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PSC 361.01: Public Administration

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Course Description & Objectives

The course introduces students to the legal and institutional setting of the U.S. public-administration system and to organizational dynamics and processes of public management. The instructor emphasizes the case-analysis approach as an aid to learning about administrative practice. Most cases highlight actual challenges of public administration that call for perceptive and skilled management responses. In addition to enhanced understanding of fundamental concepts and issues of public administration (including the evolution of public administration as a field of study, major organizational theories, private/public administration interfaces and dichotomies, budget preparation, ethical dilemmas, approaches to public service, the role of career officials in the policy process and political context, human-resource issues, challenges to effective management, and the comparative/glob perspective), students should develop the ability to apply theoretical insights, personal values, and social-science findings to challenging organizational and ethical situations.

Required texts

(2) Coursepack available at UC Bookstore

Course Requirements

In addition to leading class discussion of selected cases, each student is responsible for individual writing projects that apply useful approaches and research findings to challenging organizational situations.

15% Budget cuts exercise (*2 June*)
25% Mid-term examination (*9 June*)
10% Debate
30% Student’s own case presentation & analysis (*16 June & 21 June*)
20% Class participation
Course Outline and Assignments

27-30 May  I. Introduction to Public Service and U.S. Public Administration
1. Shafritz and Russell, pp. 87-92
5. Levine, “More on Cutback Management”

2 June  II. Introduction to Case Analysis
2. “Case Analysis: Pocket Checklist”

3 June  III. Democratic Accountability v. Administrative Discretion
1. Shafritz and Russell, pp. 342-350

4 June  IV. Public and Private Administration
4. “A Zealous City Employee” (G,S,W, pp. 53-57)

5, 6 June  V. Organization Theory, Design, and Communication
1. Shafritz and Russell, pp. 198-199
2. Garvey, “Matrix and Network Organizations” (pp. 94-100)
4. “The Electronics Stock Control Group”
5. Lohr, “‘Cubes’ Vie with ‘Caves’ in Offices”
6. “A Positive Stroke Goes Awry” PLUS “Manage e-mail,” “Brusque Isn’t Desired Effect;” “Wired, Frazzled”
7. “Replacement of Key Personnel”
8. Mattick, “Multitasking”

9 June  MIDTERM
10 June VI. Decision Theory and Policy Implementation
1. Garvey, “Backward and Forward Mapping” (pp. 462-468)
3. “Keep a 2x4 Behind Your Desk” (G,S,W, pp. 220-223)

10-12 June VII. Ethics and Public Administration
1. Whetton & Cameron, “To Ship or Not to Ship”
2. “HIV and Employee Rights” (G,S,W, pp. 150-152)
4. “Ethics Task Force” exercise
5. James, “Sexual Harassment”
6. “Carl the Ripper” (G,S,W, pp. 197-199)

13 June
7. “Day After Trinity” film

16 June Your case due

16-19 June VIII. Personnel Administration
1. Shafritz and Russell, pp. 361-396
2. Meyer and Brown, “Personnel Dilemma: Terminate or Retain”
3. Artley, “Rose Winn Doesn’t Win”
6. “Conflicts on the Human Services Coordination Team” r/p (G,S,W, p.200-206)
7. Fugleberg, “Nightmare in the American Heartland”
9. “A Supervisor for Unit II” r/p (G,S,W, pp. 141-143)
10. Gage, “Help Wanted” r/p

23 June Analysis of your case due

20,23,24 June IX. Management, Leadership & Supervision; Employee Motivation
2. Stafford, "In Managers, People Skills ..."
3. Meyer and Brown, “It’s Not Easy at the Top” PLUS “Gore Dots i’s that Bush Leaves to Others”
5. “For Better or Worse” PLUS “Relocations”

25 June  X. Public Administration in Comparative Perspective

1. Phyllis Ngai and Peter Koehn, “Cross-cultural Management”
2. Ehrenhalt, “Nepotism and the Meat Ax” (2001)
3. Terada, “Cross-culture Negotiation”
4. Tadella Taferra, “Assefa and Sileshi”

26, 27 June  XI. Class Case Studies

1.
2.
3.