**Course Proposal:** URBS 653 Urban Management Seminar

**Instructor:** Tony Filipovitch

**Text:** Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (Vintage, 1974)

**Course Objectives:** In this course, you will research, present, discuss, and critique standards and emerging concepts in urban management. By the end of this course, you will have:

1. Studied and assessed the career of arguably the most significant local government manager in the Twentieth Century. You will reflect on the object lessons (both positive and negative) you can take from the goals and methods he used over the course of his career.
2. Researched the current thinking on an issue raised by the life and work of Robert Moses, prepare and present a 45-60 minute presentation on that topic, and lead your classmates in a discussion of how those principles reinforce the strengths of Moses’ approach and/or inoculate against the weaknesses of Moses’ approach. To the extent it is relevant, you will articulate the relevant “contextual differences” between New York State and Minnesota and between large city (strong mayor, home-rule charter)/city (manager plan)/small city (administrator plan) styles.
3. Considered the range of management styles (Moses’ own, that of others around him, and various styles/approaches presented by yourself and your classmates), weighed them in light of the appropriate codes of professional ethics (AICP and/or ICMA) as well as your personal code of ethics and your respective skills and inclinations, and as a result formulated your own position paper on managing staff and programs.

**Instructional Methodology and Teaching Strategies:** This is a seminar course. While there will be a few lectures and there will be several writing projects, this heart of this course will be your reading and research, and the discussion that you will lead with your classmates. My teaching style is based on an "adult-centered" model which assumes that you are active participants, each responsible for your own learning, and I am a facilitator and resource who helps you advance your project. My goal for myself as a teacher is to "take you someplace you would never before have gone alone."

**Assignments:**

1. **Classwork:** The class meetings will begin with a check-in (reflections/insights about the previous week’s work), move on to seminar presentation assigned from the course calendar, and conclude with focused discussion led by the presenter and then general discussion shared among the class and guests. Each week, I will invite guests to the class who have some specific, applied experience with the topic at hand; these guests will serve as resource people and as reality-checks for our discussion. Although leading the discussion on each topic will be the responsibility of one or another of the students in the class, *all* students are expected to have read and be prepared to discuss chapters assigned from the text. Throughout the course, you are expected to demonstrate the skills and abilities that will be expected in professional practice, including the skill of [active listening](http://krypton.mnsu.edu/%7Etony/courses/Listening.html).
2. **Assignments:** 
   1. Seminar discussion: You must select one of the topics from the text and prepare to lead the class in discussion of that topic. Part of your job as discussion leader is to summarize the current thinking on the topic and the issues raised, both by the career of Robert Moses and as practiced by others in Minnesota cities. Your job as discussion leader is to engage your classmates and keep the discussion flowing (see “[Notes on Leading Discussion](http://krypton.mnsu.edu/%7Etony/courses/Discussion.html)”). You must develop an assessment tool which your classmates will complete for you. You will be evaluated on a) your written notes for leading the discussion, b) your written assessment of the discussion (including feedback from your classmates), c) my [assessment](http://krypton.mnsu.edu/%7Etony/courses/Discussion%20assessment.html) of your performance as a discussion leader.
   2. Assessment of Robert Moses as a public manager: By mid-term, you will write an essay, suitable for *PM* magazine, reflecting on the lessons for public managers to be learned from the career of Robert Moses.
   3. How to Manage: By the end of the course, you will write an essay, suitable for your professional portfolio, presenting your own approach to managing staff and programs. While this is not intended to be a public document, neither is it a private journal entry. Consider it something that you might share with your mentor and a close coterie of fellow mangers. It will be a work-in-progress, something that you might come back to at intervals (say, 5 years) to modify yet again in light of further experience.

**Course Expectations:**

1. **Attendance & Class Participation:** Students play an important role in educating and challenging each other. This can only happen if there is consistent attendance. I expect you to attend. I may take the class roll. Unexcused absence (*prior* notification is required—even if I am not available, my [voice mail](http://krypton.mnsu.edu/%7Ejp5985fj/courses/615/615syl.html) and e-mail always are) can result in loss of points toward one’s grade.

At the first class, we will discuss the schedule of class meetings—We can meet weekly, or we might consider meeting less frequently for longer stretches of time.

1. **Grading:** There are 100 points for the course, divided as follows:

1) Seminar Discussion 50

2) Moses Assessment 30

4) How to Manage 20

 The final grade may be based on a curve, but students can expect at least an A if they achieve 90, a B with 80, etc.

1. **Other Matters:**
   1. **Extra Credit**: In general, I do not encourage extra credit in this class. I would rather that you put the extra effort into your regular assignments. In the event of **very unusual** circumstances, a maximum of 10 points may be earned by **prior** arrangement with me.
   2. All assignments are due on the assigned date. While I would prefer not to receive work late, you can get at least [partial credit](http://krypton.mnsu.edu/%7Ejp5985fj/courses/615/615syl.html) for late work (better late than never, and better something than nothing). I reserve the right not to permit extensions or makeups unless you obtained prior permission or have a very good excuse.
   3. You may use any resource for your coursework, as long as you identify your sources. (Failure to do so is plagiarism and could result in an F for the course). While you may work on an assignment with classmates, you may not turn in identical (or essentially the same) reports.
   4. Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please contact me as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and/or contact the Disability Services Office at 507-389-2825 (V) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY).

**Course Calendar**

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| ***Date*** | ***Assignments*** | ***Seminar Topic*** | ***Student*** |
| 1 |  | The Powerbroker: Robert Moses |  |
| 2 | Caro pp. 1-90 | Public Work/Civil Engineering: “How Many Colors Can You Name?” |  |
| 3 | Caro pp. 91-180 | Planning Principles: Transportation “People vs. Cars?” |  |
| 4 | Caro pp. 181-298 | Planning Principles: Recreation & Open Space “Passive vs. Active Recreation?” |  |
| 5 | Caro pp. 299-401 | Planning Principles: Residential & Commercial “Highest & Best Use vs. Finding a Home” |  |
| 6 | Caro pp. 402-498 | Local Government Finance “Follow the Money” Fairfax County [10 Principles of Sound Financial Management](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/10_principles_sound_financial_management.htm) |  |
| 7 | Caro pp. 499-638 | [Drafting Legislation/Ordinances/Resolutions](https://www.portlandoregon.gov/citycode/article/227438)  “The Devil Is in the Details” |  |
| 8 | Moses Assessment paper | Ethics—Professional and Personal |  |
| 9 | Caro pp. 639-754 | Publicity/Public Relations/Press Relations/ Leaks and Fake News |  |
| 10 | Caro pp. 755-849 | Administrative Structure/Civil Service/”Getting Things Done” |  |
| 11 | Caro pp. 850-960 | Project Management (PMBOK) |  |
| 12 | Caro pp. 961-1066 | Negotiations—“Getting Past No” |  |
| 13 | Caro pp. 1067-1162 | Grant Writing “Trotters in the Public Trough” See Grantsmanship Center <https://www.tgci.com/taxonomy/term/57> |  |
| 14 |  | Public Participation/Public Good/Leadership “Is PP really nothing more than ‘cooling out the marks’?” |  |
| 15 | How to Manage paper | Power/Charisma/Sources & Uses “How do you deal with the devil?” |  |

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