



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

URPL-GP 4666

Topics in Urban Studies: Managing Complex Systems Reform in Government Fall 2022

DRAFT SYLLABUS/COURSE OUTLINE (AS OF MARCH 2022)

Linda Gibbs
Principal, Social Services Practice, Bloomberg Associates
Fmr. Deputy Mayor, Health & Human Services, NYC

Many of the thorniest issues in public service are hard to solve because it takes trust and cooperation across levels of government and siloes of service. Using the examples from the areas of juvenile justice reform, homelessness, and alternatives to policing for crisis response, this class will explore what it takes to build and sustain meaningful reforms that bring deep systemic change to improve community well-being to these interconnected issues.

Grading:
Session papers – 3 at 15% each, 45% of grade
Final paper – 40% of grade
Class participation - 15% of grade

Wednesday, September 7, 2022

Homelessness

Format: One hour panel followed by class discussion

Panel, Co-Authors of Innovations that Work
Moderated by Linda Gibbs
Muzzy Rosenblatt, CEO Bowery Residents Committee
Jay Bainbridge, Professor of Public Administration, Marist College
Tamiru Mammo, Manager, Bloomberg Associates
Bridget Ackeifi, Manager, Bloomberg Associates

The panel will share firsthand stories of managing homeless services on the front line and from City Hall, drawing from their book [How Ten Global Cities Take On Homelessness: Innovations that Work](#). The systems level lessons drawn from the experience on managing homelessness resonate across disciplines. This first session will draw out the pillars of success - when solving a thorny problem, we must challenge culture and interrupt organizational priorities across sectors. These will form the through-line for subsequent sessions. Cities of focus for this discussion will include Paris, London, Houston, and San Francisco.

Reading:

The Concept of wicked problems: improving the understanding of managing problem wickedness in health and social care

[https://osuva.uwasa.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/10236/Osuva Raisio Puustinen Vartiainen 2018.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y](https://osuva.uwasa.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/10236/Osuva_Raisio_Puustinen_Vartiainen_2018.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y)

How Ten Global Cities Take on Homelessness: Innovations that Work

<https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520344679/how-ten-global-cities-take-on-homelessness>

Chapters of Part Two

Post-session assignment: 3-5 page paper exploring the theme of establishing shared values and aligning to a common purpose in overcoming siloes in multidisciplinary problem solving. 15% of grade.

Wednesday, September 21, 2022

Juvenile Justice Reform

Format: One hour panel followed by class discussion

Panel, Reform leaders in the 2010 Close to Home Initiative

Moderated by Linda Gibbs

Vincent Schiraldi, former NYC Probation and Corrections Commissioner

Ana Bermudez, NYC Probation Commissioner

Jess Dannhauser, NYC Administration for Childrens Services Commissioner

Liz Glazer, former NYC Criminal Justice Coordinator

The panel will share reflections on the momentous reform of juvenile justice services in NYC, culminating in implementation of the Close to Home legislation which devolved responsibility for care for justice involved youth to NYC, close to young people's home and community. The reflection will look particularly at sensitive political and economic pressures that weigh against systems reform. Cities of focus for this session will include Washington, DC and NYC.

Reading:

Implementation of New York's Close to Home Initiative: A New Model for Youth Justice

<https://cclp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Close-to-Home-Implementation-Report-Final.pdf>

Moving Beyond Youth Prisons: Lessons from New York City's Implementation of Close to Home

[https://justicelab.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Justice%20Lab%20C2H%20Case%20Study%20FINAL%20\(Web%20Version\)%20\(1\).pdf](https://justicelab.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/Justice%20Lab%20C2H%20Case%20Study%20FINAL%20(Web%20Version)%20(1).pdf)

Post-session assignment: 3-5 page paper exploring the development of allies and managing across multiple levels of government in overcoming siloes in multidisciplinary problem solving. 15% of grade.

Wednesday, October 4, 2022

Alternatives to Police in Crisis Response

Format: One Hour panel followed by class discussion

Panel, Reformers in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Crisis Response Systems

Moderated by Linda Gibbs

Melanie Hartzog, former Deputy Mayor HHS, NYC

Robin Ried, Manager, Bloomberg Associates

Clyde Hunt, Manager, Bloomberg Associates

Calls to defund the police, and the backlash to that, often crowd out the real reforms happening across the country in building alternative response systems that provide services and support rather than incarceration for people experiencing crises. The panel will discuss what it takes to successfully build and adopt reforms which are as much about culture and optics as getting the work done. Cities of focus for this session will include Atlanta, Houston, Tucson, and NYC.

Reading:

Behavioral Health Crisis Alternatives: Shifting from Police to Crisis Response

<https://www.vera.org/behavioral-health-crisis-alternatives>

Crisis Response Services for People with Mental Illnesses or Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A Review of the Literature on Police-based and Other First Response Models

<https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/crisis-response-services-for-people-with-mental-illnesses-or-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities.pdf>

Post-session assignment: 3-5 page paper exploring challenging organizational culture in overcoming siloes in multidisciplinary problem solving. 15% of grade.

Wednesday, October 19, 2022

Final Reflection

Format: Class discussion

Students will explore what it takes to sustain a culture of reform and collaboration, motivate partners, and drive change forward. Ideas will be generated for how influences like new technologies and community engagement can act to support, or impede, progress. A brief exploration of how emergency response provides lessons for systemic culture change will be investigated.

Reading:

The Economist: Linda Gibbs on how responses to the pandemic helped people sleeping rough

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pdW-9HXbWejW5R5e_igTC3YA_MnHTkL/view?usp=sharing

Review Prior Readings and Notes

Post-session assignment: 10 page paper making the case for an investment or strategy that offers significant promise for creating and sustaining multi-disciplinary solutions to complex social challenges. 30% of grade.

Brightspace

All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the Brightspace site. I may modify assignments, due dates, and other aspects of the course as we go through the term with advance notice provided as soon as possible through the course website.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email CSD (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

NYU’s Wellness Exchange

[NYU’s Wellness Exchange](#) has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.

Class Policies

[Feel free to make this section your own. Add any additional instructions or information that you believe students need to know. Some examples of categories for this section: attendance [for those of you teaching intensive courses, please be explicit since missing even one day or a portion of a day may be too much and students may need to choose a different course], reporting illnesses or emergencies, participation, re-grading, late submission policy, technology use in the classroom, your response time, [incomplete policy](#), [course withdrawal policy](#), etc.]