**ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE**

**Social Sciences Division**

**POL 107 *–* Municipal Government**

**Course Outline**

**Course Number & Name:**  POL 107 Municipal Government

**Credit Hours:**  3 .0 **Contact Hours:**  3.0 **Lecture:** 3.0 **Lab:**  N/A **Other:**  N/A

**Prerequisites**:  None

**Co-requisites:** None **Concurrent Courses:** None

**Course Outline Revision Date:**  Spring 2011

**Course Description**: This course introduces students to the importance, structure, duties, and responsibilities of local government in providing the delivery of essential services to its constituents. It examines the history of municipal government in New Jersey. Commission versus mayor-council forms of local government is explored. This course also includes analysis of the perceived and actual relationships between the legislative and administrative branches of local government and the relationship of municipal government to the county, state, and federal counterparts. The class is team taught by ECC faculty, various urban mayors, and other municipal officials in the State of New Jersey.

**Course Goals:** Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. describe the different forms of municipal government in New Jersey;
2. discuss the various ways to influence municipal government;
3. explain the relationship between urban policies and planning in municipal government; and
4. evaluate a municipality’s financial and management system.

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)**: Upon successful completion of this course, students should specifically be able to do the following:

1. Describe the different forms of municipal government in New Jersey:

* 1. *compare and contrast the differences between a city, township, borough or a village;*
  2. *explain what a municipal charter is and who the authorizing body is;* and
  3. *explain what home rule means in New Jersey*

1. Discuss the various ways to influence municipal government:
   1. *discuss the electoral process;*
   2. *explain what lobbying is and who does it*;
   3. *discuss an issue in one’s community*; and
   4. *explain the role of grassroots movement in municipal decision making*

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)** (continued):

1. Explain the relationship between urban policies and planning in municipal government:
   1. *explain the different branches of municipal government;*
   2. *describe who makes policies in municipal government and how this is done;*
   3. *explain who does the planning in municipal government;*
   4. *discuss how planning and policy development influence one another in municipal government;* and
   5. *identify some of the various departments in municipalities and explain their roles*
2. Evaluate a municipality’s financial and management system:
   1. *explain who controls the municipal budget;*
   2. *explain the system of governmental checks and balances related to municipal finances;* and
   3. *explain how the management of municipal finances affects the citizens*

**Methods of Instruction**: Instruction consists of lectures, class discussions, videos, and a scholarly research project.

**Outcomes Assessment:** Weekly analytical reflections and/or quiz/exam questions are blueprinted to course objectives. Rubrics are used to evaluate the assignments and the final presentation for the presence of course objectives. Data is collected and analyzed to determine the level of student performance on these assessment instruments in regards to meeting course objectives.  The results of this data analysis are used to guide necessary pedagogical and/or curricular revisions.

**Course Requirements:** All students are required to:

1. Read all assigned course materials including the textbook selections.
2. Attend class regularly.
3. Complete all written assignments and participate in classroom discussions.
4. Complete the assigned research paper using ASA format for reference and citation.
5. Take exams/quizzes as scheduled.

**Methods of Evaluation:** Final course grades will be computed as follows:

**% of**

**Grading Components final course grade**

* **Analytical Reflections/Class Participation/Attendance 15 – 40%**

Weekly assignments are made that analyze reading materials and/or current affairs, the selection of which is based on relevance to course objectives. Responses to reflective questions or quizzes will provide evidence of the extent to which students have met course objectives. Classroom participation and attendance are also considered here.

* **Final Presentation**   **15 – 35%**

The presentation requires the use of PowerPoint and discussion of the student’s paper in conjunction with one of the chapters covered over the course of the semester and, therefore, relates to one or more course objectives.

* **Midterm Exam 10 – 15%**

The midterm will provide evidence of the extent to which students have met course objectives addressed by course material covered during the first half of the semester.

* **Final Exam**  **15 – 35%**

The **comprehensive** final exam will examine the extent to which students grasp and synthesize the concepts of municipal government in New Jersey and methods and theories that are design to achieve the course objectives.

Note: The instructor will determine (as appropriate) the specific component(s) appropriate for the course and provide specific weights which lie in the above-given ranges at the beginning of the semester.

**Academic Integrity:** Dishonesty disrupts the search for truth that is inherent in the learning process and so devalues the purpose and the mission of the College.  Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

* plagiarism – the failure to acknowledge another writer’s words or ideas or to give proper credit to sources of information;
* cheating – knowingly obtaining or giving unauthorized information on any test/exam or any other academic assignment;
* interference – any interruption of the academic process that prevents others from the proper engagement in learning or teaching; and
* fraud – any act or instance of willful deceit or trickery.

Violations of academic integrity will be dealt with by imposing appropriate sanctions.  Sanctions for acts of academic dishonesty could include the resubmission of an assignment, failure of the test/exam, failure in the course, probation, suspension from the College, and even expulsion from the College.

**Student Code of Conduct:** All students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible and considerate adults who respect the rights of others. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. All students are also expected to attend and be on time all class meetings. No cell phones or similar electronic devices are permitted in class. Please refer to the Essex County College student handbook, *Lifeline*, for more specific information about the College’s Code of Conduct and attendance requirements.

**Course Content Outline:** based on the following texts:

Morgan, David R, Robert E England, and John P Pelissero, *Managing Urban America*, 6th Ed., Washington: CQ Press, 2006.

Wolfe, Albert J., *A History of Municipal Government in New Jersey since 1798*. New Jersey League of Municipalities. 2004.

Recommended reference:

New Jersey League of Municipalities. *2007 – 2008 Elected Officials Handbook*. New Jersey League of Municipalities. 2007.

**Unit Topics/Chapters**

1 Overview and Introduction – text: Wolfe

a) history of municipal government in New Jersey

b) communicating with municipal officials

2 Municipal governments in action

a) meet the mayors and other elected officials

b) attend a city council meeting

c) attend another public municipal meeting

d) regularly read news concerning one’s own municipality

e) complete *Awaka* simulation

3 Managing American cities – Chapter 1 in Morgan, et al

4 Intergovernmental relations – Chapter 2 in Morgan, et al

5 Urban political structure – Chapter 3 in Morgan, et al

6 Urban policymaking – Chapter 4 in Morgan, et al

7 Urban planning and development – Chapter 5 in Morgan, et al

8 Decision making and analysis – Chapter 6 in Morgan, et al

9 Lobbying in municipal government – handout

10 Urban service delivery – Chapter 7 in Morgan, et al

11 Management systems theory and practice – Chapters 8 & 9 in Morgan, et al

**Unit Topics/Chapters**

12 Finance and budget – Chapter 10 in Morgan, et al

13 Managing the urban future – Chapter 11 in Morgan, et al

**Note:** In POL 107, the instructor must cover the 13 units listed above minimally in any reasonable order throughout the duration of the semester. Also, the instructor may include additional areas based on his/her expertise and/or interests.