UST 835
Public Organization and Management Theory
Fall 2007
Thursday 6:00 – 9:30 pm
Instructor: Cam Stivers
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Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 4:00 – 6:00 pm
or by appointment

Note: Some students have requested re-scheduling this course for a Saturday format. We will discuss this possibility the first night of class (Thursday 8/30). If all members of the class are in favor, we will shift (given available rooms at the college) to meet all day on six Saturdays rather than every Thursday night. Consult the class schedule below for more information.

Introduction

This doctoral seminar focuses on organization and management theory relevant to public agencies. All public agencies are ‘organizations’ but not all organizations are public. A great deal of organization and management theory is equally relevant to both public and private organizations. But as we will explore in depth during this semester, there are issues surrounding public organizations that are unique to them—in particular, the tension between public accountability and the accomplishment of organizational goals, or, as Dwight Waldo once put it, the tension between bureaucracy and democracy. Therefore, our exploration will seek to consider organization and management theories within a political context.

As a doctoral seminar, this course will aim for considerable depth and complexity. We will seek to place theories within the larger framework of public administration as a field of study and to balance a broad review of organizational and management literature with in-depth examination of several texts that have special significance for public administration. Unlike master’s level organization theory or management courses, we will not give primary consideration to the application of these theories in practical situations. Rather we will approach the topic on a conceptual level, seeking to understand such issues as what kind of ‘theory’ various organization and management theories are, how they have evolved, what kind of conceptual map they form as a body of thought, and where the future development of public organization and management theory seems to be headed. Nevertheless, because public administration is an applied field, the extent to which organization and management theory informs, shapes, and guides agency practice will never be far from our discussions.

For heuristic purposes, we can consider the literature we will cover as falling into two ‘piles:’ the ‘organizational sociology’ pile and the ‘management’ pile. In general, organizational literature in PA tends to gravitate toward the ‘management’ pile, because of the field’s early roots in municipal management reform and in Frederick Taylor’s ‘scientific management.’ Organizational sociology, however, beginning with Max Weber
and developing throughout the 20th century, also plays an important role in public administration thinking. We will find ourselves attempting to tease out the relationship between these two bodies of literature and to get a sense of how things stack up, conceptually, in the early 21st century.

The goals of the course are as follows:

1. To give you a solid understanding of major organization and management theories relevant to public administration
2. To enable you to develop your own conceptual map of this topic
3. To provide opportunities to write practice answers to questions of the kind usually found on the comprehensive exams
4. To encourage you to develop a critical understanding of organization and management thinking
5. To help you find your own identity or sense of affiliation within the larger network of organization and management theory
6. To make clear the political and economic context within which organization and management theory in public administration is formulated and applied.

Readings

Several books and a number of articles will make up the reading assignments. Books (with two exceptions) will be available in the CSU bookstore, and most are widely available elsewhere. Various websites may be used to find reasonably priced copies. One I have found quite useful for price comparisons is campusL.com. Articles will be available via electronic reserve.

Books

Frederick Taylor, *Principles of Scientific Management*
Roy Jacques, *Manufacturing the Employee: Management Knowledge from the 19th to the 21st Centuries*
Chester Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*
Michael J. Handel, *The Sociology of Organizations: Classic, Contemporary, and Critical Readings*
Derek S. Pugh, *Organization Theory: Selected Readings* (4th edition—NB be sure to get this edition and not an earlier one)
Martin Kilduff and Wenpin Tsai, *Social Networks and Organizations*
Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*
Ralph P. Hummel, *The Bureaucratic Experience* (5th edition): Not released yet. We will discuss access to this book in class.
Articles (ECR)

Max Weber, ‘Bureaucracy’
Herbert Simon, excerpts from Administrative Behavior
Mary Parker Follett, excerpts from Dynamic Administration
Roethlisberger & Dixon, ‘Human relations’
Karl Weick, excerpts from The Social Psychology of Organizing
James Thompson, excerpt from Organizations in Action

Assignments

Brief papers: Write four brief (3-4 double spaced pages) reaction papers each of which discusses some issue raised by the reading for a particular class session. The papers will be evaluated based on your demonstration of your understanding of the material and your ability to apply it to a thesis of your choosing. Choose two session before the midterm and two after; in each case the papers are due the night of the class under discussion. No late work will be accepted.

Guided discussions: Each member of the class will select one class session for which s/he will serve as discussion leader for the first part of the class. You should select the discussion you wish to lead by the end of the second class. The instructor will mediate if there is competition for a particular session. The point of the assignment is not to present a rote summary of the reading, but to provide an opportunity for you to step into the role of instructor. Imagine yourself as the instructor and think about what points you believe it is important for the rest of the class to discuss from the reading for that night. Use your creativity to design discussion formats that will enhance class learning.

Conceptual map: The last night of class, bring with you a drawing or diagram that reflects your conceptual map of public organization and management theory, one that shows connections among the various schools of thought and connections to other aspects of public administration thought. You will present your map to the class and guide us over its terrain. We will discuss this assignment at length in class and the instructor will provide you with examples. Each person’s map is unique. There is no ‘one best way,’ only one that is most meaningful to you. Nevertheless, you should be prepared to make a case for why you drew your map the way you did.

Midterm and final exams: There will be a midterm and a final. The midterm will be taken in class, probably in the computer lab. The questions will be modeled after the kinds of questions you are likely to encounter on the comprehensive exams. You will answer one required question and one optional question. Your answers will be graded as if they were comps answers, with allowances for less time and preparation. Each question will be graded “pass” or “no pass.” Two passes=A, one pass=B, two no passes=C.

The final will be a take-home exam, with only one question. In this sense it is a cross between an exam and a final paper (rough estimate of length: 12-15 pages). It will be due one week after the last class. The question is as follows:
Some people argue that organization and management theory can be used to understand public organizations in essentially the same way as private organizations. Others argue that organizing and managing in the public sector is fundamentally different from the private sector—therefore there is, or there needs to be, something distinctive about public organization/management theory. Which aspects of the organization and management literature (themes, concepts, etc.) do you consider applicable to both public and private organizations in essentially the same manner? Which may not apply to public organizations, or may need to be modified in order to apply?

Class Schedule

Note: If we shift to a Saturday format, we will schedule as follows:

9/6 and 9/13: Saturday 9/15, 9 to 5.
9/20 and 9/27: 9/30
10/4 and 10/11: 10/13
10/18 and 10/25: 10/27
11/1 and 11/8: 11/10
11/15 and 11/29: 12/1

8/30: Introduction, course overview, review of the syllabus, lecture

9/6: Classic management theory: Taylor (entire book), Fayol (Pugh), Braverman (Handel)

9/13: The Hawthorne Studies: Mayo (Pugh), Homans (Handel), Roethlisberger & Dixon (ECR), Bramel & Friend (Handel)

9/20: Chester Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*

9/27: Bureaucracy: Weber (excerpt), Hummel (from instructor)

10/4: Contingency theory: Burns & Stalker (Handel), Burns (Pugh), Woodward (Handel), Lawrence & Lorsch (Pugh), Thompson (ECR)

Organization and environment, organizational ecology: Pfeffer & Salancik (Handel), Pfeffer & Salancik (Pugh), Hannan & Freeman (Pugh), DiMaggio & Powell (Pugh—a more complete version of this article than Handel’s)

10/11: Decision-making & rationality: Simon (ECR), Vaughn (Handel)

Power: Michels (Handel), Pfeffer (ECR)

Market vs. Hierarchy: Williamson (Handel), Perrow (Handel), Powell (Handel)

10/18: Mid-term

Mary Parker Follett (ECR)
10/25: Organizations as Human and Social Systems: Handel, parts III/B and IV
Enacted Organizations: Weick (ECR), Weick (Pugh)

11/1: Perrow, *Organizing America*

11/8: Jacques, *Manufacturing the Employee*

11/15: Kilduff & Tsai, *Social Networks and Organizations*

11/22: Thanksgiving Day; no class

11/29: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

12/6: Conceptual maps; review of the course

**Grading**

Your grade for the course will be apportioned as follows:

- Critical reaction papers 20%
- Conceptual map 20%
- Mid-term 20%
- Final 20%
- Guided discussion & general participation 20%

In general, in evaluating your work I will be looking for evidence of solid (rather than superficial or cursory) knowledge of the material, and the ability to use the material to make your own arguments.

**Attendance and participation**

You are expected to attend class faithfully and participate actively. As a doctoral seminar, this class depends on its members to join in, share thoughts, ask questions, etc. No matter how good your written work is, you will not receive an A for the course if you sit silent the entire semester! Successful participation does not require brilliant comments, only the willingness to ask questions and offer thoughts.

You are expected to notify me in advance if you have to miss class. Absence without prior notification and/or more than one unexcused absence will reduce your grade for the course. Under special circumstances (e.g. a family emergency) you may make up excess absences by means of additional written work—talk to me.

Please let me know if there is something more I can do to enhance your learning. I welcome suggestions and feedback, both positive and critical.