

# **Bureaucratic Politics**

POS 6933, Sect. 5066

Department of Political Science  
University of Florida  
Fall 2006

Professor: Michael T. Heaney  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3pm-4:30pm; Thursdays, 4pm-5:30pm; and by appointment  
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Time: Class Meets on Wednesdays, 3pm-6pm (periods 8-10)  
Location: Anderson 0034  
Final Exam: Tuesday, December 12, 10am-noon

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

While it is sometimes said that public policy in the United States is made according to democratic or majoritarian principles, a more empirically accurate description is that policy is the product of negotiation and interaction among multiple institutions contending for power. Since policies are ultimately implemented (or not) by bureaucratic agencies (and, often, low-ranking, street-level administrative officials), a vital part of these negotiations involves attempts to motivate, cajole, or undermine the work of bureaucracies. Bureaucratic work is especially limited by bounded rationality, uncertainty, incomplete intraorganizational control, and threats from the external environment, though it is sometimes pushed forward by attention from outside observers, such as members of Congress and interest groups. This course brings to bear a variety of theoretical perspectives – derived from economics, sociology, psychology, and political science – to examine the efforts of these myriad actors to influence the work of bureaucracy in the United States.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. *Attendance and Active Participation.* Students are expected to attend all sessions of the course and be prepared to offer informed commentary during class discussions. Please show up with printed copies of the assigned readings in hand so that you can refer to them if necessary. The reason you are attending classes in person – as opposed taking an on-line seminar – is in order to interact directly with the professor and your colleagues. These interactions are vital to the learning process and will be weighted appropriately in determining your final course grade. (20% of the course grade)

2. *Weekly Memos.* Each week students are expected to submit a 500-word summary and critique of the readings for the week. Memos are due each week at 5pm on Tuesday. Send the memos to the professor at [mtheaney@ufl.edu](mailto:mtheaney@ufl.edu). (30% of the course grade)
3. *Case Study.* Students are expected to write one case study on a bureaucratic agency of their choosing, subject to the approval of the instructor. The goal of the case study should be to illuminate the behavior of the agency in light of the theoretical perspectives discussed in the course. To what extent do theories of bureaucracy explain the case and to what extent does the case challenge existing theories? The paper must be 2,500 to 3000 words in length, without counting appropriate citations to published works. The case study may be submitted in any week of the semester. The student is excused from writing a weekly memo in the week that the case study is submitted. Manuscripts must be submitted to <http://www.turnitin.com>. (20% of course grade)
4. *Final Exam.* An in-class, closed-book final exam will be administered in Anderson 0034 on Tuesday, December 12, 10am-noon. The exam will be a mix of short-answer and essay questions based on the reading materials for the course. (30% of course grade)
5. *E-mail.* Students are expected to provide the professor with an e-mail address that they check regularly. Announcements or updates may be sent to the class via e-mail.

## REQUIRED READINGS

Students are expected to read carefully all of the readings listed below in the course outline. The various recommended methods of obtaining the readings are listed in brackets []. Some readings will be available for purchase, others may be downloaded through the University of Florida libraries, and still others will be distributed by the professor in print or electronic format.

1. *Books for purchase at UF-affiliated bookstores*
  - John J. Dilulio, Jr. 1987. *Governing Prisons: A Comparative Study of Correctional Management*. New York: The Free Press.
  - Martha S. Feldman. 1989. *Order without Design: Information Production and Policy Making*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
  - Joel D. Aberbach. 1990. *Keeping a Watchful Eye: The Politics of Congressional Oversight*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

- Ronald N. Johnson and Gary D. Libecap. 1994. *The Federal Civil Service System and the Problem of Bureaucracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- James G. March. 1994. *A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen*. New York: The Free Press.
- Paul C. Light. 1997. *The Tides of Reform: Making Government Work, 1945-1995*. New Haven Yale University Press.
- Stephen Goldsmith and William D. Eggers. 2004. *Governing by Network: The New Shape of the Public Sector*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Kenneth J. Meier and Laurence J. O'Toole, Jr. 2006. *Bureaucracy in a Democratic State: A Governance Perspective*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

2. *Readings distributed by the professor for no cost*

- Max Weber. 1968. *Economy and Society*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. New York: Bedminister Press. Chapter 11.
- John Brehm and Scott Gates. 2007. *Functions of the Public Executive: Teaching, Managing Tasks, Brokering Trust*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Gregory A. Huber. 2007. *The Craft of Bureaucratic Neutrality: Interests and Influence in Government Regulation of Occupational Safety*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

3. *A required reading packet is available for purchase through Orange and Blue Textbooks, 309 NW 13<sup>th</sup> Street.*

4. *All other readings are available on-line through the University of Florida libraries.*

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines of the University of Florida. Among other things, this means: (1) Students must submit only their own, original work in fulfillment of course requirements; (2) Consulted works must be cited using an accepted documentation style; (3) Examinations are to be taken without the aid of notes, books, or other people; (4) Students must provide truthful representations to the professor on issues such as reasons for missing class. Violating this policy may cause a

student to suffer severe grade penalties, failure of the class, academic probation, or expulsion from the university.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. The use of wireless communication devices (such as cell phones or pagers) during class is prohibited. Please turn them off. (Do not put your cell phone on “vibrate.”) The professor reserves the right to confiscate devices operating in violation of this policy.
2. Students requiring any special accommodation for this course are responsible for making an appointment to see the professor at the beginning of the semester. Every effort will be made to meet your needs in accordance with University guidelines.
3. The lectures and handouts of this course are the intellectual property of the professor. You do not have the right to sell your notes or recordings from this class for profit without the express written consent of the professor. No recording devices are permitted in class without the consent of the professor.

## **Course Outline**

### **PART I: BUREAUCRACY AND GOVERNANCE**

Week 1 – August 23. Introduction to the Course

Week 2 – August 30. Bureaucratic Structures

- Max Weber. 1968. *Economy and Society*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. New York: Bedminister Press. Chapter 11. [Handout from the professor]
- John J. Dilulio, Jr. 1987. *Governing Prisons: A Comparative Study of Correctional Management*. New York: The Free Press. [Purchase]

Week 3 – September 6. The Political Development of American Bureaucracy

- Ronald N. Johnson and Gary D. Libecap. 1994. *The Federal Civil Service System and the Problem of Bureaucracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [Purchase]

## PART II: INSIDE BUREAUCRACY

### Week 4 – September 13. Individual Decision Making in Organizational Contexts

- Herbert A. Simon. 1947. *Administrative Behavior*. New York: Free Press. Chapters 4-5. [Reading Packet]
- James G. March. 1994. *A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen*. New York: The Free Press. [Purchase]

### Week 5 – September 20. The Role of Executives in Public Bureaucracies

- Gary J. Miller. 1992. *Managerial Dilemmas: The Political Economy of Hierarchy*. Chapter 11. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Reading Packet]
- John Brehm and Scott Gates. 2007. *Functions of the Public Executive: Teaching, Managing Tasks, Brokering Trust*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. [Electronic copy provided by professor]

### Week 6 – September 27. Lower-Level Participants

- Michael Lipsky. 1980. *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in the Public Services*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chapters 1-2. [Reading Packet]
- James Q. Wilson. 1989. *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 9. [Reading Packet]
- Martha S. Feldman. 1989. *Order without Design: Information Production and Policy Making*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. [Purchase]

### Week 7 – October 4. Accidents and Catastrophes

- Martin Landau. 1969. “Redundancy, Rationality, and the Problem of Duplication and Overlap.” *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (July): 346-358. [Access through J-Stor]
- Chales Perrow. 1984. *Normal Accidents: Living with High-Risk Technologies*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 3. [Reading Packet]
- C.F. Larry Heinmann. 1993. “Understanding the Challenger Disaster: Organizational Structure and the Design of Reliable Systems.”

*American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 2 (June): 421-435.  
[Access through J-Stor]

- Diane Vaughan. 1999. "The Dark Side of Organizations: Mistake, Misconduct, and Disaster." *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 25: 271-305. [Access through J-Stor]

### **PART III: POLITICAL ENVIRONMENTS OF BUREAUCRACY**

#### Week 8 – October 11. Managing Organizational Environments

- Philip Selznick. 1949. *TVA and the Grass Roots: A Study in the Sociology of Formal Organization*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 1. [Reading Packet]
- Charles E. Lindblom. 1959. "The Science of Muddling Through." *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Spring): 79-88. [Access through J-Stor]
- Oliver E. Williamson. 1981. "The Economics of Organization: The Transaction Cost Perspective." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 87, No. 3 (November): 548-577. [Access through J-Stor]
- Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (April): 147-160. [Access through J-Stor]
- Terry M. Moe. 1984. "The New Economics of Organization." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (November): 739-777. [Access through J-Stor]

#### Week 9 – October 18. Regulation

- George J. Stigler. 1971. "The Theory of Economic Regulation." *The Bell Journal of Economics and Management Science*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring): 3-21. [Access through J-Stor]
- Sam Peltzman. 1976. "Toward a More General Theory of Regulation." *Journal of Law and Economics*, Vol. 19, No. 2, (August): 211-240. [Access through J-Stor]
- Terry M. Moe. 1985. "Control and Feedback in Economic Regulation: The Case of the NLRB." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (December): 1094-1116. [Access through J-Stor]

- James Q. Wilson. 1989. *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 5. [Reading Packet]
- Lawrence S. Rothenberg. 1994. *Regulation, Organizations, and Politics: Motor Freight Policy at the Interstate Commerce Commission*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Chapter 3. [Reading Packet]

#### Week 10 – October 26. Congressional Oversight

- Joel D. Aberbach. 1990. *Keeping a Watchful Eye: The Politics of Congressional Oversight*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. [Purchase]

#### Week 11 – November 1. Administrative Procedures and Interest Group Influence

- Mathew D. McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. “Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms.” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (February): 165-179. [Access through J-Stor]
- Matthew D. McCubbins, Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast. 1987. “Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Control.” *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Fall): 243-277. [Access through J-Stor]
- Steven J. Balla. 1998. “Administrative Procedures and Political Control of the Bureaucracy” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 92, No. 3 (September 1998), pp. 663-673. [Access through J-Stor]
- Steven J. Balla and John R. Wright. 2001. “Interest Groups, Advisory Committees, and Congressional Control of the Bureaucracy.” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (October): 799-812. [Access through J-Stor]
- Jason Webb Yackee and Susan Webb Yackee. 2006. “A Bias Towards Business? Assessing Interest Group Influence on the U.S. Bureaucracy.” *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (February): 128-139. [Access through University of Florida E-journals Locator]

#### Week 12 – November 8. Networks

- Daniel P. Carpenter. 2001. *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies*,

1862-1928. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Introduction and Chapter 1. [Reading packet]

- Keith Provan and H. Brinton Milward. 2001. "Do Networks Really Work? A Framework for Evaluating Public-Sector Organizational Networks. *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 61 (July/August). [Access University of Florida E-journals Locator]
- Stephen Goldsmith and William D. Eggers. 2004. *Governing by Network: The New Shape of the Public Sector*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. [Purchase]

Week 13 – November 15. Political Conflict and Strategic Neutrality

- Gregory A. Huber. 2007. *The Craft of Bureaucratic Neutrality: Interests and Influence in Government Regulation of Occupational Safety*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Paper copy made available for duplication by professor]

#### **PART IV: REFORMING BUREAUCRACY**

Week 14 – November 29. The Politics of Bureaucratic Reform

- Paul C. Light. 1997. *The Tides of Reform: Making Government Work, 1945-1995*. New Haven Yale University Press. [Purchase]

Week 15 – December 6. Bureaucracy and Democracy

- Kenneth J. Meier and Laurence J. O'Toole, Jr. 2006. *Bureaucracy in a Democratic State: A Governance Perspective*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Final Exam – Tuesday, December 12, 10am-noon

**HAVE A HAPPY HOLIDAY! ☺**