

University of Minnesota
Political Science 8360
01:25 P.M. - 03:20 P.M.
1450 Social Sciences

Scott Abernathy
Department of Political Science
1378 Social Sciences Building
phone: 612-624-3308
email: abernath@polisci.umn.edu
Office Hours: Tues. 3:30-4:30
And by appointment

Bureaucracy in America

Introduction

This course is an intensive study of bureaucratic politics. My goal is for the seminar participants to emerge with an understanding of the key ideas in the study of bureaucracy and an understanding of the ways in which engaging these ideas is prerequisite to an informed analysis of American politics and policy. My main questions are these:

- What are public bureaucracies, and why should we study them?
- What are the prerequisites to successful bureaucratic reform?
- What purchase do these perspectives give us on the functioning of American democracy?

I view this course as a continuation of the study of public administration in American politics introduced in the American graduate core course. I am expecting students to have already studied American politics at the graduate level. There will, of course, be gaps. Theoretical approaches derived from neoclassical economics will dominate our exploration, to the detriment of sociological, cognitive psychological, and Marxian approaches. In addition, some interesting empirical work on public bureaucracies, along with new methodological approaches, will not be covered in this theoretically oriented exploration. Finally, the focus will be almost exclusively on bureaucratic politics in the United States.

Seminar requirements and assignment of grades

1. Class participation

Please come to class having completed and prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Regular class attendance is expected. Please notify me in advance for absences due to participation in religious observances and scheduled activities of official University student organizations.

On one occasion, each student will be expected to lead the seminar discussion for 30-45 minutes on the week's readings. In preparation for this, each student is asked to prepare a 1 page handout to distribute in class on the day of the discussion. The goal of this assignment is not to summarize the readings, but to identify the key arguments of the work(s) and evaluate them on the basis of theory, evidence, and method.

Student participation will constitute 30% of the final grade.

2. Final examination

A two-hour closed-book final examination will be given Tuesday, April 11 during the regular class time. Students will be asked to answer 1 essay question from a list of 3. I will reserve the computer lab for the examination. Your answers to either question also do not need to (and shouldn't) involve a large amount of memorization. The point is to thoughtfully engage the theoretical approaches that we cover.

The exam will count towards 30% of the final grade.

3. Research Prospectus

Students will be asked to write a research prospectus (12-15 pages) and present it to the seminar.

Your prospectus should:

- identify an interesting research question that engages with the literature that we have read and discussed
- situate the question within the appropriate literature
- describe the method and evidence that you would use to answer your question

We will be encountering a variety of methodological approaches during the semester, including historical, observational, formal, and empirical methods. Your prospectus should explain why your proposed methodology (or methodologies) is appropriate to your study. The prospectus should not merely summarize the relevant literature. Rather, it should engage it, situating your exploration within the literature, pointing out commonalities, conflicts, and how your analysis may contribute to our understanding of public bureaucracies.

The prospectus is due on Monday, April 24. Please hand in a paper copy.

Participants will be asked to make a short (10 minute) presentation to the seminar describing the research proposal, the theoretical issues, and the proposed methods. The final two class sessions will be devoted to these presentations.

The prospectus and presentation will count towards 40% of the final grade.

Required Readings

The following texts have been ordered and are available for purchase at the University Bookstore:

Barnard, Chester I. 1938. *The Functions of the Executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Brehm, John and Scott Gates. 1997. *Working, Shirking, and Sabotage: Bureaucratic Responses to a Democratic Public*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

DiIulio, John J., Jr. 1987. *Governing Prisons*. New York: The Free Press.

Hecl, Hugh. 1977. *A Government of Strangers*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

Kaufman, Herbert. 1960. *The Forest Ranger*. Washington, D.C.: Resources for the Future.

Osborne, David and Ted Gaebler. 1992. *Reinventing Government*. New York: Plume.

Simon, Herbert A. (1945). *Administrative Behavior*. New York: The Free Press.

Wilson, James Q. (1989). *Bureaucracy*. Basic Books.

Most articles are available through JSTOR (www.jstor.org). I will place all other articles or chapters in the 12th floor lounge.

Weekly Schedule

January 17: Course introduction and completion of bureaucratic tasks

January 24: The problem of the bureaucracy

Chester Barnard. 1938. *The Functions of the Executive*, (Introduction, Chapters 2, 6-8, 11).

Max Weber. *Economy and Society*, (Chapter 11).

Herbert Kaufman. 1956. "Emerging Conflicts in the Doctrines of Public Administration." *APSR*, 50:1057-1073.

David Osborne and Ted Gaebler. 1993. *Reinventing Government*, (Chapters 1, 3, 5, and 11).

January 31: Economics

Terry Moe. 1984. "The New Economics of Organization." *AJPS*, 28(4):739-777.

Steven Rhoads. 1985. *The Economist's View of the World*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 4 and 9 (pp.39-58; 143-177).

Charles Perrow (1986). *Complex Organizations*. St. Louis: McGraw-Hill, Inc. Chapter 7 (pp.219-257).

February 7: Behavior

Herbert A. Simon. 1945. *Administrative Behavior*, (Chapters 1-5, 7).

Charles E. Lindblom. 1959. "The Science of Muddling Through." *Public Administration Review*, 19:79-88.

Jonathan Bendor and Terry Moe (1985). "An Adaptive Model of Bureaucratic Politics." *APSR*, 79(3):755-774.

February 14: Incentives and Tasks

Alchian, Armen A., and Harold Demsetz. 1972. "Production, Information, and Economic Organization." *American Economic Review*, 62:777-795.

Canice Prendergast (1999). "The Provision of Incentives in Firms." *Journal of Economic Literature*, 37:7-63.

Wilson, James Q. (1989). *Bureaucracy* (1-9, 19-20).

February 21: Information and Discretion

John Brehm and Scott Gates. 1997. *Working, Shirking, and Sabotage: Bureaucratic Responses to a Democratic Public*, (Chapters 1-7).

Kenneth Arrow (1963). "Uncertainty and the Welfare Economics of Medical Care." *The American Economic Review*, 53(5):941-973.

George Akerlof (1970). "The Market for Lemons." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 84(3):488-500.

February 28: Oversight

Mathew D. McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms," *AJPS* 28:165-179.

Terry Moe. 1987. "An Assessment of the Positive Theory of Congressional Dominance," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 12:475-520.

William J. Niskanen. 1968. "The Peculiar Economics of Bureaucracy." *American Economic Review*, 58:293-305.

March 7: Development

Skowronek, Stephen. (1982). *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapters 1-2, Introduction to Part II, Chapter 5, Introduction to Part III, and Chapter 6).

Daniel Carpenter (1998). "The Corporate Metaphor and Executive Department Centralization in the United States, 1888-1928." *Studies in American Political Development*, 12:162-203.

March 14: Culture

DiIulio, John J., Jr. 1987. *Governing Prisons*, (Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 6).

Kaufman, Herbert. 1960. *The Forest Ranger*, (All).

John DiIulio, Jr. (1994) "Principled Agents: The Cultural Biases of Behavior in a Federal Government Bureaucracy." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 4(3):277-318.

March 28: Domestic Policy—The Case of No Child Left Behind

Scott Abernathy. *No Child Left Behind and the Public Schools*. (manuscript).

Terry M. Moe. 2003 "Politics, Control, and the Future of School Accountability." (in Peterson and West, pp.80-106).

Jennifer Hoschschild. 2003 "Rethinking Accountability Politics." (in Peterson and West, pp.107-126).

April 4: Foreign Policy

Hugh Hecl. 1977. *A Government of Strangers*, (Chapters 1-3).

Graham T. Allison. 1969. "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." *APSR*, 58:689-718.

Jonathan Bendor and Thomas H. Hammond. 1992. "Rethinking Allison's Models." *APSR*, 86:301-322.

April 11: In-Class Exam

April 18: Working Session

April 25: Presentations

May 2: Presentations