1 Course description

This course explores the complex interplay between democracy, politics, and administration in the United States. Our aim is to begin developing an understanding of the contemporary role public organizations play in the political process and broader democratic context. To this end, we will examine the major intellectual and constitutional origins and subsequent evolution of American government and public administration. We will also explore various theories that (1) inform our understanding of the roles and responsibilities of modern public organizations and administrators, and (2) explain current governance arrangements.

By the end of this course, students should have:

- Gained a basic understanding of the central debates surrounding the legal, political, and civil/social dimensions of U.S. public administration,
- Acquired the knowledge necessary to think critically about the role of U.S. public administration in the political process and contemporary society, and
- Learned how to apply various theoretical lenses when tackling political-administrative issues.

2 Required Text

Throughout the course, students will be expected to read several books (see reading list below) and articles. When possible, course materials will be posted on Blackboard.
3 Assignments

3.1 Overview
The following assignments will form the basis of your grade in this course:

- Final Paper (70% of final grade)
- Paper proposal (15% of final grade)
- Discussion leader (10% of final grade)
- Participation (5% of final grade)

NOTE: All assignments will be turned in via Blackboard.

3.2 Final Paper
Students will be required to prepare a publication quality manuscript in one of two stages: 1) a full manuscript with analysis (for students who have necessary methodological training) or 2) a research proposal.

A full manuscript should follow the format of an academic journal article: introduction, background and theory, hypotheses to be examined, data and methods used to test the hypotheses, discussion of results, and conclusion. For students who lack the methodological preparation to complete the analysis, a research proposal will be substituted for a full manuscript draft. The format should be the same; however, students will instead describe the research design and data they would use to test the theoretical propositions made in your research proposal, the methods they would use to analyze the data, and articulate how and why such research would contribute to the literature of their chosen proposal topic. Research proposals should use either extant data, originally collected administrative or survey data, or mixed methods that incorporate focus groups, interviews, etc. alongside survey or administrative data.

Pre-writing tasks. To ensure students are on track, students are required to submit a one-page summary of their proposed paper by February 27th at midnight via Blackboard. I will not accept late submissions of summaries. I will return summaries with feedback within 7 days after submission.

Formatting. There is no length requirement, but papers should be 20-30 pages excluding tables, figures, and references. Students should use APA formatting for their citations.

Submission of papers. The final paper will be submitted on May 16th by midnight through Blackboard.

Late assignments. Late work will not be accepted and students who turn in work late will receive no credit.
3.3 Discussion Leaders

Each week, students will be assigned a reading to summarize and lead the class discussion concerning that reading. When leading discussion for a reading, students should prepare one-page, single-spaced summaries of the reading, verbally summarize the reading in class, identify point the student found interesting, and identify potential issues, limitations, or gaps in the ideas presented in the readings. **The summaries are to be emailed to the professor the day before class.** The professor will post the summaries to Blackboard to facilitate notes sharing across the class. TIP: If all students take good, useful notes, this will be a highly valuable resource for recalling, retaining, and studying the core ideas and concepts covered in the class.

3.4 Participation

A big part of learning comes from class discussion and participation in class activities. **NOTE: There will be in class activities in most weeks.** You can do neither if you do not attend class. Attendance will be tracked and points will be subtracted for absences not cleared with me ahead of time. In addition to attendance, sustained and regular contributions to class discussion will be factored into the class participation grade for the semester. Note that while participation only affects 5% of your final grade, it can mean a difference of a full letter in the grade you receive. In education, as with most things in life, what you get out of an act is a function of what you put into that act. Consider this my small way of nudging you towards getting all you can out of this class.

4 Class policies

- Academic work requires professional conduct befitting of budding scholars. I expect doctoral students to be respectful in discussion, willing to ask questions, open to (constructive) critique and feedback, and intellectually curious about a variety of perspectives. In addition to good scholarly conduct, I expect general professionalism, such as punctuality, adhering to deadlines, and preparedness. All writing for the course should be carefully edited and proofread for quality and clarity. When presenting to the class, communicate audibly and clearly and respond to any questions and comments with respect. When watching a presentation, be respectful and attentive and contribute thoughtfully to the discussion.

- After the first week, readings for each week should be completed by the Wednesday of that week (that is, BEFORE CLASS!). While much of the class reading comes from the text, I will cover other material in my lectures. **You will be responsible for knowing this material too!**

- A large body of well-designed research has demonstrated the detrimental effects of laptops on learning in a lecture/discussion based environment. Laptops should only be used for note-taking, nothing more. Cellular phones are not to be used during class time!
• Attend class! Again, class participation is 5% of your grade, and you can’t participate if you’re not in class. If you DO need to miss class (emergencies, sickness, etc.), please contact me as soon as possible and let me know. It will be your responsibility to notify me and to get any notes/materials from other students.

• Cell phones: we all have them, and they can be quite distracting. I ask that you please be courteous and silence your cell phone and leave it out of sight (in a pocket/purse/bag) during class.

• Feel free to eat and drink in class. I only ask that you do so quietly and in a manner that does not disrupt class.

• All assignments and, where possible, readings will be posted to the class Blackboard. I will email any announcements or updates to the class and also post them in the Blackboard. Report any trouble accessing anything on the Blackboard as soon as you encounter the problem.

• I have a strict open door policy. If there is anything about the course, the assignments, the grading, the material, class, or anything related to public administration broadly that you would like to discuss, do not hesitate to visit me during office hours or email me. I can respond via email, schedule a phone call, or schedule a separate meeting. I am here to help, so please do not hesitate to reach out to me. (But please be respectful of my time!)

• Have fun! Public administration is a broad topic that explores big, important questions that affect everyone. Discussing these topics should be as fun and interesting as it is challenging.

• [Table 1] below lays out the grading scale that will be used in assigning final course grades. Note: the percent refers to the percent of available weighted points earned. Each assignment is weighted by the proportion of the final grade made up by the assignment itself, as described in Section 3.1.

• Students with special physical and/or learning needs will be accommodated. Please notify the Disabilities Office and me as soon as possible so that reasonable accommodations can be made.
Table 1: Grade scale used for calculating class grades

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4.1 Academic integrity

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 Dean of Graduate Studies 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. For a more detailed description of the university’s academic honesty policies, go to: http://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/requirements_degree.htm#standards_integrity

4.2 Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disability.

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) offers assistance with accommodations and support for physical, medical, or psychological disabilities (518-442-5490; 120 BA). Information about DRC’s services can be found at http://www.albany.edu/disability/index.shtml

If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in this course and have not contacted DRC, please do so as soon as possible. Also, please feel free to contact the professor privately.
4.3 Counseling Center

The Counseling Center (518-442-5800; 400 Patroon Creek Blvd, Suite 104) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus resources. More information can be found at http://www.albany.edu/counseling_center/index.shtml

4.4 Library Assistance

SUNY-Albany offers a great collection available in several different media. Access to research help and library tutorials can be found online at http://library.albany.edu/

For information about SUNY-Albany’s Dewey Graduate Library, which is located on the Downtown Campus, visit http://library.albany.edu/dewey?source=drop

4.5 Writing Center

The university offers a number of services for students who need assistance with writing and research projects. Support is available in the Writing Center (518-442-4061; 140 HU) and at the University Library. Information about the Writing Center can be found at http://www.albany.edu/writing/index.html

5 Class schedule

5.1 Overview of weeks

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5.2 Detailed schedule of weeks

Week 1: Introduction to Public Administration

Week 2: Theory and Craft in Public Administration


Week 3: The Study of Politics and Administration


Recommended:


Week 4: The Constitutional Basis of Public Administration, Part I


Recommended:


Week 5: The Constitutional Basis of Public Administration, Part II


Week 6: Democracy and Public Administration


**Week 7: Organized Interests and the Political Economy, Part I**


**Week 8: Organized Interests and the Political Economy, Part II**


**Week 9: Public Organizations: Role, Responsibility, and Power, Part I**


**Week 10: Public Organizations: Role, Responsibility, and Power, Part II**


**Week 11: Political Control of the Bureaucracy**


**Week 12: The “Public” in Public Administration**
[Blackboard]


**Recommended:**


**Week 13: What is Public? What is Private?**


**Week 14: Public Administrators as Public Servants**


**Week 14: Odds and Ends**


This syllabus is a detailed plan for the course, but the instructor will make changes/revisions if necessary.