



**NYU**

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

## **URPL – GP 4666**

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

### **Instructor Information**

- Linda Gibbs – Principal, Bloomberg Associates & Fmr. Deputy Mayor, Health & Human Services, New York City
- Email: lg3690@nyu.edu
- Office Address: TBC
- Office Hours: by appointment via Luna Szoke – lps260@nyu.edu

### **Course Information**

- Class Meeting Times: 6:45-10:15PM
- Class Location: Puck Building

### **Course Description**

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.

### **Overview of the Semester**

- Week 1
  - Date: Wednesday September 7
  - Topic: Homelessness
- Week 2
  - Date: Wednesday Sept 21
  - Topic: Juvenile Justice Reform
  - Deliverable: Assignment 1 due by Wednesday September 14

- Week 3
  - Date: Wednesday October 5
  - Topic: Alternatives to Police in Crisis Response
  - Deliverable: Assignment 2 due by Wednesday September 28
- Week 4
  - Date: Wednesday October 19
  - Topic: Final Reflections
  - Deliverable: Assignment 3 due by Wednesday October 12

## Required Readings

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, All Chapters of Part Two

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

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)

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>

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

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pdW-9HXbWejW5R5e\\_igTC3YA\\_MnHTkJL/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pdW-9HXbWejW5R5e_igTC3YA_MnHTkJL/view?usp=sharing)

## Assignments and Evaluation

Session papers – 3 at 15% each, 45% of total grade

Final paper – 40% of total grade

Class participation - 15% of total grade

## Late Submission Policy for Assignments

Extensions can be granted on a case-by-case basis, and certainly in case of emergency. Please reach out to me in the case that you need an extension on an assignment. Late submissions without extensions will be penalized 20% per 24-hour period.

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>A</b>	4.0 points
<b>A-</b>	3.7 points
<b>B+</b>	3.3 points
<b>B</b>	3.0 points
<b>B-</b>	2.7 points
<b>C+</b>	2.3 points
<b>C</b>	2.0 points
<b>C-</b>	1.7 points
<b>F</b>	0.0 points

Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- (A) Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.
- (A-) Very good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.
- (B+) Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.

- (B) Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.
- (B-) Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”
- (C/-/+) Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.
- (F) Fail: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.

## Detailed Course Overview

### WEEK 1: Homelessness

#### Readings Due:

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, All Chapters of Part Two

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

#### Format:

One hour panel followed by class discussion

Panel - Co-Authors of “[How Ten Global Cities Take on Homelessness: Innovations that Work](https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520344679/how-ten-global-cities-take-on-homelessness)”

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.

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.

## WEEK 2: Juvenile Justice Reform

Readings Due:

Implementation of New York's Close to Home Initiative: A New Model for Youth Justice  
<https://ccclp.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)

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.

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.

## WEEK 3: Alternatives to Police in Crisis Response

Readings Due:

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-forpeople-with-mental-illnesses-or-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities.pdf>

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, Fmr. Deputy Mayor, Health & Human Services, New York City

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.

Post-session assignment:

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

## WEEK 4: Final Reflections

Readings Due:

The Economist: Linda Gibbs on how responses to the pandemic helped people sleeping rough  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pdW-9HXbWejW5R5e\\_igTC3YA\\_MnHTkJL/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pdW-9HXbWejW5R5e_igTC3YA_MnHTkJL/view?usp=sharing)

Review prior readings and notes

Format:

We 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.

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. 40% 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](mailto: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.