

**POLI 299-001**  
**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Public and Nonprofit Organizations**  
Bridgewater State University  
Department of Political Science

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Office Hours: Mondays, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm & Thursdays from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm.  
OR by appointment at [www.calendly.com/sjmeyer85](http://www.calendly.com/sjmeyer85)

Spring Semester, 2026  
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:20-1:35  
Maxwell Library, Room 307

**Course Description:** One of the big arguments within the field of public administration is the role of equity, often called one of the pillars of the field. In this course, we will explore how diversity, equity, and inclusion is an important part of the work of nonprofit and public organizations. By looking at diversity, equity, and inclusion from both a macro and micro perspective, students will be able to identify vulnerable populations, explore how to create a representative bureaucracy, and discuss equitable governance.

**Primary learning goal:**

- Students will define diversity, equity, and inclusion and understand how it impacts public and nonprofit organizations.
- Students will explore the process of creating a research project in both for both an academic and professional setting

**Other student learning objectives:**

- 1) Begin the process of developing students' core competencies in leadership and service in the public sector.
- 2) Practice skills that foster ability to communicate and collaborate productively with diverse populations in the workplace and in the larger community.

Class meetings will include a combination of lecture, discussion, practical exercises, and student presentations. Students are expected to complete all assignments (reading and written) prior to class, and actively participate in class discussions and exercises. You should also follow current events in the world of public policy and administration. In addition to reading newspapers, you will find it useful to visit websites such as: [www.governing.com](http://www.governing.com), [www.govexec.com](http://www.govexec.com), [www.aspanet.org](http://www.aspanet.org), and [www.stateline.org](http://www.stateline.org).

**Instructional Perspective**

My efforts in this course aim at supporting and guiding *your* efforts to become a better public leader, manager, and citizen. The values of professional excellence, integrity, accountability, and proactive engagement will underpin all our work together. It is my hope that these values are now and will continue to be guiding principles for you in all your endeavors, including this course.

As a tangible expression of those values, my job includes continuously updating course content and my teaching methods, with an eye to new thinking in the field and practical application of the concepts we discuss. Wherever it seems helpful, I will for your benefit draw on my experiences.

I am available to you by e-mail, phone, and in-person discussions. Please arrive in class well-prepared for our interactions, and ready to respond to course issues in a proactive manner.

### **Required Textbooks and Capabilities:**

- There are no textbooks for this class. All of your readings will be available on blackboard.

### **Evaluation and Related Policies:**

- Please note that grades for assignments and your final grade will not be scaled.
- **Note all papers are to be submitted on Blackboard. Paper submissions will not be accepted.**
- Written assignments are considered "late" if handed in after the class period in which they are due. Assignments are docked one-half a letter grade for each day late. Assignments are not accepted if submitted after their due date, unless clear advance arrangements have been made with the instructors.
- This syllabus does not constitute a contract. The time schedule for assigned readings, assignments and the course content may change to accommodate student/instructor interests and logistical modifications resulting from weather or other unforeseen circumstances.
- Please note that dates for exams and all written assignments will be adhered to strictly, save for class cancellations due to weather, instructor illness, or other circumstances identified by the instructors and announced in advance. This should allow you to budget your time at the onset of the course.
- All participants in the class are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. See the College Catalog for specific policies on academic integrity.
- The use of cell phones or non-course related computer use is prohibited in the classroom. I ask that you have your phone either turned off or on silent. On the rare occasion that a student receives an emergency call, please leave the classroom without disturbing others.
- The use of inappropriate, disrespectful language is prohibited in the classroom. Use of language that is disrespectful or unprofessional will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom and a grade reduction.
- Your professor expects that written communications from students, including e-mails, will use full sentences, good grammar and spelling, and include a formal salutation and closing.

### **Grade Breakdown**

**100.00-93.00: A**  
**92.99-90.00: A-**  
**89.99-87.50: B+**  
**87.49-83.00: B**  
**82.99-80.00: B-**  
**79.99-77.50: C+**  
**77.49-73.00: C**  
**72.99-70.00: C-**  
**69.99-67.50: D+**  
**67.49-63.00: D**  
**62.99-60.00: D-**  
**59.99 or Lower: F**

## Course Assignment Descriptions

### This I Believe (15 points)

By way of situating ourselves in the class, we are going to write an essay following the format from This I Believe (<https://thisibelieve.org/>). The fundamental purpose of an essay of this kind is to answer the question – what do I believe in? This is a first-person essay where you reflect on that question by thinking through the following:

- What are my core beliefs and why? (Give me an explanation of what you consider to be your core beliefs and why. It does not matter what they are. If there are some you think “uh oh this could be negative, should I share it?” the answer is yes! The essay will only be seen by me, and I am not here to pass judgment because we ALL have some core beliefs that others might think are weird.)
- How do I carry those into my daily life? (Include examples)
- How do I carry those into my workplace? (Include examples)
- How do my core beliefs influence my career (either current or future) as a public servant?
- How could some of my more challenging beliefs affect me as a public servant?

Aim for 1,000 words. Use first person. No need for citations here as this is a personal reflection. A grading rubric can be found in Appendix A.

### Social Activism as Action

Diversity, equity, and inclusion is not just about theory but about practice as well. In this class, students will take part in a social action project Over the first couple of weeks, students will research what topic they want to take part in and present why it is important. During the course, students will

- Identify, as a group, a topic to fight for.
- Research the topic that you are fighting for.
- Build a plan on how to advocate.
- Enact your plan.

Students must all decide, together, what they will work on. Below is more information on the process which we will be going through this semester:

#### *Process:*

- 1) What will you work on (5 points)?
  - a. On Feb 5, students will each present (no more than 5 minutes) what they feel should be the topic/action the class should focus on the rest of the semester.
  - b. While it does not need to be a PowerPoint presentation, students should be ready to come to class explaining why their issue is important.
  - c. Following the presentations, students will anonymously rate each topic from 1-4.
- 2) Research the idea to better understand your problem (15 points).
  - a. The students will work together to better understand the topic. They will each write a paper (no more than 5 pages) to explore the issue.
  - b. The paper should include citations from **THREE** academic articles. You will also identify **THREE** organizations which work on this topic. These organizations can either agree with the perspective the class is going towards or disagree.
  - c. This is a formal paper and should be written as such.
- 3) Build an advocacy plan (10 points).
  - a. As a group, students should create a plan on how they will push the change that they want.
  - b. Advocacy is not random; instead, it often needs to be planned.

- c. There will be time during class for students to create an advocacy plan.
  - d. Students will submit **ONE** advocacy plan for the whole group.
- 4) Enact your plan (10 points).
- a. The students will spend the last week of class enacting your plan.
- 5) Reflection (10 points).
- a. Students will write a reflection on the social action process you went through. This is an informal paper and can include first-person narrative. It does not require citations.
  - b. This paper should be no longer than 3 pages double-spaced.

### **Final Paper (15 points):**

Students will do a final research paper on a topic of their choice. This will be a paper similar to the paper earlier in the semester, but it should be on a different topic. Students should choose a topic that is important to them. The final paper should be no longer than 10 pages (double spaced). The components are:

- 1) Introduction.
  - a. What is the topic you are looking at?
  - b. What is your research question?
- 2) Literature Review.
  - a. Identify **six articles from academic journals**.
  - b. You are allowed to send an email to the professor to see if the article is from an academic journal.
  - c. What do each of these articles say and how do they connect?
- 3) Identification of Nonprofit Organizations.
  - a. Identify **four nonprofit organizations** that work in the area.
  - b. Note that these nonprofits do not have to agree with each other or your position.
- 4) Conclusions and Next Steps.
  - a. If this were a research project, what would your next steps be?
  - b. How would you continue this research?
- 5) Citations.
  - a. While students can use any citation style they want (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.), they must be consistent.
  - b. Citations should include author name(s), year, article title, journal title, volume, issue (if appropriate), pages, and DOI.

### **Journal (10 points)**

For every reading, students are expected to write a small (one to two paragraph) response to the reading before class (even if you will not be coming into class). This will help guide conversations during class. **Students are allowed to miss two journals per class.** Journals should be uploaded to Blackboard. Following that, students will lose 1 point per missing journal.

- What did you find interesting in the article?
- What do you not understand about the article?
- What question(s) do you have?
- What would you like to learn more about?

### **Attendance (10 points)**

Students are expected to come to class and engage with each other and the materials. **Students are allowed to miss two classes.** Following that, students will lose 1 point per missed class. If the student will be missing a lot of classes, they should reach out to the professor to discuss the situation at hand.



## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings Due</b>
<b>1/22</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>No readings</b>
<b>1/27</b>	<b>Snow Day</b>	
<b>1/29</b>	<b>What is social equity?</b>	Meyer, S.J., Johnson III, R.G., & McCandless, S. (2022) Meet the new Es: Empathy, Engagement, Equity, and Ethics in Public Administration. <i>Public Integrity</i> 24(4-5), 353-363
<b>2/3</b>	<b>What is diversity?</b>	Weisinger, J. Y., Borges-Méndez, R., & Milofsky, C. (2016). Diversity in the nonprofit and voluntary sector. <i>Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly</i> , 45(1_suppl), 3S-27S.
<b>2/5</b>	<b>Choosing an issue</b>	<b>No readings:</b> Bring in an idea of what you want to focus on.
<b>2/10</b>	<b>Using the library</b>	Guest Speaker. <b>This I Believe Paper due</b>
<b>2/12</b>	<b>Doing social equity</b>	Gaynor, T. S., & Wilson, M. E. (2020). Social vulnerability and equity: The disproportionate impact of COVID-19. <i>Public administration review</i> , 80(5), 832-838.
<b>2/17</b>	<b>Racism in PA</b>	Trochmann, M. B., Viswanath, S., Puello, S., & Larson, S. J. (2021). Resistance or reinforcement? A critical discourse analysis of racism and anti-Blackness in public administration scholarship. <i>Administrative Theory &amp; Praxis</i> , 1-20.
<b>2/19</b>	<b>White Supremacy</b>	Skutsch, C. (2017) "The History of White Supremacy in America" <i>Rolling Stones</i> Bonds, A., & Inwood, J. (2016). Beyond white privilege: Geographies of white supremacy and settler colonialism. <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> , 40(6), 715-733.
<b>2/24</b>	<b>Research Components: Gathering data</b>	"More than Numbers: A Guide Toward Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Data Collection"
<b>2/26</b>	<b>Research Components: Performing interviews</b>	Austin, Z. & Sutton, J. (2014) Qualitative Research: Getting Started. <i>Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy</i> 67(6) Guest Speaker: Patrick Hale
<b>3/3</b>	<b>Special Guest Speaker: Asa Iacobucci</b>	
<b>3/5</b>	<b>Trans and Nonbinary Policy</b>	Elias, N. M., Johnson, R. L., Ovando, D., & Ramirez, J. (2018). Improving transgender policy for a more equitable workplace. <i>Journal of Public Management &amp; Social Policy</i> , 24(2),
<b>3/10</b>	<b>No Class: Spring Break</b>	
<b>3/12</b>		
<b>3/17</b>	<b>Extremism and Hate</b>	"How Harmful is Social Media" & "How Extremists Utilize Irony"

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings Due</b>
<b>3/19</b>	<b>Representative Bureaucracy</b>	Medina, P. S., & Azevedo, L. (2021). Latinx COVID-19 outcomes: Expanding the role of representative bureaucracy. <i>Administrative Theory &amp; Praxis</i> , 1-15.
<b>3/24</b>		
<b>3/26</b>		
<b>3/31</b>		Guest Speaker: Jill Beckwith to speak
<b>4/2</b>		
<b>4/7</b>	<b>Transgender and Nonbinary Populations II</b>	Myers, A. (2021) "What is Gender and Why Do We Need To Talk About It" <i>Supporting Transgender Students</i> University of New Orleans Press
<b>4/9</b>	<b>No Class: Conference</b>	
<b>4/14</b>	<b>Ableism</b>	Jammaers, E., & Zanoni, P. (2021). The identity regulation of disabled employees: Unveiling the 'varieties of ableism' in employers' socio-ideological control. <i>Organization Studies</i> , 42(3), 429-452. Bogart, K. R., & Dunn, D. S. (2019). Ableism special issue introduction. <i>Journal of Social Issues</i> , 75(3), 650-664.
<b>4/16</b>	<b>Religion</b>	Hodge, D. R., & Boddie, S. C. (2021). Anti-Semitism in the United States: An Overview and Strategies to Create a More Socially Just Society. <i>Social Work</i> , 66(2), 128-138.
<b>4/21</b>		
<b>4/23</b>		
<b>4/28</b>	<b>Indigenous Communities</b>	Chafik, S., & Drechsler, W. (2022). In the semi-shadow of the global west: Moroccan zawāyā as good public administration. <i>Public Administration Review</i> , 82(4), 747-755.
<b>4/30</b>	<b>Intersectionalities</b>	Blessett, B. (2020). Rethinking the administrative state through an intersectional framework. <i>Administrative Theory &amp; Praxis</i> , 42(1), 1-5. Bearfield, D. A. (2009). Equity at the intersection: Public administration and the study of gender. <i>Public Administration Review</i> , 69(3), 383-386.

**Appendix A: This I Believe Paper (15 points)**

Category	Low	Medium-Low	Medium-High	High
What are my core beliefs and why? (3 points)	The student did not answer this question (0 points)	Student provided a brief answer to this question (1 point)	Student provided some insight into their answer, including life experiences (2 points)	Student provided insight in their answer with both their life experiences and how personal values impacts their life (3 points)
How do I carry those into my daily life? (3 points)	The student did not answer this question (0 points)	Student provided a brief answer to this question (1 point)	Student provided some insight into their answer, including life experiences (2 points)	Student provided insight in their answer with both their life experiences and how personal values impacts their life (3 points)
How do I carry those into my workplace? (3 points)	The student did not answer this question (0 points)	Student provided a brief answer to this question (1 point)	Student provided some insight into their answer, including life experiences (2 points)	Student provided insight in their answer with both their life experiences and how personal values impacts their life (3 points)
How do my core beliefs influence my career (either current or future) as a public servant? (3 points)	The student did not answer this question (0 points)	Student provided a brief answer to this question (1 point)	Student provided some insight into their answer, including life experiences (2 points)	Student provided insight in their answer with both their life experiences and how personal values impacts their life (3 points)
How could some of my more challenging beliefs affect me as a public servant? (3 points)	The student did not answer this question (0 points)	Student provided a brief answer to this question (1 point)	Student provided some insight into their answer, including life experiences (2 points)	Student provided insight in their answer with both their life experiences and how personal values impacts their life (3 points)

**Appendix B: Research Paper (15 points)**

Category	Missing	Low	Medium	High
Students identified and defined the issue they are focusing on.	This was missing (0 points)	Student briefly mentioned what they are focusing on.	Students discussed an issue but did not fully explain why it is a problem.	Student clearly identified the issue they are focusing on and explained succinctly why this is a problem (4 points).
Students used three articles to build on their understanding of the issue.	This was missing (0 points)	Students looked at one article and identified the research question and findings of the articles. They also clearly connected the article to the issue at hand.	Students looked at two articles and identified the research question and findings of the articles. They also clearly connected the articles to the issue at hand.	Students looked at six articles and identified the research question and findings of the articles. They also clearly connected the articles to the issue at hand (4 points).
Students discussed three nonprofit organizations.	This was missing (0 points)	Students identified one nonprofit organization. They discussed the work which the organization does and where the organization is based. The student clearly connects the organization to the issue.	Students identified two nonprofit organizations. They discussed the work which the organization does and where the organization is based. The student clearly connects the organization to the issue.	Students identified four nonprofit organizations. They discussed the work which the organization does and where the organization is based. The student clearly connects the organization to the issue (4 points).
Students provided citations for all of their information.	This was missing (0 points)	Some of the citations (internal and references pages) are included and consistent in format.	Most of the citations (internal and references pages) are included and consistent in format.	All of the citations (internal and references pages) are included and consistent in format (3 points).

**Appendix C: Final Paper (15 points)**

Category	Missing	Low	Medium	High
Students identified and defined the issue they are focusing on.	This was missing (0 points)	Student briefly mentioned what they are focusing on.	Students discussed an issue but did not fully explain why it is a problem.	Student clearly identified the issue they are focusing on and explained succinctly why this is a problem (4 points).
Students used three articles to build on their understanding of the issue.	This was missing (0 points)	Students looked at one article and identified the research question and findings of the articles. They also clearly connected the article to the issue at hand.	Students looked at two articles and identified the research question and findings of the articles. They also clearly connected the articles to the issue at hand.	Students looked at three articles and identified the research question and findings of the articles. They also clearly connected the articles to the issue at hand (4 points).
Students discussed three nonprofit organizations.	This was missing (0 points)	Students identified one nonprofit organization. They discussed the work which the organization does and where the organization is based. The student clearly connects the organization to the issue.	Students identified two nonprofit organizations. They discussed the work which the organization does and where the organization is based. The student clearly connects the organization to the issue.	Students identified three nonprofit organizations. They discussed the work which the organization does and where the organization is based. The student clearly connects the organization to the issue (4 points).
Students provided citations for all of their information.	This was missing (0 points)	Some of the citations (internal and references pages) are included and consistent in format.	Most of the citations (internal and references pages) are included and consistent in format.	All of the citations (internal and references pages) are included and consistent in format (3 points).