

**Navigating Diverse Perspectives in Public Sector Leadership**  
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Your effectiveness as a public service leader will depend on how well you can understand and respond to the perspectives of a diverse array of people. Accordingly, this immersion experience seeks to (1) introduce you to the concepts of empathy and cultural competence; (2) facilitate your understanding of your identity; and (3) give you practice at articulating a perspective different from your own.

An individual's perspective entails their worldview, values, beliefs, motivations and behaviors. An individual or group's worldview is their philosophy or outlook on the world. Values refer to what an individual or group holds as good and right and dear. Beliefs are our understandings about what is true. Motivations drive us to act in order to achieve desirable and undesirable states of being. An individual's behaviors comprise their actions.

**Identity Paper (10%).** Understanding other life perspectives starts with wrestling with your own identity. This one- to two-page paper involves (1) documenting your identity and (2) discussing how that identity affects your worldview, values, beliefs, motivations and behaviors. Your identity can include any number of factors (race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, political leaning, nationality, age, mental and physical health, etc.) This assignment is for your learning and will not be available to other students (although you can choose to share it as you see fit.)

**Reflections on a Different Life Perspective (40%).** This exercise involves diving deep into the perspective of a different type of person or group of people. Four tasks are involved:

1. Book Selection Assignment (2/10 of 40%)
  - A. Indicate your preference for reading a book from a list of approved readings that represents a perspective different from your own, the further away the better. Explain why you have chosen that book and what you hope to gain. Read the information on the back of the book and, without peeking inside, write what you *think* the book is going to be about. Cover who or what is the book's subject, what you predict their worldview, values, beliefs, motivations and behaviors are going to be, and articulate any notions you have about this particular perspective. This will not be available to other students, although you can choose to share it as you see fit.
  - B. 1-2 pages
2. Chapter Reflections (2/10 of 40%)
  - A. Read chapters from your book **each week** and reflect on **each of them**. Decide how to schedule your reading, but plan on reading and reflecting on *at least one chapter per week*.
  - B. When reflecting on each chapter, discuss the worldview, values, beliefs, motivations and behaviors of your assigned perspectives, and discuss how they

are similar/different from your own, along with parts of the text that strike you for whatever reason (1-2 pages)

3. Peer Commentary (1/10 of 40%)

A. Each week, you will be randomly assigned to comment on the chapter reflections of two of your colleagues.

4. Post-Reading Reflection (5/10 of 40%)

A. After you have read the book, you will compare your original thoughts with your post-reading reflections to see if/how your perspective changed. What did you learn from reading this book that has expanded your understanding of another perspective? (1-2 pages)

**Discussion of Readings (5%)** For this requirement, discuss the readings on cultural competency and empathy with your classmates on Canvas.

**Implicit Association Test and Reflection (10%)** Implicit bias is the topic of our Friday morning session. To prepare, you should take the implicit association test for race, gender and age, which can be found [here](#). Then ponder your results online. Your implicit bias test reflection will not be available to other students, although you can choose to share your reflection as you see fit. (1 page.)

**Final Reflection (35%)** For this final assignment, you will write an essay that sums up three conclusions you drawn from the readings and experiences of the class, including but not limited to the panels and exercises, your reflections on a different perspective, and the identity, empathy and cultural competence readings. (1-2 pages)

**Empathy/Cultural Competency Readings (On Canvas under Files)**

From Empathy: HBR Emotional Intelligence Series

Ch 1. What Is Empathy? *And why it's important.* By Daniel Goleman

Ch 9. The Limits of Empathy: *It's exhausting.* By Adam Waytz

From Gooden, Susan. *Cultural Competency for Public Administrators.* Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2012.

Ch 2. Rice and Matthews, "A New Kind of Public Service Professional Possessing Cultural Competency Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills"

### **Books from Which to Choose (Pick One)**

Blum, Lawrence N. 2000. *Force Under Pressure: Why Cops Live and Why They Die*. New York: Lantern Books.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2015. *Between the World and Me*. First ed. New York: Spiegel & Grau.

Conley, Garrard. 2016. *Boy Erased: A Memoir*. New York: Riverhead Books.

Dyson, Michael Eric. 2017. *Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America*. First ed. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Faludi, Susan. 1999. *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*. 1st ed. New York: W. Morrow and Co.

Gallo, Gina. 2018. *Armed and Dangerous: Memoirs of a Chicago Policewoman*. New York: Forge.

Grande, Reyna. 2012. *The Distance Between Us*. New York: Atria Books.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2018. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. New York: The New Press.

Isenberg, Nancy. 2016. *White Trash: The 400-year Untold History of Class in America*. New York, New York: Viking.

Kimmel, Michael S. 2008. *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men*. 1st ed. New York: Harper.

Miller, Chanel. 2019. *Know My Name: A Memoir*. New York: Penguin.

Noah, Trevor. 2016. *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*. First ed. New York: Spiegel & Grau.

Nutt, Amy Ellis. 2015. *Becoming Nicole: The Transformation of an American Family*. New York: Random House.

Sandberg, Sheryl. 2013. *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. First ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Sellers, Bakari. 2020. *My Vanishing Country: A Memoir*. New York: Armistade.

Solnit, Rebecca. 2014. *Men Explain Things to Me*. Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books.

Tweedy, Damon. 2015. *Black Man in a White Coat: A Doctor's Reflections on Race and Medicine*. New York: Picador.

Vance, J. 2016. *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis*. First ed. New York, NY: Harper, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers, 2016.