Managing Public Disputes Fall 2017 Syllabus

**PADM 7341 RH313**

## Course Description and Prerequisites

This graduate-level 3-credit-hour course teaches knowledge and skills necessary for effective management of multi-party public policy disputes and for collaborative problem solving in the public sector. The course is an elective for both the Master of Public Administration Program and the Graduate Certificate in Conflict Mediation.

The course examines theory regarding public issues and policy conflicts; explores effective methods for analyzing and framing public issues; and describes step-by-step procedures for engaging in dialogue and deliberation, managing public policy disputes, and solving problems collaboratively. Numerous case studies and real-world examples are discussed and analyzed.

The course will appeal to public sector managers, dispute resolution professionals, managers of nonprofit or private organizations, and others who work toward public goals in partnership with organizations and individuals with divergent and sometimes conflicting interests.

In addition to written assignments, the course requires active participation in class discussion, role-plays, and in-class small group exercises.

Prerequisites: bachelor’s degree, admission to graduate school, and consent of advisor (MPA Program Coordinator or Graduate Certificate in Conflict Mediation advisor.)

## Schedule

This class is an alternative format course which will meet in six parts on two weekends. Students should plan to attend all class hours. (See Student Responsibilities below.) Schedule:

September 8th, 2017 Friday 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm

September 9th , 2017 Saturday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

September 10th, 2017 Sunday 9:00 am – 4:30 pm

September 29th, 2017 Friday 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm

September 30th, 2017 Saturday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

October 1st 2017 Sunday 9:00 am – 4:30 pm

## Instructor Information

Linda M. Pledger, PhD

Professor Emeritus

Dept of Applied Communication, UA Little Rock

## Course Materials

Required textbook (buy or borrow this):

1. Carpenter, Susan L. and W.J.D. Kennedy (2001). *Managing public disputes*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Other required reading (will be made available through the instructor):

1. Dewey, J. (1927). *The public and its problems*. Athens, OH: Swallow Press. (Chapter 1)
2. Gusfield, J.R. (1981). *The culture of public problems: Drinking-driving and the symbolic order*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 1)
3. Various case studies and related readings

## Student Responsibilities

Attend class. With the short course format and the large number of interactive exercises, students should not register for the course unless they can **attend all sessions**.   
If an emergency causes you to miss class time, contact the instructor as soon as possible by phone or e-mail. If you miss more than two hours, your grade will be adversely affected. Missing more than four hours will constitute grounds for failing the course.

Prepare the assignments on time. With the short course format, **much of the reading must be completed before the first class**.

Submit written assignments to my email as MS Word documents, with your last name in the file name

Participate fully in class discussion and exercises. Interact with other class members in thoughtful, open-minded, and respectful class discussion.

## Assignments

Due Thursday Sept 7th by 12N

Read: Dewey and Gusfield Chapters (provided in first email to class)

Write: an email to whole class indicating a passage from the Gusfield reading and a passage from the Dewey reading, incicating why you chose these passages; be prepared to share your understanding of the passages in class.

Due Saturday, Sept 9th, beginning of class

Read: *Managing Public Disputes* Part One and Part Two (pp. 1-154)

Write: A memo based on the Clarkson Airport Authority case

Due Friday, Sept 29th, beginning of class

Read: *Managing Public Disputes* Part Three (pp. 155-277)

Write: 5-10 page paper (double-spaced) detailing the assessment of a chosen state or local public issues case. Your assessment should be thorough and include references to the textbooks and other sources. Provide textual evidence for any claims you make; be prepared to present your case and your assessment to the class.

Due Saturday, Sep 30th, beginning of class

1-2 page concept for Sunday role plays based on the case you were assigned first weekend (to be shared with your group)

Due Sunday, October 1st

Facilitation of assigned case study (small group exercise)

## Grading Points

Active informed participation in class discussions, exercises 50

Dewey/Gusfield email 25

Clarkson Airport Authority memo 25

Concept paper for role-plays 25

Public conflict assessment paper 100

Small group exercise/facilitation 75

Total points 300

## Learning Outcomes

The student who completes the Managing Public Disputes course should be:

Familiar with theories distinguishing public problems and issues from private issues

Familiar with the concepts of collaborative public management and participative governance

Knowledgeable about the characteristics of public conflicts

Competent to use basic communication and conflict management techniques

Knowledgeable about participatory and collaborative processes

Familiar with the ways in which collaborative public management and participative governance are used to address potentially divisive public issues

Competent to assess disputes to determine what types of conflict management or collaborative processes are appropriate

## Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program Mission and Goals

This course, an elective in the UALR/MPA program, is designed as an integral part of the effort to prepare graduates for professional management and leadership careers in state and local government and nonprofit agencies in Arkansas. To accomplish this mission, the MPA program strives to provide knowledge about public and nonprofit administration; develop management skills and technical expertise; and, develop conceptual skills and provide analytical tools for problem-solving and decision-making.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible, so that we can discuss with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s) and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the DRC, at 501-569-3143 (V/TTY) or 501-683-7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the DRC website at www.ualr.edu/disability.

## Discrimination Policy

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