

Organization Theory and Behavior in Public Administration  
PA 510 – Spring 2008

Instructor

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**WEB PAGE:** We will be using the Blackboard internet software for purposes of communication in this course. You have access to the Blackboard website at <http://blackboard.uic.edu>. You need to log in to access the web page for this class using your UIC net id. All relevant class information will be placed on this site including the syllabus, announcements, and information on assignments. Many of the readings will also be posted on the web site. I recommend checking the website at least once a week for announcements.

**OFFICE HOURS:** Although I am generally available in my office during work hours; it is best set up an appointment in advance. This can be done by phone or e-mail.

**PLAGIARISM**

Do not plagiarize. For detailed guidelines on what constitutes plagiarism and academic honesty, please refer to the UIC guidelines at <http://www.uic.edu/depts/sja/integrit.htm>.

**REQUIREMENTS:** Students are expected to do all the readings, be prepared for class and participate in discussion

This course will be conducted along three separate but complementary “tracks” as follows:

Track 1 – Weekly Readings on topics in organizational theory and behavior. Three – four articles/chapters per week will be assigned. Starting with Week #3, one student will be responsible for preparing a 4+ page paper summarizing and discussing that week’s readings. Students will select the weeks for which they are responsible in Week #2. Each student will select two topics/weeks.

Note that week #15 is labeled “Potpourri.” That week, each student will present a 8+ page paper on one of a set of topics provided by the instructor.

Track 2 – Seminal works in organization theory. Starting with week #4, one student will be responsible for preparing a 4+ page paper summarizing and discussing one from a list of seminal works in organization theory and behavior. These are “classics” and as such you should be familiar with them. Each student will select two of these works, to be reported on separately. Students will select the works that they will report on in Week #3.

Track 3 – Journal Reviews. Starting with week #6, one student will be responsible for preparing an oral presentation on one from a list of journals on organization theory provided by the instructor.

EVALUATION: The grading structure is as follows:

- |                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| • Class participation          | 25% |
| • Papers (2) – Weekly readings | 20% |
| • Papers (2) – Seminal works   | 20% |
| • Paper – Potpourri            | 25% |
| • Journal review               | 10% |

READINGS:

The readings will be posted on the class web site.

**Adjustments to this syllabus may be made from time to time as the course evolves.**

SCHEDULE/READINGS

Week 1 Introduction and Overview  
January 15

Week 2 Theorizing about Organizations I  
January 22

- Readings:
- Whetten, “What constitutes a theoretical contribution?”
  - Bacharach, “Organizational theories: Some criteria for evaluation”
  - Weick "Theory Construction as disciplined imagination"

Week 3  
January 29

## Theorizing about Organizations II

- Readings:
- Pfeffer, “Barriers to the advance of organizational science: paradigm”
  - Cannella & Paetzold, “Pfeffer’s ‘Barriers to the advance of organizational science’: A rejoinder”
  - Astley and Van de Ven, “Central perspectives and debates on organization theory”
  - Morgan, “Paradigms, metaphors, and puzzle solving in organization theory”

Week 4  
February 5

## Organizations as Rational Systems/Organization Structure

- Readings:
- Weber, “Bureaucracy”
  - Meyer, “The two authority structures of bureaucratic organization”
  - Meyer, “The Weberian tradition in organizational research”
  - Pugh et al. “An empirical taxonomy of structures of work organizations”

Week 5  
February 12

## Organizations as Natural and Open Systems

- Readings:
- Katz and Kahn, “Organizations and the system concept”
  - Thompson, “Organizations in action”
  - Merton, “Bureaucratic structure and personality”

Week 6  
February 19

## Organizational Change and Innovation

- Readings:
- Weick and Quinn, “Organizational change and development”
  - Van de Ven and Poole, “Explaining development and change in organizations”
  - Romanelli and Tushman, “Organizational transformation as punctuated equilibrium”

Week 7  
February 26

## New Organizational Forms

- Readings:
- Romanelli, “The evolution of new organizational forms”
  - Hecksher, “Defining the post-bureaucratic type”
  - Huber, “The nature and design of post-industrial organizations”

Week 8  
March 4

## Organizational Politics

- Readings:
- Crozier and Friedberg, Actors and Systems (Chapter 1 – “The actor and his strategy”)
  - Hickson, D. C. Hinings et al., “A strategic contingencies theory of intraorganizational power”
  - Georgiou, “The goal paradigm and notes toward a counter-paradigm”

Week 9  
March 11

## Institutional Theory

- Readings:
- Meyer and Rowan, “Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony”
  - Tolbert and Zucker, “Institutional sources of change in the formal structure of organizations: The diffusion of civil service reform, 1880-1935”
  - Friedland & Alford, “Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices, and institutional contradictions”

Week 10  
March 18

## Network Theory

- Readings:
- Powell, “Neither market nor hierarchy: Network forms of organization”
  - Provan and Milward, “A preliminary theory of interorganizational network effectiveness: A comparative study of 4 community mental health systems”
  - Agranoff and McGuire, “Big Questions in Public Network Management Research”

Week 11  
April 1

## Public-Private Differences

- Readings:
- Chubb and Moe, “Politics, markets and the organization of schools”
  - Perry and Rainey, “The public-private distinction in organization theory: A critique and research strategy”
  - Fottler, “Is management really generic?”

Week 12  
April 8

## Institutional Economics

- Readings:
- Ouchi, W. “Markets, bureaucracies and clans”
  - Moe, “The new economics of organizations”
  - Eisenhardt, “Agency theory: An assessment and review”

Week 13  
April 15

### Organizational Learning

- Readings:
- Mirvis, “Historical foundations of organizational learning”
  - Huber, G., “Organizational learning: An examination of the contributing processes and a review of the literature”
  - Levitt and March, “Organizational learning”

Week 14  
April 22

### Decision-making in Organizations

- Readings:
- Cohen et al., “A garbage can model of organizational choice”
  - March, “Decision-making perspective and theories of choice”
  - Argyris, “Single-loop and double-loop models in research on decision making”

Week 15  
April 29

### Potpourri