Public Service as Responsible Citizenship  
School of Public Affairs and Administration  
Rutgers University-Newark  
SYLLABUS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Seth J. Meyer, LMSW  
seth.meyer@rutgers.edu  
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, after class  
Office Hours subject to change

Summer Session II  
July 6 – August 12  
Monday – Thursday  
10:15 am – 12:00 pm

Introduction:

This course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of public service. This course will introduce a brief description of the history of public service in the context of American democracy, examine the current erosion of interest in public service, explore the diversity of action for public service, and allow the students to explore their personal perspectives and experiences.

Course Overview:

Public Service as Responsible Citizenship is designed to nourish students’ current and future commitments to the common good. Students will explore their personal values with respect to leadership service and diversity through critical analysis of social issues, reflection and practice. By the end of the course, students should be able to articulate an understanding of public service and apply theories and models of service and leadership to an issue of their choosing. This course critically examines the community service approach to “public work” and seeks to understand how service might be more effective in improving community life. Students will learn basic strategies and tactics utilized by individuals, groups, and organizations to maintain and improve the quality of life in their communities.

This course is constructed around a simple model of public service. This model includes participation in public service not only as a core responsibility for every one of us as citizens and members of the community, but also as a fulfilling desire to improve the conditions of living within the community and the society and to make a difference. This engagement cannot be restrained by the simplifying distinction between public and private sector.

This course also will focus on the potential impacts within communities that stem from various forms of public service, such as traditional political participation, personal volunteering, careers in public service, service on nonprofit boards, and socially-responsible engagement in corporate careers. The main premise of this course is that all citizens will have opportunities to engage in
public service during their lives—the main question, therefore, is, *how to enhance your opportunities in the pursuit of public service?*

**Course Outcomes:**

At the completion of this course students who have done *all* of the readings, *fully* engaged in class discussions, and *successfully* completed all assignments should:

- Be able to describe public service concepts and explain the importance and influence of those concepts within our modern democratic society
- Be able to identify vocational opportunities to serve the public good that exist in all three economic sectors: public, private, and nonprofit
- Be able to research and evaluate existing organizations based upon current theories of best practices in public service
- Be able to devise and implement methods to increase civic engagement in today’s society in order to solve difficult social problems
- Be able to identify a social issue, describe and evaluate what is currently being done to address the problem, identify other opportunities for improvement, and create a strategy that helps to ameliorate the issue
- Be able to create a personal plan for ongoing civic engagement whether through traditional political participation (voting), volunteering and advocacy, careers in public service, service on nonprofit boards, socially-responsible engagement in corporate careers, and/or elected public office.

**Academic Integrity:**

All students are expected to work independently. All assignments should be the student’s own work – unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, copying from previous semester answer keys or assignments, and other forms of academic dishonesty are expressly prohibited. Rutgers University’s Office of Academic Integrity maintains a website explaining the university’s academic honesty procedures:

[http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/)

The web site also provides resources for students. It is the student’s responsibility to understand the definition of academic honesty, but if you are ever in doubt, please ask me before you do something that could put your academic career in jeopardy.

The following websites provide basic guidelines regarding the APA citation style:


For any further help with reading, writing or even research skills, students may reach out to the Rutgers, Newark Writing Center, which provides writing tutoring and writing workshops to all undergraduate students currently enrolled in classes on the Rutgers University, Newark Campus.
The Newark Writing Center is located in Conklin 126. Contact information may be found on their website: http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter

Disability Services:

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide me with a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS. Accommodations are not provided retroactively, so please let me know about them as early as possible. Further information is available at the ODS web site: http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/

Participation and Attendance:

Class attendance is required and expected. Three or more absences will hurt your grade. Students will be expected to share their knowledge and opinion of lectures, required readings and related materials. This is a course primarily based on class discussion and group participation so class attendance is required. Students who are missing class are responsible to individually obtain the content and the materials discussed for and during the class that was missed. Most of the communication will be done through Blackboard; students are individually responsible to properly access the information from the website.

Grading:

- Attendance & Participation – 10%
- Short Essays – 25%
- Public Service Organization Investigation – 25%
- Final Project – 40%
- Grading Scale:
  - A: 100–95 points
  - A-: 94-90 points
  - B+: 89-85 points
  - B: 84-80 points
  - C+: 79-75 points
  - C: 74-70 points
  - D: 69-60 points
  - F: <60 points

Policies:

- **Course Textbook:** Please note, there is no course textbook for this class. If there is an area in this class that interests you, please feel free to e-mail me and I would be happy to recommend a book that would be able to provide you with additional information.
- **Attendance & Participation:** Required. Students are expected to come into class prepared to discuss the readings that have been assigned. **Students will receive 10 points (maximum) for attending all of the classes and participating in discussion.** Students
are allowed to miss two classes. After two classes, students will lose 1 point from their Attendance & Participation grade.

- **Syllabus:** This syllabus serves as general outline. I reserve the right to deviate from any part of the plan as necessary. Students will be notified of any such modifications.
- **Late Assignments:** Submitting the required assignments is a prerequisite for this class. As such, late assignments will be applied a penalty, namely 1 point of the assignment for each day between the due date and the submission date.
- **Grade Disputes:** If students have a grade dispute, they should submit a one-page memo to the instructor presenting evidence for their case. The instructor will review and reconsider the original assignment. This review may lead to a grade increase but equally may lead to a grade decrease based on the new overall evaluation.
- **Class Etiquette:** In order to make the class as enjoyable as possible for everyone, laptops and cell phones should be turned off during the class. Reading outside material, talking during lectures, leaving the classes early, text messaging, emailing, and surfing the web are prohibited in class. Please arrive on time!
- **Class Readings:** You are expected to read articles and chapters before coming to class. Other than the required book, all class readings will be made available via Blackboard.

### Class Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Theme &amp; Reading</th>
<th>Assignment/Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 6</td>
<td><strong>Introduction and Syllabus Review</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 7</td>
<td><strong>Democratic Society in America</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 9</td>
<td><strong>Public Service: Professionalization of an Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 15</td>
<td><strong>Reasons to Engage</strong></td>
<td>Clavien, Christine (2012) “Altruistic Emotional Motivation: An Argument in Favour of Psychological Altruism” in <em>Philosophies of Behavioral Biology</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Final Project Proposal due</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Source/Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 20</td>
<td>Conceptualizing Public Service Today</td>
<td>Essay 2 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 21</td>
<td>Voluntary Engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 23</td>
<td>Methods for Increased Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 26</td>
<td>Digital Citizenship</td>
<td>Tisch &amp; Weber, <em>Citizen You</em> Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 27</td>
<td>Driving Social Change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 28</td>
<td>A Career in Public Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 3</td>
<td>Engaged Professionals</td>
<td>Essay 4 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 4</td>
<td>Citizen Business People</td>
<td>Tisch &amp; Weber, <em>Citizen You</em> Chapter 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 5</td>
<td>Social Entrepreneurship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 6</td>
<td>Revitalizing Our Democracy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 11</td>
<td>An International Perspective</td>
<td>Essay 5 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 12</td>
<td>Final Project Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ESSAYS AND PAPERS:**
Short Essays:

Every Monday, students are expected to turn in 1 page essay concerning the readings from the previous week. Each essay is expected to be single spaced, 12 point font with citations in APA format. The purpose of these essays is to provide your own perspective on the readings and the class. You may choose any one reading that you would like to discuss and compare how that reading resonates with you personally and/or professionally. The essays will be graded on a 0-5 point scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The essay is clear with an introduction and a conclusion. The student has brought in their own personal experiences as well as discussed the readings. There are no grammatical or spelling errors. Citations are provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The essay contained some grammatical or spelling errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The essay contained many grammatical or spelling errors. The student did not refer back to the readings in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The essay did not contain citations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The essay was confusing. Many spelling and grammatical errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The essay was not handed in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public Service Investigation:

The purpose of this assignment is to link the concepts and principles explored in the classroom to an actual public service institution. The investigation will focus upon a local formal or informal organization that provides public service. The analysis may be focused upon an individual or group of individuals associated with the selected institutions, upon a specific event or program conducted by the organization, or upon the local chapter of a broader organization as an entity. For this project, you are expected to

1) Identify and select a local institution (1 point).
2) Describe the environment within which the institution exists (1 point).
3) Describe the overall institution including its: mission and purpose, program(s), funding sources, and who it serves (2 points).
4) Establish how the selected institution is associated with public service (3 points).
5) Investigate through direct contact the specific element you are interested in. (5 points).
6) Describe your personal opinion on how the activities of this specific element impact the community (5 points).
7) Utilize the readings in this course and outside readings to support your observations (5 points).
8) Use correct grammar and spelling (3 points).

This paper should be 5-10 pages long (not including citations), double spaced with 12 point font and is worth 25 points.
Final Project:

The purpose of this group project is to apply the concepts and principles explored in class to the conceptual development of a public service institution. This assignment will address a real-time human service issue, determine the actions currently addressing this problem, and then provide a creative strategy that a new organization could pursue to improve this issue. Groups are expected to e-mail the professor by JULY 16 with the issue they would like to study. This project will be worth 40 points, divided into two parts:

Group Presentation (10 points)
Each group will deliver a 10-15 minute presentation on the last day of class. This presentation should consist of:
   1) Description of the issue (2 points).
   2) Efforts currently being done to address this problem (4 points).
   3) The group’s conceptual strategy to address the problem (4 points).

Group Paper (30 points)
   1) Identification and description of the issue (10 points).
   2) Establish what is currently being done to address the problem (5 points).
   3) How effective are the current programs being done (15 points).
   4) Develop a conceptual strategy your group could implement to improve the situation (10 points).

Each group paper should be 10-15 pages long, double spaced in 12 point font. Any citations should be done in APA format.