

## **UST 835: Organization Theory for Public Administration**

Instructor: Cam Stivers

UB 238A, ext. 3536

camilla@wolf.csuohio.edu

Fall Semester 2001

Wednesdays, 6-9:50 pm

UR 245

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 4-6 pm

or by appointment

### **Introduction**

This doctoral seminar focuses on organization theory relevant to public agencies. All public agencies are “organizations,” but not all organizations are public. There is a great deal of organization theory equally relevant to both public and private organizations. But as we will explore in depth in this seminar, 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 theories within a political context.

As a doctoral seminar, this course will aim for considerable depth and complexity in our consideration of public organization theories. We will seek to place these theories within the larger framework of public administration as a field of study and to balance a broad review of organizational literature with in-depth examination of several texts that have special significance for public administration. Unlike master’s level organization theory 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 theories are, how they have evolved, what kind of conceptual map they form as a body of thought, and where the future development of organization theory seems to be headed. Thus, for example, we will be more likely to consider the relationship between theory and practice as a conceptual issue than to spend time seeking to use various theories to diagnose organizational problem situations. Nevertheless, because public administration is an applied field, the extent to which organization theory as a body of thought informs, shapes, and guides agency practice will never be far from our discussions.

The goals of this course are as follows:

1. To give you an understanding of major organization theories relevant to public administration;
2. To enable you to develop your own conceptual map of this part of the field;
3. To provide opportunities to write practice answers to questions of the kind usually found on comprehensive exams;

4. To help you find your own identity or sense of affiliation within the larger network of organization theory;
5. To make clear the political context within which organization theory in public administration is formulated and applied.

## **Readings**

Several books and articles will make up the reading assignments. Books will be available in the CSU bookstore; xerox copies of articles will be handed out in class.

### Books

Frederick Taylor, *Principles of Scientific Management*  
Chester Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*  
Christopher Hood, *The Art of the State*  
Jay Shafritz and Steven Ott (eds.), *Classics of Organization Theory*  
Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*  
Karl Weick, *The Social Psychology of Organizing*  
Shoshana Zuboff, *In the Age of the Smart Machine*

### Articles

Max Weber, "Bureaucracy"  
Joan Woodward, "Management and technology"  
Trist and Bamforth, "The longwall study"  
Lawrence and Lorsch, "High performing organizations in three environments"  
Elton Mayo, "Hawthorne and the Western Electric Company"  
Roethlisberger and Dixon, "Human relations"  
Boje, et al, "Story-telling at Administrative Science Quarterly"

## **Assignments**

Reaction paper: Write a brief (4-5 double-spaced pages) paper on Frederick Taylor. What are the most significant questions Taylor's work and theory raise for public administration? Due September 19.

*Conceptual map*: The last night of class (12/5), bring with you a drawing or diagram that reflects your conceptual map of public organization theory, that is, a map of organization theory that shows connections among the various schools of thought and connections to aspects of public administration thought. You may supplement your map, if you wish, with a brief written discussion, but in general the closer the map comes to standing on its own, the better. We will discuss this assignment at length in class.

*Midterm exam (10/17):* The midterm questions will be modeled after the kinds of question you are likely to encounter on the comprehensive exam. We will use the exam not only to test your command of the material but to give you practice in writing good comps answers. Your answers will be graded as if they were comps answers, with allowances for less time and preparation. For each question, Pass=A, No Pass=C.

*Final paper:* Write a 10-15 page paper on an organization theorist or school of thought of your choice. The paper should explore the significance of this theorist or school for public administration. In particular, it should address the question discussed the first night of class, that is, the tension between organizational and political goals. Due Wednesday, December 12, 6 pm.

### **Class Schedule**

Note that there will be three classes held jointly with a doctoral class from University of Akron. These classes will be held at my house, 10057 North Court, Brecksville, beginning at 6:30 pm. Pizza and sodas will be provided. All other classes will begin at 6 pm.

8/29: Introduction

9/5: Classics: Taylor, Fayol (Shafritz & Ott #5), Gulick (S&O # 8)

9/12: Weber (CLASS MEETS IN BRECKSVILLE)

9/19: Hood  
Short papers due

9/26: Barnard

10/3: Contingency theory: Burns & Stalker (S & O # 20), Woodward, Trist & Bamforth

10/10: Organization and environment: Katz and Kahn (S&O #26), Thompson (S&O #27), Lawrence and Lorsch

10/17: MIDTERM  
Human side: Mayo, Roethlisberger & Dixon (S&O #15), Roethlisberger, Follett

10/24: Power: Pfeffer (S&O #31), March (#33), Kanter (#34), Mintzberg (#35)

10/31: Culture: Schein (S&O #36), Acker (#38), Scott & Yanow (#39)

11/7: Foucault (CLASS MEETS IN BRECKSVILLE)

11/14: Weick

11/21: NO CLASS

11/28: Zuboff (CLASS MEETS IN BRECKSVILLE)

12/5: Postmodernism: Bergquist (S&O # 45), Boje, et al  
Conceptual maps due

12/12: Final papers due

### **Grading**

Your grade for the course will be apportioned as follows:

Short paper	10%
Conceptual map	20%
Mid-term	20%
Final paper	30%
Attendance and participation	20%

### **Attendance and participation**

You are expected to attend class faithfully and participate actively. As a doctoral seminar, the class depends on its members to join in, share their thoughts, ask questions, etc. You are expected to notify me in advance if you have to miss class. Absence without prior notification and/or more than two unexcused absences will reduce your grade for the class. Under special circumstances (e.g. family emergency), you may make up excess excused absences by means of additional written work—talk to me.

Late work will be accepted only in case of an emergency!

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