Introduction

As part of the core curriculum of the MPA program this course focuses on the theories and applications of organization management as it applies to public and nonprofit agencies. This course builds around a series of class sessions designed to show how we can understand organizational behavior through the medium of different images of organization and behavioral actions as individuals in public office. Each class session draws attention to significant aspects of the organizing process, and provides distinctive means of understanding and managing organizational situations. A section of the course is devoted to public administration theory as it relates to democratic institutions.

MPA 602: Course Objectives

The course has three main objectives. First, to provide students with a systematic understanding of key issues for managing public organizations and familiarize them with administrative theories that can be related to own organizational experiences. Second, to show how these ideas can serve as practical tools for the analysis and management of organizational situations. Finally, at least, the overall intent of the course is to provide information, enhance skills and broaden perspectives on organization management, individual action and organization behavior in support of public interest.

Textbook:


Supplemental Reading
Course Requirements:

1. Class Participation 10%
2. Discursive Writings 20%
3. Final Case study 40%
4. Midterm 30%

Case Study Paper Requirements

The purpose of the case study is to create an opportunity to apply the ideas and concepts discussed in the course and analyze them using a real organizational situation. The papers should run from 10-15 pages long (double-spaced, APA style) and draw upon your experiences (preferably first hand) in real management situations in an organization. This may include your on-the-job experience, cases you have studied or certain perception about administration that you feel strongly about. The paper would be judged on the following basis:

- To what extent does it draw upon course material, class discussion and existing literature on public administration?
- Clearly explain the organizational setting and the process of interaction of members in the organization.
- Explain how you, as an actor, understand and share the values that are formed in the process of interaction with the people in your case study.
- Discuss which metaphor applies well in your case study and why do you think so. Give examples.
- How clearly is the paper written? Does the paper effectively present the arguments in an understandable fashion?
- Is the paper presented appropriately? (e.g., spelling grammar, clear section headings).

Finally, some of your thoughts about the case are highly encouraged. Examples of possible questions that you might write on might include the following. These are simply suggestions feel free to pick your own.

- Based on this experience, what general advice could you give concerning the workings of organizational processes?
- What have you learnt and what is the significance of your reaction to this experience?
- For the better, what could have been different in what circumstances?
- What general conclusions can you draw from this case paper?
Be sure to maintain a professional stance in relation to matters which are sensitive and confidential and disguise the source if necessary through the use of appropriate pseudonyms.

Discursive Writing

Discursive discussion pieces should not exceed two pages. The creativity should reflect your thoughts about themes discussed in class and matters related to readings. You should bring in evidence and show different sides of an argument. An example of a typical discursive piece should include at least the following sections:

1. State the theme of the discussion. Explain what you understand by that and how different or similar is it from class discussion.
2. The body of the paper should be devoted to theoretical discussion supporting your thoughts and use examples from real life experience/situation. You may use different sources to support your argument.
3. The last part should be used to make a conclusion and implications of your thoughts.

Midterm Exam

Materials covered from Session 1 through 5 will be tested in the Midterm exam. It will be comprehensive with essay and short questions. Bring your own exam book.

Class participation:
Assigned readings must be completed prior to coming to the class. Discussions will be based on assigned readings. Anyone may be asked to lead a panel discussion.

Especial credit will be applied to students who participate in the Public Service Speaker Series and Department sponsored panel discussion. Our first sponsored event is on September 5, 2003 at 6:00 p.m. in the Great Hall of the Hill University Center (corner of 15th street and 8th Av). A panel of specialist will talk about the Tax Reform legislation and its implications for future Alabamians. At the end of the semester, these special credits will be applied as extra points to your class participation grades.

Grading Policy

Final grades will be assessed on an A-B-C-F scale. Late assignments will not be accepted except under emergency circumstances. Final grades will be assessed on an A-B-C-F scale using the following point ranges:

A = 90 – 100
B = 80 – 89
C = 68 – 79
F = below 68

Pluses and minuses will be shown on graded assignments for advisory purposes only.
NOTE: Incomplete is not allowed. There are no make-up tests. Students who need special assistance should inform the instructor of their needs at the beginning of the course. Any gesture or communication that connotes abusive or discriminatory behavior will not be tolerated in the classroom.

Tentative Class Schedule

Session 1 (Aug 23): Course overview. Understanding organizations and organization behavior.


Session (Sep 6): LABOR DAY (NO CLASS)

Session 3 (Sep 13): Mechanical Images of Organization—the traditional approach to PA. Readings: Images Chap. 2; COT: 21, 22, 23, 74, 75 & 77.


(Oct 18): NO CLASS (Dr. Haque in NASPAA conference). Readings: Classics: Chapter 37 – 44.


Session 10 (Nov 8): MIDTERM EXAM (Please bring your blue exam book)


Session 13 (Nov. 29): Supplemental Reading from Spicer: Chap. 4-7. *COT*: 19, 35, 70 & 71; *Classics*: Chapter 45 – 49.

Session 14 (Dec. 6): Final Review

Session 15 (Dec. 13): **Case study presentation and final paper due.**