

THEORIES OF PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS - POLS 6203

Dr. Caress
Fall 2009

Course Format: This course will be presented both as a traditional seminar and an on-line course. It will require students to use their computer to communicate with the professor and the other members of the class. The first class meeting (Saturday August 16, 2008 at 9:00AM) will be in person on campus. The next five week (through September 30) will also meet on campus.- except August 30 (Labor Day) when there will be no class. Starting October 4 class will be on-line until the last two weeks of the semester. Additional in person class meetings will be assigned if the professor determines a need. All exams will be taken on campus.

Course Outline: This course is an examination of both the theoretical and practical nature of public organizations. It is divided into three separate but related sections. The first section reviews classic and modern theories of organizational design and function. This section provides a foundation for understanding how public, private, and nonprofit organizations operate. This section will also illustrate the differences and similarities between public and private organizations. The works of Max Weber, Frederick Taylor, Luther Gulick, Chester Barnard, Robert Merton, Herbert Simon and others will be studied.

The second section examines several aspects of organizational operation. This includes a study of organizational communication; organizational decision-making; and organizational leadership and motivation. Basic concepts in each topic area will be analyzed and specific problems discussed in detail. The writings of Abraham Maslow, Douglas MacGregor, Frederick Moshier, Robert Dahl, Charles Lindblom and others will be studied.

The final section will examine the structure and functional style of several federal, state, and local government agencies and bureaus and apply many of the concepts discussed in the first two sections. The course concludes with the presentation of an overview that will include many of the concepts that had been covered.

This class is a core Masters of Public Administration course and therefore will combine a lecture, seminar, and on-line format. During the first five weeks each student will be expected to participate in class discussions. During the final 10 weeks each student will complete a weekly on-line assignment based on the week's assigned readings.

LEARNING OUTCOME: Students will understand the major theories of organizations and their terminology. They will also gain knowledge of the relevance of the "public" aspect of organizational thought and how to apply abstract theory to real organizational experiences.

TEXTBOOKS

CLASSICS OF ORGANIZATION THEORY - Shafritz, Ott. & Jang. 6th Edition, Publisher - Thomson Wadsworth ISBN 0-534-63156-8

UNDERSTANDING & MANAGING PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS - Rainey, 3rd Edition, Publisher - Jossey Bass ISBN 0-7879-6561-8

OFFICE HOURS AND PHONE NUMBER Dr. Caress' campus phone number is 678-839-4989, and e-mail is scaress@westga.edu. He will hold regular office hours during the week, but since this class meets on line he will answer his email messages every weekend and special office consultation hours will be available on the weekends by appointment.

ASSIGNMENTS There will be two exams (midterm & final), a written paper, an oral presentation, and five short written assignments. Both exams will be worth 25% of the total grade and will be given on campus, but if a student needs to take the exams on-line special arrangements will be made. During the first 5 weeks each student will give an oral presentation worth 10% of the grade. During the last 10 weeks each student will need to check the Vista Web CT site once a week and respond to the question about the assigned readings. The answers to the questions will be graded satisfactory or not and be worth 25% of the grade. Also each student will be required to write a short summary paper (10-12 pages), which will be worth 15% of the grade.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

August 15 - 1st Day of Class - Meets on campus - 9:00AM

Week 2. Read Rainey Chapter 1 Meets on campus - 9:00AM

Week 3 Read Rainey Chapter 2 Meets on campus - 9:00AM

Week 4. September 5 Labor day – No class

Week 5. Rainey Chapters 6 & 7 Meets on campus - 9:00AM

Week 6. **MIDTERM EXAM - September 19 at 10:00 AM on Carrollton Campus**

Week 7. Read Rainey Chapter 9 Meets on campus - 9:00AM

Week 8. Read Shafritz Chapter 10 Meets on campus - 9:00AM

October 10th - Last in person class

Week 9. Read Rainey Chapter 11- Organizational Culture - pg 307-315

Fall Break - NO assignment - October 17

October 24th --- On-Line Classes

Week 10. Read Shafritz Chapter 35 (Schein) Organizational Culture

Week 11. Read Shafritz Chapter 37 Trice & Beyer - Organizational Change

Week 12. Read Shafritz - Chapter 20 Blau and Scott - Formal & Informal organizations

Week 13. Read & Shafritz - Read Chap 39 Ouchi - Z Organizations

Week 14. Read Week 15 Shafritz Chapter 45 (Katz & Kahn)

FINAL PAPER DUE – November 21 (to be emailed or hand delivered)

FINAL EXAM on campus December 5 at 10:00AM