Cal State Fullerton.

POSC 588, Collaborative Governance

Spring 2026

Faculty Information

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Office hours: Mondays and Tuesdays from 11:00–1:00, Tuesdays from 5:30 to 6:30, and by appointment.
Schedule meetings throughout the week: dadams.io/appointments

Course Communication

All course announcements and communications will be sent via *Canvas* and university email. Students are responsible for regularly checking their *Canvas* notifications and email. Students are also responsible for ensuring that their *Canvas* notifications are set to receive messages from the course. Students are expected to check *Canvas* and their email at least once daily.

Response time: I will strive to respond to all student emails and *Canvas* messages within 24 hours, except on weekends and holidays. If you are still awaiting a response within 24 hours, please send a follow-up message. If you are still waiting to receive a response within 48 hours, please send another follow-up message and contact me via phone or SMS at (657) 278-4770.

Technical Problems

If you encounter any technical difficulties, contact the instructor immediately to document the problem. Then, contact: student IT help desk, email, phone (657) 278-8888, walk-in student genius center, online chat - log into portal; click "Online IT Help"; click "Live Chat."

For issues with Canvas: Canvas Support Hotline = (657) 278-8888, search the CSUF Canvas Guides with AI Assistant, or report a problem.

Alternative plan for submitting work: If you cannot submit an assignment via *Canvas*, contact the professor as soon as possible to document the issue and arrange an alternative submission method.

Response time: I will strive to respond to messages about technical problems within 24 hours, except on weekends and holidays.

Course Information

Prefix, number, title: POSC 588, *Collaborative Governance*
Meeting times with modality, day(s), time(s), and location: In-Person, Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m., Gordon Hall 208

Course requisite(s): none
Catalog description: This course introduces core topics in collaborative and networked public management, including federalism, intergovernmental relations, public-private partnerships, contracts, interlocal agreements, and network governance.
Policy regarding the use of generative AI: See the *Policy on the Use of Generative AI and Other Technology* section below.
Course materials and equipment: Canvas; access to course readings and course documents
Required text(s): Agranoff (2012); Emerson and Nabatchi (2015); Henderson (2015); O'Leary and Bingham (2009)

Course Description

This course examines collaborative governance across public, nonprofit, and private sectors, with attention to federalism, intergovernmental relations, contracts, interlocal agree-

ments, and network governance.

Many of the hardest public problems (housing, homelessness, wildfire, water, public safety, health, climate) are too big for any one organization to solve alone. Agencies, nonprofits, and firms increasingly work through partnerships, networks, and shared-service arrangements to get results.

You will learn how collaborative arrangements form, how they actually function in the wild, why they fail, and how managers can redesign them to produce results rather than meetings.

Student Learning Outcomes

Collaborative governance can produce real public value, but it is also difficult to build and sustain. This course focuses on the management challenges that show up once you actually try to collaborate across boundaries.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain why networks have become central to public management;

2. Distinguish managing hierarchies from managing networks;

3. Apply practical tools for improving collaborative governance;

4. Assess collaborative performance and recommend action.

Required Texts

There are four books for this course:

1. Agranoff, Robert. 2012. *Collaborating to Manage: A Primer for the Public Sector*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

2. Emerson, Kirk and Tina Nabatchi. 2015. *Collaborative Governance Regimes*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

3. Henderson, Alexander C. 2015. *Municipal Shared Services and Consolidation: A Public Solutions Handbook*. New York: Routledge.

4. O'Leary, Rosemary and Lisa B. Bingham, eds. 2009. *The Collaborative Public Manager: New Ideas for the Twenty-First Century*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Additional Readings

In addition to the above texts, several additional readings, including articles, book chapters, and case studies, are posted on Canvas and are noted in the course schedule at the end of this document.

Student Resources Website

It is the student's responsibility to read and understand the required and important student information for course syllabi. Included is information about:

- University learning goals
- General Education learning objectives
- Netiquette/appropriate online behavior
- Students' rights to accommodations
- Campus student support resources
- Academic integrity
- Emergency preparedness/what to do
- Library services
- Student IT services and competencies
- Software privacy and accessibility
- Accessibility statement
- Diversity statement
- Land acknowledgement
- Final exam schedule
- Semester calendar

Course Requirements

Course Format: Flipped and Studio

This course follows a flipped-classroom-and-studio format. Class meetings are 2–2.5 hours. You will do a short pre-class package so that our in-person time can focus on application, practice, and problem-solving (the part you cannot get from a slide deck).

Weekly Flow

Each week follows a consistent flow to help you manage your time and expectations.
Before class (60–90 minutes):

- Complete the assigned readings.
- Submit a **Pre-Class Brief** (completion credit). The brief is short and structured—it checks that you (1) have key terms straight, (2) can diagnose what is happening in a case, and (3) can make and defend a practical management decision.

In class (120–150 minutes):

- 15 minutes: opening frame and *"What is the managerial problem today?"*
- 35 minutes: guided discussion (student facilitation)
- 60 minutes: case lab / negotiation / simulation block
- 10 minutes: exit ticket (what changed in your thinking, and what you would do Monday morning)

Three Asynchronous Work Weeks

Three weeks are structured asynchronous *work weeks*. These replace in-person meetings and are designed to move your team project forward.

- **Week 4 (Async):** regime formation, stakeholder/power mapping, and team formation
- **Week 8 (Async):** group charter and governance design sprint
- **Week 12 (Async):** performance and accountability dashboard build, plus peer critique

Graded Work (100 points)

Graded work is designed to keep the course application-focused while making expectations clear and manageable.

- **Pre-Class Briefs (10 x 1 pt) = 10.** Completion credit.
- **Discussion Facilitation (5) = 5.** Teams of 2–3 facilitate one class discussion.
- **Stakeholder and Power Map (10) = 10.** Due Week 4 (Async).
- **Case Memos (3 x 10 pts) = 30.** Short, structured memos using a repeating template:

    1. Memo 1: Diagnose the CGR (components and failure points)

    2. Memo 2: Design intervention (governance model and agreements)

    3. Memo 3: Performance plan (measures, reporting, and accountability)

- **Signature Simulation and Reflection (15) = 15.** Reflection connects actions to theory.
- **Group "Collaboration Design Dossier" and Briefing (30) = 30.** Briefing Week 15; revised final dossier due Week 16 (finals week) based on briefing feedback.

Grading Policies and Standards

a. Grading scale:

Table 1: Grade scale

Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A+	98.0–100.0	C+	77.0–79.9
A	93.0–97.9	C	73.0–76.9
A-	90.0–92.9	C-	70.0–72.9
B+	87.0–89.9	D+	67.0–69.9
B	83.0–86.9	D	63.0–66.9
B-	80.0–82.9	D-	60.0–62.9
		F	0.0–59.9

b. Required Course Assignments:

Table 2: Assignment weighting

Assignment	Weight
Pre-Class Briefs	10%
Discussion Facilitation (team)	5%
Stakeholder and Power Map	10%
Case Memos (3)	30%
Signature Simulation + Reflection	15%
Group Collaboration Design Dossier + Briefing (incl. revised final dossier)	30%
Total	100%

Table 3: Graded items and points

Assignment	Pts	Due
Pre-Class Briefs (10 × 1 pt)	10	Before class (10 selected weeks)
Discussion Facilitation (team)	5	Assigned week (in class)
Stakeholder and Power Map	10	Week 4 (Async)
Case Memo 1: Diagnose the CGR	10	Week 6
Case Memo 2: Design intervention	10	Week 9
Case Memo 3: Performance plan	10	Week 12 (Async)
Signature Simulation + Reflection	15	Simulation Week 11; reflection due Week 12
Group Collaboration Design Dossier + Briefing	30	Briefing Week 15; revised final dossier due Week 16
Total	**100**	

c. Attendance and Participation policy: Students are expected to attend all in-person sessions. If you are unable to attend a session, please notify the professor in advance. If you miss a session, you are responsible for obtaining the information and materials covered in the session. If you miss a session, you will not be able to participate in mandatory class activities. This may have an impact on your graded materials.

d. Examination dates: No traditional exams in this course. Finals-week assessment is the revised final dossier due in Week 16.

e. Make-up and late submission policy: All assignments are due on the date specified in

the course schedule. Late work is not accepted without prior approval from the professor.

Alternative procedures for submitting work: Students are expected to submit all assignments via *Canvas*. If you cannot submit an assignment via *Canvas*, please get in touch with the professor to discuss alternative submission procedures.

f. Authentication of student work: Students may be required to submit their work to a plagiarism detection service. This may include submitting drafts and final versions of assignments. Students should be aware that their work may be checked for authenticity and originality. Cal State Fullerton uses Turnitin©.

g. Extra credit: There are no extra credit assignments in this course.

h. Retention of student work: Work submitted for a grade in this course, either as a hardcopy or through the Canvas course site, shall be retained for a reasonable time after the semester is completed not to exceed the last day of the subsequent semester. Exam material is exempt from this policy; however, students have the right to review their work in the presence of the faculty member. (UPS 320.005)

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to the sanctions described in the Academic Dishonesty Policy (UPS 300.021). Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and submitting previously graded work without prior authorization. Students are expected to be familiar with the university's policy on academic dishonesty and to adhere to this policy in all aspects of this course. Any student who has questions about the policy should ask the professor for clarification.

Policy on the Use of Generative AI and Other Technology

Generative AI tools may be used as a learning aid (e.g., brainstorming, outlining, or feedback on clarity), but may not be used to draft or rewrite submitted work. All analysis, synthesis, and writing must be your own. If AI meaningfully shaped your work, disclose and cite it (e.g., "ChatGPT (GPT-5.2), personal communication, [date]"). Misuse of AI may be treated as academic dishonesty.

Technical Competencies

Students need:

- Proficiency with Canvas, including submitting assignments and accessing course materials
- Ability to use university email and Canvas messages for course communication
- Basic skills in word processing and exporting to PDF when needed

Calendar of Topics / Schedule of Classes

We will follow the schedule below as closely as possible. If we need to adjust pace or sequencing, you will get advance notice in class and on *Canvas*.

1/20 – Week 1: Why Collaboration (and Why It's Harder Than It Looks)

In Class

- Collaboration autopsy (what broke, why) and course simulation preview

Readings

- Emerson and Nabatchi (2015): Introduction and Chapter 1
- Agranoff (2012): Chapter 1
- Ansell and Gash (2008) (baseline model)
- **Supplement:** Brown, Potoski and Slyke (2016) (complex contracts and relational governance)

Assignments

- Pre-Class Brief 1 (due before class)

1/27 – Week 2: Starting a Regime: System Context, Drivers, Formation

In Class

- Driver diagnosis lab (what is pushing actors to the table?)

Readings

- Emerson and Nabatchi (2015): Chapter 2
- O'Leary and Bingham (2009): Chapter 3 (incentives/obstacles)
- Emerson, Nabatchi and Balogh (2012)

Assignments

- Pre-Class Brief 2 (due before class)

2/3 – Week 3: Dynamics: Engagement, Motivation, Capacity for Joint Action

In Class

- Stakeholder mapping workshop and trust vs. transaction mini-simulation

Readings

- Emerson and Nabatchi (2015): Chapter 3
- Agranoff (2012): Chapter 2 (intergovernmental and collaborative management)
- Henderson (2015): Chapter 2 (costs of cooperation)

Assignments

- Pre-Class Brief 3 (due before class)

2/10 – Week 4: ASYNC WORK WEEK (Required)

Theme

Build the map, form the team, and pick the problem.

Readings (lighter but foundational)

- Emerson and Nabatchi (2015): Chapter 2 and Chapter 3
- O'Leary and Bingham (2009): Chapter 4 (partner selection)

Deliverables

- Stakeholder and power map (individual) *(graded)*
- Team formation and one-page problem pitch (group) *(required milestone)*
- Short CGR formation memo (who convenes, why now, what leverage) *(required milestone)*

2/17 – Week 5: Agreements: MOUs, Contracts, Relational Governance

In Class

- Negotiation lab: draft six MOU clauses under real-world constraints

Readings

- Agranoff (2012): Chapter 4 (forging external agreements)
- O'Leary and Bingham (2009): Chapter 8 (relational contracting)
- Henderson (2015): Chapter 6 (managing interlocal contracts)

Assignments

- Pre-Class Brief 4 (due before class)

2/24 – Week 6: Managing Connections and Networks (the Daily Grind)

In Class

- Choose a governance structure (lead org vs. shared vs. NAO) and defend it

Readings

- Agranoff (2012): Chapters 5–6
- Provan and Kenis (2008) (network governance forms)

Assignments

- Pre-Class Brief 5 (due before class)
- Case Memo 1 (due)

3/3 – Week 7: Barriers: Conflict, Veto Players, Culture, and "Soft Sabotage"

In Class

- Barrier diagnosis and intervention planning (what can you change, and what can you not?)

Readings

- Agranoff (2012): Chapter 7
- Henderson (2015): Chapter 3 (communities/culture)
- Thomson and Perry (2006) (collaboration dimensions)

Assignments

- Pre-Class Brief 6 (due before class)

3/10 – Week 8: ASYNC WORK WEEK

Theme

Design sprint: turn your coalition into something you can actually govern.

Readings

- Emerson and Nabatchi (2015): Chapter 4
- Henderson (2015): Chapter 4 (service-level consolidation/sharing)

Deliverables (group)

- Collaboration charter (purpose, scope, decision rules, membership) *(dossier milestone)*
- Governance design justification (tie to Provan & Kenis and CGR) *(dossier milestone)*
- Risk register (capture, equity gaps, legal/fiscal stress, exit risks) *(dossier milestone)*

3/17 – Week 9: Shared Services as Collaboration (Results, Not Romance)

In Class

- Case lab: should we share this service? (cost/quality/equity tradeoffs)

Readings

- Henderson (2015): Chapter 7 (performance) and Chapter 10 (innovation/ASD)
- Agranoff (2012): Chapter 3 (conductive public agencies)

Assignments

- Pre-Class Brief 7 (due before class)
- Case Memo 2 (due)

3/24 – Week 10: Failure Case: the Fire Authority That Didn't Happen

In Class

- Failure postmortem and redesign the collaboration (no fantasy fixes)

Readings

- Henderson (2015): Chapter 8 (failed attempt fire authority)
- Bryson, Crosby and Stone (2015) (cross-sector collaboration)

Assignments

- Pre-Class Brief 8 (due before class)

3/31 – Spring Break: No Class

Spring Break is 3/30–4/3.

4/7 – Week 11: Signature OC/LA Basin Simulation

In Class

- Full simulation and structured debrief using CGR components

Readings

- Simulation packet (minimal reading)

Assignments

- Simulation (participation)
- Reflection assigned (due Week 12)

4/14 – Week 12: ASYNC WORK WEEK

Theme

Performance and accountability: show evidence that the collaboration worked.

Readings

- Emerson and Nabatchi (2015): Chapter 9 (performance assessment)
- Agranoff (2012): Chapter 8 (new public organization)

Deliverables

- Performance dashboard (measures, cadence, ownership) *(dossier milestone)*
- Accountability map (who answers to whom, for what, and when?) *(dossier milestone)*
- Peer critique on another team's dashboard *(dossier milestone)*
- Case Memo 3 (due)
- Simulation Reflection (due)

4/21 – Week 13: Typologies and Matching the Regime to the Problem

In Class

- Fit test lab: diagnose mismatch between problem type and governance type

Readings

- Emerson and Nabatchi (2015): Chapter 8 (typology)
- O'Leary and Bingham (2009): Chapter 2 (resource sharing choices)

Assignments

- Pre-Class Brief 9 (due before class)

4/28 – Week 14: Integration: Redesign Under Political Heat

In Class

- Rapid redesign clinic under new constraints and political pressures

Readings

- Emerson and Nabatchi (2015): Conclusion (recommendations)
- O'Leary and Bingham (2009): Chapter 14 (future/paradoxes)

Assignments

- Pre-Class Brief 10 (due before class)

5/5 – Week 15: Final Briefings

In Class

- Dossiers due and 10–12 minute briefings, plus cross-exam

Assignments

- Group Collaboration Design Dossier and Briefing (due)

5/12 – Week 16: Finals Week (No Class Meeting)

Deliverable

- Revised final dossier due (incorporate briefing feedback)

References

Agranoff, Robert. 2012. *Collaborating to Manage*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Ansell, Chris and Alison Gash. 2008. "Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18(4):543–571.

Brown, Trevor L., Matthew Potoski and David Van Slyke. 2016. "Managing Complex Contracts: A Theoretical Approach." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 26(2):294–308.

Bryson, John M., Barbara C. Crosby and Melissa Middleton Stone. 2015. "Designing and Implementing Cross-Sector Collaborations: Needed and Challenging." *Public Administration Review* 75(5):647–663.

Emerson, Kirk and Tina Nabatchi. 2015. *Collaborative Governance Regimes*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Emerson, Kirk, Tina Nabatchi and Stephen Balogh. 2012. "An Integrative Framework for Collaborative Governance." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 22(1):1–29.

Henderson, Alexander C. 2015. *Municipal Shared Services and Consolidation: A Public Solutions Handbook*. New York: Routledge.

O'Leary, Rosemary and Lisa Blomgren Bingham, eds. 2009. *The Collaborative Public Manager: New Ideas for the Twenty-First Century*. Georgetown University Press.

Provan, Keith G. and Patrick Kenis. 2008. "Modes of Network Governance: Structure, Management, and Effectiveness." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18(2):229–252.

Thomson, Anne Marie and James L. Perry. 2006. "Collaboration Processes: Inside the Black Box." *Public Administration Review* (Special Issue):20–32.