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PSC 504.01: Organization Theory

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Recommended Citation

Tompkins, Jonathan, "PSC 504.01: Organization Theory" (2010). *University of Montana Course Syllabi*. 6996.

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Political Science 504
Organization Theory
Spring 2010

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Course Description

This seminar provides a comprehensive overview of organization theory, particularly as it relates to public management and organizational effectiveness. Our goal is to determine what each major school of thought can tell us about how to structure and manage complex organizations and to develop our own theory of organizational excellence.

Course Objectives

1. To develop skill in theory-building
2. To increase conceptual and theoretical knowledge

Required Texts

1. Shafritz, Ott, and Jang, Classics of Organization Theory (Wadsworth, 2011).
2. Jonathan Tompkins, Organization Theory and Public Management (Wadsworth, 2005).
3. Bob Stone, Confessions of a Civil Servant (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

There are also a few articles on electronic reserve in the library. Password = PSCI504.

Course Requirements

Students are required to read all reading assignments and be prepared to discuss them in class. Students are also required to write five 3-4 page writing assignments and one take-home final exam (100 points each). The exam question is provided on this syllabus.

A = 558-600 points

A- = 540-557

B+ = 522-539

B = 498-521

B- = 480-497

C+ = 462-479

Reading Assignments

Feb. 4 Organization Theory and Public Management
Read Tompkins chapters 1, 2, and 3.

Feb. 11 Weber's Theory of Bureaucracy
Read Tompkins chapter 4 and Max Weber's "Bureaucracy" in Shafritz et al.

- Feb. 18 **** No Class – Begin Working on Scientific Management Theory****
- Feb. 25 Scientific Management Theory
 Read Tompkins chapter 5 and Frederick Taylor’s “The Principles of Scientific Management” in Shafritz et al.
- **Assignment #1 due Monday, March 1****
- March 4 Administrative Management Theory
 Read Tompkins chapter 6, and Henri Fayol’s “General Principles of Management” and Luther Gulick’s “Notes on the Theory of Organization,” in Shafritz et al.
- March 11 Pre-Human Relations Theory
 Read Tompkins chapter 7, and Mary Parker Follett’s “The Giving of Orders” in Shafritz et al.
- March 18 Human Relations Theory
 Read Tompkins chapter 8, and Fritz Roethlisberger’s “The Hawthorne Experiments” in Shafritz et al.
- ** Assignment #2 due Monday March 22****
- March 25 The Open Systems Perspective
 Read Tompkins Chapter 11, and Burns and Stalker’s “Mechanistic and Organic Systems” and James D. Thompson’s “Organizations in Action” in Shafritz et al.
- April 1 **** Spring Break****
- April 8 Participative Management Theory
 Read Tompkins Chapter 12.
- April 15 Human Resources Theory
 Read Tompkins Chapter 13, Douglas McGregor’s “The Human Side of Enterprise” in Shafritz et al., and Frederick Herzberg, “One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?” (on reserve in the library).
- **Assignment #3 is due Monday, April 19****
- April 22 Total Quality Management Theory
 Read Tompkins Chapter 14, Mary Walton’s “Parable of the Red Beads” and Joseph Sensenbrenner’s “Quality Comes to City Hall, both on reserve in the library.

****Assignment #4 is due Monday, April 26****

April 29

The Organizational Culture Perspective

Read Tompkins Chapter 15, and William Ouchi's "The Z Organization" in Shafritz et al.

May 6

Symbolic Management and Leadership Theory

Read Peters and Austin's "Attention, Symbols, Drama, Vision – and Love" on e-reserve in the library, and Bob Stone chapters 1-6.

****Assignment #5 Due Monday, May 10****

May 13

Leadership as a Moral Obligation

Read Tompkins chapter 16 and the rest of Bob Stone's book.

****Final Exam Due by Monday, May 17****

Writing Assignments and Rules of the Game

Your writing assignments are to be written in a specific way in order to achieve specific purposes. They are to be 3-4 pages in length, typed, and double-spaced. For purposes of analysis, they require you to choose a small organization or organizational unit in a large organization with which you are familiar and which has a relatively clear and distinct mission (e.g., a school, nonprofit agency, government agency or bureau). Some advice:

1. Your goal is to pack as much analysis as possible into relatively few pages. This requires you to walk a fine line between succinctness on the one hand and depth of analysis on the other.
2. Each paper should offer a title and appropriate subheadings, as follows:

[Title]

Introduction

[Your First Core Concept]

[Your Second Core Concept]

[Your Third Core Concept]

Analysis

3. Your introduction should a) introduce the school of thought under study by placing it in historical context, b) articulate the school's implicit theory of organizational excellence, and c) establish the purpose of the paper, i.e., "to assess the relevance of the theory under study for our organization as it continues its pursuit of excellence." For (b) above, introduce the implicit theory of excellence

as follows: Theory such-and-such holds that organizational excellence is achieved by [doing] x, y, and z [where x, y, and z are the theory's core concepts].

4. The body of the paper must provide an “imaginative description” of how your organization would look and be managed if each core concept were fully implemented. [I don't want to know how your organization currently looks or acts].
5. Academically speaking, your goal is to demonstrate how well you understood the theory. So, a) be sure to begin each subsection with a conceptual definition of the core concept itself, and b) make appropriate references to key theorists (e.g., “Taylor, believed, for example, that . . .”
6. In the final section [Analysis], offer your assessment regarding the value, or lack of value, of this theory for your organization.

Note: Rewrites will be allowed only on assignment #1 and only within 2 weeks of receiving the paper back.

Writing Assignment #1 – Scientific Management Theory

Write an essay analyzing scientific management as a theory of organizational excellence by identifying its core concepts and describing what your organization would look like (how it would be structured, managed and/or operated) if it were organized strictly in accordance with scientific management theory. As you will say in your introduction, the purpose of your paper is to explore the relevance of scientific management theory to your organization as it continues its pursuit of excellence.

Close with an assessment of the relevance of this theory to your organization given its commitment to the pursuit of excellence.

Writing Assignment #2 – Human Relations Theory

Repeat Assignment #1, but this time utilizing human relations theory (Mayo/Roethlisberger).

Writing Assignment #3 – Human Resources Theory

Repeat Assignment #1, but this time utilizing human resources theory (Likert/McGregor/Argyris/Herzberg). **Note: I suggest including participative management under a single conceptual heading, such as “participative management” or “collective decision making and accountability.” Also, you would be very wise to incorporate Herzberg's concept of job enrichment.**

Writing Assignment # 4 – Total Quality Management Theory

Repeat Assignment #1, but this time utilizing total quality management theory (Deming/Juran).

Writing Assignment #5 – Symbolic Management and Leadership Theory

Repeat Assignment #1, but this time utilizing symbolic management and leadership theory (Ouchi/Peters).

Final Exam Question

Write on the following question much as in previous assignments but this time do not write with a specific organization in mind. Provide enough explanation and analysis to demonstrate that you have mastered course content well (3-5 typed, double-spaced pages)

Present your “general theory” of organizational excellence as drawn from the schools of thought studied this semester (not necessarily all of them). Introduce the core concepts that comprise your theory in the introduction. In the body of the paper, explain how each core concept, in your view, contributes to organizational excellence.

Criteria for Grading Essays

	C-	B-	B	A-	A	weights
Thoroughness of answer	7	8	8.5	9	10	x3=
Sophistication of analysis	7	8	8.5	9	10	x3 =
Organization and logical development	7	8	8.5	9	10	x3 =
Clarity of expression	7	8	8.5	9	10	x1 =
Grammar, punctuation, and spelling	See Below					

Guide to Understanding the Criteria

1. Thoroughness of Answer

The best essays respond to each question thoroughly and with sufficient detail to demonstrate that the subject is fully understood.

2. Sophistication of Analysis

In the best essays, the author does much more than just explain or describe. He or she shows evidence of having thought about the subject in depth. The subject is analyzed from many angles and assessed critically.

3. Organization and Logical Development

The best essays show evidence of prior planning as if they had been outlined in advance. They have a purpose and/or theme which is introduced in the introduction, developed in the body of the paper, and returned to in the conclusion.

Paragraphs are well constructed and linked to each other in a logical sequence using transitional sentences and subheadings as needed. Arguments, examples, facts, opinions, and details explain the main point and lend credibility to each point being developed.

4. Clarity of Expression

In the best essays, words are chosen carefully and sentences are constructed purposefully so that each point the author makes is expressed as exactly, precisely, and clearly as possible.

5. Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling

The best essays are characterized by consistently correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Verbs agree with subjects. There are no single-sentence paragraphs or sentence fragments.

One point will be subtracted for each single-sentence paragraph, verb-subject disagreement, sentence fragment (incomplete sentence