Course Description

This course is designed to provide students an introduction to the field of public administration, including its practice, themes and values, and contemporary challenges. Public administration is government in action, as broadly defined by Woodrow Wilson in 1887. Public administration includes activities taken directly by government, or indirectly by its partners, to meet the democratically expressed needs of the public. These activities include policy design, implementation, evaluation of outcomes, and re-design or re-direction.

By the end of the course, students should have a basic understanding of 1) the relationship and tensions between politics and administration, 2) various means for assuring administrative accountability and responsiveness, and 3) the challenges associated with implementing public programs. It is intended that students will leave the course with a substantive, applied understanding of the values and practice of public administration.

Text Books


Additional readings will be made available through the course web page on Blackboard, which can be accessed at https://blackboard.albany.edu/. Use the same login and password as that required for MyUAlbany.

Communication

Communication outside of scheduled class meetings and office hours will occur primarily over email. Students are expected to check their email every day. The best way to contact me outside of class is by email. Meetings outside of class and office hours should be scheduled by appointment. All class-related activities, including class and group discussions, emails and
assignments should be conducted in business standard English.

Grading

Student performance in the course will be determined by:

- Mid-term exam (20%)
- Final exam (20%)
- Two short essays: see appendix I;
  - Essay #1 (15%)
  - Essay #2 (25%)
- Participation (20%) see appendix II.

Attendance. Attendance is required and necessary for your success in the course. Any student with 3 unexcused absences will lose 5% from the final grade. A student with more than 3 unexcused absences will have a notation placed on the transcript indicating you stopped attending class. The instructor reserves the right to drop you from the class if you have more than three absences. Absences will only be excused under certain circumstances, such as an unplanned health emergency, in case of religious observance, or for an authorized intercollegiate event. Documentation is required to have an absence excused.

Grading Scale. Each student’s final grade will be determined by a weighted average of the points earned. For example, assume a student earned the following grades: 100 for participation, 87 on the first essay, 92 on the second essay, 80 on the midterm exam, and 93 on the final exam. She also missed 3 classes. The student’s grade would be calculated as follows:

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(100 \times 0.2) + (87 \times 0.15) + (92 \times 0.25) + (80 \times 0.2) + (93 \times 0.2) = 91 - 5 = 86 \text{ (B)}
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A: 93 percent and above  
A-: 90 to 92 percent  
B+: 87-89 percent  
B: 83-86 percent  
B-: 80-82 percent  
C+: 77-79 percent  
C: 73-76 percent  
C-: 70-72 percent  
D+: 67-69 percent  
D: 63-66 percent  
D-: 62-60 percent  
F: below 60 percent

Grade Appeals. Students may appeal a grade on a specific assignment within two weeks of the assignment being returned. To submit an appeal, the student should return the original graded assignment and a letter/memo outlining why you think the grade should be changed. Appeals must be submitted on paper, typed-written. In the appeal, students must identify 1) the specific issue you believe should be reconsidered and 2) evidence from assignment instructions, assigned readings, lectures, or other materials that would indicate your original submission is worthy of a higher grade. Be aware that your grade may go up, down, or remain the same as a result of your appeal.

Academic Honesty. Academic honesty is something your professor takes very seriously. Cheating in any form will not be tolerated. Students are required to be familiar with the university’s academic honesty policies; ignorance is not an excuse for dishonest behavior. In all
cases of cheating, a Violation of Academic Integrity Report will be submitted to the Office of Undergraduate Education to be placed in your university file, with copies provided to you, the department head, and the Dean of Rockefeller College. Additional penalties may include some combination of the following: revision and re-submission of the assignment, reduction of the grade or failure of the assignment, reduction of the course grade or failure of the course, filing of a case with the Office of Conflict Resolution and Civic Responsibility, suspension or expulsion.

Other Course Policies

- It is your instructor’s goal to conduct class in an environment that is welcoming to all perspectives. Please treat your fellow students with the respect you want to receive.
- Students with needs consistent with the Americans with Disability Act should inform the instructor during the first week of class so that reasonable accommodations can be made.
- This syllabus serves as a general outline. The instructor reserves the right to deviate from the plan if necessary. Students will be notified promptly of any modifications.
- Arrive to class on time. Arriving late is disruptive to both the instructor and your classmates.
- Turn off all cell phones, IPods/MP3 players, and anything that beeps and/or vibrates during class. If there is an emergency that requires you to leave your cell phone on during class, notify your instructor before class begins.

Course Schedule

August 26: Introduction

September 2: Core Concepts of Public Administration
1. Kettl chapters 1 and 2
2. Cases: Kettl case 1.1 Accountability & Kettl case 2.1: The Administrative State

September 9: Key Activities of Government
1. Kettl chapters 3 and 5
2. Cases: Kettl case 5.1: The Federal Aviation Administration & Kettl case 5.2: Which Way for Cheese

September 16: Regulation and the Courts
1. Kettl chapter 13

September 23: Accountability
1. Kettl chapter 14
3. Case: Hurricane Katrina Toxic Trailers
September 30: Strategic Management
3. Case: Strategic Planning in the Air Force, and Ellen Schall and the Department of Juvenile Justice

October 7: Decision-making
1. Kettl chapter 10
3. Case: Housing for Single Mothers in Chicago & Kettl case 10.3: Tweeting to the rescue?
4. Review for Midterm Exam

October 14: Midterm Exam (in-class)

October 21: Social Equity

October 28: Implementation
1. Kettl chapter 12
2. Case: Fuel Efficiency & Kettl case 12.1: Policy Implementation in Florida
3. Essay #1 Due

November 4: Contracting
3. Case: NYS Wireless Network

November 11: Nonprofits
3. Case: Building Black Leadership on HIV/AIDS Issues
November 18: Personnel Management
1. Kettl chapter 8
2. Case: *Griggs vs. Duke Power*

November 25: Enjoy an early Thanksgiving Break!

December 2: Financial management
3. Review for Final Exam

December 9:
1. **Essay #2 Due**
2. **Final Exam** (in-class)

**Appendix I: Two Short Essays**

Essay #1 due October 28th, Essay #2 due December 9th

*Overview.* To assess your understanding of the course material and your ability to apply concepts to real life cases of government action, students will write two short essays during the semester. Each essay will require students to use coursework to understand the case *Ellen Schall and the Department of Juvenile Justice.* Additional details about the exact questions and formatting will be distributed separately.

You will work as a “Taskforce” in a group to analyze the case during class time. However the two essays you submit will be written individually. The two memos to Ellen Schall will detail your group’s analysis of problems and potential solutions. You need to read the case by September 30th as opportunities to meet with your groups will begin on that date.

*Submission of paper.* Essays are due at the beginning of class. Paper copies are to be submitted at the beginning of class. Electronic versions of the paper are to be submitted via the SafeAssign function in Blackboard before class; papers will be due to SafeAssign by 2:30 p.m. the day of class. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure the electronic file is readable and not corrupted. An assignment is considered late if the paper copy is not submitted at the beginning of class, if the electronic file is not submitted before class, and/or if the electronic file is not readable. Please note: once you hit the submit button in SafeAssign, you cannot go back and submit a different version.

*Formatting.* Pages are to be formatted with one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 point font and pages are to be numbered. Pages are to be stapled together. Please do not use plastic report covers.
Citations. If you use ANY outside sources (including class readings), you must include a bibliography. Students are to cite sources in a manner consistent with academic honesty policies. Your professor would rather you include many citations rather than too few. As a general rule of thumb, provide a citation for something you did not know before you began your research. In-text citations and the bibliography should be formatted in MLA style. See the recommended text for assistance in using MLA style or other on-line help sheets such as:

http://library.albany.edu/cfox?type=mla
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/
http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/mla

Note: Wikipedia is not an acceptable source; blogs are not an acceptable source.

Grading. Together, the essays constitute 40% of the student’s grade for the course. The first essay is worth 15% of the semester grade, while the second essay constitutes 25% of the semester grade. Students must complete both essays.

Rubrics will be provided for each essay and posted on the course Blackboard page. In general, submissions will be assessed according to the degree to which the student 1) evaluates the case in a sophisticated manner, 2) illustrates a complete understanding of the course material, 3) uses evidence to support arguments, 4) presents a well-organized and professional paper, and 5) follows formatting and citation guidelines.

Late Assignments. An assignment is considered late if the paper copy is not submitted at the beginning of class, if the electronic file is not submitted before class, and/or if the electronic file is not readable. Assignments (electronic or hard copy) submitted 10 minutes after the beginning of class will be considered late and will be automatically reduced by 10%. Papers submitted one day after the due date will be automatically reduced by 20%; essays submitted two days after the assigned date will be reduced by 30%, etc. Exceptions will be made for extreme health and family emergencies. It is better to submit essays early rather than late, so please plan ahead if you know you will be missing a class session in which an essay is due.

Appendix II: Class Participation

Participation in the course constitutes 20% of the student’s semester grade. This will be evaluated by:

1) Weekly reading commentaries (3/4), and
2) Class participation (1/4).

Weekly Reading Commentaries.
Weekly commentaries constitute 15% of the student’s semester grade. There are two primary purposes for the commentaries: 1) to hold students accountable for completing the assigned reading, and 2) to provide information to your instructor which will influence the content of class discussions.
Students are required to submit 2 comments or questions illustrating comprehension of the assigned material each week (one comment must be submitted before Monday class). Students can choose to submit 2 questions, 2 comments, or one of each. Comments can focus on something you find interesting, surprising, disagree with, etc. Additionally, comments may “connect the dots” between assigned readings and the various cases we will discuss during the semester. Importantly, the commentaries should not be summaries of the reading. Instead they should reflect your thoughts and analysis on the week’s topic and cases. For example, why do you find a particular topic interesting? How does the reading help you reflect on something in the news recently? How does the reading help you understand the case more effectively? Is there something you disagree with and why? Etc. Questions can also indicate a topic you find confusing and why you are unclear on the matter.

Submission. Commentaries are due the day before class. They are to be submitted no later than 24 hours before the scheduled class time, and are to be submitted through Blackboard, in electronic form only. Of the 12 weeks of assigned reading, students are to submit commentaries for 10 of the 12 weeks. Each comment/question should be 4-10 sentences in length. Late commentaries will not be accepted, except in extreme cases of a health or family emergency.

Grading. Each week’s commentaries are worth 10 possible points, with 5 points possible for each comment/question submitted. Submissions will be graded according to the following criteria: 1) did the student submit two comments/questions, 2) to what degree do the comments/questions represent independent analysis, and 3) to what degree do the comments/questions reflect the content of the assigned reading.

Participation. Participation in the course constitutes 5% of the student’s semester grade. This will be based on substantive contributions to class discussions and small group exercises.

According to Martha Maznevski (1996) at the University of Virginia, the ultimate goal of class participation is for students to learn from each other:

Active involvement in learning increases what is remembered, how well it is assimilated, and how the learning is used in new situations. In making statements to peers about their own thoughts on a class topic, students must articulate those thoughts and also submit them to examination by others. In listening to their peers, students hear many different ways of interpreting and applying class material, and thus are able to integrate many examples of how to use the information (p. 1).

Maznevski (1996) suggests that high-quality participation is characterized by the following:

- Demonstrates good preparation: knows case or reading facts well, has thought through implications of them;

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• Contributes well to discussions: responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion; and
• Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of case material, e.g., puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further (p. 3).

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