

I. Introduction to Public Administration

Prof. Paul Manna

Paul Manna is an associate professor of government and public policy at the College of William and Mary. His research and teaching interests focus on federalism, implementation, K-12 education policy, and applied research methods.

Course description

This class addresses a common but understandable misperception about American government. Many people believe that elected officials and judges are the most consequential actors in the country's political system. However, policies and judicial decisions are not self-executing. Rather, they rely on public bureaucracies and thousands of public administrators to implement them. To understand the role of public administration in the United States, this course examines the administrators who manage and implement policy, the tools they use, and the environments in which they work.

Readings

- James Q. Wilson. 1989 [or 1991]. *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. New York: Basic Books. ISBN 978046500785.
- Donald F. Kettl. 2007. *System Under Stress: Homeland Security and American Politics (2nd ed.)*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. ISBN 978087289333.
- Roger W. Cobb and David M. Primo. 2003. *The Plane Truth: Airline Crashes, the Media, and Transportation Policy*. Washington, DC: Brookings. ISBN 0815771991

Assignments and grading

The course stresses three skill sets -discussing ideas, writing, and thinking on your feet in timed settings- that all students trained in the liberal arts should possess. Mastering these skills will help you make positive contributions in your future classes, the workforce, and the communities where you eventually reside.

- 30% Class participation and attendance
- 15% Midterm exam in-class part
- 15% Midterm take-home part
- 20% Final exam in-class part
- 20% Final exam take-home part

I will base final course grades on the following scale, with partial-percents typically rounded to the nearest full percent: A 93-100, A- 90-92, B+ 88-89, B 83-87, B- 80-82, C+ 78-79, C 73-77, C- 70-72, D+ 68-69, D 63-67, D- 60-62, F <60.2

Finally, because errors sometimes creep into grade calculations -- and on rare occasions papers become lost as they are handed in -- please keep a copy of all work you submit until I have processed final grades.

Class participation

Attendance every day and active class participation are essential components of this class. Everyone should arrive prepared to have thoughtful and energetic discussions about the class material. If generally you are shy in class you should see me early in the semester so I can help you overcome that fear of speaking out. I will distribute a class participation rubric to help you understand what I consider to be excellent class participation.

Midterm exam and final exam

Each exam will contain a take-home (essay) portion and an in-class (short answer) part, with each part weighted equally. The take-home parts will be distributed approximately 2 days before they are due.

In fairness to everyone, students who arrive late for an exam may not work overtime. The only valid reasons for missing and rescheduling an exam are due to a documented illness, religious observance, and death in the family or similarly grave family emergency. If you miss an exam for another reason you can take a makeup for which the maximum grade you can earn is a C (75%).

Schedule of topics, readings, and assignments

I. Overview

Course nuts and bolts

Public and private bureaucracy

- Wilson, Ch. 17 Problems

II. Analytical frameworks

Organizations

- Wilson, Ch. 1 Armies, prisons schools; Ch. 2 Organization matters

Organizations (cont.)

- Wilson, Ch. 9 Compliance

Organizations (cont.)

- No new reading

Decision-makers

- Wilson, re-read pp. 27-28
- Mark Moore. 1995. *Creating Public Value*, Ch 3 (excerpt) Organizational strategy in the public sector (pp. 57-76).

Decision-makers (cont.)

- Wilson, Ch. 3 Circumstances; Ch. 4 Beliefs

Decision-makers (cont.)

- Wilson, Ch. 6 Culture; Ch. 12 Innovation

Principals, agents, and networks

- Carole Kennedy Chaney and Grace Hall Saltzstein. 1998. Democratic control and bureaucratic responsiveness: The police and domestic violence. *AJPS*. 42:3 (pp. 745-68).

Principals, agents, and networks (cont.)

- Wilson, Ch. 10 Turf
- Robert Agranoff. *Managing within Networks*. Ch. 1 Public networks (pp. 1-22); Ch. 2 Networks in public management (pp. 23-33).

Principals, agents, and networks (cont.)

- No new reading

System Under Stress

- Ch. 1 Stress test; Ch. 2 Coordination dilemmas; Ch. 3 Reshaping the bureaucracy

System Under Stress (cont.)

- Ch. 4 The federalism jungle; Ch. 5 The political costs of managing risk

System Under Stress (cont.)

- Ch. 7 Gauging the stress test

II. Politics

Legislative and executive branch politics

- Wilson, Ch. 13. Congress; Ch. 14 Presidents

Legislative and executive branch politics (cont.)

- No new reading

Interest group politics / Midterm exam discussion

- Wilson, Ch. 5 Interests

Interest group politics (cont.) / Judicial branch politics

- Wilson, Ch. 15 Courts

Judicial branch politics (cont.)

- No new reading

MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS

- The take-home part is due when you arrive to take the in-class part

The Plane Truth

- Ch. 1. Plane crashes and public policy; Ch. 2. After the crash

The Plane Truth (cont.)

- Ch. 4. The crash of USAir Flight 427; Ch. 5. The crash of ValuJet Flight 592; Ch. 6. The crash of TWA Flight 800

The Plane Truth (cont.)

- Ch. 8. Safety and symbolism in aviation politics

III. Reform

Tides of reform

- Paul Light. 1997. *The Tides of Reform: Making Government Work, 1945-1995*. Ch. 1 The tides of reform (pp. 15-43).

Tides of reform (cont.)

- No new reading

Centralizing

- Diane Ravitch. 1995. Ch. 1 The idea of standards. *National Standards in Education: A Citizen's Guide*. pp. 7-32.

Decentralizing

- John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe. 1990. Ch. 6 Better schools through new institutions: Giving Americans choice. *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools*. pp. 185-229.

Constraining

- Wilson, Ch. 7 Constraints

Structural choice

- Terry M. Moe. 1989 (excerpt). The politics of bureaucratic structure. In John E. Chubb and Paul E. Peterson (eds.) *Can the Government Govern?* (pp. 267-85, 323-9).

Structural choice (cont.)

- Wilson, Ch. 20 Bureaucracy and the public interest

IV. Tools of government

Tools perspective on public administration

- Review your class notes from 1/26 to 1/30 on "Organizations" and from 2/2 to 2/6 on "Decision-makers"

True size of government

- Paul C. Light. 1999 (excerpt). *The True Size of Government*. Ch. 1 The illusion of smallness (pp. 1-9).
- Paul C. Light. 2003. Fact sheet on the new true size of government (pp. 1-9).

Direct government

- President's Commission on the United States Postal Service. 2003. *Embracing the Future*. Ch. 1 Adapting to a new world (pp. 1-13); Ch. 2 Delivering the mail (pp. 14-33).

Direct government (cont.)

- No new reading

Contracts

- GAO. 2006 (excerpt). High-level DOD Action Needed to Address Longstanding Problems with Management and Oversight of Contractors Supporting Deployed Forces. December (pp. 1-39).

Contracts (cont.)

- No new reading

Grants

- Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. 2008. Notice of Availability of Funds and Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) for YouthBuild Grants. *Federal Register*, October 7. (pp. 58653-67).

Grants (cont.)

- No new reading

Applying the tools

- James P. Lynch and William J. Sabol. 2001. Prisoner Reentry in Perspective. Washington, DC: Urban Institute (pp. 1-24).

Applying the tools (cont.) / Final exam discussion

- No new reading

V. Final exam

As with the midterm, the take-home part is due when you arrive to take the in-class part.