

Foundations of Public Administration
Fall 2011
Instructor: Dr. Christine Reed

The main purpose of this course is to achieve an understanding of public administration as a field of study by exploring its historical development, including dynamic changes in subject matter and the underlying knowledge frameworks. In this course we will examine major historical periods; leading scholars who helped to define the field; and knowledge frameworks within which those scholars designed and carried out their work.

Logic of the Course

The history of public administration as a field of action is inextricably linked to theories of knowledge. The earliest writing, dating from the late nineteenth century, parallels the emergence of positivism as the dominant philosophical foundation of research. In recent writings the importance of pragmatism and post-modernism are evident.

While the term “knowledge explosion” has become a cliché, the sheer amount of research published in academic journals can easily overwhelm doctoral students. Learning how to distinguish writing based on its underlying theory of knowledge is one way to address this volume and complexity.

Familiarity with the leading writers in the field is another way to ground oneself as a new doctoral student. Many leading scholars are contemporaries who want to mentor the next generation of scholars. Learning how they developed their intellectual identities will be a beneficial experience.

We have designed PA 9000 and 9300 to work in tandem: there are four 3 week modules, each module addressing a major knowledge framework; public administration “classics” grounded in that framework; and a third week integrating material from both courses. The assignments for both 9000 and 9300 are due on the third week of each module.

Assigned Readings

There are several books, book chapters and articles, each associated with one of the knowledge frameworks that are covered in PA 9300. Articles and book chapters are noted by an asterisk (*) and are available on electronic reserve at the UNO Library. Books are noted by a double asterisk (**) and can be purchased in paperback versions on Amazon. The first set of readings show how two key leaders in the field articulated the need for a science of administration, bureaucracy organized according to scientific principles and the study of administrative decision-making using rigorous a scientific methodology.

Interpretive social science encompasses a number of distinct approaches that will be covered in PA 9300. The readings for PA 9000 explore the influence of the “interpretive turn” in public administration. “Stories Managers Tell” is an excellent example of how knowledge development within the city management profession emerges from exchange of stories (narrative knowledge) that “ring true” for practitioners. *Bureau Men Settlement Women* is an exploration of an alternative tradition in public administration, one based on respect for local knowledge and experience versus the scientific knowledge of experts in bureaucratic organizations characteristic of a positivist knowledge framework.

The arc of pragmatist thought stretches from John Dewey in the early 20th century to the post-modern pragmatism of Richard Rorty. Pragmatism poses a challenge to empirical and normative assumptions underlying the politics-administration dichotomy. We will share the readings on pragmatism with PA 9300, in particular the use of a pragmatist approach in public administration as discussed by the Miller and Shields articles.

The post-traditional knowledge framework is characterized by the “linguistic turn” or the idea that our understanding of the social world is mediated by (multiple) languages. It is also marked by a renewed awareness of value pluralism in public administration. Spicer’s *In Defense of Politics* is his most recent and comprehensive statement about the risks of subsuming public administration under the vision of a “science of government.”

Writing Assignments

Assignment #1: Class Journal. Keeping a journal with reflections on the readings is an indispensable aid to organizing a large volume of reading. You will also find that your ideas begin to take shape as you read back through weekly entries. Questions for the assigned readings will be posted on Black Board under the Course Documents link and due the following week, when we integrate the materials from PA 9300 and PA 9000 in a series of student presentations and discussions.

Assignment #2: Bibliographic Essay. Reading and synthesizing the life work of a single, prominent scholar is an invaluable way to vicariously experience the unfolding of that scholar’s academic career. You will write a 20-25 page essay integrating the major ideas or themes in the work of a contemporary scholar. You will be responsible for locating, reading, summarizing and integrating all of the academic publications of a scholar whom you choose from a list provided in class.

Assignment #3: Final Exam. There will be a final comprehensive exam in a “take home” and “open book” format. The exam question will ask you to discuss how the field of public administration has changed over time, in terms of both subject matter concerns and logic of inquiry or knowledge frameworks.

Grading Assignments

Assignment #1:	40%
Assignment #2:	25%
Assignment #3:	25%
Participation	10%
TOTAL	100%

Grading Scale

97-100%	A+
94-96%	A
90-93%	A-

GRADING CLASS PARTICIPATION

Obviously intelligent active and meaningful class participation is essential. It is necessary that each student be committed to the 4 p's of student involvement for the course to be successful: preparation, presence, promptness, and participation. Your classmates deserve your thoughtful opinions, analyses, and reasoning—you can contribute these (and in turn understand those of others) only if you are present in class and adequately prepared. Appropriate classroom participation is also part of your participation grade. This means all of us must be respectful of others, constructive in our comments and open to alternative views.

A contribution to class discussion may include answering a question, discussing a point brought up, leading the class discussion, taking a leadership role, engaging in a role exercise or offering support to another class member. Contributions should be directed toward the entire class. Any actions that impeded the learning of class members will adversely affect the contribution grade.

The following guideline will determine your final class participation:

- A students “make things happen” by always seizing the initiative
- B students “know what happened” and frequently provide insight
- C students “watch things happen” and occasionally participate
- D students while appearing observant, typically ask: “what happened?”
- F students don't care if anything happened

Outstanding participation is characterized by:

- Initiates information relative to topics discussed
- Accurately exhibits knowledge of assignment content
- Demonstrates excellent listening by remaining on the “same page” as the rest of the class through comments
- Brings up questions that need to be further explored
- Clarifies points that others may not understand
- Draws upon personal experience or personal opinion
- Offers relevant succinct input to class
- Demonstrates ability to apply, analyze, and synthesize course material
- Willing to take risk in attempting to answer unpopular questions

Course Policies

- A final course grade of C or below will result in academic probation
- Regular attendance and timely completion of assignments is expected.
- Prior notification of absence from class or late assignment is required.
- Read the policy on academic honesty and plagiarism in the Graduate Catalog.
- Use only Lotus Notes to send and receive communications and assignments.

Dates/Topics/Assignments

August 23rd **Intellectual Identity and the Philosophy of Science**

Mills, C.W. (1959). "On intellectual craftsmanship," in C. Wright Mills, *The sociological imagination*.

August 30th **PA 9300 material on Positivism**

September 6th **PA 9000 Positivism and Public Administration**

*Fry & Raadschelders (2008). "Luther Gulick: The Integrated Executive," in *Mastering Public Administration*.

*Gulick, Luther L. (1937). "Notes on the Theory of Organization," in *Papers on the Science of Administration*. N.Y. Institute of Public Administration. E-Reserve

*Fry & Raadschelders (2008). "Herbert Simon: A Decision-Making Perspective," in *Mastering Public Administration*.

*Simon, Herbert A. (1946). "The Proverbs of Administration," in *Public Administration Review*. E-Reserve

*Waldo, Dwight (1952). "Development of Theory of Democratic Administration," in *Public Administration Review*. E-Reserve

*Simon, Herbert (1952). "Development of Theory of Democratic Administration: Replies and Comments," in *Public Administration Review*. E-Reserve.

September 13th **Class discussion, assignments due**

September 20th **PA 9300 Interpretivism**

September 27th PA 9000 Interpretive Turn in Public Administration

*Hummel, Ralph P. (1991). "Stories Managers Tell," in *Public Administration Review*

**Stivers, Camilla (2000). *Bureau Men Settlement Women: Constructing Public Administration in the Progressive Era*.

October 6th Class discussion, assignments due

October 11th PA 9300 Pragmatism

October 18th NO CLASS: FALL BREAK

October 25th PA 9000 Pragmatism and Public Administration

November 1st Class discussion, assignments due

November 8th PA 9300 Post-Traditional Approaches

November 15th PA 9000 Post-Traditional Public Administration

**Spicer, Michael (2010). *In Defense of Politics in Public Administration*

November 22nd Class discussion, assignments due

November 29th Presentation of major course papers

December 6th Prep week

December 13th Final exam

