Fall 9-1-2001

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 the 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, challenges to effective management, and the comparative/global perspective), students should develop the ability to apply theoretical insights, personal values, and social-science findings to challenging organizational and ethical situations.

Required texts

(3) 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 (*18 Sept*)
10% Debate
30% Student’s own case presentation & analysis (13 Nov & 29 Nov)
25% Written analysis of “Demise of Policy & Review” (**11 Dec**)
20% Class participation
Course Outline and Assignments

4,6 Sept  
I. Introduction to Public Service and U.S. Public Administration  
11,13 Sept  
1. S&R, Chpts. 1,2,3 (pp. 80-114),12  
4. Levine, “More on Cutback Management”  
5. *“Budget Cuts” (G,S,W, pp. 30-31 as amended)*

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

20,25 Sept.  
III. Democratic Accountability v. Administrative Discretion  
1. S&R, pp. 342-351  

27 Sept  
IV. Public and Private Administration  
2 Oct  
2. Haque, “Diminishing Publicness of Public Service”  
3. “A Zealous City Employee” (G,S,W, pp. 53-57)  
4. “Midvalley Recreation Department”  
5. Gayhart, “Joe’s Dilemma”

4,9 Oct  
V. Organization Theory, Design, and Communication  
11,16 Oct  
1. S&R, Chpts. 5,6  
2. Garvey, “Matrix and Network Organizations” (pp. 94-100)  
4. Lohr, “‘Cubes’ Vie with ‘Caves’ in Offices”  
5. “A Positive Stroke Goes Awry” PLUS “Manage e-mail;” “Brusque Isn’t Desired Effect;” “Wired, Frazzled”  
6. “Replacement of Key Personnel”  
7. “The Electronics Stock Control Group”
18 Oct
9. “Conflicts on the Human Services Coordination Team” r/p (G,S,W, p.200-206)

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

25, 30 Oct
VII. Ethics and Public Administration
1 Nov
1. S & R, Chpt 14
2. Whetton & Cameron, “To Ship or Not to Ship”
4. “HIV and Employee Rights” (G,S,W, pp. 150-152)
5. “Ann’s Dilemma” (G,S,W, pp. 60-62) PLUS “Court Backs”; “State: We Can Open”; “Minding Everyone’s Business”
6. “Ethics Task Force” exercise
7. James, “Sexual Harassment”
8. “Carl the Ripper” (G,S,W, pp. 197-199)
10. Smith, “Ferment at the Met Lab” CC PLUS “Day After Trinity” film

13 Nov
Your case due

6, 8 Nov
VIII. Personnel Administration
13, 15, 20 Nov
1. S & R, Chpt 10, 11
2. Meyer and Brown, “Personnel Dilemma: Terminate or Retain”
3. Artley, “Rose Winn Doesn’t Win”
6. “Interviewer Hints” & “Interviewing”
7. Yeager, “Equal Employment Opportunity” role play (r/p) CC
8. “A Supervisor for Unit II” r/p (G,S,W, pp. 141-143)
9. Gage, “Help Wanted” r/p
10. “Jayne’s Baby”
11. “Middle Management Ignored” (G,S,W, pp. 41-45)
13. “Stop Having Birthdays” (G,S,W, pp. 224-227)
15. Dubnick, “A Trashy Situation” r/p CC

29 Nov Analysis of your case due

27,29 Nov IX. Management, Leadership & Supervision; Employee Motivation
4,6 Dec
1. S & R, Chpt 8, 9
2. Stafford, “In Managers, People Skills…”
3. Lohr, “Making Cars the Volvo Way”
4. Garvey, “Helping the Homeless” CC PLUS “City Told to Stop”
5. Meyer and Brown, “It’s Not Easy at the Top” PLUS “Gore Dots i’s that Bush Leaves to Others”
6. “The Outsider” (G,S,W, pp. 78-81)
7. “Making of a Corrections Officer” (G,S,W, pp. 207-212)
9. “For Better or Worse” PLUS “Relocations”
10. McCracken, “Walter and Ace Construction Company”
11. “One Supervisor’s Analysis” (G,S,W, pp. 229-231)

11 Dec ** Analysis of Koehn, “The Demise of Policy & Review” due

11, 13 Dec X. Public Administration in Comparative Perspective

1. Phyllis Ngai and Peter Koehn, “Cross-cultural Management”
2. “Berso Company”
3. Terada, “Cross-culture Negotiation”
4. Tadella Taferra, “Assefa and Sileshi”
5. Gervais, “Working with the Tribal Bureaucracy”

17 Dec (3:20-5:20) XI. Class Case Studies

1.
2.
3.

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