

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS  
PAD 517/617  
SUMMER 2009

**Course Information**

Tuesday and Thursday 6 - 9:50 p.m.  
UR 247  
4 credit hours

**Instructor Information**

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Office hours by appointment: Best one hour before class

**Course Description:**

Although at its founding Public Administration was to be separate from the political process, this seminar course is designed to show how the two disciplines actually work together. The course will focus on the symbiotic relationship between public administration and the political process. It will do so by concentrating on public policy, decision-making, and the role of the public as well as the public administrator within government.

- We will examine the concept of public policy, how a problem is resolved through policy, and the role that public administrators play in forming and implementing policy
- We will discuss the decision-making process as it pertains to public policy and policy implementation
- We will examine the role of the three branches of government - legislative, executive, and judicial - as well as the three levels of government - federal, state, and local in the consideration of public policy. We will add a new layer to the mix - the administrative state - and examine how this design, crafted by the founding fathers and expanded over time, actually works in the formulation and implementation of policy.

Public administration and the political process begins with a discussion of problem definition - how do we know something is a problem which requires governmental action? The next step is agenda setting. Once we have identified a problem, how can it be resolved? The final step is decision-making, who gets

to be included in resolving the problem and what gets to be done? Defining a problem is not as easy as it might sound and there are ramifications to what gets included as well as excluded in the definition. Setting the agenda is a process of leadership, compromise, and reading the political will. Decision-making involves the various levels of governmental actors who have a role in determining the outcome of a policy and who jockey for position to influence power. The final component within the process is the public: you as the administrator, you as a citizen- participator, and you as the representative of the bureaucracy.

The course seeks to develop an understanding of the policy process:

- By understanding how complicated the nature of policy making is in practicality
- By understanding the incremental nature of decision-making
- By understanding the role of public administrators in the legislative process
- By understanding the role of discretion in the practice of public administration
- By understanding how implementation is the tool of the administrative state
- By understanding how public administration cannot be separated from politics

### Required Text and Materials

Kingdon, John W. (2003). *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: Addison- Wesley.

O'Leary, Rosemary. (2006). *The Ethics of Dissent: Guerilla Government*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.

There will also be required readings posted on Electronic Course Reserve as well as required readings available through Journal Finder from the Library's web site.

### Course Requirements

Students will be asked to complete the following requirements:

- 1) Complete all reading assignments. This is a seminar class. You will be asked to engage in discussions based upon the reading material. The readings will be used as the theoretical base from which the practical application of public administration will be derived. In addition to the assigned readings students are expected to know current political events, either through reading newspapers or watching television news shows.

- 2) Participate in classroom discussions. The best classes are the ones in which all students participate. As you have chosen Public Administration as your field of study and practice it is important for you to understand how your actions impact policy. Discussions of real-life workday experiences add to this understanding, however, participation will be graded on the quality of your contribution, not the quantity. Please remember, listening is an act as important as talking.
- 3) Complete the following assignments on time. Late work will be penalized.
  - Public Administrator Profile: Each student will be asked to identify one public administrator, alive or deceased, who has made an impact on the art of governance. The presentation should be no less than ten minutes in length and include a hand-out to the class plus a three-page (double-spaced) summary for the instructor. A hand-out and sample presentation will be distributed in class to help students prepare for this assignment.
  - Midterm exam: The midterm will be an in-class exam consisting of essay questions from the reading. More information will be provided during the semester.
  - Book Review: Each student must complete a three-page (single-spaced) review of the O'Leary text.
  - Citizen Participation in Action: Students will attend a meeting of the North Olmsted City Council on Tuesday, June 16<sup>th</sup> to watch government at work and to see public participation in action. We will meet at 6:00 p.m. North Olmsted City Hall, 5200 Dover Center Road, North Olmsted, OH 44070. The Council has a caucus meeting at 7:30 p.m. and the regular meeting begins at 8:00 p.m. Let me know in advance if you have transportation issues.
  - Public Policy Research Project: Each student will complete a research paper on a policy problem identified during the first two weeks of the course. We will review and discuss various policy issues currently confronting national, state, and local governments. Students will be asked to pick one topic of interest and develop a policy statement in response to the issue. The final project will be a 7 - 10 page paper that answers the following questions:
    - i. Problem Definition and Policy Design: How has the understanding of this policy problem developed over time? What (or who) has shaped the problem definition? What is the target population of this policy and how does that impact the design of the policy?
    - ii. Decision-making: Explore the history of the policy problem, specifically, focus on how a policy addressing the problem made the policy agenda and how the policy was created.

- iii. Implementation: What implementation tools are used to address this policy problem? What are some of the possible challenges associated with these tools for addressing the problem?
- iv. Current situation: What is being done to address the problem? Has a new law been enacted? Is the government taking action to address the problem?

### Grading and Evaluation

Grades will be determined by attendance, participation, and performance on the mid-term exam, public administrator profile, book review, and policy project. Grades will be calculated as follows:

|                               |     |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Discussion and participation: | 15% |
| Public Administrator Profile: | 10% |
| Book Review:                  | 15% |
| Midterm:                      | 25% |
| Policy Project:               | 35% |

Grading Scale:

|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| A = 94 - 100 | C+ = 77 - 79     |
| A- = 90 - 93 | C = 70 - 76      |
| B+ = 87 - 89 | D = 60 - 69      |
| B = 83 - 86  | F = less than 60 |
| B- = 80 - 82 |                  |

### Policies

Students with special needs or those who require special accommodations when taking exams, completing projects, or meeting the class requirements should identify themselves immediately to the instructor so that appropriate arrangements may be made.

Refer to the CSU Bulletin for add/drop, withdrawal procedures, S/U, or incomplete grading.

Academic misconduct: plagiarism or cheating will result in an F for the assignment and possibly an F in the course. Plagiarism, according to the CSU Student Handbook, is defined as the stealing and/or using the ideas of another in a paper, exam, or report and claiming it as your own. This includes, but is not limited to the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the work of another person with full and clear acknowledgement (CSU Handbook, 2008). This includes the work of another student. You may not collaborate on the midterm or on your final policy project. See Academic Regulations <http://www.csuohio.edu/studentlife/conduct/acadregs.html>

Make up of exams and assignments are at the discretion of the instructor and require valid written documentation (such as a doctor's note).

There is to be no eating in class unless food is provided for everyone.

There is no gum-chewing in class.

Laptops are permitted for note-taking only. The use of the laptop privilege will be lost should the instructor find you are checking email or surfing the web.

### Electronic Course Reserve

Journal articles and case studies are posted on the Library's Electronic Course Reserve website. When accessing the site use PAD 617 as the course number. If you try to find the material using Instructor name you will be disappointed. Search the material by course number and you will be successful. Please let me know if you have any trouble finding the material.

### Journal Finder

Journal Finder is another method whereby you may access articles from the CSU Library web site. Go to the Library home page, click on Journal Finder, enter the name of the journal and then find the year in which the article was published. I have given you full bibliographic information in order for you to access the file.

### Assignments

#### Week One: May 26: Orientation and the Politics/Administration Dichotomy

Publius. (1788). The Federalist Papers #51.

Wilson, Woodrow. (1876). The Study of Administration.

#### May 28: Problem Definition

Theodoulou, Stella Z. (1995) "The Contemporary Language of Public Policy: A Starting Point." In Stella Z. Theodoulou and Matthew A. Cahn, eds. *Public Policy: The Essential Readings*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall. (pp. 1 - 9) ECR

Kingdon, Forward, Chapters 1

#### Week Two: June 2: Agenda Setting

Kingdon, Chapters 4, 5, 6,

Cobb, Roger W. and Marc Howard Ross. (1997). "Agenda Setting and the Denial of Agenda Access: Key Concepts." In Roger W. Cobb and Marc Howard Ross, eds. *Cultural Strategies of Agenda Denial*. Lawrence: The University of Kansas Press. (pp. 3 - 24). ECR

June 4: Agenda Setting  
Kingdon, Chapter 7, 8

Identify your public policy

Week Three: June 9: Decision-Making

Lindblom, Charles E. (1995). "The 'Science' of Muddling Through." In Stella Z. Theodoulou and Matthew A. Cain, eds. *Public Policy: The Essential Readings*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall. (pp. 113-127). ECR

Etzioni, Amitai. (1967). "Mixed Scanning: A Third Approach to Decision-Making." *Public Administration Review* (27(5)): 385-392. ECR

Case Study: Alabama's Confederate Flag ECR

June 11: Midterm Exam and the Legislative Process

Week Four: June 16: North Olmsted City Council Meeting - Citizen Participation and Street Level Bureaucracy

Kingdon, Chapters 2, 3, 9

Vinzant, Janet Coble and Lane Crothers. *Street Level Leadership: Discretion and Legitimacy in Front Line Public Service*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. (pp. 32 - 94). ECR

Maynard-Moody, Steven and Suzanne Leland. (1999). "Stories from the Front-Lines of Public Management: Street Level Workers as Responsible Actors." In *Advancing Public Management: New Development in Theory, Methods, and Practice*. Ed. Jeffrey L. Brudney, Laurence O'Toole, Jr. and Hal Rainey. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press. (pp. 109 - 123). ECR

June 18<sup>th</sup>: Citizen Participation

King, Cheryl S., Kathryn M. Felty, and Bridget O. Susel. (1998). "The Question of Participation: Toward Authentic Public Participation in Public Administration". *Public Administration Review* 58(4): pp. 317 - 27. ECR

Begin Public Administrator Profiles

Week Five: The Administrative State: June 23

O'Leary, Rosemary. *The Ethics of Dissent*. Paper due.

Public Administrator Profiles

June 25: The Administrative State

Wilson, James Q. (1995). "The Rise of the Bureaucratic State." In Stella Z. Theodoulou and Matthew A. Cain, eds. *Public Policy: The Essential Readings*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall. (pp. 251-258).

Public Administrator Profiles

Week Six: Implementation: June 30

Brodkin, Evelyn. (1990). "Implementation as Policy Politics." *Implementation and the Policy Process*, ed. Dennis Palumbo and Donald Calista. New York: Greenwood Press. ECR

Public Administrator Profiles

July 2: Student Presentations of Policy Projects

## COURSE SUMMARY

| DATE    | TOPIC                        | ASSIGNMENTS                   |
|---------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| May 26  | Orientation, PA Dichotomy    | Reading                       |
| May 28  | Problem Definition           | Reading                       |
| June 2  | Agenda Setting               | Reading                       |
| June 4  | Agenda Setting               | Reading, Public Policy id     |
| June 9  | Decision-Making              | Reading, Case Study           |
| June 11 | Midterm, Legislative Process | Study for midterm             |
| June 16 | Citizen Participation        | Reading, City Council meeting |
| June 18 | Citizen Participation        | Reading, Profiles begin       |
| June 23 | Administrative State         | Reading, Book Review          |
| June 25 | Administrative State         | Reading, Profiles             |
| June 30 | Implementation               | Reading, Profiles             |
| July 2  | Policy Project               | Paper and Presentation        |