Public Administration 504: Organization Theory
Spring 2019

Instructor information

Gordy Pace

- **Email:** gordy.pace@umontana.edu (If you email me I will usually respond promptly, but please allow for a 24-hour response time)
- **Phone:** (406) 243-2371 (office); (406) 370-3075 (cell) - Please call M-F between 8-5
- **Office:** Law School 151
- **Office hours:** Tuesdays and Wednesdays 3-4:30 p.m. Please make an appointment. Flexible office hours are available with advance notice.
- **One-on-one conferences:** I encourage you to schedule 30-minute one-on-one conferences with me two different times during the semester. I will provide a reminder roughly five weeks and ten weeks into the semester.

Course description

This course provides a comprehensive overview of organization theory, particularly as it relates to public management. Organization theory is not a single theory. Rather, "there are many theories that attempt to explain and predict how organizations and the people in them will behave in varying organizational structures, cultures, and circumstances." (Shafritz, Ott and Jang, 2016) The field is multidisciplinary in nature with contributions from sociologists, anthropologists, economists, psychologists, and political scientists. Our goal is to determine what the major schools of thought can teach us about how to structure and manage complex organizations, and to develop our own theory of organizational innovation appropriate to 21st century circumstances.

Organization Theory is a required core course for the University of Montana’s MPA program. It is run as a seminar with students analyzing, writing about, explaining, and comparing literature in the field of organization theory.

Student learning objectives

- Understand the major concepts or schools of thought that shape organization theory
- Develop a concept of what it means to lead, manage, and organize well by applying theory to practice
- Understand similarities and differences between the purpose and operating environments of public and private organizations
- Understand the concept of organizational culture, how to assess it, and how effective leaders shape culture and transform organizations
- Demonstrate graduate level writing, public speaking, critical thinking, research, and analytical skills
In exploring these, the course will introduce and begin to develop core national (NASPAA) MPA competencies to lead and manage in public governance.

Course readings

Required texts

Rainey, Hal G. *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations*
Khademian, Anne M. *Working With Culture: The Way the Job Gets Done in Public Programs*

Required supplements

Additional supplemental materials will be provided in Moodle. Most of the additional readings are from *Classics of Organization Theory* 8th Edition (Shafriz, Ott, and Jang)

Course expectations

Class preparation and participation

As a small seminar class, your participation in discussion is a must. Everyone—students and the instructor—can and should learn from one another. Learning is a process and is enhanced by dialogue. Additionally, engaging the material requires that students come to class having rigorously read the assignments so that they are prepared to thoughtfully and productively contribute to the class discussion.

Attendance and tardiness

The course meets just one time per week so attendance is crucial. You are allotted one absence for the semester for any reason. Additional absences will impact your grade. Students who are frequently late to class or who leave early should also expect to have their overall grade reduced.

Laptop and mobile device policy

Laptops, tablets and mobile devices are permitted as long as they are used in a way that complements learning. Please make sure cell phones are silenced during class.

Using Moodle

Course materials, including supplemental readings, will be posted in Moodle. In addition, all writing assignments will be submitted using the Moodle assignment dropbox.
Guidelines for written work

Strong writing skills are essential in public service work. All written assignments should meet the following criteria unless otherwise noted in the assignment instructions or the professor:

1. All work must be typed, double-spaced, utilize 12 point font, and have one inch margins.
2. Citations should follow a proper style guidelines such as, MLA, Chicago, or APA (in-text citations and a reference page are necessary)
3. Assignments are due on the date listed in the course schedule; late assignments will not be accepted. If a student is absent on the day an assignment is due, he/she should make arrangements to turn in the assignment ahead of time.
4. All assignments must be turned in electronically (unless otherwise noted in the course syllabus) via Microsoft Word to the designated Moodle assignment dropbox. If the instructor cannot open the document, the student will not receive a grade. Submission of assignments via e-mail will not be accepted unless specific arrangements have been made.
5. Written work will be evaluated both in terms of content, following instructions, organization, and writing/grammar.
6. Student collusion is not allowed for individual assignments and will be treated as an act of plagiarism.

The University of Montana Writing and Public Speaking Center is a great resource to review written assignments and readily available to meet the needs of students. Please set up an appointment in advance for staff to review your work before assignments are due.

MPA portfolio

You should set aside work from MPA classes for the final portfolio required for completion of the MPA degree. Your portfolio must include three public administration-related research papers that are individual (not group) projects that demonstrate you ability to design, conduct, and analyze research; and evidence of your ability to work cooperatively in a team setting, which may stem from an independent study, internship, or traditional course.

Assignments

Theory critiques

There will be several weeks where you will write a concise 700-word critique of a piece of assigned reading. See the weekly schedule for due dates.

Critiques should include the following:

- A summary of the reading that includes identification of the main argument(s) of the piece
The strict word limit is imposed to build the habit of identifying core concepts and communicating in a simple, compact manner.

**PROJECT: Detecting an organization's cultural commitments**

In *Working with Culture: The Way the Job Gets Done in Public Organizations*, Anne Khademian contends that "Students of public administration or public management will find that the concept of culture is intricately connected to program performance and that the tending of culture is an essential responsibility of top managers."

For this project, you will work with a federal, state, or local government or nonprofit organization to:

- Map the roots of the program's culture (task, resources, and environment);
- Identify and connect program commitments to those roots; and
- Identify potentially beneficial change and how that change might be facilitated

Use Khademian, chapter 5 as a guide for this exercise. Your research should include interviews with the organization's top leaders, managers, and staff at various levels of the organization as well as external stakeholders. You should also make observations and gather written documents and other artifacts that provide insight into program culture.

You will submit a 3,000-word written assessment by April 12

**Develop a leadership framework**

Reflect on what you've learned in the course and how it connects to your experiences with leadership to develop a personal leadership framework. This framework will represent your perspective on "how organizations and the people in them will behave in varying organizational structures, cultures, and circumstances," and explore how you envision applying that perspective in future leadership roles.

Consider the following questions in your reflection:

- What are your leadership aspirations?
- What leadership values, qualities, and skills do you most admire in others?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses as a leader?
- What is your viewpoint on a leader's role, especially when it comes to influencing organizational culture?
- What do you believe about motivation and how to influence the way people behave in organizations? How will that influence your leadership style?
- What do you believe about the role structure plays in an organization's effectiveness?
- What new perspective(s) did you gain in this class?
- What is your strategy for continuing to develop your leadership capacity?
You will present your leadership framework in a 10-15 minute presentation on April 22.

**Grading**

You can earn one of three grades in this class: A, B or C. There are no pluses or minuses for the final grades in this class.

During the semester I will not assign grades or scores to individual assignments; instead I will provide written or verbal feedback on the assignments that you turn in. In my feedback I will identify the strong aspects of the assignment, point out information or concepts that were missing from your assignment, and/or suggest additional work (thinking, writing, reading, etc.) that you need to do in order to improve your understanding of the topic. Ideally this feedback will help you deepen your understanding of the material and concepts.

This class employs something called contract grading. One of the goals of contract grading is to reduce the anxiety about grades that students often experience. Another goal is to encourage students to develop their own motivations for excellence. A key aspect of contract grading is to emphasize qualitative evaluative feedback over quantitative assessments of students’ written work.

In courses with contract grading, the instructor sets a clear and unambiguous bar for earning a B in the course. If students meet this bar, they are guaranteed a B in the course. Students must go above and beyond this bar in order to earn an A in the course, and they must fall below the bar in order to earn a C in the course.

**Grading contract**

You are guaranteed a final grade of B in this class if you:

1. Meet the stated criteria for all assignments;
2. Meet due dates for all assignments;
3. Attend all classes, arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class;
4. Actively participate in all class discussions and exercises;
5. Give thoughtful feedback during peer exercises and workshops during class; and
6. Edit all assignments so that they conform to the conventions of academic English;

The grade of B does not derive from my judgment about the quality of your writing, the uniqueness of your ideas, or your enthusiasm for qualitative research methods. Instead, you will earn a B in this course entirely on the basis of what you do (not on how well you do it). If you meet the conditions above, you will earn a B in this class. However, your final grade will fall rapidly below a B if you do not meet these conditions. I will let you know via email or in person if you are in danger of falling below a B in the course.

A grade of A in this course does rest on my judgment about the quality of your writing, the uniqueness of your ideas and the depth of your understanding of qualitative research methods. To earn an A in the course, you must do everything that you must do to earn a B as well as:
1. Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the material and concepts presented in class
2. Produce creative, unique, thoughtful assignments;
3. Receive critiques during peer exercises and workshops in a professional and non-defensive manner;
4. Turn in papers that are concise, carefully edited and easy to read

To earn an A, your performance in all aspects of this class must be exceptionally high quality. I will let you know via email or in person if you are in the running for an A in the course.

You are welcome to discuss this grading contract, your performance in the course or your concerns about your final grade with me during my office hours. Grade questions and concerns are always best addressed earlier rather than later.

**Course schedule**

This schedule may be modified as the semester progresses.

Readings marked with an asterisk* will be available in Moodle.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Discussion Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
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<td>January 14</td>
<td><strong>Getting started</strong></td>
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<td>• Getting to know each other</td>
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<td>• Course overview and expectations</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>Overview of organization theory</strong></td>
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<td>January 21</td>
<td>Introduction to classical organization theory</td>
<td>READ</td>
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<td>(Holiday,</td>
<td>Rainey Ch. 1: <em>The Challenge of Effective Public Organizations and Management</em></td>
<td>Rainey Ch. 2: <em>Understanding the Study of Organizations</em></td>
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<td>class online)</td>
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<td>Shafritz, Ott and Jang: <em>Classical Organization Theory (Chapter 1)</em></td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>What makes public organizations distinctive?</strong></td>
<td>READ</td>
<td>Due Jan. 25 : Theory critique of Smith or Taylor</td>
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<td>January 28</td>
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<td>Rainey Ch. 3: <em>What Makes Public</em></td>
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| Week 4 | February 4 | Adam Smith and Frederick Winslow Taylor | Organizations Distinctive
Smith: *Of the Division of Labor*
Taylor: *The Principles of Scientific Management* | Analyzing the environment of public organizations
Max Weber and Luther Gulick | READ
Rainey Ch. 4: Analyzing the Environment of Public Organizations
Weber: *Bureaucracy*
Gulick: Notes on the Theory of Organizations* | Due Feb 1: Theory critique of Weber or Gulick
Make appointment for 1:1 conference with instructor |

| Week 5 | February 11 | Working with culture
Culture as a management tool; A cultural roots framework | READ
Khademian Chs. 1-3 | 1:1 conference with instructor by Feb. 15 |

| Week 6 | February 18 (Holiday, class online) | The impact of political power and public policy
Extending the cultural roots model; Detecting cultural commitments; Getting the job done with culture | READ
Rainey Ch. 5: The Impact of Political Power and Public Policy
Khademian Chs. 4-6 |

| Week 7 | February 25 | Organizational goals and effectiveness | READ
Rainey Ch. 6: | Due Feb. 21: Theory critique of Simon or Selznick |
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<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Formulating and achieving purpose</th>
<th>READ</th>
<th>Due March 1: Theory critique of Follett or Mayo</th>
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<td>March 4</td>
<td>Human Resource Theory, or the Organizational Behavior Perspective</td>
<td>Rainey Ch. 7: <em>Formulating and Achieving Purpose</em></td>
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<td>Mary Parker Follett and Elton Mayo</td>
<td>Shafritz, Ott and Jang: <em>Human Resource Theory, or the Organizational Behavior Perspective</em> (Chapter 3)*</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>People in public organizations: motivation and motivation theory</td>
<td>READ</td>
<td>Due March 8: Theory critique of Maslow or McGregor</td>
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<td>March 11</td>
<td>Abraham Maslow and Douglas McGregor</td>
<td>Rainey Ch. 9: <em>Understanding people in Public Organizations: Motivation and Motivation Theory</em></td>
<td>Make appointment for 1:1 conference with instructor</td>
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<td>Maslow: <em>A Theory of Human Motivation</em></td>
<td>McGregor: <em>The Human Side of</em></td>
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| Week 10  | People in public organizations: Values, incentives, and work-related attitudes | People in public organizations: Values, incentives, and work-related attitudes | READ  
Rainey Ch. 10: Understanding People in Organizations: Values, Incentives, and Work-Related Attitudes  
Peters and Waterman: In Search of Excellence: Simultaneous Loose-Tight Properties* | 1:1 conference with instructor by March 22 |
| March 18 | Contemporary organizational theory  
Tom Peters and Robert Waterman | | |
| Week 11  | Spring Break | Spring Break | No class | No class |
| March 25 | | | Spring Break | Spring Break |
| Week 12  | Leadership, management roles, and organizational culture | Leadership, management roles, and organizational culture | READ  
Rainey Ch. 11: Leadership, Managerial Roles, and Organizational Culture  
Schein: The Concept of Organizational Culture* | Leadership, management roles, and organizational culture |
| April 1  | Edgar Schein | Edgar Schein | Edgar Schein | Edgar Schein |
| Week 13  | Teamwork: Understanding communication and conflict in groups | Teamwork: Understanding communication and conflict in groups | READ  
Rainey Ch. 12: Teamwork: Understanding Communication and Conflict in Groups  
Katz and Kahn: Organizations and the System Concept*  
Acker: Gendering Organization Theory* | Teamwork: Understanding communication and conflict in groups |
| April 8  | Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn; Joan Acker | Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn; Joan Acker | Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn; Joan Acker | Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn; Joan Acker |
| Week 14  | Managing organizational change and | Managing organizational change and | READ  
Rainey Ch. 13: | Managing organizational change and |
| April 15 | | | | April 15 |
### Academic and classroom policies

**Extra Credit**: Not available for this course.

**Classroom Etiquette**: A driving component of our MPA program is professionalism and your ability to work well with teams/groups. Thus, the expectation is that students will maintain a high level of professionalism in their classroom conduct with me, and with their fellow students. This means being respectful during class discussions, and in all communications with the professor and others.

**E-mail Etiquette**: E-mail is a wonderful tool for you to contact me with questions, but it does not replace office hours. If you have involved questions about course material, you should set up a time to come see me or set up a phone conversation.

**Incompletes or Withdrawals “W” for the Course**: If for some reason the course is not working out for you please adhere to the University’s policies for the last day to drop a class.

**Late Assignments**: Students are expected to submit all work on the date specified in the course calendar. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the instructor 72 hours before the date in question. Students must complete all assignments to receive a grade for the course.

**University Attendance Policy**: (please make sure to follow the participation course policies listed above too) Students who are registered for a course but do not attend the first two class meetings may be required by the instructor to drop the course. This rule allows for early identification of class vacancies and to permit other students to add classes. Students not allowed to remain must complete a drop form or drop the course on the Internet (http://cyberbear.umt.edu) to avoid receiving a failing grade. Students who know they will be absent should contact the instructor in advance.

**Wikipedia**: This online source is not reliable and should not be cited in any course assignment. The goal is to become accustomed to using scholarly sources for all work in any of your courses at the University of Montana.

**Academic Dishonesty (Plagiarism)**: Students must follow the University’s policies for academic dishonesty. For detailed information, please view. As such, all work submitted must be your own; no duplicate work (work completed for another class) will not be accepted. Acts
of cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of zero (0) for the assignment. Moreover, acts of plagiarism will also be reported to the Academic Court. To avoid acts of plagiarism, cite each reference or source you use and give proper credit for the ideas, opinions, and findings of others. When you are using the exact words of others, you must use quotation marks and include the page number where you found the quote in your citation.

**Sensitive Course Materials:** College education aims to expand student understanding and awareness. Thus, it involves engagement with a wide range of information, ideas, and creative representations. In college courses, students can expect to encounter—and critically appraise—materials that may differ from and perhaps challenge familiar understandings, ideas, and beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss these matters with the professor.

**Disability Assistance:** The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors. The link for this is information: Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.