

Tennessee State University
Department of Public Administration

PADM 7310 section 80
Seminar in Advanced Public Organization Theory
Summer, 2015
Thursday 5:00-8:20 PM

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This is a sample for prospective students. Current students should NOT purchase books based on this - consult your instructor!

Course Description

This course is a survey of public organizational theories which purport to explain the what, how and why of public organizational actions and dynamics. The “theories” examined are primarily perspectives which attempt to account for the problematics, the emphases, the mission definitions and the idiosyncratic development of organizations over time. Given that public and non-profit organizations are special entities the first order of business is to establish the defining features which distinguish them in degree if not in kind from for-profit enterprise. However, since much of the OT literature is generic/sociological or business-sector driven, much of the literature for this course will also derive from the generic perspective. Students will be expected to develop mastery in both the generic category as well as public organization literature.

Students will be expected to develop competencies in critique, analysis, and theory building. It will not be enough to demonstrate mastery in particular theories, e.g. Weber’s ideal type of bureaucracy. The student must be able to critique it using other writers’ perspectives, categorize it, and fit it within a meta-perspective or paradigm. The ultimate objective of the course is for each student to develop thorough knowledge and a personally grounded critique of the gaps, biases, methodological problems and assumptions of these writings on organizations.

Students who successfully complete the course should be able to demonstrate what they have learned. First, they should be able to deepen their knowledge of OT to date. They should be able to:

- outline the major schools of organizational thought as well as trace their historical streams or derivation;
- describe the status of the field of public OT through major concepts, authors and works;
- describe and critique macro as well as micro level system treatments of organizations.

In addition, the following doctoral level skills should be successfully demonstrated. Students should be able to:

- demonstrate a sound grasp of public OT research including major themes, common methodologies, and findings as well as limitations and criticisms of that research;
- create several views of environmental and interorganizational

- treatments of organizations;
- describe examples of common concepts in organizational literature such as power, leadership, environment and particularly network theory; and
- classify much of mainstream American organizational literature using a variety of classification schema such as historical eras, schools or paradigms.

Class Conduct

Because this is a doctoral-level required course, the class will be conducted as a seminar. Students are expected to come to class regularly, on time and thoroughly prepared with assigned reading. These assignments are intended to provide the elements of mastery in the subject and are therefore not to be read cursorily but with great attention to the content. Be prepared to come to class to demonstrate that you think critically, analytically, with questions and commentaries at the ready. Seminars are the preferred vehicle for learning when all students are prepared and are capable of sharing in an informed and relevant exchange of ideas concerning the topic of choice. In an effective seminar, the instructor is available as a mentor, guide and resource person. The students “own” the class because they take responsibility for their learning. The student takes the role of a self-directed learner, one who can read the material carefully, summarize it succinctly, but beyond those basics, can apply what s/he has read, compare it to other views, and critique it in a scholarly fashion. Please refer to the learning rubric under Course Evaluation for details.

Academic integrity

According to the *TSU Graduate Catalog, 2009 - 2011* (p. 30), conferral of a graduate degree implies personal integrity and knowledge of scholarly methods. Therefore, there are three areas to which graduate students should pay particular attention:

- 1) proper acknowledgement of cited works,
- 2) the use of copyrighted material, and
- 3) The proper reporting of works where research compliance is required.

In ALL written work, any material taken from another work must be documented, and in no case should one represent another’s work as one’s own, this includes information received from others during examinations or submitting another’s assignments, papers, etc. as one’s own. Students involved in collaborative research to avoid questions of plagiarism should exercise extreme caution. If in doubt, students should check with the professor about the project. Plagiarism will be investigated when suspected and prosecuted if established.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Any student who feels the need for academic accommodations due to a recognized disability, as stated in *The TSU Handbook*, will be offered adjustments only after the students proceeds through proper channels at the University. *The TSU Handbook* is the source for identifying proper procedures. The

University's main campus Office of Disabled Student Services is the assisting unit. The director is Patricia Scudder who can be reached at 615 963-7400.

Course Requirements

Reporting, class participation and attendance (10% participation and attendance; 10% discussion leading = 20%)

This course will be organized in a seminar format where students are responsible for reading all assignments and presenting/discussing the material in class. This also means that since students are responsible for their own learning that if questions or problems arise, they need to take initiative and seek assistance. All students are expected to volunteer to lead discussion of several reading assignments through providing insight-provoking, thoughtful questions for the class to consider. Reporting on class assignments will be required. Due to the class size, it is estimated that two assignments per students may be possible.

With regard to class participation, it is important to attend class regularly. One class absence is tolerable, two class absences will result in a five-point deduction from the final grade. With three absences from class the student will be asked to withdraw from the course.

Research project: a Concept Map (30%)

Subject: *“The Field of Public Organizations”*

Due: July 30, 2015

The Seminar in Public Organization Theory surveys Organization Theory with a special focus on the public type. This project will highlight the latter by zeroing in on public organization research and literature.

Project goals: Explore and research the topic of public organizations within the field of PA, examine the need-to-know literature in this area, construct a guide to use in answering future questions, provide a way to focus thinking on this topic.

Guidelines

The purpose of this particular concept map is to develop your knowledge base of public organization literature as a field. The following may serve as guidelines:

* In contrast to an annotated bibliography, this paper will deal with **concepts**. For example, if your first concept is “structure,” you would include *only those writings specifically dealing with public organizations which trace the structure literature over time. If your second concept is “rationality” or “rationalization,” then you do the same.* The concepts, of course, are your choice and no two students might research the same list. That’s OK! We are aiming at what makes sense to you in learning this literature.

* For any given concept you will provide only thumbnail sketches (a few sentences only) of the seminal literature students in this program should know. Fuller summaries of the literature or authors cited are expected.

* The literature you should target are public administration sources on government organizations and pieces of non-PA (e.g. Sociology) writing that have been so influential in the field (e.g. Weber’s ideal type of bureaucracy could conceivably be one), that the map would be incomplete without its inclusion.

* do not consider non-profit organizational literature unless government organizations are also addressed; citations of for-profit literature would have to be critically relevant to be included.

* only consider American public sector organizations although that literature may cover any level of government;

* List this seminal literature **historically or chronologically**. Which writings on public organizations came first? How did that or those writings spin off into others?

* What categories or schools of authors (if any) can you locate when exploring a particular concept? Do not be dismayed if some authors (e.g. J. March) have different writings appear under many different concepts you might choose.

* Since this is *not* an annotated bibliography, do not add verbiage in a misguided attempt to flesh out the paper. Instead, concentrate on locating the major concepts with important readings including books and articles which, if they were thoroughly familiar with these readings, they could claim mastery of the public organization literature.

* A complete (selected, of course) bibliography with full citation is expected at the end of the paper.

* This paper will probably be around ten pages in length, typewritten, including bibliography. You are not attempting to provide an exhaustive list of literature. Assume that the reader, future 7310 student, or The Great Evaluator has command of generic OT to begin with. This project targets the *most important* or seminal writings as organized around your concepts.

* Rather than a standard research paper with an introduction and conclusion, this paper should simply list concepts and trace their evolution through the literature. You are welcome to draw linkages between concepts at the end of the paper, if you so desire.

Project Questions:

The knowledge base concerning public organizations is a subset of both PA and Organization Theory. How does the topic of public organizations contribute to PA as a field? How useful is the POT literature in explaining how and why public organizations operate as they do? What authors, articles, books represent the "must reads" in this topical area?

Your conceptual map may be organized as follows. However, you are not limited to these suggestions. See "A Lesson in Concept Mapping" for further suggestions on the eLearn course Content link.

General Themes, Descriptions of Theory and Concepts:

Main Dependent Constructs or Factors:

What factors are affected or shaped by what public organizations do?

Main Independent Constructs or Factors:

What factors explain the current structures of public organizations?

*****This paper is due **July 30th** in class. Late papers will not be accepted.

Grading Criteria for Papers:

To offer a general idea of the categories of evaluation the instructor will use in all projects, the rubric below roughly corresponds to “C” (inferior), “B” (solid), and “A” levels of performance.

<i>Evaluation Criteria for Papers and Examinations</i>			
CRITERION	RUBRIC: Inferior	RUBRIC: Solid	RUBRIC: Outstanding
Understanding	Seems to understand class texts and requirements but does not express this understanding clearly and explicitly. Does not use concepts from the text or class to analyze the paper/project elements	Has a very solid grasp of the concepts used in class. Discusses the ideas clearly and explicitly in paper. Rarely misunderstands the materials or expresses it poorly.	Has a subtle and sophisticated understanding of conceptual and theoretical material. Uses several concepts from PA to analyze the paper/project elements. Can see beyond what was taught and form own ideas.
Using Concepts	Examples or analogies are not quite right, or are naïve (or uses only the examples provided by text or professor) Comparisons and contrasts between various concepts are naïve or unclear or wrong Does not apply theory to practical experience appropriately	Uses appropriate examples and/or analogies. Makes appropriate comparisons and contrasts between various concepts used in class. Can apply theory and ideas to practical experience. Demonstrates knowledge required for the paper/project.	Examples and analogies are not only interesting but suggest additional possibilities. Discussion of them is clear and appropriately detailed. Makes insightful contrasts between various concepts. Applies theory and ideas creatively and derives learnings from them.
Critical Thinking and Reasoning	Mostly reiterates what was discussed in text or in class. Makes inappropriate inferences. Accepts what others say or write uncritically	Occasionally offers critical commentary in paper/project. Can identify underlying theory or values in what is read, Arguments are logical and clear.	Offers penetrating criticism of material, appropriately praising or criticizing and explaining <i>why</i> . Arguments are sophisticated and clear.
Writing	Paper or project has several spelling or grammar errors, no evidence of revision; unclear	Paper or project has few spelling or grammar errors, shows evidence of revision; reasonably clear	Presentation has no errors in spelling, grammar, shows evidence of revision; very clear and graceful

In addition to the general categories provided in the rubric, add these fundamentals which distinguish graduate level work (Stanley PA 731 Syllabus, 2006):

- 1) *Analysis*: A sufficient number of organization theory concepts are used to analyze the situation discussed;
- 2) *References*: A variety of pertinent and timely references were sought and obtained in the paper's preparation. Reliable, scholarly academic works are used, e.g. refereed academic journals, not *USA Today* or Wikipedia!
- 3) *Organization*: The main points are stated clearly and arranged in logical sequence;
- 5) *Coherence*: The development of ideas, arguments and discussion shows consistency and logical connection;
- 6) *Conciseness*: The language is direct and to the point, using sufficient space to say precisely what is intended to be readily understood by the reader;
- 7) *Grammar*: The written is in standard American English, with proper sentence structure, syntax, punctuation and spelling;
- 8) *Drafting*: The writing shows evidence of being drafted, revised and edited before submission of final copy;
- 9) *Following Directions*: Identifying and addressing all components of the project the instructor outlines;
- 10) *Timeliness*: Turning the project in on the specified date as assigned by the instructor.

Examinations

Midterm: 20%

Final: 30%

Both the midterm and final written examination will consist of essay and short answers which test the student's ability to apply what was learned to a given problem or set of criteria. As an example, students might be asked to compare the writings of one author with another; other questions might charge students with classifying various concepts by schools or theories. The midterm exam will be conducted on line and due in the eLearn dropbox **July 8th**; the final examination will be held in class on **August 6th**.

To practice test answers and to prepare students to anticipate important areas of study, there will be a series of "pop" quizzes. These occasional quizzes are intended to teach essay preparation as well as serve as regular feedback on a student's learning. Each quiz will be completed, graded and returned anonymously using identification numbers so that only the student knows how he or she is progressing in the course. While these quizzes do not count toward the final grade they should alert the student to problems in learning or retaining the material.

Recommended texts:

Shafritz, Jay M. and J. Steven Ott. *Classics of Organization Theory*. 5th edition or later. ISBN 0-534-63156-8

I strongly recommend that students re-read *The Classics* book prior to the first class. It is expected that students in this course are already thoroughly familiar with these works as part of their previous preparation for the PhD program. For example, those previously completing the prerequisite PADM 6310 would have covered this book in some detail. Prior to the first class, review *The Classics* and ensure that for each article included, you can associate the authors, schools, and major concept(s) associated with each article. Keep those notes handy.

Wilson, James Q. *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. N.Y.: Basic, most recent edition.

This is a sample for prospective students. Current students should NOT purchase books based on this - consult your instructor!

Baum, Joel (editor). *The Blackwell Companion to Organizations*. ISBN 978-0-631-21695-7

Scott, W. Richard and Gerald Davis. *Organizations and Organizing: Rational, Natural and Open Systems Perspectives*. 0-131958933 sixth edition or later

Selected journal articles, conference papers or book chapters as needed will be available at the eLearn course site.

Course Schedule

Class Date	Topics	Readings to be completed prior to class
June 4	Introduction: 100 years of OT History in Review	<i>Shafritz and Ott</i> (all)
June 11	An Overview of the Field Rational, Natural & Open Systems	<i>Baum, Intro</i> (pp. 1-34) <i>Scott and Davis, chs. 1-4.</i> Leaders _____
June 25	Intraorganizational Issues: from Institutions to Learning in Organizations	<i>Baum, chs. 1-8</i> Leaders (8) _____ _____ _____

<p>July 2</p>	<p>Cognition and Interpretation in Organizations</p> <p>Combining Rational, Natural and Open Systems Perspectives</p> <p>Power, dependence and politics</p>	<p><i>Baum, ch. 15</i> Leader_____</p> <p><i>Scott and Davis, chs. 5;</i> Leader_____</p> <p><i>Scott and Davis, ch. 8;</i> Leader_____</p> <p><i>Scott and Davis, ch. 13;</i> Leader_____</p> <p><i>Baum 16, 26</i> Leaders_____ _____</p>
<p>July 8</p>	<p>Midterm examination due (submit in Dropbox)</p>	
<p>July 9 to 16th</p>	<p>The Power of Environments</p> <p>Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony</p> <p>Institutional Theory</p> <p>Institutional Theory at Organizational and Interorganizational Levels</p>	<p><i>Scott & Davis, chs. 9-10</i> Leaders_____</p> <hr/> <p><i>Baum, chs.13, 23</i> Leaders_____</p> <hr/> <p><i>Powell and DiMaggio, chs. 1-2</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Hecllo, chs. 3-4</i> Leaders_____</p> <hr/> <p><i>Leaders _____</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Baum, ch. 11, 21</i> Leaders_____</p>

July 16 (continued)	Organization Learning	<i>Baum, ch. 18</i> <i>Scott and Davis 6</i> Leader _____
July 23	About Networks Organizational and Interorganizational Networks Strategy, Structure and Performance The Rise of Corporations	<i>Scott & Davis, ch. 11</i> Leader _____ <i>Graber, "Constructing Networks"</i> <i>Baum, chs. 12 and 22</i> Leaders _____ _____ <i>Scott & Davis, ch. 12</i> Leader _____ <i>Scott & Davis, ch. 13</i> Leader _____
July 30	Organizational Change and Evolution Emerging Forms in Public Organization Concept Maps due July 30th in class	<i>Scott & Davis, ch. 14</i> Leader _____ <i>Baum, ch. 14, 24</i> _____ _____ TBA
August 6	Final examination in class	

Note: this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

