

Organizational Theory and Behavior (PA584)
The MPA Program
Sam Houston State University
Spring 2008

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Office Hours: MWF, 9:00-11:00; or by appointment.

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Course Objectives

PA584 is the core organization theory course for the MPA degree. Its purpose is to provide a broad perspective on the various frameworks, concepts and practices related to organizational forms, design issues and, most importantly, the people working in the organizations. Our goal is that everyone gains:

- An understanding of classical and contemporary organization theory and behavior, and the ability to translate and apply this understanding into practice;
- An understanding of organizational structures, as well as the environments within which organizations function and the relationship between the two;
- An understanding of the role of motivation in organizational success and different approaches for fostering it;
- An ability to diagnose and affect change within an organization (organization development);
- A future oriented perspective and direction for organizational renewal and growth;
- An appreciation of the special nature of public sector organizations;
- An individualized understanding of organizational realities through the development of a research paper.

Course Format

For the first time in our program, Organization Theory and Behavior is set to take the form of an online seminar. Traditional graduate seminars depend mightily on the timely preparation and active participation of its stakeholders. An online graduate seminar depends even more on such steady work and participation. Successful learning in this format depends on everyone being a contributor and thus being instrumental in the realization of a collective endeavor.

Our online seminar will consist of weekly readings and discussion on the assigned topics. To help regularize the work, it is necessary to establish when required responses and initial discussion should be completed. Tuesday will serve as our target day. The basic routine is that you commence with the week's readings, receive my questions by the end of business on Friday and get your responses in no later than the end of business on Tuesday.

Course Requirements

Participation (30%). Your sustained engagement in the course is expected. This means preparing thoroughly for weekly assignments and being active in discussions. The primary component of participation is answering the professor's questions related to each week's material. But participation can and should also be comprised of engagement in terms of offering additional reactions and/or questions of your own, as well as dialogue with the observations offered by other members of the seminar.

Reaction Papers (10%). On two occasions this term, you will write a short (approximately three pages) critical reaction paper on a topic/issue that arises in the weekly material.

Examination (30%). There will be one exam during the term. This evaluation will cover important points from readings and discussions. The exam will be in essay form and students will have approximately twelve days to complete the questions.

Organizational Analysis (30%). You are responsible for the undertaking and successful completion of a research paper based on an organizational analysis topic mutually agreed upon by student and professor. This involves embarking on the study of either a public or non-profit organization (it could be your own place of employment), or a subsystem of a larger organization (e.g. a specific department).

Grading Scale. The standard SHSU grading scale is in effect: 90-100 A, 80-89 B, 70-79 C, and below 70 warrants a failing grade according to the Graduate School.

Required Texts

Tompkins, Jonathon R. *Organization Theory and Public Management*. Thomson-Wadsworth, 2005.

Kettl Donald F. *System Under Stress: Homeland Security and American Politics*, 2nd edition. CQ Press, 2007.

Golembiewski, Robert T. and Glenn H. Varney. *Cases in Organization Development: Four Perspectives on Value-Guided Consultation*. F.E. Peacock Publishers, 2000.

Course Schedule

Week 1

January 22

What is Organization Theory – Its Landscape and Approaches and The Public Sector as a Distinct Organizational Environment

Readings: Tompkins, Chapter 1-2

Week 2

January 29

Weber's Theory of Bureaucracy and Scientific Management Theory

Readings: Tompkins, Chapter 3-5

Week 3

February 5

Administrative Management Theory

Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapter 6; Kettl, Chapter 1

Week 4

February 12

Pre-Human Relations Theory and Human Relations Theory

Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapters 7-8; Kettl, Chapter 2-3

Week 5

February 19

Natural Systems Perspective, Structural-Functional Theory and the Open Systems Perspective

Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapters 9-11

Week 6

February 26

Participative Management Theory and Human Resources Theory

Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapters 12-13; Kettl, Chapter 4-5

Week 7

March 4

Quality Management Theory and Organizational Culture and Symbolic Management

Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapter 14-15; Kettl, Chapter 6-7

Spring Break

Week 8

March 18

Exam Due

Assigned readings: None assigned

Week 9

March 25

Cases: Practical Applications, Insights and Diagnoses

Assigned readings: Golembiewski and Varney, I.1, I.3, I.5, I.14, and I.16

Week 10

April 1

Cases: Practical Applications, Insights and Diagnoses

Assigned readings: Golembiewski and Varney, I.19, II.1, II.2, and II.5

Week 11

April 8

Cases: Practical Applications, Insights and Diagnoses

Assigned readings: Golembiewski and Varney, II.10, II.12, and II.13

Week 12

April 15

Cases: Practical Applications, Insights and Diagnoses

Assigned readings: Golembiewski and Varney, III.1

Week 13

April 22

Continue and Intensify Work on Organizational Analysis Paper

Assigned readings: None assigned

Week 14

April 29

Continue and Intensify Work on Organizational Analysis Paper

Assigned readings: None assigned

Week 15

May 6

Organizational Analysis Due

