PSC 504.01: Organizational Theory

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Political Science 504  
ORGANIZATION THEORY  
Spring 1998

Professor Tompkins  
Tel: 243-2721  

Office: LA 252  
Hours: Every day, except when in class

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar provides a comprehensive overview of organization theory, particularly as it relates to managerial effectiveness. It requires extensive reading of the "classics" in the field as well as selections from the more recent literature.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To increase conceptual and theoretical knowledge.
2. To develop analytical and problem-solving skills.
3. To improve writing skills.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Selected articles in Readings Packet.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Student Participation: Students are required to read all reading assignments and be prepared to discuss them in class.

2. Analytical Memos (25% of grade each): Students are required to write an organization description (graded pass/no pass) and three, 3-4 page analytical memos. Grades will be reduced by a half of a letter grade for each day an assignment is late.

3. Final Exam (25% of grade): Students are required to write an in-class final exam. The exam questions are provided on this syllabus. Four questions will be drawn at random and students will write on three of them in class.
READING ASSIGNMENTS

Feb 4  Organization Theory and Management Practice

Feb 11  Directing, Controlling, and Motivating Employees

Exam Question #1: Describe the four motivational strategies identified by Katz and Kahn and the behavioral consequences that might be expected to follow from each. Which would you adopt as a manager and why?

Organization Description: Due Friday, February 13 (3-4 pages double-spaced).

Feb 18  Weber's Model of Bureaucracy

Exam Question #2: Bureaucracy can be understood as a structural mechanism for directing and controlling employees. Describe four key elements of Weber's model of bureaucracy, and explain how each of these (according to Weber), contribute to administrative efficiency. Finally, discuss how knowledge of Weber's model may constrain your ability to organize the workplace and motivate employees.

Feb 25  Understanding Public Bureaucracy
       James Q. Wilson, Bureaucracy, Chapters 1 and 2, on reserve in Library.

Analytical Memo #1: Due Monday March 2.

March 4  Scientific Management Theory
       Adam Smith, "Of the Division of Labour," in Shafritz and Ott, pp. 40-45.

Exam Question #3: Frederick Taylor is best known for his scientific method for getting the maximum output from a worker for a minimum input of energies and resources. Describe the steps involved in this method and his implicit theories about how to a) direct, b) control, and c) motivate employees. Finally, offer your
own assessment of scientific management as a means of improving organizational performance.

March 11 Administrative Management Theory

March 18 SPRING BREAK

March 25 Human Relations Theory

Exam Question #4: Explain in some detail what Follett meant by "observing the law of the situation." Explain how Follett's work anticipated ideas associated with later schools of thought, including human relations, human resources, and TQM.

Exam Question #5: Summarize the conclusions drawn from the Hawthorne Experiments and the assumptions and methods of human relations theory derived from them. Which of these methods, if any, will you incorporate into your approach to management, and why?

April 1 Human Resources Theory
Frederick Herzberg, "One More Time: How Do You Motivate Employees?," in readings packet.

Exam Question #6: Describe the "motivational theory" behind a) job enrichment and b) participative management. Generally speaking, what distinguishes human relations theory from human resources theory? As a manager, will you use an approach based on self-motivation alone, or will you use a two-factor approach? Why?

Analytical Memo #2: Due Monday, April 6.

April 8 Systems Theory and Contingency Theory
Kast and Rosensweig, "General Systems Theory," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 310-313 only (as discussion pertains to contingency theory).
Exam Question #7: Organizations can be viewed as rational machines for achieving specific goals or as natural systems seeking to survive in a hostile environment. What are the differences between these two views, and which view or combination of views provides the most realistic understanding of organizations? What is the value of systems theory to managers?

April 15  The Organizational Culture and Symbolic Management School
Edgar Schein, "Defining Organizational Culture," in Shafritz and Ott, pp. 430-441.
Peters and Austin, "Bone-Deep Beliefs," Chapter 13 of Passion for Excellence.

Exam Question #8: Part of the solution to the "human problem" lies in maximizing employee commitment to organizational goals. Knowing that organizations may have unique cultures, comprised of unique values and symbols, holds what implications for employee motivation and organizational performance?

April 22  Leadership Theory

Exam Question #9: Write an essay distinguishing a good leader from a good manager. Place your discussion in the context of achieving organizational excellence.

April 29  Total Quality Management
Joseph Sensenbrenner, "Quality Comes to City Hall," in readings packet.

Exam Question #10: Write an essay describing TQM as a theory of organizational excellence and relating it to other management theories we have studied. Offer some tips about how to implement it successfully in the public sector.

May 6  Case Study and Review for Exam
Analytical Memo #3: Due Wednesday, May 6.

May 13  FINAL EXAM
WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Organization Description  Due Friday, February 13  Three-five pages double-spaced

Choose a government or not-for-profit agency with which you are familiar and describe it in terms of the 12 organizational dimensions identified by Richard Daft (you may skip the personnel ratios dimension). Also append an organizational chart. To make this assignment relevant to the memos described below, choose a relatively small agency or bureau within a larger agency. Don't describe a perfect agency. Describe it accurately, warts and all.

The analytical memos ask you to extract the main points from the readings and to organize a discussion of them around your own theory. They are to be 3-5 pages, typed, and double-spaced.

Memo #1  Due Monday, March 2  A Theory of a High Performance Agency

Your newly appointed agency director is from the private sector. Concerned about his ability to manage a public agency effectively, he asks you to write an analytical memo outlining a theory of how to create and sustain a high performance organization. Specifically, he asks you to identify the constraints on organizational performance in the public sector, develop your theory for overcoming those constraints based on your reading of Wilson and Osborne and Gaebler, and recommend how the organization should be modified on some of Daft's 12 dimensions in accordance with your theory.

Memo #2  Due Monday, April 6  A Theory of Employee Motivation

Your immediate superior wants to maximize productivity without sacrificing morale, but she is unsure how to do so. She asks you to investigate what scientific management, human relations, and human resources theory has to offer and to report back regarding your findings. Specifically, she asks you to summarize how to direct, control, and motivate employees from the perspective of each of the three schools, introduce your own theory of motivation, and recommend how the organization should be modified on some of Daft's 12 dimensions in accordance with your theory.

Memo #3  Due Wednesday, May 6  A Theory of Organizational Excellence

A new agency head has just come on board. He asks you to write an analytical memo summarizing what he can do to achieve organizational excellence. He sincerely desires a turned on workforce and operational effectiveness and is relying on you for the answers. In contrast to Memo #1, this director asks you to draw on the ideas of Peters/Austin and TQM theorists in formulating your theory of organizational excellence. He also asks you to recommend how the organization should be modified on some of Daft's 12 dimensions in accordance with your theory. (You will need to identify 3-5 key concepts and integrate them into your theory).
Tips for Writing Analytical Memos

1. These are a form of technical writing in which the student seeks to pack as much analysis as possible into relatively few pages. They require a delicate balance between succinctness on the one hand and depth of analysis on the other.

2. Keep the grading criteria clearly in mind. Be sure, for example, that your introductory paragraph establishes the purpose of the memo and introduces the theme around which the analysis will be organized. Don't begin writing until you have crystallized a theme/theory.

3. Avoid bullets; write in complete sentences. Avoid linear analysis, i.e., avoid "the first step is . . . the second step is . . ."

4. Avoid bald assertions; back statements up with examples or academic references.
CRITERIA FOR GRADING ANALYTICAL MEMOS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Weights</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thoroughness of answer</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 x6 =</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophistication of analysis</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 x6 =</td>
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<td>Organization and logical development</td>
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<td>Clarity of expression</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 x3 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar, punctuation, and spelling</td>
<td>See Below</td>
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GUIDES TO UNDERSTANDING THE CRITERIA

1. **Thoroughness of Answer**

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

2. **Sophistication of Analysis**

   In the best memos, 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 memos 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 memos, 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 memos 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), and run-on sentence.
EXAM QUESTIONS

1. Describe the four motivational strategies identified by Katz and Kahn and the behavioral
consequences that might be expected to follow from each. Which would you adopt and why?

2. Bureaucracy can be understood as a structural mechanism for directing and controlling
employees. Describe four of the elements of Weber's model of bureaucracy and explain how each
of these, according to Weber, contribute to administrative efficiency. Finally, discuss how
knowledge of Weber's model may constrain your ability to organize the workplace and motivate
employees.

3. Frederick Taylor is best known for his scientific method for getting the maximum output from
a worker for a minimum input of energies and resources. Describe the steps involved in this
method and his implicit theories about how to a) direct, b) control, and c) motivate employees.
Finally, offer your own assessment of scientific management as a means of improving
organizational performance.

4. Explain in some detail what Follett meant by "observing the law of the situation." Explain how
Follett's work anticipated ideas associated with later schools of thought, including human
relations, human resources, and TQM.

5. Summarize the conclusions drawn from the Hawthorne Experiments and the assumptions and
methods of human relations theory derived from them. Which of these methods, if any, will you
incorporate into your approach to management, and why?

6. Describe the "motivational theory" behind a) job enrichment and b) participative management.
Generally speaking, what distinguishes human relations theory from human resources theory? Will
you use an approach based on self-motivation alone, or a two-factor approach? Why?

7. Organizations can be viewed as rational machines for achieving specific goals or as natural
systems seeking to survive in a hostile environment. What are the differences between these two
views, and which view or combination of views provides the most realistic understanding of
organizations? What is the value of systems theory to managers?

8. Part of the solution to the "human problem" lies in maximizing employee commitment to
organizational goals. Knowing that organizations may have unique cultures, comprised of unique
values and symbols, holds what implications for employee motivation and organizational
performance?

9. Write an essay distinguishing a good leader from a good manager. Place your discussion in the
context of achieving organizational excellence.

10. Write an essay describing TQM as a theory of organizational excellence and relating it to
other management theories we have studied. Offer some tips about how to implement it
successfully in the public sector.