

Michael D. Thom

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Academic Appointments

Teaching Professor, Price School of Public Policy, 2025–current
Associate Teaching Professor, Price School of Public Policy, 2018–2024
Assistant Teaching Professor, Price School of Public Policy, 2012–2018

Administrative Appointments

Program Director, Doctorate in Policy, Planning, and Development, Price School of Public Policy, 2023–current

Education

Ph.D. in Political Science, Michigan State University, 2012
M.A. in Political Science, Michigan State University, 2009
B.A. in Chemistry, Michigan State University, 2005

Research and Teaching Interests

Tax policy | Applied policy analysis | Economic development | Entitlement and pension funding and reform
Policy diffusion and termination | Public understanding of taxation | Political philosophy | Theory and
practice of regulation | Unintended consequences of public policy | Evidence-based pedagogy

Books

[Taxing Sin](#), Palgrave Macmillan (2021)
[Tax Politics and Policy](#), Routledge (2017)

Refereed Articles

[Can Additional Funding Improve Mental Health Outcomes? Evidence from a Synthetic Control Analysis of California's Millionaire Tax](#)
PLoS ONE 17(7): e0271063 (2022)

[Does Program Evaluation Affect Program Termination? Insights from the Repeal of Corporate Tax Incentives for the Motion Picture Industry](#)
Policy Studies Journal 49(4): 1135-1159 (2021)

[Are Group Assignments Effective Pedagogy or a Waste of Time? A Review of the Literature and Implications for Practice](#)
Teaching Public Administration 38(3): 257-269 (2020)

[Do State Corporate Tax Incentives Create Jobs? Quasi-Experimental Evidence from the Entertainment Industry](#)
State and Local Government Review 51(2): 92-103 (2019)

[Volunteerism as Co-production in Public Service Management: Application to Public Safety in California](#) (with Juliet Musso and Matthew M. Young)
Public Management Review 21(4): 473-494 (2019)

Refereed Articles, continued

Teaching Public Financial Management: An Integrated Approach to a Critical Subject
Teaching Public Administration 37(1): 92-106 (2019)

Lights, Camera, but No Action? Tax and Economic Development Lessons from State Motion Picture Incentive Programs

American Review of Public Administration 48(1): 33-51 (2018)

Time to Yell “Cut?” An Evaluation of the California Film and Production Tax Credit for the Motion Picture Industry

California Journal of Politics and Policy 10(1): 1-20 (2018)

Fade to Black? Exploring Policy Enactment and Termination through the Rise and Fall of State Tax Incentives for the Motion Picture Industry (with Brian An)

American Politics Research 45(1): 85-108 (2017)

The Drivers of Public Sector Pension Reform Across the U.S. States

American Review of Public Administration 47(4): 431-442 (2017)

Local Government Sick-Leave Practices: An Exploratory Study (with Thom Reilly)

Review of Public Personnel Administration 37(4): 492-510 (2017)

“I Can’t Believe I Haven’t Been Asked This Before:” Bringing “Why Government?” and “Which Government?” to the Classroom

Journal of Public Affairs Education 23(1): 563-570 (2017)

Underfunding Annual Pension Contributions: Examining the Factors Behind an Ongoing Fiscal Phenomenon (with Anthony Randazzo)

State and Local Government Review 47(1): 35-44 (2015)

Compensation Benchmarking Practices in U.S. Local Governments: Results of a National Survey (with Thom Reilly)

Public Personnel Management 44(3): 340-355 (2015)

A Divided Branch: Legislative Chambers and the Varied Effects of Party Strength on Policy Outcomes in the American States

Research & Politics 2(1): 1-8 (2015)

Politics, Fiscal Necessity or Both? Factors Driving the Enactment of Defined Contribution Accounts for Public Employees

Public Administration Review 73(3): 480-489 (2013)

All of the Above: How Fiscal, Political, and Workforce Traits Affect Pension Funding

State and Local Government Review 45(3): 163-171 (2013)

White Papers

The High Cost of Licensing Mental Health Occupations (with Conor Norris)

Knee Regulatory Research Center (2023)

Assessing Scope of Practice for Marriage/Family Therapists and Clinical Social Workers in the US (with Conor Norris)

Knee Regulatory Research Center (2023)

How Does Universal Recognition Affect Licensed Industries? Evidence from the Hairstyling Industry (with Conor Norris)

Knee Regulatory Research Center (2022)

Research and Teaching Grants

Examining the Scope and Impact of Occupational Licensure in Mental Health Professions
Knee Regulatory Research Center; \$37,430 (2023)

Examining the Impact of Universal Licensure
Knee Regulatory Research Center; \$17,533 (2022)

Repeal and (Don't) Replace: Why Have Some States Terminated Corporate Tax Incentives?
Koch Foundation; \$38,725 (2020)

Evaluating the Evaluations: Are State Assessment of Corporate Tax Incentives Any Good?
Koch Foundation; \$37,500 (2019)

Evaluating the Job and Wage Impact of Tax Incentives for the Motion Picture Industry in High-Spending States
Koch Foundation; \$15,000 (2018)

Ride to Nowhere? Examining the Fiscal Sustainability of Public Transit Systems in the United States
Koch Foundation; \$13,705 (2017)

Should the Government...? Conversations about Regulation and Personal Choice
Templeton Foundation; \$1,000 (2016)

Teaching and Mentorship

Undergraduate Courses

Public Policy and Management | Government and Business | Capstone Laboratory in Detroit | Statistics for Policy, Planning, and Development

Graduate Courses

Finance of the Public Sector | Public Financial Management and Budgeting | Public Administration and Society
Qualitative and Mixed-Methods Research for Public Policy | Business and Public Policy | Public Policy and Globalization | Public Policy Formulation and Implementation

Doctoral Students

Brian An (Ph.D.) | Luis Gutierrez (DPPD) | Jose Scott (Ph.D.) | Andrew Barton (Ph.D.) | Stephen Hubbard (DPPD) | Sonja Castañeda-Cudney (DPPD)

Teaching Awards

Graduate Policy Administration Committee Professor of the Year 2014 (won), 2018 (won), 2019 (nominated), 2024 (won)

Committee Service

University-level Committees

Student Behavior Appeals Panel | Committee on Teaching and Academic Programs | Academic Integrity Policy Working Group | Student Recognition Awards Committee

School-level Committees

MPA Program Committee | MPP Program Committee | Teaching Excellence Task Force | Faculty Council | NASPAA Competency Assessment Task Force | Adjunct Faculty Review Committee | DPPD Admissions and Program Committees | Undergraduate Program Committee | Distance Learning Director Search Committee | Policy Analysis Faculty Search Committee | LEAP Steering Committee | Yan Tang Award for Aspiring Local Government Professionals Committee | John and Dora Haynes MPA Capstone Award Committee | 90th Anniversary Committee | Building and Space Committee | Biller Award for Best MPP Practicum Committee

Referee Service

American Journal of Political Science | Public Administration Review | American Review of Public Administration | Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory | Public Personnel Management Review of Public Personnel Administration | Journal of Pension Economics and Finance | Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting, and Financial Management | Legislative Studies Quarterly | Politics & Policy | Public Budgeting & Finance | Public Management Review | State and Local Government Review | State Politics & Policy Quarterly | Contemporary Economic Policy | Geographical Review | Econ Journal Watch | Journal of Public Affairs Education

Media Engagement

Podcasts

“No Hollywood Ending for the Visual-Effects Industry.” Freakonomics Radio.

Interviews, Quotes, and Research Citations

New York Times | Los Angeles Times | Boston Globe | Variety | New Zealand Herald | Hollywood Reporter | Los Angeles Business Journal | CNBC | Newsday | CalMatters | Georgia Recorder | Sacramento Bee | Augusta Chronicle | Minneapolis Star-Tribune | Santa Monica Daily Press | Las Cruces Sun-News | New Hampshire Union Leader | LAist/KPCC | The Nation | The Nevada Independent | KQED Radio | Lexington Herald-Ledger | The Village Voice | Bloomberg | The Oregonian | The Arizona Republic | LA Weekly | LA Daily News | Budget & Tax News | Arkansas Times | Democrat & Chronicle | Richmond Times-Dispatch | US News & World Report | Gothamist | City Journal | Deseret News | The Center Square | Daily Gazette | City and State | New York Times Union | Voice of OC | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette | Inc. Magazine

Background Source

Los Angeles Times | New York Times | Associated Press | USA Today | NPR | Texas Tribune

Current as of August 5, 2025