PUBAFRS 8040: 
Doctoral Seminar in Public Organization Theory & Behavior 
Spring 2016 

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Office Hours: M: 3:00-4:00pm/by appointment 
Credit Hours: 3 
Time/Room: Monday 9:00 – 12:00/Page Hall 240 

COURSE DESCRIPTION 

The primary goal of this course is to provide students with an overview of the major theoretical perspectives and issues studied in organizational research. Formal organizations and organizing processes are now ubiquitous in modern society. They dominate most facets of our social life including education, employment, family, recreation, religion, and politics. Organizational scholars have developed a set of theoretical approaches in an effort to explain how organizations form, survive, grow, change, compete, interact, influence, and address problems that are internal and external to their boundaries. The field of organizational theory and behaviour has a rich history and tradition but is also constantly changing as new developments challenge our understanding about how organizations function. Each session will provide students with an introductory exposure to classical and contemporary perspectives covering both theoretical and empirical work. Due to time limitations, we will touch lightly on many important topics, and neglect others entirely, especially those that are not so pertinent for the study of government and non-profit organizations. Also, given the focus is on theoretical matters, methodological issues will move to the background. Empirical material will be used to illustrate how knowledge is produced from a particular standpoint and trying to answer particular questions. 

Because this is a doctoral level course, it is organized as a seminar. You are responsible for completing all assigned readings and being prepared for general discussions about the session topic and in-depth discussions about assigned articles. You will be required to submit discussion questions and weekly memos related to the readings for each week in advance of each class. 

COURSE EVALUATION 

Class Participation (10% of the grade) 

This course is organized as a seminar. Therefore, your co-operation and willingness to participate actively are critical for creating the best learning environment. You must come to each class prepared to answer the following questions regarding each of the readings: 

- What is the basic argument, and what are its strengths and weaknesses?
• If you disagree with the argument, what would it take to convince you?
• Under what circumstances and for what kinds of organizations is the argument meant to apply?
• What changes would be necessary to extend the argument to other empirical domains?
• What are the similarities and differences between this argument and others put forward by readings in the same and in previous weeks? and
• What, if any, alternative explanations could account for the empirical material?

One student will be assigned in each class session to make a brief presentation on the material for that week. The rest of us are responsible for asking probing questions of each presenter, identifying items that they have missed, and providing our thoughts on how best to apply the theory to the selected research question. Learning is a collective enterprise, so everybody will benefit from an engaged, intense, and constructive conversation.

**Weekly Memos (20% of the grade)**

Starting from Week 1, you will be required to write a concise memo relating to the reading for each week. The memos are due on each Saturday at 5pm and should be submitted through Carmen. The maximum length of the memos is five pages (Times New Roman 12 point font, double spaced, and one inch margin). Memos exceeding this page limit will NOT be graded.

In the memo, you need to develop a summary and critique of each required reading. The summary should provide a brief factual description of the main points of the readings. This does not involve any critique or judgment. Ideally, your description of what the authors are saying would be agreeable to both the supporters and opponents of this work. This will allow the reader to quickly identify the main contribution of the work. Once you have summarized the work, you will need to critique the work. Some questions that you may use to critique the work: (1) What is the essential thesis or argument of the paper, (2) What are the behavioral assumptions, (3) What is the underlying structure of the thesis/question, (4) Is it logically derived? (5) Is it grounded in empirical evidence? (6) Is it ideological, and (7) How persuasive is the development of the case.

I strongly encourage you to retain copies of the best memos of your classmates. These analyses and syntheses of the literature will be invaluable in preparation for the exam in this course as well as your Ph.D. qualifying exam.

**Term Paper (40% of the grade)**

You will need to write a paper on a topic of your interest. The topic must be related to one of the central research questions/areas of public management. The length of the paper should between 30 and 40 pages (double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, and one inch margin) including references, figures, tables and notes. You need to use APA guidelines for formatting references. Papers exceeding this page limit will be NOT be read and returned for revision. The paper can take any number of formats, including:

• A critical review of the literature on any theory or research topics discussed in the course
• A conceptual piece linking two or more of the theoretical frameworks and issues
• The theory/conceptual section of your dissertation proposal
You need to develop a short outline (2 pages, double spaced) describing the paper topic and goals. The outline is due on September 23. After submitting the outline (through Carmen), you are required to meet with me in person to discuss the paper topic during the week of September 26. You can schedule the meeting time during class on 9/26 or earlier through email. You will have an opportunity to receive feedback and revise your term paper before the final deadline. The deadline for submitting the working draft is Friday, November 18. The deadline to upload the final paper on Carmen is midnight Friday, November 18. The deadline to upload the final paper on Carmen is midnight Friday, December 2.

Final Exam (30% of the grade)

The final exam for this class is designed to mirror your Ph.D. candidacy exam. We will collectively identify a set of potential exam questions at the end of the semester. I will modify and select a subset of those questions for the exam. You will be able to choose from this subset of questions as you write your exam (i.e. 2 from 4). You will have two hours to take the exam and will only be allowed a bibliography of citations. The exam will take place on Dec 12.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term academic misconduct includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). Your work should be original. I will not accept excessive quotation and paraphrasing of other’s work with or without citation. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).

If you cannot deliver an assignment in person, you are responsible for submitting assigned material to me through some other means (Page Hall 350C, fax 292-2548 or email a Microsoft Word attachment to hassan.125@osu.edu). Informing me of your intention to be absent does not waive your obligation to submit assigned work. I will accept late work with a one-letter grade penalty each day that it is late.

Grade appeals

Your grades on assignments and exams are intended to reflect the overall quality of work you submit. If you think the grade does not reflect the quality of your performance on the assignment, you may appeal your grade on an assignment. To appeal a grade, submit a clear written explanation describing why you believe the assigned grade is inappropriate within one week after your work is returned. I will carefully consider all such appeals.

Disability Statement

“Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated. Students should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/.”
Mental Health Statement
As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life Counseling and Consultation Services (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 4th Floor of the PAES Building. 24 hour emergency help is also available through the National 24/7 Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org

COURSE OUTLINE (* Optional but highly recommended)

Week 0 (8/22): Background Readings/Preparation


Week 1 (8/29): Agency Theory and Research on Bureaucratic Politics


**Week 2 (9/12): Transaction Cost Theory and Research on Contracting**


**Week 3 (9/19): Resource Dependence Theory and Research on Organizational Collaboration**


**Week 4 (9/26): Contingency Theory and Research on Organizational Design**


**Week 5 (10/3): Institutional Theory and Research on Organizational Change**


**Week 6 (10/10): Embeddedness Theory and Research on Alliances/Networks**


Week 7 (10/17): Theories and Research on Organizational Decision Making


Week 8 (10/24): Social Exchange Theory and Research on Employee Attitudes/Behavior


Week 9 (10/31): Social Identity Theory and Research on Employee Behavior


**Week 10 (11/7): Goal Setting Theory and Research on Work Motivation**


**Week 11 (11/14): Theories and Research on Performance Management**


**Week 12 (11/21): Theories and Research on Prosocial Motivation**


**Week 13 (11/28): Theories and Research on Managerial Leadership**


**Week 14 (12/5): Representative Bureaucracy and Research on Workplace Diversity**


