

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY  
Department of Public Administration and Policy  
Fall, 2011

PUAD 612 (01 and 02)  
Public Administration in the Policy Process  
Tuesday 5:30 to 8:00; Thursday 2:35 to 5:15

Prof. Howard McCurdy  
202 885 6236  
mccurdy@american.edu

The course is designed to familiarize students with the basic concepts needed to effectively manage public service programs—in the governmental, non-profit, and private sectors—and to acquaint students with public administration as a field of study. Knowledge of concepts and the field provides students with a necessary foundation for the practice of public administration in a professional way. It helps students who assume administrative responsibilities avoid the mistakes that others have already made. It also serves to prepare students for more advanced course work, particularly in the areas of management theory, project management, human resource management, and management analysis.

Learning Objectives:

The primary learning objectives of the course are two-fold.

- By the end of the course, students should have acquired a basic ability to diagnose administrative situations (both successful endeavors and failures) and to locate appropriate administrative practices that fit each diagnosis.
- By the end of the course, students should have a basic familiarity with the field of public administration, its concepts, and contributors.

The primary pedagogical techniques for achieving these objectives are lectures, analysis of case studies (both real and fictional), and review of readings.

Books

A wide selection of readings have been assembled for the course, organized around the development of public administration as a field of study. Some readings are seminal works in the field—that is, they influence the way in which people study and comprehend public administration. Others provide commentary on current topics. Additionally, we shall examine a succession of case studies and some films.

Students are encouraged to purchase a book of readings by Shafritz and Hyde. The instructor and the class assistant shall endeavor to make most of the readings available electronically. Readings can be found in the Shafritz book, on the class Blackboard site, through the university library online journal collection, and on the internet. Follow the course outline closely to locate materials (the outline may be updated as the class develops).

Jay M. Shafritz and Albert C. Hyde, *Classics of Public Administration*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (2007). We will use a number of selections from this book, most of which can be found in earlier editions or alternative sources

Students wishing to purchase books for their own library may want to consider some of the following.

James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy* (1989). We will use four selections from this informative book.

David H. Rosenbloom and Robert Kravchuk, *Public Administration: Understanding Management, Politics, and Law in the Public Sector*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed (2008). Worth purchasing for students who sense that they need a basic textbook.

David Osborne and Peter Plastrik, *Banishing Bureaucracy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2006). A complete statement of the “reinventing government” philosophy, this book can be hard to find in its second edition.

Students may be asked to download a few cases from the Kennedy School of Government Case Program. These cost \$2.75 each.

### Course Assignments

The primary requirement for the course is to read. Read as much as you can—the book excerpts, the articles, the case studies, and the supplementary assignments. By working efficiently, students should be able to complete the readings and other assignments for most class sessions with between three to five hours of out-of-class work. To prepare for class, students will be asked to do the following:

- Peruse the assigned readings for each class, using the GoogleSite “Public Administration Explained” and the actual readings. This is best done each week, as the readings are cumulative. Cramming at the end of the class does not work well since in their professional capacities graduates will be expected to recall the main lessons.
- Attend the entire class. Please come on time and do not leave early. If you must miss part or all of a class, please notify the professor or class assistant.
- To prepare for class, students are encouraged to prepare a “brief” on each of the major readings. The briefs may vary in length from a few sentences to a paragraph or two but should not exceed one page in length. The space available

- on a five by seven inch card is ideal. Concept briefs are typically short, unless they are combined with an associated reading. Each brief should summarize the primary contribution of that concept or reading to the understanding of public administration and the content relevant to that contribution. Students may add a personal critique although this is not required. Students are encouraged to prepare the assigned briefs week-by-week and not fall behind, as efforts to prepare a large number of briefs at the end of the semester tend to result in less than adequate learning. Each student must prepare his or her own briefs, although students may consult with each other as they write.
- Since the preparation of the briefs constitutes the equivalent of preparation for a final exam, students have one of two choices with respect to their evaluation in the course.
    - At the end of the semester, submit the briefs you have prepared to the instructor, along with a table of contents that lists the readings covered. Please identify your source for each reading, since the selections available in the Shafritz reader do not always match the selections placed on Blackboard. Students selecting this option should submit a sample brief to the professor around the mid-point of the class.
    - Alternatively, students may take a short (closed book) exam at the end of the semester. Those taking the exam will be asked to summarize the influence and content of a selected group of concepts and readings.
  - For both cases, prepare short (one to three sentence) statement that contains a diagnosis of the situation. If the action described in the case succeeded, identify why. If the action failed, do the same. Consult the list of “Why Programs Fail” and look for underlying administrative reasons. (Most cases contain both a technical cause and an administrative one. Look for the latter.) Write the statement on a single sheet of paper with your name attached. Bring the statements to class. The instructor will call upon students to submit their diagnosis and discuss it.
  - Toward the end of the course, each student should submit a short memorandum no more than two to three pages in length analyzing one of the cases covered in class. Select any case you wish. The written analysis should draw on the in-class discussion of the case. The best memoranda tend to be short and focused with a specific diagnosis and remedies that fit that finding. Identify a client, formulate a statement of the client’s concern and primary objective(s), diagnose the underlying problem, summarize alternative courses of action, estimate the expected effects of undertaking each alternative, and present a recommendation along with a method for evaluating whether those effects occur. (See the seven-step model at the end of the syllabus.) The recommendation should come after the analysis of the issue and not precede it. In other words, do not write an argumentative essay that from the beginning seeks to defend your recommendation. Be modest in your recommendation—allow your client to make the final decision. The recommendation must address the underlying issue (or issues) as contained in the diagnosis. The diagnosis is key; it should be well articulated and defended and make use of material covered in the course. The diagnosis must precede the recommendation. A list of the cases follows.

No cases assigned for week 1.

2. Treblinka  
Managing Nuclear Energy
3. Schools  
One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest
4. The NYPD Takes on Crime in New York City (A)  
Armies
5. Fighting Corruption in Afghanistan  
High Salaries in Bell, California
6. The Ladder and the Scale  
The NYPD Takes on Crime in New York City (B)
7. Controlling Cocaine  
Traffic
8. Setting Up the Tennessee Valley Authority  
Operation Fast and Furious
9. Just Try to Fire an Air Traffic Controller
10. The Decision to Launch the Challenger  
The Cuban Missile Crises
11. The Readiness Report  
Reconsidering the Virtual Fence
12. High Stakes and Frightening Lapses  
Prisons
13. How Long Do I Need to Stand in Line?  
Who Killed Cap and Trade?

- For the section on administrative ethics, bring a statement to class that helps to explain the derivation of the concept of the public servant. Look for statements contained in historic documents and religious texts. The statement need not apply to governmental workers, but anyone called to serve on behalf of the populace. Place the statement in large type on some sort of poster board so that it can be displayed and shared with the whole class.
- *Students are invited (but not required) to help with the construction of the GoogleSite “Explaining Public Administration.” With team leaders and a class coordinator, allocate individual entries. Coordinate the allocations with the other section of the class. Check the facts in the entry—especially the biographical statement—against the best primary source for accuracy. Check the main parts of the biographical statement and impact summary for repetition with other sources. Report inaccuracies and repetitions up the line to the class assistant and instructor.*

## Grading

Grades will be based on the final submission of briefs or exam (45 percent), the written case analysis (35 percent), and class preparation and participation (20 percent). Please note the following with respect to the distribution of grades.

- The range of grades on submitted briefs tends to cluster around the mean. Students who are content to receive a mid-range grade may wish to submit briefs.
- Grades on the in-class exam tend to show more variance, so students who wish to demonstrate exceptional knowledge of the readings may choose to take an in-class exam. Please note, however, that the variance works both ways, with deficiencies in understanding being more apparent on in-class exams. Students who do not prepare briefs will need to take the exam.
- The assessment of briefs and case analyses by the instructor involves a certain amount of subjective judgment.
- In class as in the professional world, communication is as important as content. Up to half of each grade on submitted materials may be based on the quality of writing or presentation.
- Exceptional work is unmistakably excellent, technically just right, and clearly communicated. It makes just a few, highly appropriate points. Occasionally, one hopes, it contains an exciting insight. Above average work is technically accurate, complete, and easy to understand.
- A grade of “B” (3.0) indicates satisfactory work. It is not a grade indicating deficient performance.
- Just as some submissions are obviously too short, others can be too long. Students should vigorously avoid the tendency to load a submission with a large number of points in the hope that a few of them are appropriate.

Professional success in administration depends in large part on the ability of individuals to complete work and show up when expected and participate productively in group activities. Work habits developed in school tend to carry over to professional careers. More than two unexcused absences will seriously affect a student’s grade. Unexcused absences for part of a class are considered absences for the whole.

Incompletes are not given in the course in the absence of exceptional circumstances and require the prior agreement of the student and professor. In the absence of such a prior agreement, work not completed by the date of the final examination will be graded as a “zero” and averaged into the overall course grade.

By registering for the course, you have formally acknowledged your knowledge of the standards of academic conduct in all of its facets as set forth in the University Academic Code. Under the code, you must not present any material from another source as if it was your own. At a minimum, use footnotes, quotations marks, or citations to identify material you submit that has originated from another source. Under no circumstances should students “cut and paste” any material of four consecutive words or more without direct attribution. The university maintains a substantial system for detecting and

prosecuting violations of the Academic Integrity Code and violations are treated very seriously.

## Schedule of topics<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction to Public Administration and the Policy Process

#### Class 1. The scope and purpose of public administration

Introduction of students; organization of the course. Who are the public administrators?  
The nature of public administration. Reasons programs fail; administrative analysis as a diagnostic process.

No readings assigned<sup>2</sup>

#### Class 2. Organization Structure and Authority

Concepts include principles of administration, scientific management, politics-administration dichotomy, orthodox public administration.

Henri Fayol, *General and Industrial Management* (1916). selections. (Retrieve from the class Blackboard site or look at pages 19-26, 33-36 in the original.)

Luther Gulick, "Notes on the Theory of Organization" from *Papers on the Science of Administration* (1937). (Read the selection in Shafritz and Hyde—hereafter noted as S&H—or retrieve from the class Blackboard site. Taken from pages 3-13 in the original.)

Frederick Taylor, *Scientific Management* (1911), selections. (Read the selection in S&H or the on-line review in Wikipedia by retrieving Principles of Scientific Management.)

Louis Brownlow et al., "Report of the President's Committee on Administrative Management," (S&H; Blackboard. Taken from pages 3, 5-6, 29-32 in the original report.)

Start reading the relevant sections from the GoogleSite "Public Administration Explained" and continue to do so through the semester.

Case: Treblinka. The case, while dealing with a distasteful subject, poses a critical question in administrative studies. Why don't hardened convicts or inmates at camps, who vastly outnumber their guards, simply overpower their overseers and escape? In a more modern context, what accounts for the success or failure of pro-democracy movements in displacing rulers who cling to power through violence? The answer to the question contains a key insight into the practice of

---

<sup>1</sup> Your understanding of policy and administration is likely to be enhanced by reading a newspaper that perceptively treats the administrative aspects of business and government. I recommend the *Wall Street Journal*, although the *Washington Post* is good as well.

<sup>2</sup> Please note that the selection of readings and concepts may change based on the interests of the class as the semester progresses.

administration. Please read the summary on the class Blackboard site and any other materials you wish to consult.

Case: Managing Nuclear Energy. This case is based on the work of the Kemeny Commission that reported on the accident at Three Mile Island; please use the summary found on the class Blackboard site.

For both cases, prepare short (one to three sentence) statement that identifies the primary reason that the inmates at Treblinka succeeded in their revolt and another statement that identifies the primary reason that the experts at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission failed to contain the accident at Three Mile Island. This is your diagnosis. Bring the written statement to class. In class, you will be asked to follow up the correct diagnosis for the second case (Managing Nuclear Energy) with a set of recommendations for correcting the deficiencies, but only the diagnosis needs to be written.

### Class 3. Bureaucracy as an Organizational Form

Concepts include bureaucracy, goal displacement, adhocracy.

Max Weber, "Essay on Bureaucracy" (1911). (S&H; Blackboard)

Robert K. Merton, "Bureaucratic Structure and Personality" (1940). (S&H; Blackboard)

Anthony Downs, "The Life Cycle of Bureaus," from *Inside Bureaucracy* (1967). (S&H; Blackboard)

Warren Bennis, "Organizations of the Future" (1968).\* (S&H; Blackboard)

Video: Clips from "Ghostbusters" and "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" will be shown. These are extra materials and do not need to be covered by briefs or pre-class preparation.

Case: One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. Read the summary of the book and film which can be found on the class Blackboard site. (In your spare time, whenever that returns, you might want to read the novel by Ken Kesey or watch the movie starring Jack Nicholson. For additional insights of this sort, someday read Joseph Heller, *Catch-22*. These are two of the most influential administrative novels ever written.)

Case: "Schools," from Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, from chaps 1 & 2. (Book; Blackboard)

As before, prepare a short written diagnosis for each case.

### Class 4. Motivation and Teamwork

Concepts include Hawthorne experiments, informal group, hierarchy of needs, Theory X and Theory Y, the social basis of authority (including the "law of the situation").

Elton Mayo, *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (1945), 68-76.  
(Blackboard)

Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise* (1960) (Read from S&H or retrieve the selection “theory X and theory Y” from Wikipedia.)

A. H. Maslow, “A Theory of Human Motivation” (1943). (S&H or retrieve “hierarchy of needs” from Wikipedia.)

Mary Parker Follett, “The Giving of Orders.” (S&H; Blackboard)

Chester Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive* (1938), selections on authority.  
(Blackboard)

Nigel Nicholson, “How to Motivate Your Problem People” (2002). (Blackboard) This is an extra reading for which a brief does not need to be prepared.

Case: The NYPD Takes on Crime in New York City (A). Order version 1557.3 and 1558.3 from the Kennedy School of Government case program—parts A and B. This week we examine part A; part B follows in two weeks.

Case: “Armies,” from James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy* (1989), in chapters 1 & 2. (Read directly from the book or retrieve from the class Blackboard site.)

Diagnose the cases as before.

#### Class 5. Comparative Public Administration: Administration Outside the U.S.

Concepts include prismatic society, ecology of public administration (similar to administrative relativity), formalism, presidentialism, regime analysis, corruption, diversity, administrative relativity, cyclical administration, contingency theory. (also under week 6).

Fred Riggs, *The Ecology of Public Administration* (1961) 98-102. 121-25. This is optional reading; students seriously interested in comparative public administration may want to read it. (Blackboard)

Students who do not read Riggs in the original might wish to examine read McCurdy, “Fred W. Riggs: Contributions to the Study of Comparative Public Administration.” (Retrieve from the home page of Fred W. Riggs or search directly for “McCurdy Riggs” on Google; also available on Blackboard.)

Ferrel Heady, *Public Administration: A Comparative Perspective* (2001, c1966) excerpts.  
(Blackboard)

Riggs on presidentialism: Fred Riggs, “Bureaucracy and the Constitution,” *Public Administration Review* 54 (January-February 1994) 65-72. (Available on Blackboard)

Case: Fighting Corruption in Afghanistan (on Blackboard).

Case: High Salaries in Bell, California: Jeff Gottlieb and Ruben Vives, "Is a City Manager Worth \$800,000?" *Los Angeles Times* (July 15, 2010). (Google this article; also available on Blackboard)

#### Class 6. Business Approaches to Public Administration: Objective setting, strategic planning, logic models, and performance measurement

Concepts include management by objectives, logic models, contingency theory.

Peter F. Drucker, "Managing the Public Service Institution," *The Public Interest* 33 (Fall 1973) 43-60; also in Richard J. Stillman, *Public Administration: Concepts and Cases*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980), 256-264. (Blackboard)

Harry Hatry, *Performance Management* (2006), 3-8. (Blackboard)

Selections on contingency theory (Amitai Etzioni, James D. Thompson, and Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch. Available on Blackboard).

"Introduction to Logic Models," from W. K. Kellogg Foundation, *Logic Model Development Guide*, 2004, 1-13. (Look on the class Blackboard site or download this publication by locating it through Google.)

Beryl A. Radin, *Challenging the Performance Movement* (2006), 13-20, 115-16, 234-47. (Blackboard)

Case: The Ladder and the Scale: Commitment and Accountability at Project Match. (Order this case from the Kennedy School of Government case program. The abridged version provides an acceptable overview.)

Case: The NYPD Takes on Crime in New York City (B) Compstat.

#### Class 7. Collective Action and Policy Analysis

Concepts include social contract, collective action, markets, economic efficiency, market failure, transaction costs, non-market failure, cost-benefit analysis, rent seeking.

Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration" (1887). (S&H; look on Blackboard.)

Weimar and Vining, *Policy Analysis*, selections. The book is now in its 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (2011). (Purchase the whole book or look for excerpts on the class Blackboard site.)

Case: Controlling Cocaine. (Available on the class Blackboard site.)

Case: "Traffic." At a minimum, read the plot synopsis for the Mexico storyline from the Wikipedia summary for the film. Perhaps you would like to view the whole film. As background, you might examine Mary Anastasia O'Grady, "Mexico Pays the Price of Prohibition," *Wall Street Journal* (August 18, 2008). (Search online for the article or consult the class Blackboard site.)

#### Class 8. Public Administration and the Political Process

Concepts include administrative pluralism, subgovernments (also known as issue networks, subsystems, and iron triangles), politics-administration dichotomy, co-optation, punctuated equilibrium.

Frank J. Goodnow, "Politics and Administration," (1900). (S&H; Blackboard)

Paul Appleby, "Government is Different," from *Big Democracy* (1945). (S&H; Blackboard)

Philip Selznick, "The Cooptative Mechanism," (1949). (S&H; Blackboard, where it is titled *TVA and the Grass Roots*)

Theodore J. Lowi, *The End of Liberalism* (1969). (S&H; on the class Blackboard site, this is also listed as *Toward Juridical Democracy*, Lowi)

Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* (1993), selections. (Blackboard)

Case: Setting Up the Tennessee Valley Authority. (Blackboard)

Case: Operation Fast and Furious. (Blackboard)

#### Class 9. Administrative Ethics, Values, and Democratic Constitutionalism

Concepts include the concept of public service, spoils system, Pendleton Act.

Frederick Mosher, *Democracy and the Public Service* (1968), selections. (Blackboard)

Dwight Waldo, *The Administrative State* (1948), 12-21. (Blackboard)

David Rosenbloom, "Public Administration Theory and the Separation of Powers" (1983). (S&H; Blackboard)

Paul Van Riper, *History of the United States Civil Service* (1958), excerpts on the Pendleton Act. (Blackboard)

Romzeck and Dubnick, "Accountability in the Public Sector" (1987). (Blackboard)

Assignment: Poster session on the concept of public service.

Case: Just Try to Fire an Air Traffic Controller (Blackboard).

#### Class 10. Organizational Culture and High Risk Administration

Concepts include organization culture and bureaucratic politics.

"Successful American Companies," from Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies* (1982), contents, 13-17. (Blackboard)

Herbert Kaufman, *The Forest Ranger* (1967), excerpts. (Blackboard)

Charles Perrow, *Normal Accidents* (1984), excerpts; plus commentary by Larry Heimann, *Acceptable Risks* (1997). (Blackboard)

Case: The Decision to Launch the Challenger. Blackboard. Additional detail can be found in the report of the Rogers Commission on the Space Shuttle Challenger Accident, available on the Internet.)

Case: The Cuban Missile Crises (Blackboard).

#### Class 11. Budgets and the Deficit

Concepts include incrementalism, line-item budget, performance budget, program budget (PPB), cut-back management, honest accounting and responsible budgeting.

Allen Schick, "The Road to PPB: The Stages of Budget Reform" (1966). (S&H; Blackboard)

Aaron Wildavsky, *The Politics of the Budgetary Process* (1964). (S&H; Blackboard)

Charles H. Levine, "Organizational Decline and Cutback Management (1978) (S&H; Blackboard)

Wake-Up Call," *60 Minutes: CBS News Transcripts*, March 4, 2007. (Blackboard)

Case: The Readiness Report. (Blackboard)

Case: Reconsidering the Virtual Fence. (Blackboard)

#### Class 12. The New Public Management

Concepts include new public management, privatization, entrepreneurial management, hollow state.

Read David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector* (1992), contents, xix-xxi, 12-16, 34-37. (Blackboard)). Students with the Shafritz reader may substitute "From Red Tape to Results," *National Performance Review* (1993), although the Osborne and Gaebler reading is preferred. A more up to date statement of the philosophy can be found in David Osborne and Peter Plastrick, *Banishing Bureaucracy*, 2005.

Ronald C. Moe, "Exploring the Limits of Privatization" (1987) (S&H; Blackboard)

Mark H. Moore, *Creating Public Value* (1995), 13-21, 65-76 (Blackboard)

Larry D. Terry, "The Thinning of Administrative Institutions" (2007). (Blackboard)

Case: High Stakes and Frightening Lapses: DSS, La Alianza Hispana and the Public-Private Question in Child Protection Work (A). (Order the 14-page version A from the Kennedy School Case Program.)

Case: "Prisons," from Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, chap 1 & 2 (Read from the book or retrieve from Blackboard.)

#### Class 13. Management, Technology and New Forms of Administration

Concepts include bounded rationality, heuristics, incremental decision-making, pyramids/wheels/clouds, control and designer systems, reengineering, swarm theory, artificial intelligence, administrative systems with “nobody in charge.”

Herbert Simon, “The Proverbs of Administration,” (1946); also in *Administrative Behavior* (1947); see his comments on administrative rationality and the psychology of administrative decisions. (S&H; Blackboard)

Charles Lindblom, “The Science of ‘Muddling Through’” (1959). (S&H; Blackboard)

Harlan Cleveland, *Nobody in Charge* (2002), 16-31. (Blackboard)

Michael Hammer and James Champy, *Reengineering the Corporation* (1993), 39-44. (Blackboard)

Russell M. Linden, *Seamless Government: A Practical Guide to Re-Engineering in the Public Sector* (1994), excerpts from chap. 4 (“Principles of Reengineering”) (Blackboard)

Students interested in future developments in science and technology may wish to read excerpts from Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (2005), 7-9, 470-73. (Blackboard)

Case: How Long Do I Need To Stand In Line? (Case study available on Blackboard site)

Case: Who Killed Cap and Trade?

#### Class 14. Open Class Session; Course Summary

\* \* \*

A seven step model for management analysis will help you prepare your written analysis of one of the cases:

1. Identify a client. Clarify the outcomes that the client would like to achieve—his or her principal objective(s).
2. Summarize the facts—briefly.
3. Present a diagnosis. (What type of problem is this?)
4. Identify alternatives related to the diagnosis.
5. State the expected effects. Where relevant, anticipate possible side effects.
6. Recommend one or more.
7. Explain how you would evaluate the recommended alternative(s).