PAD 550: Foundations of Government Information
Strategy and Management

Spring 2012
Monday 2:00 – 5:00 PM
Husted 006

Instructor
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Office hours: Mondays 1:00 – 2:00 and by appointment

Course Overview

This course focuses on the ways that information strategies and management approaches affect governmental functions, democratic processes, and public programs. It introduces students to the interaction of policy, management, data, and technology in the design, operation, and evaluation of government operations, citizen engagement, and public services. The course draws from the literature and experiences of both public and private sector management to explore organizational, government-wide, societal, and global topics. Case studies illustrate policy, management, data, and technology at work in single organizations and in different kinds of cross-boundary settings.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students will:

1. Be familiar with current and emerging issues and opportunities inherent in the public sector information environment.
2. Understand the four domains of knowledge that constitute the public sector information environment: policy, management, data, and technology.
3. Demonstrate, through analysis and discussion of case studies and practical problems, how these domains interact to shape the challenges, options, and actions available to government managers in single organizations and in multi-organizational and multi-sectoral settings.
4. Synthesize and present original work on these themes through a student-selected project.
Readings

Most required course readings are found on Blackboard or provided as handouts. These include selected news stories, articles from scholarly and trade publications, material from professional associations, and case studies. Several additional required readings are available for purchase from www.XanedU.com.

Course Content

January 23 – Introduction to the course
   Introductions
   Review of syllabus
   Instructions for Blackboard and other readings
   Opening exercise: Enabling “meaningful participation” in policy making.

January 30 – The public sector information environment
   A look at the historical development of government in the digital age, including promises, accomplishments, and disappointments

   Assignments due:
   Discussion Board: Introduce yourself and your interest in this course

February 6 – Multi-dimensional thinking
   Overview of six interacting themes of government information strategy and management: strategy, policy, data, skills, costs, and technology.
   Application of the themes to a major public policy initiative – data.gov

February 13 – Information policy overview
   Concepts, definitions, analytical models for understanding information policy.
   Federal, state, and local government information policy principles and roles.
   Applying principles of information stewardship and usefulness.

   Assignments due:
   Find 3-5 recent news items with information policy implications, categorize them according the Galvin Model, bring them to class.

February 20 – Information policy in action
   Case: “A Concerned Citizen”
   Class discussion: information policy implications of the Toxics Release Inventory

   Assignments due:
   1. Submit written case analysis of “A Concerned Citizen” in or before class. (Full case assignment on Blackboard)
   2. Explore the TRI website to prepare for class discussion.

February 27 – Information, technology and organizational effectiveness
   Evaluating information systems for organizational effectiveness
   Roles, responsibilities, and competencies
   Using a business case to connect information strategy with organizational mission
March 5 – Information systems in organizations
Case: "Electronic Medical Records System Implementation at Stanford Hospital and Clinics"

Assignments due:
Submit written case analysis in or before class. (Full case assignment on Blackboard)

March 12 – Using information and technology to implement public policy
Cases:
- "Inciting a Computer Revolution in Health Care: Weighing the Merits of the Health Information Technology Act"
- "Inciting a Computer Revolution in Health Care: Implementing the Health Information Technology Act"

Assignments due:
1. Prepare for class discussion by considering the two cases using the public value framework
2. Submit a one-page proposal for your final project – see guidelines on Blackboard

March 19 – Spring Break – No class

March 26 – Government and society: the impact of open government and social media
A look at transparency, open government initiatives, social networking and other Web 2.0 tools and their potential for changing the way government organizations acquire, manage, and use information internally as well as their potential for changing relationships among government, the market, and society.

Assignment due:
Two-page paper: What are the 2-3 most important benefits and risks of the open government movement from different perspectives? (Full assignment on Blackboard)

April 4 – Using information and technology for strategic change
Information and technology as assets for shaping and guiding strategic policy initiatives
Incentives for and barriers to using information strategically
Case: "A policy maker’s database"

Assignment due:
Submit written case analysis in or before class. (Full case assignment on Blackboard)

April 9 – Easter Break – no class
April 16 – Reality Check: a conversation with experts
This class meeting will focus on a panel of leaders and managers from the public, private, and civil sectors to discuss their views and experiences in managing, using, and evaluating information and technology policies, strategies, and initiatives

Assignments due:
1. Post at least two questions for the panel on the class discussion board.
2. Prepare to discuss the progress of your individual project with the class for feedback and advice

April 23 – Global perspectives
Issues associated with information and technology across national and cultural boundaries. Cultural differences in the concepts and application of e-government and e-governance.

Assignment due:
Compare selected developed and developing countries (Full assignment on Blackboard)

April 30– Future prospects for digital age government
From government to governance, ‘e’ or not, prospects for future evolution

May 7 – No Class – work on your final papers
See guidelines & requirements on Blackboard

May 13 – Final papers due 5:00 PM
See guidelines & requirements on Blackboard

Student evaluation and grading
Three short written assignments are required in which students will analyze cases (Concerned Citizen, Stanford Hospital EMR System, Policy Maker’s Database). These three analyses should be 4-5 double-spaced pages. The three papers together are worth 40% of your final grade. Several short assignments will represent 20% of your final grade. The frequency and quality of your contributions to the class learning environment represent 15% of your final grade. I will evaluate your contribution as a combination of engagement with the topics and engagement with the ideas of your fellow students and our guest speakers, including the quality of your contributions to the discussion board. Your final paper may be on a topic of your choosing but must follow the basic outline and requirements provided. It should be 10-12 double spaced pages.

Your final grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

- Frequency and quality of contributions to class discussions, online discussion board, and overall learning environment (15%).
- Three case analyses (40%)
- Short assignments (25%)
- Written presentation of your final project (20%)
Course policies

This course requires that you work both individually and collaboratively with your fellow students. The interaction of the case discussions and group exercises is a form of learning by collaboration and represents a significant fraction of your final grade. Case discussions, classroom exercises, activity on the electronic discussion board and/or wiki, and interaction with guest experts are active learning methods. They require that you actively engage with one another, with our guests, and with me during each class session. These discussions are your opportunity to test your own ideas, and to question and clarify what you've heard or read. These discussions contribute to 15% of your final grade so they really matter. Here are some guidelines and suggestions:

- Read the assignments and think critically about them. Ask yourself: What are the big lessons or principles? What are alternative models or choices for action? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
- Use the readings to enrich your understanding of the cases and bring them into our discussions.
- Be a good listener – this is more than being polite and quiet while others speak – it means really hearing what they are saying and actively comparing their ideas to your own.
- Make points that are relevant to the discussion and link them to the comments of others. Ask other people what they think about your ideas and why they think the way they do.
- Test your ideas – don't limit yourself to making statements that simply restate facts without offering analysis or conclusions – go out on a limb and say what you think and why.
- Use some of your comments in our discussions to clarify, summarize, and make associations across the various cases, concepts, and readings and opinions.
- Share additional readings, resources, or other material relevant to the class. You can do this in class or by using the discussion board or wiki.
- Use class meetings and the discussion board and wiki to engage in discussion and share your ideas.

Written assignments can be submitted in class or via e-mail as an attached file, in Microsoft Word format. E-mail submissions must be made before the class meeting time on the day they are due. My email address is sdawes@ctg.albany.edu.

Text in papers should be double-spaced with one-inch page margins. Please observe the page limits for each assignment. When the assignment calls for 4-5 pages, you won't get more credit for writing 7-8 – in fact, you'll get less. These short writing assignments require you to select and focus on important factors, and to present them in a well-organized way. By the way, spelling and grammar DO count because they affect the quality of your communication, so review your work carefully (or ask someone else to review it) before handing it in. If you need help with your writing, see the writing guide on Blackboard, or contact the writing center. If your first language is not English, you may want to recruit a native English-speaker to review your assignments before you hand them in.

I run the course on an honor system and therefore consider any case of plagiarism to be a most serious ethical issue. An incident of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course with the possibility of further action being pursued at the university level. I feel very strongly...
about this issue, so if you have any question about this topic, I encourage you to discuss it with me as soon as it comes up.

The **due dates** for assignments are absolute. I regard these as professional obligations and expect you to observe them scrupulously, except under extreme extenuating circumstances. Written assignments submitted after the due dates will be accepted only at my discretion and may result in an "incomplete." If accepted, late submissions will be reflected in a lower grade for the assignment.

**NOTE on pre-requisites:**

The course content presumes that you are familiar with the principles, structures, and processes of American government and administration. Students who do not have the pre-requisites for this course (PAD 500 or PAD 506) must also choose one of the following books (or a similar one) to gain the needed background knowledge:

