

**URBAN LAW & POLICY WORKSHOP
SYLLABUS**

JANUARY TERM 2017
PROFESSOR SARA C. BRONIN
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I. Introductory Matter

Students enrolled in this course will serve as an ad hoc urban law and policy think tank, working directly with policymakers in an urban community in Connecticut to draft laws, regulations, guidelines, plans, and other documents offering the most modern thinking in the respective areas of law. Students will spend a portion of the course studying the applicable local and model laws: their legal basis, key provisions, approaches, and recent innovations. Students will also discuss and work through specific assignments relating to the needs of the selected city. Students' work will include some or all of the following: researching legal or regulatory provisions in other localities, liaising with municipal, regional, or state officials, giving presentations, drafting language, and working with peers in small or large groups.

The goals and objectives of this course include that students will:

- Become familiar with local government law and policy, including the legal basis, key provisions, approaches, and recent innovations
- Cultivate research skills
- Work in teams to collaborate on written products
- Conduct oral advocacy before boards and commissioners, policymakers, and members of the public
- Apply theories and legal doctrines to real-world situations
- Achieve UConn's university-wide goals of public engagement by contributing expertise to a struggling municipality in great need of legal resources.

Location:	LIB 422	Day/Time:	Jan. 9 th -13 th : 9-11 a.m., 12:30-2:30 p.m.
Course Number:	7547	Credits:	2

Course Texts:	DAVID MCCARTHY & LAURIE REYNOLDS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT LAW IN A NUTSHELL, 5th ed. (2003) Municipal code of chosen city, online at www.municode.com Various other documents to be uploaded to TWEN
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Laptops:	Permitted except on January 9th
TWEN:	Sign up; primary method for communication and submission of assignments
Office hours:	Available after class or by appointment
Accommodations:	Students with documented disabilities may be eligible for accommodations; contact Jennifer Cerny, Director of Student Services, for more information

II. Statement on Service Learning & Reflection

The Urban Law & Policy Workshop is designed to be a UConn-designated “Service Learning” course. The Carnegie definition of service learning is “a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.” This service learning course provides hands-on opportunities for students to conduct applied research and directly engage with municipal decision-makers and stakeholders in real time. Unlike a Law School clinic, where students have formal legal obligations to serve specific clients, Urban Law & Policy Workshop students are tasked with getting to the best policy outcomes; in effect, they function as an independent think-tank focusing on municipal law. In prior related courses, students’ work has directly resulted in the adoption of laws/regulations, policy changes, new legal guidance documents, and greater public education and awareness.

Reflection is an important part of the service learning experience. Here is one explanation:

Reflection is a process by which the students become active learners within the service learning experience. Reflection is the mode or tool by which students make a connection between the course content and the service. “Reflection is a mental activity that builds a bridge between the human inner world of ideas, and the outside world of experience” (Hinchey, 2004). Service Learning experience becomes educational when reflection guides the students to develop a new understanding of the situation, which, in turn, lead to a change in the state of mind and more informed action (Bringle & Hatcher).¹

During this course, students will participate in the following UConn-listed reflection activities: write case study papers, give presentations to community organizations, listen to speakers, think critically through guided group discussion, participate in community events, and view a video to elicit discussion about critical issues. These reflection activities will help students process their experiences throughout the semester and enhance their ability to achieve the goals and objectives of the course.

III. Course Requirements

Students will be evaluated based on three measures, and one pass-fail evaluation of partners/group members, as follows:

- (A) Quiz – 15 points
- (B) Primary Exercise – 75 points
- (C) Presentation(s) – 10 points
- (D) Evaluation of Team Activity – pass/fail

¹ Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (1999). Reflection in service learning: Making meaning of experience. *Educational Horizons*, 77, 179–185.

These assignments aim to teach basic concepts in municipal law; develop drafting and research skills; and strengthen written and oral presentation skills.

(A) Quiz – 15 points

The first day of the course will cover basic concepts in municipal law and will introduce some of the issues identified in *Requirement (B)*. You will be awarded up to 15 points for your performance on a 45-minute short-answer (e.g., multiple choice, fill in the blank, 2-3 sentence essays) quiz designed to assess your grasp of concepts and procedures covered in the first class. The quiz will primarily cover what we discuss in class and is not intended to be the equivalent of a mid-term or final exam in a conventional course. The quiz will be a closed book quiz; no outside materials will be allowed. The quiz must be taken on paper, not on a computer.

(B) Primary Exercise – 75 points

Working in teams of at least two, you will be assigned a topic, possibly related to one or more of the following sample issues, based on expressions of interest:

Assignment options may be modified based on number of students, expressions of interest, and evolving needs of the city we are serving. You may have one major project and a minor project(s). After receiving a written and/or oral introduction to each issue, you will be required to conduct research on it. As part of this research, you may be introduced to a member of the City staff, a City legislator or commissioner, and/or a member of the general public, who will enhance your ability to do your work. Work sessions may include meetings with such individual(s), informal presentations to the class, consultations with the professor, moots of presentations for *Assignment (C)*, and general discussion.

Your final written product for your major project will be a memo to the relevant City official(s), which will contain the following parts:

- (a) Description of the issue (not to exceed 200 words)
- (b) Current treatment in the federal, state, and local law, as applicable
- (c) Analysis of best practices elsewhere (not to exceed three single-spaced pages)
- (d) Identification of the approach most appropriate for Hartford (not to exceed 200 words)
- (e) Specific recommendations for language (the longest section)

Your final written product for your minor project(s), if any, will most likely be simply specific recommendations for language for the climate action plan.

(C) Presentation(s) – 10 points

Students will be required to make one or two presentations. If/when your group is scheduled to present, you will be expected to offer visual communication, such as a Power Point presentation or a handout. You should be prepared discuss your approach, take questions, and obtain guidance from the audience member(s).

(D) Evaluation of Team Activity – P/F

Requirements (B) and *(C)* will include small group activities. You will be required to submit a description and evaluation (strengths/weaknesses) of both your role and the role of each of your team members during these group activities. This evaluation should help you think critically about your ability to work with others and about how you respond to others' contributions. You will be completing one form per team member. The form is available on TWEN in the Course Materials section.

While copies of the evaluations will not be shared with others on your team, your submissions may influence the award of the CALI designation. In addition, the professor may pass on your constructive comments to the relevant team member, to encourage her to pursue those areas of improvement. A copy of the form for the evaluation is attached to this syllabus.

IV. Schedule

- January 9: Local Government Law
Climate Stewardship Council – Climate Action Plan
Reading: Nutshell, pp. 1-63, 72-76, 103-115, 140-151, 167-168, 204-226, 245-250
- January 10: Climate Stewardship Council meeting, 8:30-10:15 a.m.
Quiz – *Requirement (A)*
Review of Quiz Answers (in class)
Discussion of Assignment of Topics – *Requirement (B)*
Work Session
- January 11: Work Session
Reading: Nutshell, pp. 338-344 (on Revenues)
- January 12: 8 a.m., Draft Assignment *Requirement (B)* due
Work Session
- January 13: Work Session
Presentation(s) (likely) – *Requirement (C)*
- January 16: 5 p.m. Final Assignment *Requirement (B)* due

Urban Law & Policy Workshop
Professor Bronin
Team Member Evaluation Form

Please note that copies of this form will be kept confidential, subject to the notes on usage in the syllabus. Complete separate forms for each team member. For multiple team members, feel free to duplicate responses below where applicable (e.g., describing the team's workload; assessing your own abilities to work on a team).

Your name: _____

Name of your team member: _____

How did you and your team divide the workload?

What worked well and did not work well with your collaboration with this team member?

What have you learned about your own abilities to work with in a group setting?

What constructive comments do you have for your team member for future endeavors?

How would you rate your team member's contributions on a scale of 1-5 (1 being a poor marking and 5 being the highest mark)? Please explain your choice briefly:

How would you rate your own contributions on a scale of 1-5? Please explain your choice briefly and note whether you believe your team member would agree.