Responses to the Weekly Class Discussion Questions (points per response):

- **3 points:** Responds to the question, displays detailed and insightful knowledge of the topic or reading, has excellent substance, and adds a new perspective or insight.
- **2 points:** Responds to the question, displays specific knowledge of the topic or reading, has good substance, and/or adds a new perspective or insight.
- **1 point:** Responds to the question and seems to display knowledge of the topic or reading but has minimal substance or merely repeats what someone else has said.
- **0 points:** Does not respond to the question or displays no specific knowledge of the reading.

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Comments on Classmate Responses (points per comment):

- **3 points:** Comment is substantive, thoughtful, and insightful.
- **2 points:** Comment is thoughtful and informative.
- **1 point:** Comment is adequate and/or minimal in terms of comments (or merely repeats what someone else has said).
- **0 points:** Comment has nothing to do with the response or displays no specific knowledge or value.

Based upon the above scale, a student may earn a maximum of eighteen (18) points on Weekly Discussion Forum postings per week. However, students are also encouraged to go above and beyond the six mandatory postings in order to actively engage other students. Again, the success and benefit of an online course relies heavily upon the level of participation involved on the part of all students! Regular, active participation on the Discussion Board above and beyond the required weekly postings will certainly be considered in cases where a student is within a point or so of the next highest grade.

It should be noted that, towards the end of the semester, short personal assignments related to HTML and web design will be given in lieu of the Weekly Discussion Forum postings. The points earned for these assignments will be applied to the Weekly Discussion Board Participation grade category (see below).

GRADES, ASSIGNMENTS AND TESTS

The following items (and their associated weights) will be used to determine the final grades during this course:

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| • Weekly Discussion Board Participation | 30% |
| • Participation in Real-Time Events | 10% |
| • Midterm Exam | 20% |
| • Group Project | 20% |
| • Final Exam | 20% |

Additional information regarding the Group Project will be disseminated on the Blackboard site at a later date.

All work is due on time. Late papers or projects will automatically receive a one point reduction in grade for each day beyond the due date that the assignment is submitted. Again, any student requiring special arrangements because of a disability or personal emergency should contact me to discuss further. Also, keep in mind that the academic honor code applies to all work, under all conditions. All work that is borrowed directly paraphrased or alluded to must be properly cited. The APA format is preferred.

QUIZZES AND EXAMS

As a result of this being an online course, there will not be any formal, graded quizzes. However, "self-assessment" quizzes will be given at the end of each week's lecture presentation. Although not mandatory (and not graded), these quizzes are a good way

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for students to evaluate their skills and their knowledge of the subject matter (these quizzes will be especially useful during the introductory HTML part of the course).

There will be both a Midterm Exam and a Final Exam as part of this course. These exams will be issued a week prior to their respective due dates, and they will be in an essay format.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

As indicated above, the academic honor code applies to all work. ***Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated.*** The UIC Graduate College's statement on Academic Integrity can be found at: <http://www.uic.edu/depts/grad/regulations/integrity.shtml>
It reads as follows:

"The University of Illinois is dedicated to learning and research, and hence is committed to truth and accuracy. Integrity and intellectual honesty in scholarship and scientific investigation are, therefore, of paramount importance. These standards require intellectual honesty in conducting research, writing of research results, and relations with colleagues. Graduate students may be faced with difficult choices regarding academic integrity in their various roles as student, teacher, and researcher. If this is the case, they should seek the advice and experience of their faculty advisors and the Graduate College staff.

The University publishes two documents that contain specific definitions of misconduct (such as plagiarism, falsification of data, etc.), procedures used for investigation of charges, and the consequences of that conduct. Students are governed by the Student Disciplinary Procedures (October 1993) and faculty are governed by the Policies and Procedures for Academic Integrity (June 1989)."

INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY

In that this is an exclusively online course, I will not be traveling on campus too often! The primary means of communication with me will be via email, and I will try and respond to all emails (as well as Discussion Board postings) within 48 hours (in most cases, this will be much sooner). Also, I will be accessible via phone, and face-to-face appointments will also be possible, if necessary.

Depending upon how the course proceeds, I will be open to hosting an online Midterm Exam or Final Exam review session, if desired.

COURSE MATERIALS

The following books are **required** for this course:

Eggers, William. *The Public Innovator's Playbook: Nurturing Bold Ideas in Government.* Deloitte Research, 2009. 1st Edition.

Lathrop, Daniel, and Ruma, Laurel. *Open Government: Collaboration, Transparency, and Participation in Practice.* O'Reilly Media, 2010. 1st Edition.

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Mossberger, Karen, Tolbert, Caroline J., and Stansbury, Mary. *Virtual Inequality: Beyond the Digital Divide (American Governance and Public Policy)*. Georgetown University Press, 2003. 1st Edition.

Rocheleau, Bruce. *Case Studies in Digital Government*. IGI Global, 2007. 1st Edition.

Later in the semester, you will also need the following book:

Niederst Robbins, Jennifer. *Learning Web Design: A Beginner's Guide to X(HTML), Style Sheets, and Web Graphics*. O'Reilly Media, 2007. 3rd Edition.

Finally, the following two books are **not** required. However, they are great supplemental books to read if you wish to further your knowledge of this area.

Eggers, Williams. *Government 2.0: Using Technology to Improve Education, Cut Red Tape, Reduce Gridlock, and Enhance Democracy*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007.

Gralla, Preston, *How the Internet Works (8th Edition)*. Que, 2006.

All of the above books can be found on Amazon and through other online book sellers (and, in most cases, at discounted rates). You should also be able to obtain these books through the UIC Bookstore.

Articles and Readings

Additional articles and readings will be made available throughout the semester.

It is the student's responsibility to complete all assigned readings by the appropriate dates and to be prepared to discuss all readings in class.

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COURSE SCHEDULE – TOPICS, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Please note that reading assignments should be completed prior to the weekly lecture presentation in order to get the maximum benefit. **Be aware that the reading assignments listed below is only meant to serve as a high-level guide, and readings may change (and be added) as the course progresses, so please consult the Assignments section of the Blackboard website for the most updated list of assigned readings.**

Week 1 (August 25th)

- *Course Overview and Introduction to e-Government*

Week 2 (September 1st)

- *Introduction to the Internet and e-Government Technologies*

- **Readings:**
 - Lathrop, Daniel, and Ruma, Laurel. *Open Government: Collaboration, Transparency, and Participation in Practice*. **Chapters 2 - 3, 27, Appendix.**

Week 3 (September 8th)

- *Organizations and Innovations in the Public Sector*

- **Readings:**
 - Eggers, William. *The Public Innovator's Playbook: Nurturing Bold Ideas in Government*.
 - Lathrop, Daniel, and Ruma, Laurel. *Open Government: Collaboration, Transparency, and Participation in Practice*. **Chapter 10.**
 - Rocheleau, Bruce. *Case Studies on Digital Government*. **Chapter 1.**

Week 4 (September 15th)

- *e-Government in Practice: The Focus on the Customer*
- *Social Networking in the Public Sector*

- **Readings:**
 - Lathrop, Daniel, and Ruma, Laurel. *Open Government: Collaboration, Transparency, and Participation in Practice*. **Chapter 34.**
 - Rocheleau, Bruce. *Case Studies on Digital Government*. **Chapters 2, 12 - 14.**

Week 5 (September 22nd)

- *Breaking Down Barriers: e-Government Transforms the Public Sector*

- **Readings:**
 - Lathrop, Daniel, and Ruma, Laurel. *Open Government: Collaboration, Transparency, and Participation in Practice*. **Chapter 12.**
 - Rocheleau, Bruce. *Case Studies on Digital Government*. **Chapters 6, 17 - 19.**

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Week 6 (September 29th)

- *The Digital Divide and Accessibility Issues*
- **Readings:**
 - Mossberger, K., Tolbert, C.J., and Stansbury, M. *Virtual Inequality: Beyond the Digital Divide (American Governance and Public Policy)*.
 - Rocheleau, Bruce. *Case Studies on Digital Government. Chapter 21.*

Week 7 (October 6th)

- *Open Government: Privacy and Security Issues*
- **Readings:**
 - Lathrop, Daniel, and Ruma, Laurel. *Open Government: Collaboration, Transparency, and Participation in Practice. Chapters 8, 21 – 26, 28 - 30.*
- **Midterm Exams Distributed**

Week 8 (October 13th)

- *Midterm Exam*
- **Readings:**
 - None

Week 9 (October 20th)

- *The Business of e-Government*
- *e-Government and the Future of Education*
- **Readings:**
 - Rocheleau, Bruce. *Case Studies on Digital Government. Chapters 9 - 10, 16.*

Week 10 (October 27th)

- *Digital Democracy*
- **Readings:**
 - Lathrop, Daniel, and Ruma, Laurel. *Open Government: Collaboration, Transparency, and Participation in Practice. Chapters 6 – 7, 13 – 15, 18 – 19, 31.*

Week 11 (November 3rd)

- *Implementing and Managing e-Government Solutions*
- **Readings:**
 - Lathrop, Daniel, and Ruma, Laurel. *Open Government: Collaboration, Transparency, and Participation in Practice. Chapters 32 - 33.*

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- Rocheleau, Bruce. *Case Studies on Digital Government*. **Chapters 3 - 5, 7 - 8.**

Week 12 (November 10th)

- *Introduction to Website Management, Web Design Concepts, and HTML*
- **Readings:**
 - Niederst Robbins, Jennifer. *Learning Web Design: A Beginner's Guide to X(HTML), Style Sheets, and Web Graphics*. **Chapters 1 – 3.**

Week 13 (November 17th)

- *HTML II*
- **Readings:**
 - Niederst Robbins, Jennifer. *Learning Web Design: A Beginner's Guide to X(HTML), Style Sheets, and Web Graphics*. **Chapters 4 - 6.**

Week 14 (November 24th)

- *HTML III and CSS*
- **Readings:**
 - Niederst Robbins, Jennifer. *Learning Web Design: A Beginner's Guide to X(HTML), Style Sheets, and Web Graphics*. **Chapters 7 - 13.**

Week 15 (December 1st)

- *Course Wrap-Up: The Future*
- **Group Projects Due**
- **Final Exams Distributed**

Week 16 (December 8th)

- **Final Exams Due**