

Organizational Theory and Behavior (PA584)
Sam Houston State University
Fall 2009
Thursday 6:00-8:45
The University Center 311

Professor: **Dr. John M. Bolus**

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Office Hours: Thursday 4:30-6 here at the University Center 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, ideas and practices related to organizational forms, design issues, and just as importantly the people working in the organizations. We will work to achieve:

- A conceptual understanding of classical and more contemporary theories of organization theory and behavior;
- An understanding of organizational structures, as well as the environments within which organizations function and the relationship between the two;
- An understanding of the human element in organizational success, including the role of motivation and different approaches for fostering it;
- A diagnostic eye for organizational redesign and development, with an emphasis on issues related to timing and implementation;
- A practical orientation in the study of organizational frameworks and approaches;
- An appreciation of the special nature of public sector organizations;
- An individualized understanding of organizational realities through the development of an organization analysis paper.

Class Format

Our seminar sessions will consist of limited lecturing (often with Dr. Bolus and a weekly discussant) and a great deal of discussion on the assigned topics. You are expected to read the assigned material before class. That is a necessary condition for effective learning and participation. Additionally, professional growth and participation depends on curiosity, a desire to engage others and, last but not least, a commitment to be part of a successful collective endeavor.

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.

On a few occasions I will provide you with handouts (either to review together in class or to read for the next class) to supplement our study of particular topics and points of interest.

Requirements

Reaction Papers (10%). On one occasion this term, you will write a short (approximately three pages) critical reaction paper on a topic/issue that arises in the weekly material or seminar discussion and that catches your eye and prompts you to want to further engage the topic/issue.

Discussant (10%). On one occasion you will be required to play a leading role in the evening's discussion on the assigned topics and readings, prompting the group to examine key points from the material, perhaps posing questions/criticisms, and of course answering my questions.

Examination (30%). There will be one "take home" examination during the term. The exam will cover important points from readings and seminar discussions. The format is a combination of short answer and essay. Please note: the completed exam must be turned in or before the due date.

Organizational Analysis (35%). 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).

Presentation (5%). Toward the end of the term you will make a presentation of your research project because your inquiry into a particular set of issues for an organization is of interest to all of us. I will provide a few basic guidelines like presentation length well in advance but the content and medium of your presentation are up to you.

Participation (10%). Your sustained engagement in the course is expected. This means preparing thoroughly for our meetings and being active in class discussions. PA584 is a seminar and we all no doubt recognize that there are distinct advantages in such an environment. But remember, successful learning in a seminar format depends on everyone being a contributor.

Grading Scale. The standard graduate level SHSU grading scale is in effect: 90-100 A, 80-89 B, 70-79 C, and you will not receive a passing grade if you finish the term below a 70 percent.

Academic Dishonesty

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experience both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work (exams, quizzes, and attendance) will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate

disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Americans with Disabilities Act

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe a religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). This request must be made in the first fifteen days of the semester or the first seven days of a summer session in which the absence(s) will occur. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

Visitors in the Classroom

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

Course Schedule

Week 1 -- August 27

Course Introduction and What is Organization Theory – Its Landscape and Approaches

Readings: Tompkins, Chapter 1

Week 2 -- September 3

The Public Sector as a Distinct Organizational Environment

Readings: Tompkins, Chapter 2-3; Kettle, preface

Week 3 -- September 10

Weber's Theory of Bureaucracy

Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapter 4; Kettle, Chapter 1

Discussant:

Week 4 -- September 17

Scientific Management Theory

Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapter 5; Kettl, Chapter 2

Discussant:

Week 5 -- September 24

Administrative Management Theory

Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapter 6; Kettl, Chapter 2

Discussant:

Week 6 -- October 1

Pre-Human Relations Theory and Human Relations Theory

Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapters 7-8

Discussant:

Week 7 -- October 8

Natural Systems Perspective and Structural-Functional Theory

Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapters 9-10

Discussants:

Week 8 -- October 15

Participative Management Theory

Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapter 12; Kettl, Chapter 3

Discussant:

Week 9 -- October 22

Human Resources Theory

Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapter 13; Kettl, Chapter 4

Discussant:

Week 10 -- October 29

Quality Management Theory

Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapter 14; Kettl, Chapters 5

Reaction Paper Due

Discussant:

Week 11 – November 5
Organizational Culture and Symbolic Management
Assigned readings: Tompkins, Chapter 15
Exam Posted/Distributed on Nov. 7

Discussant:

Week 12 – November 12
DHS: Balancing Security and Liberty
Assigned readings: Kettl, Chapter 6

Week 13 – November 19
Organizational Culture and Symbolic Management
Assigned readings: Kettl, Chapter 7
Exam Due in class

Week 14 – November 26
Thanksgiving No Class Meeting

Week 15 – December 3
No Assigned Readings
Presentations

Week 16 – December 10
No Assigned Readings
Presentations
Organizational Analysis Paper Due