

**PPAS 4380  
Local Government**

York University  
School of Public Policy and Administration

Wednesday  
11:30am  
ACE 006

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Course Director:  
Dr. Zachary Spicer  
Associate Professor, SPPA  
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Office hours by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines the theory and practice of public administration and management, with a particular focus on Canada and Canadian institutions. Students will be exposed to various theories of organizing governments, delivering services and interacting with the public and various stakeholders. In particular, students will gain an understanding of the how local government functions, how political actors interface with bureaucracy, how ethics guide public servants, how government is financed and the various ways in which core services are delivered to the public.

## REQUIRED TEXT

This course utilizes one main textbook. The bulk of the reading throughout the course will come from this text. Students are expected to obtain their own copy.

Spicer, Zachary, Joseph Lyons and Kate Graham. *Local Government in Practice: Cases in Governance, Planning and Policy*. Toronto: Emond **[Referred to as SLG in the course schedule]**

All other readings will be available through the course website.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Reading Responses: 50% (5 x 10%)

Students will respond to selected discussion questions throughout the term. The discussion questions are listed under each week's readings, below. These assignments are worth 10% each. This is a self-directed exercise. Students are free to choose when they complete the assignments. At the end of the term, students must write 5 responses. Each response should be no more than 3 double-spaced pages. Responses will be accepted only in the week the corresponding discussion question. After class discussion of the week's readings, assignments will not be accepted.

### Participation: 25%

This class is designed as a seminar. As such, each student must come prepared and participate regularly. Students will be graded based upon their attendance, understanding of reading material and quality of participation.

### Take-Home Exam: 25%

During our final class on November 27, 2024, students will be given three hours to complete a take-home exam. The exam question will be released prior to class and the completed assignment is due by the end of class. Further details will be made available early in the semester.

## GENERAL ACADEMIC POLICIES

### Grade Scale

Course grades conform to the 9-point Grade Scale used in undergraduate programs at York University

Percentage Mark	Letter Grade	Grade Point
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90-100%	A+	9
80-89%	A	8
75-79%	B+	7
70-74%	B	6
65-69%	C+	5
60-64%	C	4
55-59%	D+	3
50-54%	D	2
40-49%	E	1
0-39%	F	0

### Accessibility

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to achieve excellence, the University recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to perform at their best. The University encourages students with disabilities to register with [Student Accessibility Services](#) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors through their Letter of Accommodation (LOA).

Please let your instructor know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course. Sufficient notice is needed so that reasonable steps for accommodation can be discussed. Accommodations for tests/exams normally require three (3) weeks (or 21 days) before the scheduled test/exam to arrange.

### Academic Honesty and Integrity

Academic integrity offenses are taken seriously at York University. Students should familiarize themselves with the university's policies on scholastic offences. This information can be found on the Spark Module [here](#). All instances of academic dishonesty in this course will be reported to the appropriate university authorities. Students should familiarize themselves with the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty, available online [here](#).

### Technical Requirements

Students should have access to the internet and a computer or smart device in order to fully participate in the course. Information about the course is available on eClass. Access to the internet is required to access eClass and fully utilize its features. News and information about the class will be shared via eClass. Students should ensure they are checking the course website frequently. At points in the class, students will be required to upload assignments and complete quizzes via

eClass. Students should have access to a stable, high-speed internet connection to do so. If students are unsure about the quality of their internet connection or their access to necessary computer equipment they are encouraged to consult with University Information Technology services. For specific assistance please contact [askit@yorku.ca](mailto:askit@yorku.ca)

### Intellectual Property

Course materials are designed for use as part of this particular course at York University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third-party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian copyright law. Students may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any course materials or work without the instructor's express permission. Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct according to York's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#), and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.

### Accommodation of Religious Observances

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community and to accommodating observances of special significance to adherents. Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for assignments or quizzes pose such a conflict for you, please let the course director know in writing within the first three weeks of classes. Further guidance is available [here](#).

### Recording and Online Teaching and Learning

Activities for this course involve recording, in partial fulfillment of the course learning outcomes. Images, audio, text/chat messaging that have been recorded may be used and/or made available by the University to students enrolled in the course and those supporting the course for the purpose of materials review, for assessment, etc. Recordings will be managed according to the University's Common Record Schedule and will be securely destroyed when no longer needed by the University. Your personal information is protected in accordance with York University's [Guidelines on Access of Information and Protection of Privacy](#) and the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#). Access to online materials, including recordings or live meetings, is subject to York University's [Senate Policy on Computing and Information Technology Facilities](#).

The University will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of the recorded information, but cannot provide a guarantee of such due to factors beyond the University's control, such as recordings being forwarded, copied, intercepted, circulated, disclosed, or stored without the University's knowledge or permission, or the introduction of malware into computer system which could potentially damage or disrupt the computer, networks, and security settings. The University is not responsible for connectivity/technical difficulties or loss of data associated with your hardware, software, or Internet connection.

By engaging in course activities that involve recording, you are consenting to the use of your appearance, image, text/chat messaging, and voice and/or likeness in the manner and under the conditions specified herein. In the case of a live stream recording, if you choose not to have your image or audio recorded, you may disable the audio and video functionality. If you choose to participate using a pseudonym instead of your real name, you must disclose the pseudonym to your instructor in advance to facilitate class participation.

You are not permitted to disclose the link to/URL of an event or an event session recording or copies of recording to anyone, for any reason. Recordings are available only to authorized individuals who have been directly provided the above instructions/link for their use. Recordings for personal use, required to facilitate your learning and preparation of personal course/lecture notes, may not be shared with others without the permission of the instructor or event coordinator, and may not be published, posted, linked to, or otherwise made available online, including on social media feeds, even if those feeds are private.

#### Course Policies Regarding Assignments

- Assignments should be submitted through the course website and will not be accepted via email or in hard copy.
- Any concerns about the research process or assignments should be addressed with the instructor well in advance of any deadlines. The York University library system also has a research support service, which is available [here](#).
- Students requiring support writing assignments are encouraged to consult with York's [Writing Centre](#).
- Reflection assignments are due by the time class begins on the date noted in the course schedule, after which assignments will not be accepted.
- Citations for all assignments should conform to Chicago Style format. The York library has a guide available for students [here](#).
- The penalty for late assignments is 2% per day, including weekends.

<b>COURSE SCHEDULE AND FORMAT</b>
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Classes will begin on September 4, 2024 and conclude on December 3, 2024. The course will begin at 11:30am. Some important dates on the course calendar are below:

- Start of Fall Semester: September 4, 2024
- Fall Reading Week: October 12-18, 2024
  - No Class: October 16, 2024
- End of Fall Semester: December 3, 2024

This class will be delivered in-person at York's Keele campus. Even though this course meets in person, it may occasionally involve Hyflex sessions when guest speakers join parts of a class remotely via Zoom. Hyflex sessions are digitally transmitted and may be recorded to support teaching and learning in the classroom. As a result, York University may collect your image, voice, name, personal views and opinions, and course work under the authority of The York University Act, 1965, and for use in related educational purposes. Students who participate in a Hyflex session are consenting to have their video or image transmitted and/or recorded. If you have concerns with such transmission or recording, sit in the designated seating area which is outside of the camera range. In addition, students who participate orally are consenting to have their voices, personal views and opinions transmitted and/or recorded. If you do not consent to the transmission or recording of your voice, please use the text-based chat function to communicate during class. Students are not permitted to use any third-party software or application to record a transmitted Hyflex session. If you have any questions about the collection or use of your personal information, please contact your instructor or the Privacy Office at [info.privacy@yorku.ca](mailto:info.privacy@yorku.ca). If the instructor is unable to attend lecture in person due to academic scheduling conflicts (outlined below) or health reasons, lecture will be recorded or (in a worst case scenario) cancelled.

While the class is based around lectures, students should expect to participate in class discussions each week. Students should also expect to respond to questions, reflect on material and engage with their colleagues at every meeting. To fully prepare for class, students should complete assigned readings, outlined in the weekly schedule below.

**Class 1: September 4, 2024**

Introduction to Course and Introduction to Local Government

Readings:

SLG - "A Brief Introduction to Local Government in Canada"

Cases:

None

Discussion Question: None

**Class 2: September 11, 2024**

Urban Dimensions of Federalism

Readings:

Friendly, Abigail. 2016. "National Urban Policy: A Roadmap for Canadian Cities." *IMFG Perspectives*. Toronto: Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance

Spicer, Zachary. 2011. "The Rise and Fall of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs: A Re-Evaluation." *Canadian Political Science Review* 5(2): 117-126

Bradford, Neil. 2004. "Place Matters and Multi-Level Governance: Perspectives on a New Urban Policy Paradigm," in *Policy Options*, February.

Cases:

SLG - Chapter 17: "Applying for an Intergovernmental Grant"

SLG - Chapter 18: "Responding to Recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission"

Discussion Question: What role (if any) should the federal government play in the lives of Canada's cities?

**Class 3: September 18, 2024**

Provincial-Municipal Dynamics in Canada

Readings:

Cote, Andre and Michael Fenn. 2014. "Provincial-Municipal Relations in Ontario: Approaching and Inflection Point" *IMFG Papers No. 17*. Toronto: Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance

Good, Kristin. 2019. "The Fallacy of the Creatures of the Provinces Doctrine." *IMFG Papers No. 46*. Toronto: Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance

Hachard, Tomas. 2022. "A Seat at the Table: Municipalities and Intergovernmental Relations in Canada." IMFG Papers No. 59. Toronto: Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance

Cases:

SLG - Chapter 16: "Meeting with the Premier"

Discussion Question: Should the provinces give municipal governments more power and authority?

**Class 4: September 25, 2024**

Financing Cities

Readings:

Slack, Enid. 2011. "Financing Large Cities and Metropolitan Areas," *IMFG Paper No. 3*. Toronto: Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance

Dachis, Benjamin, Gilles Duranton, and Matthew A. Turner. 2008. *Sand in the Gears: Evaluating the Effects of Toronto's Land Transfer Tax*. Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute

SLG - Part II "Cases in Finance" Introduction (pp. 87-97)

Cases:

SLG - Chapter 6: "Balancing the Budget"

Discussion Question: Should municipalities in Ontario be allowed to have additional revenue tools?

**Class 5: October 2, 2024**

Mayor, Council and Local Politics

Readings:

Blidook, Kelly, Royce Koop and Jack Lucas. 2022. "Municipal Representation Style and Focus: Evidence from Canadian Mayors and Councillors" *Representation* 58(4): 603-622.



McGregor, Michael and Zachary Spicer. 2016. "The Canadian Homevoter: Property Values and Municipal Politics in Canada." *Journal of Urban Affairs* 38(1): 123-139

Taylor, Zack. "Strong(er) Mayors in Ontario - What Difference Will they Make?" IMFG Forum Paper 13. 2023

Cases

SLG - Chapter 2: "Introducing Online and Telephone Voting."

Discussion Question: Is it time to change how we vote in municipal elections?

**Class 6: October 9, 2023**

Managing Cities

Readings:

Sancton, Andrew. 2015. "What is a Meeting? Municipal Councils and the Ontario Ombudsman." *Canadian Public Administration* 58 (3)

Siegel, David. "The 'Public Service Bargain' in Local Government: A New Way of Looking at Relations between Municipal Councils at CAOs" *Canadian Public Administration*. 58(3)

Fenn, Michael and David Siegel. "The Evolving Role of City Managers and Chief Administrative Officers." IMFG Papers on Municipal Finance and Governance. No. 31. Toronto: Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance

SLG - Part I "Cases in Council-Staff Relations" Introduction (pp. 32-40)

Cases:

SLG - Chapter 4: "Blowing the Whistle"

Discussion Question: Are municipalities in Canada well run?

**Class 7: October 23, 2024**

Regions, Boundaries and Autonomy

Readings:

Sancton, Andrew. 2000. "Amalgamations, Service Realignment and Property Taxes: Did Harris Government Have a Plan for Ontario's Municipalities?" *Canadian Journal of Regional Sciences*. Vol. 23, No. 1.

Cote, Andre, Gabriel Eidelman and Michael Fenn. 2020. "A Playbook for Voluntary Regional Governance in Greater Toronto." IMFG Perspectives No. 28. Toronto: Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance

Miljan, Lydia and Zachary Spicer. 2015. *De-Amalgamation in Canada: Breaking Up is Hard to Do*. Vancouver, BC: Fraser Institute. July.

Cases:

SLG - Chapter 19: "Negotiating an Inter-Municipal Water Agreement."

Discussion Question: Should more provincial governments be exploring the creation of Metropolitan governments?

**Class 8: October 30, 2024**

Technology, Data and Smart Cities

Readings:

Frenken, Koen, Arnoud van Waas, Peter Pelzer, Magda Smink and Rini van Est. 2019. "Safeguarding Public Interests in the Platform Economy." *Policy & Internet* 12(3): 400-425

Haggart, Blayne, and Zachary Spicer. "Infrastructure, smart cities and the knowledge economy: Lessons for policymakers from the Toronto Quayside project." *Canadian Public Administration* 65, no. 2 (2022): 295-313.

Hollands, Robert G. "Will the real smart city please stand up? Intelligent, progressive or entrepreneurial?." *city* 12, no. 3 (2008): 303-320.

Cases:

SLG - Chapter 25: "Regulating Private Transportation Companies."

Discussion Question: Are municipalities doing enough to address the privacy and needs of residents when acquiring or regulating new technology?

**Class 9: November 6, 2024**

## Transit and Infrastructure

### Readings:

Foth, Nicole, Kevin Manaugh and Ahmed M. El-Geneidy. 2013. "Towards Equitable Transit: Examining Transit Accessibility and Social Need in Toronto, Canada, 1996-2006." *Journal of Transport Geography*. Vol. 29.

Hess, Daniel Baldwin and Peter A. Lombardi. 2005. "Governmental Subsidies for Public Transit: History, Current Issues and Recent Evidence" *Public Works Management and Policy*. Vol. 10, No. 2

Doherty, Matthew. 2004. *Funding Public Transport Development Through Land Value Capture Programs*. Ultimo: Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney.

### Cases:

SLG - Chapter 9: "Subsidizing Transit Passes for Seniors."

Discussion Question: With current revenue sources, can municipalities ever keep up with transit demand?

## **Class 10: November 13, 2024**

### Housing

#### Readings:

Hulchanski, David. 2006. "What Factors Shape Canadian Housing Policy? The Intergovernmental Role in Canada's Housing System." *Canada: The State of the Federation 2004: Municipal-Federal-Provincial Relations in Canada*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press

Zon, Noah. 2015. *Access to Affordable Housing*. Toronto: Mowat Centre

Moffatt, Mike. 2021. *Baby Needs a New Home: Projecting Ontario's Growing Number of Families and Their Housing Needs*. Ottawa: Smart Prosperity Centre

#### Cases:

SLG - Chapter 11: "New Condo Development"

Discussion Question: Is housing affordability the largest contemporary challenge for urban governments?

**Class 11: November 20, 2024**

Urban Resilience and Recovery

Readings:

Eisenger, Peter. 2013. "Is Detroit Dead?" *Journal of Urban Affairs*. Vol. 36, No 1

Tabb, William K. 2015. "If Detroit is Dead, Some Things Need To Be Said at the Funeral" *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol. 37, No. 1

Sands, Gary. 2015. "Not Dead Yet: Response to William Tabb's 'If Detroit is Dead, Some Things Need To Be Said at the Funeral'" *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol. 37, No.1

Galster, George. 2015. "A Structural Diagnosis and Prescription for Detroit's Fiscal Crisis: Response to William Tabb's 'If Detroit is Dead, Some Things Need To Be Said at the Funeral'" *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol. 37, No. 1

Scorsone, Eric and Mark Skidmore. 2015. "Blamed for Incompetence and Lack of Foresight and Left to Die: Response to William Tabb's 'If Detroit is Dead, Some Things Need To Be Said at the Funeral'" *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol. 37, No. 1

Tabb, William K. 2015. "Reply to Responses," *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol. 37, No.1

Cases:

SLG - Chapter 12: "Redeveloping an Old Industrial Area"

Discussion Question: Can Cities Die?

**Class 12: November 27, 2024**

Take-Home Exam

Readings:

None