Public Administration  
PS 3161  - Spring 2011  
Tuesday, 5:30 – 8:00 p.m., 4 Anderson Hall  

Description  

This course focuses on the politics of public administration, a complex and important part of American politics. Administrative politics centers on the role of bureaucratic organizations in making public policy and taking administrative action. Such behaviors allocate value for society: they give life, they take life; they clean up toxic substances, they pollute the environment; they confer wealth and income, they foster poverty. The bureaucracy thus exercises some independent power and shapes the world around us for better and worse in many significant ways on a daily basis.

The complexity of administrative politics stems in large part from multifarious actors and forces that influence departments and agencies as they exercise power. Public agencies operate in a mixed up field of multiple governmental and non-governmental actors at various levels of our federal structure of government. External actors, including executives, legislatures, courts, corporations, and interest groups, all attempt to control or shape administrative decisions and actions as fiercely as the agencies seek to maintain or achieve some independence. Internal struggles among individuals, units, and subgroups intermingle with the external politics, comprising the somewhat essential, somewhat sordid matter of “office politics.” Bureaucracy thus tends to operate in a dynamic maize of actors, relationships, and influence.

We begin our journey through this labyrinth with a critical review of the basic concepts and theories of bureaucratic politics and then survey the elaborate and poorly understood structure of the U.S. executive branch. To finish this introductory section of the course we read and analyze an important case study by Don Kettl, System Under Stress: Homeland Security and American Politics. Kettl’s analysis shows how thoroughly embedded are U.S. governmental agencies in the overall American political system and what the consequences of those linkages can be for the effectiveness and efficiency of policy performance.

At the center of the course we explore sources of bureaucratic power and how administrative agencies exercise power. This includes a detailed look at policymaking across basic types of policy output and the important issue of accountability. In the American context we presume a modicum of democratic accountability. We tend to think that government should be run by, or at
least for, the American people. As administrators or bureaucrats are for the most part not elected to their positions of power, this poses a special challenge. How do we hold administrators accountable to the public without the electoral check employed with elected officials such as Presidents or Senators? We will develop the issue and explore standard institutional control devices, alternative possibilities and their implications for American democracy. We finish analysis of power and accountability with the perennial favorite–administrative reform–and consider what, if anything, might be done to help the bureaucratic ship of state govern more effectively.

We wrap up the semester with concentrated attention to a special problem of bureaucratic control–internal dissent. In an assigned reading, *The Ethics of Dissent: Managing Guerrilla Government*, Rosemary O’Leary examines the rather common phenomenon of administrators rebelling and working against their employer organization in one way or another. Here we find another important angle on the politics of administration and more than a bit of ethical murkiness to try to sort through.

**Objectives**

At the end of this course students should be able (1) to describe the primary structural features and organizational components of the national executive branch in the United States, (2) to describe and analyze the political foundations of governmental agencies and their place within the context of the American political system, (3) to understand the various potential mechanisms of political accountability used with regard to public agencies, including their strengths, weaknesses, and general importance, and (4) to appreciate and analyze the role of bureaucratic agencies in public policymaking.

**Methods**

This course uses a mix of methods and assignments to help each student achieve the objectives that have been set for the class and to provide a comprehensive basis for assessment (grades).

Class time will be devoted mostly to review and discussion of highlights of the assigned readings. Students are thus expected to read assignments as scheduled, come to class with questions and issues in mind, and join the discussion. We will also note or follow breaking news related to public administration and topics we are covering. Students are encouraged to follow news on the bureaucracy and bring in notable items for discussion. Four short Reaction Paper assignments are linked to the Kettl and O’Leary monographs listed below (two each). There will be a midterm and final exam each of which will focus on its respective half of the semester and use an essay format.
Grades are based on the following components and weighted as shown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATTENDANCE &amp; PARTICIPATION</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REACTION PAPERS (four)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDTERM EXAM</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
<td>25%</td>
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**Assigned Readings**

All reading assignments are found in the books shown below. The books should be available at the Temple University Bookstore. If you do not find them on the shelf, inquire about their whereabouts and don’t hesitate to demand that a “special order” be entered on your behalf. Please note that the bookstore starts returning unsold books to distributors at midterm. The books are also placed on Reserve at Paley Library.


**Course Outline**

1. January 18
   a. *Overview of the Course*
   b. *Politics of Bureaucracy*

2. January 25
   a. *Politics of Bureaucracy* (continued)
   b. *The Structure of the U.S. Bureaucracy*
      i. Meier and Bohte, chapter 2.
3. February 1

   a. *The Structure of the U.S. Bureaucracy* (continued)
   b. *The Case of Homeland Security*

4. February 8

   a. *Homeland Security* (continued)
      i. Kettl, chapter 3-5.

   b. ***REACTION PAPER #1 DUE***

5. February 15

   a. *Homeland Security* (continued)
      i. Kettl, chapters 6-7.

   b. ***REACTION PAPER #2 DUE***

   c. *The Power of Bureaucracy*
      i. Meier and Bohte, pp. 42-53 (chapter 3).

6. February 22

   a. *The Power of Bureaucracy* (continued)
      i. Meier and Bohte, pp. 53-74 (chapter 3).

   b. *Public Policy and Bureaucracy*
      i. Meier and Bohte, pp. 75-98 (chapter 4).

7. March 1

   a. *Public Policy and Bureaucracy* (continued)
      i. Meier and Bohte, pp. 99-113 (chapter 4).

   b. *Review for Midterm*

8. March 15

   a. ***MIDTERM EXAM***

   b. *Bureaucratic Accountability*
9. March 22
   a. *Review of Midterm Exam*
   b. *Bureaucratic Accountability* (continued)
      i. Meier and Bohte, chapter 5.

10. March 29
    a. *Institutional Control of Bureaucracy*
       i. Meier and Bohte, chapter 6.

11. April 5
    a. *Alternative Bureaucratic Controls*
       i. Meier and Bohte, chapter 7.

12. April 12
    a. *Bureaucratic Dissent & Strategic Action*
    b. ***REACTION PAPER #3 DUE***

13. April 19
    a. *Bureaucratic Dissent (continued)*
       i. O’Leary, pages 64-124.
    b. ***REACTION PAPER #4 DUE***

14. April 26
    a. *Reform*
       i. Meier and Bohte, chapter 8.
    b. *Conclusions*

15. FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 10 at 5:30 p.m.
Policies and Expectations

The policies and expectations described below are intended to promote a favorable learning environment in the classroom and fair treatment of all students. They draw upon and are supported by Temple University’s Student Code of Conduct, which can be found at http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.12. As the Code notes, instructors have responsibility for enforcement of the code and may report violations to the University Disciplinary Committee or sanction violators directly with a lowered grade. Please review the following policies carefully. They constitute an agreement or contract between the instructor and students in the course and should thus guide the behavior of everyone involved. Continued enrollment in the course constitutes agreement to abide by these policies and expectations.

Academic Freedom. Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02), which can be accessed through the following link: http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism. Academic honesty is the glue that holds the educational and scholarly process together and protects their integrity. Dishonesty and cheating, thus, will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is a particular form of dishonesty that presents the work, ideas, or words of another person without attribution as if they were the author’s own. It applies to various tasks, including exams, assignments, and papers. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing may at the discretion of the instructor be given failing grades (scores of zero) on the task or for the course depending on the severity of the infraction. Students may also be referred to the University Disciplinary Committee and expelled from the University. For guidance on using sources effectively and avoiding plagiarism, see Temple Writing Center’s resources at http://www.temple.edu/writingctr/handouts/researchandplagiarism/index.html.

Arrivals, Departures, and Roaming. Students should make every effort to arrive for class on time so as to avoid disrupting the class. The same rationale applies to early departures: students should stay in class until dismissed by the instructor. If for some extraordinary reason a student must leave early, they should let the instructor know ahead of time so as to reduce the disruption. While class is in session, students should limit journeys outside the classroom to those that are absolutely necessary.

Assignments. Course assignments, written or otherwise, are due as indicated by the instructor either verbally, on the syllabus, or on assignment handouts. Written assignments are to be submitted in hard-copy, rather than email form, unless otherwise specified. It is the responsibility of the student to make themselves aware of deadlines and to meet them. Late assignments will be penalized according to the provisions on the assignment handout and to accommodate excused absences (see Attendance below). In no case will written assignments be accepted after the day and start time of the final exam unless an exception has been granted.
beforehand by the instructor.

**Attendance.** Class attendance is required and will determine the major portion of the attendance/participation grade for the semester. A percentage attendance score will be calculated based on student sign-in sheets, **excusing only religious observance, serious illness, personal crises, and other University business that are documented in writing.**

**Disability Accommodations.** This course is open to all students who met the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**Exams.** Students are expected to take exams at the scheduled date and time. If for some extraordinary reason a student must miss an exam, prior approval from the instructor must be obtained. If some extreme event results in the missing of an exam without prior approval the student must report in with a legitimate excuse no later than 24 hours after the scheduled start of the exam to qualify for a makeup. A makeup exam may be granted and scheduled at the discretion of the instructor. Makeup exams may differ in format and content from the original exam.

**Grading.** The instructor shall strive to assign grades that are reasonable, accurate reflections of student performance and that are fair to **all** students. He shall make himself available at least during office hours to discuss assignments, exams, grading criteria, and student performances. Appeals of grades are welcome if after careful reflection a student sincerely believes a grade is unreasonable or unfair but only if made in writing. No verbal appeals will be entertained. Appeals will trigger a process of regrading resulting either in confirmation or change of the original grade.

**Participation.** Students are encouraged to speak out in class to ask questions and present ideas and opinions. It should be helpful to remember that we are here primarily as **students** to analyze and discuss ideas and knowledge claims rather than as political actors seeking to advance or attack particular causes or actors. Those that make ample contributions to class discussion will be rewarded through their attendance/participation score. It usually helps moderate the flow of discussion for students to raise hands and wait to be called upon before addressing the class.

**Private Conversations.** Conversations during class time among two or more students, in contrast to the class as a whole, should be kept to an absolute minimum as they are disruptive to the attention of the instructor and other members of the class.

**Respect of Others.** While ideas about politics and policy will often generate strong feelings, we should respect everyone’s right to express their views however divergent they may be. We should also respect everyone’s equal worth as fellow human beings and our common bond of human dignity. A little bit of courtesy should go a long way.