

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Syllabi

Course Syllabi

Fall 9-1-2015

PSCI 361.01: Public Administration

Sara R, Rinfret

University of Montana - Missoula, sara.rinfret@umontana.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Rinfret, Sara R., "PSCI 361.01: Public Administration" (2015). *Syllabi*. 5857.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/5857>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

University of Montana
Political Science 361: Public Administration
Tuesday/Thursday: 9:40-11a.m.
Fall 2015

Instructor Information

Three (3) credit hours

Classroom: Native American Center, 103

Instructor: Dr. Sara Rinfret

Professor's Office: Liberal Arts 352

Email: sara.rinfret@mso.umt.edu (email is the most reliable way to contact me)

Office Hours: Tuesday (2-3p.m.), Wednesday (noon-1p.m.), Thursday (2-3p.m.), or by appointment

Course Description

This course acquaints students with the structure, issues and "themes" of public service and stimulates our thinking about how leaders respond (or fail to respond) to public needs. Primarily through case studies and lecture, we'll examine the context of public administration: the political system, the role of federalism, bureaucratic politics and power, and the various theories of administration that guide public managers today. We'll study several components of public administration, including personnel, budgeting, decision-making, organizational behavior, leadership, and policy implementation. Finally, we'll conclude the course with observations about the future of public administration in America.

Expectations for Student Learning

The course's dual focus on content and process is accomplished by dividing class sessions roughly equally between the study of the "nuts and bolts" of public administration (which is primarily lecture-based) and the examination of the case studies and important research in the field of public administration (which is mostly discussion-based). The course will operate in the following way: one session will often be devoted to the material in the text; the other will usually be devoted to the case study material; and sessions on lessons learned.

Therefore, by the end of the semester, students in this course should be able to:

1. Use critical thinking skills by carefully considering the context in which public decisions are made
2. Explore and recognize how management occurs in real life situations, and express that thinking in writing and in discussion
3. Analysis of case studies that relate to public administration theory and practice
4. Develop qualitative (interviewing) research skills and improve writing, speaking, and analytical capabilities

Course Readings

One book is required for the course:

1. Richard J. Stillman, Public Administration: Concepts and Cases, Ninth Edition, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.), 2010. Earlier editions of the Stillman text may be available, but will not have all of the case studies we discuss in class.
 - a. **Do not purchase the e-book – cases are missing from this version**

*You are also required to access on-line reading materials posted on the Moodle site – please see course schedule

Strongly Suggested Books:

For students thinking about a career or graduate work in public administration, I recommend that you purchase a leading text in the field for your library: Michael Milakovich and George Gordon, Public Administration in America, (New York: St. Martin's Press). Often, I will bring in current events, and you may be asked to read news articles about government policies and agencies.

Using Moodle:

This semester each student is enrolled in Moodle. On Moodle students can find additional copies of the course syllabus, readings, assignment instructions, grades, dropboxes for assignments, and class announcements. Here is the link for Moodle access: <http://umonline.umt.edu/>

Keep in mind that Moodle is organized through four tabs:

1. Course information – extra copy of the course syllabus
2. Readings – organized by week to coincide with the course schedule
3. Assignments – where you submit assignments, find samples, or additional instructions
4. Portfolio Project – additional instructions

Guidelines for Written Work:

All written assignments should meet the following criteria unless otherwise noted in the assignment instructions:

1. All work must be typed, double-spaced, utilize 12 point font, and have one inch margins.
2. Citations should follow one of the following style guidelines: MLA, Chicago, or APA
 - a. In text citations (parenthetical or footnotes) and a reference page are required
3. Assignments are due as noted in the course schedule. Late assignments will not be accepted. If a student is absent on the day an assignment is due, he/she should make arrangements to turn in the assignment ahead of time.
4. All assignments must be turned in by the due date electronically via Microsoft Word to Moodle. If the instructor cannot open the document, the student will not receive a grade. *The only assignments that should be turned in as a hard copy to the instructor are the case study outlines.* Submission of assignments via e-mail will not be accepted due to university FERPA policies.
5. Student collusion is not allowed for individual assignments and will be treated as an act of plagiarism. Also, Wikipedia should not be used or cited in this course. The expectation is that scholarly sources will be used to complete assignments.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes:

Students are evaluated according to their performance in four areas: outlines of the case studies, work in discussion groups/course participation, a portfolio project, and performance on exams. Descriptions are listed below and to be transparent/fair, each assignment for this course provides “how will you be evaluated” so you can use this as a guide for how grades will be awarded for your efforts.

Participation (75 points possible)

In any course participation and attendance is essential; students who are not in class do not have the opportunity to learn from the rest of the class and the class does not have the opportunity to benefit from an absent student. Since this course meets two times a week, students are allotted three absences for the semester for any reason. If a student accrues more than three absences, his/her grade will be adversely impacted. Also, upon a third absence and any additional absence (regardless of the reason) thereafter, the student will be required to submit to the instructor a three-page paper summarizing the assigned reading for each absence.

Moreover, students who are frequently late to class or who leave early should also expect to have their

participation grade reduced. After all, being late to a class is problematic for the student who is tardy, fellow students, and the instructor. A student who arrives late to class is disruptive to everyone. Students are expected to get to class on time and stay for the duration of the class.

Because class participation and discussion are vital to this class, it is imperative that class discussions be conducted in an appropriate and professional manner that benefits the larger university environment. Therefore, debate is encouraged as long as it is conducted with respect and civility. Courtesy in class discussion extends to making sure cell phones are silenced and are not accessed during class. Additionally, studies have shown that laptops and tablets are a great distraction and detract from the classroom setting. **Thus, laptops and tablets are not permitted in the classroom unless otherwise instructed by the professor.**

In-class or homework assignments and the carbon project: Throughout the semester the class will work on small group assignments, minute papers, or movie/guest speaker reflections. Such assignments will be conducted in-class or taken home for completion, due the next class period. These assignments are graded and part of your overall participation grade. You cannot make up these assignments if you miss class. Also, listed in the course schedule are class sessions devoted to small group discussions for each case. Group members should not miss these class sessions. Each group will have an assigned discussion leader for the case, who will report the conclusions and comments of the group, and a recorder, who is responsible for submitting a written response from the team each week, which are graded. Your colleagues in the group will evaluate your participation. You will also get a chance to evaluate your own contribution to the discussions and to the class. Thus, approximately 20-30 points of your total participation grade is comprised of discussion and assignments.

Evaluative Criteria for Participation

A Range: Prepared for class, clearly engaged in classroom discussions – contributes at least twice per week and is truly invested in Thursday case group (not a free-rider and does not dominate conversation), does not leave class (this includes group work), does not engage in unprofessional behavior, perfect attendance.

B Range: Occasionally engaged in larger and small group discussions, does not leave class, sometimes engages in unprofessional behavior, and misses 3 class sessions.

C Range: Rarely participates in larger and small group discussions, does not leave class, often engages in unprofessional behavior, and misses 3 classes.

D-Below: Does not participate in larger and small group discussions, leaves in the middle of classes, illustrates rude and unprofessional behavior, misses more than 3 classes

Case Study Outlines (5x15 points apiece = 75 points)

Ten case studies appear in the reading schedule. For **five** of the case studies, you should prepare a **2-3 page** (typed), double-spaced outline of the case study. If a student decides to outline all of the course case studies, the top 4 highest grades will be recorded. All students are required to complete at least one outline before Exam 1. Your *outline* should include the following:

- 1) Case details/overview (what is the case about)
 - a. Don't re-hash the case – what are the key points
- 2) Explanation of the actors (who are the actors)
 - a. Don't list all of the actors, but list the top five and briefly explain their role in the case
- 3) The relationship of the case to course theories
 - a. Use the theory for the week to connect to the case – what's the relationship between the two?
- 4) Two important lessons for public administrators from the case (have we learned anything since this case) – *this requires students to do outside research to see what is happening today*

5) Proper citations – keep in mind that our textbook is an edited volume and each essay has a citation at the bottom of each reading

***Outlines should be turned in at the end of class on our case study days (hard copy).**

How Will You Be Evaluated?

Each section counts equally, so in writing your outline, use bullet points and follow guidelines set forth in a writing handbook on how to properly craft an outline (Purdue Owl is another great source: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>).

The purpose of our outlines is to help students to prepare for in-class group discussions, exams, and our portfolio project. *Please make sure to properly cite (in the text) and add a reference page at the end of each outline. Students must use a proper citation format (APA, MLA). An automatic 5 point deduction will result in students that fail to cite. Also, students that cite Wikipedia will receive a 0 for case study assignments.*

A Range: Uses correct outline format, properly cites, well organized, grammatically correct, proper in-text citations and reference page, clearly addresses and understands items 1-5 in assignment instructions, provides own assessment in lessons learned

B Range: Attempts to be well organized, uses correct outline format, properly cites/reference page, but lack of understanding assignments items 1-5

C Range: unorganized, outline format used is unorganized, grammatical errors, does not understand the relationship between the theory of the week and how it links to the case study

D-Below: writes a paper instead of an outline, does not properly cite, lack of organization, does not follow assignment instructions

Takeaway Tuesdays (30 points possible)

To move from theory to practice, each case study group will lead 1 Tuesday “takeaway Tuesday” segment, which is noted in the course calendar, organized by group number. This segment should only last approximately the first 20 minutes of class. The goal is for the entire group to present what the takeaway was from our Thursday case discussion or the “lessons learned.” This should not be a regurgitation of the readings, but a way for students to use current events to connect to our case/discussions. Groups should use our discussions from Thursdays to guide their group’s lessons learned segment for the week and make sure to meet with the professor prior to your presentation. This is 30 points out of your total grade and students will be individually graded. Underperforming students in the group will receive 0 points for lack of participation in helping with the overall group.

How Will You Be Evaluated?

A Range: provides a clear connection between theory/practice, active participant in group presentation, creativity, presentation was not thrown together at the last minute, clear command of course materials and demonstrated an ability to conduct outside research to connect the case to contemporary society, and a clear “lessons learned” is articulated

B Range: Attempts to be well organized, provide a lessons learned, but forgets to connect to issues in contemporary society

C-Below: unorganized and hastily put together presentation, student was not part of the group presentation or dominated the discussion

Examination (100 points possible)

This course will have one take-home examination. The test will ask you to draw examples from the cases we have read and any course materials to date. Additional details about the format will be addressed in class. Make-up exams are not an option so please plan accordingly.

Electronic Portfolio Project (270 points possible)

The centerpiece project of this course is a portfolio designed to develop and enhance a number of skills that are important in both the practice and study of public administration. The project encompasses a series of assignments outlined below that will be turned in at various points during the semester on **Moodle**. After completing all of these assignments, students will write a reflection and present their lessons learned to the class (5 minute presentation). A brief description of the portfolio project elements are listed below, but more details to follow in-class.

1. Crafting your Own Resume (30 points possible): Since this is an upper level undergraduate political science course, it is important that you have a suitable resume when you go on the job market. Also, part of connecting the theory and practice of public administration is demonstrating your own skill set. Thus, each student is required to put together their own resume. Sample formats will be provided and discussed in class.

Due Date: Thursday, September 17 (Moodle, 9:30a.m.)

2. Agency Analysis (80 points possible) – The focus of this course surrounds the work of government agencies. Each student will select a different federal government agency and explore its history and functions. When and why was the agency founded? How has it been structured? What have been and currently are its policy responsibilities? What agencies does it work with? Does it work well with those agencies? What are some of the recent activities of the agency and are there any areas of controversy? Do any of the theorists we have discussed to date help to make sense of this agency today? Each student must select a different agency as students will be required to write a 4-5 page paper. More details in class and on Moodle.

Due Dates: Agency Selection (sign up during designated time in class); Agency Analysis (November 3, 9:30a.m., Moodle)

3. Interview with a Public Administrator (80 points possible): One of the best ways to get a sense of what being a public administrator is like is to talk with one. Average public administrators range from post office employees, to law enforcement officials, to public school teachers, and city government officials. This part of the portfolio project requires you to interview a public administrator of your choosing (local, state, or federal). The only stipulation is that the public administrator cannot be in your family. You are encouraged to interview someone who is in a position that is of interest to you or relates to your professional interests (after all, these interviews may be a great way to begin networking for professional opportunities). Finally, this will be a good opportunity for students to engage in qualitative interviewing. Since the types of public administrators that are interviewed will vary widely, students have a good deal of latitude in what they ask their interviewee. Interviews should be in-person and last about 20-30 minutes. To prepare for your interview, draft interview questions must be turned in for instructor review. After the interview is conducted, a write-up should be prepared. In four-five pages, discuss the person you interviewed, why you selected the individual, what you talked about, and some of the most surprising findings from your interview. The idea is that you will be able to link this interview to course readings (3-4 scholarly sources required, double-spaced, 12 point font).

Due Dates: Interview Selection (10 points): September 22, (turn in on a piece of paper to Prof. Rinfret by the beginning of class)

Draft Interview Questions (25 points): September 29 (due on Moodle by 9:30a.m.)

*Keep in mind you might be asked to re-write questions if the draft is not appropriate before interview takes place

Interview Write-Up (45 points): November 24 (due on Moodle by 9:30a.m.)

4. Portfolio Reflection “Connecting the Pieces of the Puzzle” (80 points possible): This portfolio is a whirlwind tour of public administration. The goal of this reflection paper is select two major theorists we have examined this semester to present the theme that brings together all of the elements of your portfolio project. The suggested length of this assignment is four-five pages, double spaced, with 4-5 scholarly sources, reference page, 12 point font, and in-text citations. Additionally, this assignment should include:

a. *Introduction and Body of Your Paper:* This is your chance to revisit your initial knowledge, impressions, and perceptions about the field of public administration and place yourself, your views in the body of knowledge you acquired in this class. More specifically, lay out your argument in the introduction (first paragraph) that identifies the scholars/theories that has helped you to connect the elements of your portfolio project.

c. *Concluding Thoughts:* A way to conclude this assignment is to ask: how do I see myself contributing to the field of public administration? Where do I stand on contentious issues? Where do I see myself in the future? How has the elements of your portfolio assignment aided you to address these questions?

d. *Brief Presentation:* Students present their lessons learned from their portfolio project during the final weeks of class.

Due Date: Reflection Paper: Due on Moodle, December 15, noon

Presentation Dates: See course calendar, dates TBD during class for each student

Totals Points for the Course

Exam	100 points
Case Outlines (complete 5)	75 points
Portfolio Project (several elements)	270 points
Takeaway Tuesday	30 points
Participation	75 points
Total	550 points possible (If no alterations to the syllabus)

Grading Policy: The University of Montana uses the **Plus/minus** grading system and a **Credit/No Credit** system (the CR/NCR replaces the Pass/Fail system used in the past). *General education courses must be taken using the traditional letter grade to count toward one's general education requirements.* To accommodate the Plus/Minus system the grading scale shown below will be used.

Grade	Point Scale	Point Range	GPA
A	93-100	8 points	4.00
A-	90-92	3 points	3.67
B+	87-89	3 points	3.33
B	83-86	4 points	3.00
B-	80-82	3 points	2.67

C+	77-79	3 points	2.33
C	73-76	4 points	2.00
C-	70-72	3 points	1.67
D+	67-69	3 points	1.33
D	63-66	4 points	1.00
D-	60-62	3 points	.067
F	59 or lower	N/A	0.00

***Please Note: If a student is .5 from a letter grade, the total will be rounded up; do not email to ask about this.**

Course Schedule

I encourage you to stay up with the readings in order to maximize your classroom experience and minimize personal discomfort for the exams and discussion sessions. Although this is the general outline of readings, the schedule may change as the semester proceeds. Therefore, please check reading assignments with me or a classmate if you miss a class (“CS” stands for case study; “R” stands for reading in Stillman).

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments
Week 1: Tuesday, September 1	Course Overview and Introductions	<i>Discussions about drawing groups and consideration of issues/concerns</i>
Thursday, September 3	The Study and Practice of Public Administration /Crafting your Own Resume	Moodle Reading (Cox, Buck, and Morgan) <i>Sign up for groups – assign specific tasks/the role and importance of groups in PA</i>
Week 2: Tuesday, September 8	Introduction and Concepts of Public Administration “Sipping Lattes	Read: Stillman, R1.1 <i>Receive case study questions for Thursday</i>
Thursday, September 10	The Blast in Centralia	Read: Stillman, CS1 Due: Case Study Outline Option
Week 3: Tuesday, September 15	The Bureaucracy and Power	Read: Stillman, R2 <i>Discussion about interview selections</i>
Thursday, September 17	How Kristen Died	Read: Stillman, CS2 Due: Case Study Outline Option Portfolio Project Assignment #1 (Crafting your Own Resume), 9:30a.m. – Moodle
Week 4: Tuesday, September 22	Concept of Ecology (Qualitative Research)	Read: Stillman, R3 Due: Interview Selection (part of portfolio #3) Note that the case study for this week does not follow after R3 and discussion about different

		format for Thursday's group analysis <i>Reminder about takeaway Tuesday and interview questions</i>
Thursday, September 24	The Columbia Accident	Read: Stillman, CS4 Due: Case Study Outline Option
Week 5: Tuesday, September 29	Federalism and IGR	Read: Stillman, R5 Tuesday Takeaway, Group #1 Due: <i>Draft Interview Questions, 9:30a.m. (Moodle)</i> <i>Agency selection for agency analysis paper (in-class) (Part of Portfolio #2)</i>
Thursday, October 1	Wichita Confronts Contamination	Read: Stillman, CS5 Due: Case Study Outline Option
Week 6: Tuesday, October 6	Organizational Theory	Read: Stillman, R6 Due: Tuesday Takeaway, Group #2 <i>Mid Semester Group Evaluation</i> <i>Interview Questions graded, set up interview with PA</i>
Thursday, October 8	American Ground and <i>Discussion about Exam 1</i>	Read: Stillman, C6, <i>receive Exam 1 questions/instructions</i> Due: Case Study Outline Option (remember you must turn in 1 prior to Exam 1)
Week 7: Tuesday, October 13	Review for Exam 1	Read: Review for exam
Thursday, October 15	Exam 1	Exam Due: Moodle, noon
Week 8: Tuesday, October 20 Thursday, October 22	Decision-making <i>The Storm- 10 Years Later</i>	Read: Stillman, R8 <i>Discussion about Agency Analysis (portfolio project)</i> Read: In-class assignment due (no case study option) <i>Graduate Forum (Extra Credit Event)</i>
Week 9: Tuesday, October 27	Administrative Communication	Read: Stillman, R9
Thursday, October 29	Columbine High School	Read: Stillman, R9 and CS9 Due: Case Study Outline Option

Week 10: Tuesday, November 3	Public Personnel Management, (possible guest speaker)	Read: Stillman, R11 Due: Portfolio Project #2 Agency Analysis, 9:30a.m., Moodle
Thursday, November 5	Who Brought Bernadine Healy Down?	Read: Stillman, CS11 Due: Case Study Outline Option
Week 11: Tuesday, November 10	Issue Networks	Read: Stillman, R14 Due: Tuesday Takeaway, Group #3
Thursday, November 12	What's for Lunch?	Read: CS 14 Due: Case Study Outline Option
Week 12: Tuesday, November 17	PA and Public Interest	Read: Stillman, R15 Due: Tuesday Takeaway, Group #4
Thursday, November 19	Torture	Read: CS15 Due: Case Study Outline Option <i>Sign up for portfolio presentations</i>
Week 13: Tuesday, November 24	Ethics and Public Service	Read: Stillman, R16 Due: Tuesday Takeaway, Group #5 Portfolio Project #3 (Interview with PA), 9:30a.m., Moodle
Thursday, November 26	Happy Thanksgiving	
Week 14: Tuesday, December 1	The Last Great Days	Read: CS 16 Due: Case Study Outline Option
Thursday, December 3	The Future (Rowing/Steering) – possibly begin portfolio presentations	Due: Tuesday Takeaway #6 (TBD) Read: to be provided; receive end of the semester group evaluation form
Week 15: Tuesday, December 8	Portfolio Presentations	Read: None
Thursday, December 10	Portfolio Presentations	Read: None
Week 16: Final Exam Due:	December 15 (do not meet in person)	Due: Portfolio Reflection (Moodle, noon)

Classroom Policies

- **Extra Credit:** Might be available, but will relate to civic engagement and the environment.
- **Classroom and Email Etiquette:** A driving component of any course is professionalism and your ability to work well with teams/groups. Thus, the expectation is that students will maintain a high level of professionalism in their classroom conduct with me, and with their fellow students. This means coming to class on time, being respectful during class discussions, and in all communications with the professor and others.
- **Incompletes or Withdrawals “W” for the Course:** If for some reason the course is not working out for you please adhere to the University’s policies for the last day to drop a class. If you need an incomplete for the course, you should come to my office hours or set up a meeting with me four weeks from the end of class in order to make this request. A written medical excuse or documentation will be needed for the professor to grant such a request.
- **Late Assignments:** Students are expected to submit all work on the date specified in the course calendar. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the instructor 72 hours before the date in question. Students must complete all assignments to receive a grade for the course.
- **Miss a Lecture:** Lectures will not be repeated so please ask a friend for his/her notes.
- **University Attendance Policy:** (please make sure to follow the participation course policies listed above too) Students who are registered for a course but do not attend the first two class meetings may be required by the instructor to drop the course. This rule allows for early identification of class vacancies and to permit other students to add classes. **Students not allowed to remain must complete a drop form or drop the course on the Internet (<http://cyberbear.umt.edu>) to avoid receiving a failing grade.** Students who know they will be absent should contact the instructor in advance.
- **Academic Dishonesty (Plagiarism):** Students must follow the University’s policies for academic dishonesty. For detailed information, please view: <http://www.umt.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy>. As such, all work submitted must be your own; no duplicate work (work completed for another class) will not be accepted. Acts of cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of zero (0) for the assignment. Moreover, acts of plagiarism will also be reported to the Academic Court. To avoid acts of plagiarism, cite each reference or source you use and give proper credit for the ideas, opinions, and findings of others. When you are using the exact words of others, you must use quotation marks and include the page number where you found the quote in your citation. And for those aspiring to be a future politician, plagiarism can impact such endeavors.
- **Sensitive Course Materials:** College education aims to expand student understanding and awareness. Thus, it involves engagement with a wide range of information, ideas, and creative representations. In college courses, students can expect to encounter—and critically appraise—materials that may differ from and perhaps challenge familiar understandings, ideas, and beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss these matters with the professor.
- **Disability Assistance:** The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors. The link for this is information: [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.