

Course Syllabus

PA 301
Concepts and Issues in Public Administration
Section 02 (02429)
Spring 2009
Tuesday P-145

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Course Scope and Objectives

This is an introductory course in public administration, and is designed to provide a basic introduction to the subject for students without previous coursework in this field.

The activities of public bureaucracies currently touch practically all aspects of contemporary life, and their expenditures account for approximately one-third of the U.S. total of goods and services. As persons who have a special interest in the public policy process, it therefore behooves us to gain some insight into what we mean in general when we talk about public administration; the role of bureaucracy in a democratic system and its interaction with other branches and levels of government; and the internal aspects (or management) of public organizations.

Text

Johnson, William C. *Public Administration: Partnerships in Public Service*, Fourth Edition.

Course Requirements

Students will be expected to complete assigned readings before class. Class sessions will include both lecture and discussion, so students may be called upon at random to address relevant questions.

Grades will be based upon a short paper (100 points), a midterm exam (100 points), a final exam (100 points), and attendance and participation (ranging from +20 to -20 points), for a total possible score of 320 points. (See below for attendance policy.)

The midterm and final exams will be take-home, and will consist of a combination of short answer/identify and essay questions. The due date for exams (and the short paper) is a "firm" date. **For each calendar day that the exam/paper is past due, the grade will go down by ½, that is, an A paper receives an A- on late day number one, a B+ on late day number two, etc.**

Suggested length for the short paper is four to six pages, typewritten (12-point), double-spaced. Footnotes and bibliography are not required, unless a source is directly quoted.

Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is necessary for you to master the course material and to make a good grade in the class. “Attendance” means that you are present for the entire class session; if you leave early, you will be counted absent for that day. **I will take roll at the beginning and the end of each class session.** If you have 8 or more unexcused absences, you will automatically fail the class. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Attendance/participation points will be added or subtracted on the following scale:

1 absence	+20 points
2 absences	+15 points
3 absences	+10 points
4 absences	0 points
5 absences	-10 points
6 absences	-15 points
7 absences	-20 points
8+ absences	Automatic F in the class

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (1/27)	Introduction Chap. 1
Week 2 (2/3)	Bureaucracy in a Pluralist Political Context Chap. 2
Week 3 (2/10)	Bureaucracy in a Federal System Chap. 3
Week 4 (2/17)	Privatization Chap. 4
Week 5 (2/24)	Organizations: Dynamics and Culture Chap. 5
Week 6 (3/3)	The Policy Cycle Chap. 6
Week 7 (3/10)	Leadership Chap. 7

*******Midterm Exam: Handout 3/10; Due Back 3/17*******

Week 8 (3/17)	The Decision-Making Process Chap. 8
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PAPER TOPICS

Please choose **one** of the following:

1. You have just been appointed Secretary of the Treasury in a new national administration. The President has asked you to address problems of declining worker productivity, a large and growing trade deficit, a large and growing budget deficit, a crushing national debt, declining revenues, and the most serious decline in the overall American economy since the Great Depression of the 1920s-1930s. What is your response? **[This is a hypothetical situation, and does not necessarily correspond entirely to current realities.]**
2. As the new mayor of City X, you face substantive problems in the areas of solid waste disposal, delivery of water and sewer services, crime and law enforcement, and economic development. Also, you must deal with declining city revenues, a shrinking public work force, and poor employee morale. What is your program?
3. Choose a substantive policy area in U.S. government that has been emphasized by the incoming President, Barack Obama. (Sources for this could be messages to Congress, press releases, journalistic coverage, etc.) Analyze this policy in terms of (1) an outline of the previous situation; (2) suggested changes to current policy; and (3) your evaluation of the President's suggestions and how well you think they will work, and why. (Further options: you may substitute California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger or San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders for President Obama.)