

Political Science 237
Public Policy and Public Administration
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Office Hours: M, T, W, TH 1:00-2:00 and by appointment

INTRODUCTION

Within the U.S. capitalist political economy, there are two principal ways to provide for the collective action necessary to meet basic human needs and solve persistent social problems, including economic production and national defense. These are reliance on private markets and public administration. Reliance of the former requires establishing the authority of private property rights and their manipulation by corporate enterprise. Reliance on the latter requires a system of law and administration directed by democratic political processes and executed by a range of administrative entities wielding public authority.

To a considerable degree, both private and public organizations rely on some form of complex organization and bureaucratic structure and on an ongoing commitment to rational decision making. In turn, the rational organization of complex tasks is very heavily dependent on the production, analysis and use of information. Information now serves as a significant resource for both the acquisition of power and the determination of economic, political and policy choices. That is, the control and analysis of information profoundly impacts who wins and who loses in this society, on who receives the benefits and who bears the costs of organized activity.

These propositions extend to the formulation of policy, the administrations of programs and the evaluation of administrative performance. This course is primarily concerned with how these factors characterize the administrative process in the United States. As such, the course is directed at six outcomes:

1. An understanding of the intellectual and historical origins of the modern administrative state.
2. An appreciation of the defining characteristics of complex organizations and the place that such organizations occupy within American government.
3. Reflective consideration of the normative standards that guide public policy making in the United States.
4. An understanding of the political characteristics of the policy process including the role of constituency interests, principal-agent relations and legal constraints as they impact on agency performance and accountability.
5. An introduction to the nature of decision making, policy design and implementation with a particular emphasis on recognizing and assessing the inventory of policy tools available to decision makers.
6. An appreciation of the nature of formal policy analysis and program evaluation.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all classes. Absences due to participation in legitimate Moravian College extracurricular activities; a doctor's excuse or notification by the Dean of Students Office will allow a student to be excused from class. All other excuses are subject to the instructor's discretion.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students should be aware of their obligations under the Academic Honesty Policy published in the Student Handbook.

BOOKS

Thomas Birkland, **An Introduction to the Policy Process**, second edition, (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005)

William T. Gormely and Steven J. Balla, **Bureaucracy and Democracy: Accountability and Performance**, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 2004)

Deborah Stone, **Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making**, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002)

EVALUATION OF THE STUDENT'S WORK

The student's grade will be determined on a 300 point basis through the following assignments:

Take Home Essay I	50 points
Take Home Essay II	50 points
Final Exam	80 points
Group Project	
Part I	20 points
Part II	30 points
Part III	25 points
Part IV	25 points
Instructor evaluation	20 points

TAKE HOME ESSAYS

Each student will complete two take home essays. Essays should answer the questions provided as prompts, clearly and concretely explain any key concepts and be well written. The essay prompts and due dates are listed below:

1. Drawing on the material in Section I of the course, explain what the administrative state is, why it exists and what purposes it serves? **Due 2/23**
2. Drawing on the material in Sections II and III, what are the most important factors that influence administrative decision making and why are they important? **Due 4/6**

FINAL EXAM

The final exam will consist of identification of concepts and an essay question. The final exam will be cumulative for the semester. The instructor will provide a list of concepts that will need to be studied to complete the identification portion of the exam and a set of essays to be prepared from which the essay on the final will be chosen.

GROUP PROJECT

Each student will participate in the production of a group report. The instructor will determine the size and membership of the teams responsible for the project by the end of the second week of class. There will be a single grade assigned to each group report and each team member will receive the same grade for that portion of the course. In consultation with the instructor, the class will be assigned a program currently in place at Moravian College and undertake to evaluate that program utilizing the concepts and lessons provided by the course materials. The reports should be prepared as if the team was under contract or had otherwise been engaged to provide an evaluation for those who have responsibility for the effective performance of the program. The reports will include four components described below:

- 1.) **Program identification and description (DUE DATE: 2/28)** – This section should identify the area of College activity in which the team will perform its evaluation. This discussion should include:
 - Identification of the purpose the program is supposed to serve or the “problem” the program is supposed to address.
 - Identification of the outcomes desired for the College in this program area
 - A bibliography that would constitute the basis for a literature search that could be used for a formal program evaluation in the program area. The bibliography should include at least 15 items.

- 2.) **Description of ongoing program (DUE DATE: 3/16)** – This section should include a description of the specific activities that are currently underway to achieve the desired outcomes described in the first section of the paper. This discussion should include:
- An explicit identification of any key theoretical, operational or experiential assumptions that have guided the design of the program in operation
 - Identification of any assumed causal relationships between the activities that are performed and the outcomes these activities are designed to achieve
 - An explicit identification of essential variables (e.g. goal conflicts, resource constraints, organizational intelligence and information costs) that will impact on the execution of the identified activities and a discussion of the interrelationship among those variables.
- 3.) **Operationalization of key variables (DUE DATE: 3/28)** – This section should identify the types of information or data that would be used to assess or measure the effectiveness or level of achievement of a program. In particular, to the extent possible, students should work to identify quantifiable information. In preparing this section, students should keep the following in mind:
- The discussion in this section can include a description of any “measures” or “metrics” currently in use by the College
 - It can also identify information that the College does not have but that would be useful **IF IT WERE AVAILABLE**. Such a discussion could include indications of possible sources of useful data and how the College might collect such data.
 - Where quantifiable measures are not available, students may describe *qualitative* measures that can be used for evaluative program effectiveness and performance
- 4.) **Normative analysis and program alternatives (DUE DATE: 4/18)** – In this section, the team should state whatever conclusions it can as to the performance of the program under review. This should include:
- Any observations about the performance of the program that might be warranted from what has been learned.
 - Any recommendations as to what portions of the program that should be continued or changed.
 - Any judgments as to normative merits or problems associated with the program.

Work returned for revision – Each section of the report will be evaluated and returned to the teams for possible revision. Teams willing to revise the work can resubmit it for a second evaluation and possible additional points. The maximum upgrade will be five points.

Evaluation of individual team members – While the ability to work in teams is increasingly identified as a highly valued skill within most organizational settings, there remains a compelling need to avoid unfair exploitation of contributing students by peers who do not make a fair contribution to the work of the team. Consequently, at each due date, each member of the team will have an opportunity to evaluate anonymously the other members of the team using a standard form provided by the instructor. If a student is clearly identified as failing to complete the work for which they are responsible, a conference with the instructor will be scheduled. Repeated identification could lead to a penalty calculated as part of the instructor evaluation grade. Gross failure to complete responsibilities could result in being dropped from the team and the assignment of a zero for the project.

Possible Project Areas (pending)

- **Admission and Financial Aid**
- **Athletics**
- **Diversity**
- **General Education**
- **Housing**
- **Social programming**

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

I. Administration and Society

A. Intellectual and social roots of administrative state (1/17)

B. Political economy (1/19)

1. Markets and market failures
2. Public goods
3. Power and the functions of the state

Reading: Stone Introduction and Ch.1; Charles Lindblom, “The Market as Prison”

C. History of the administrative state (1/24)

1. Structure of administrative state
2. Politics/administration distinction
3. Delegation of authority and mission
4. Administrative discretion
5. Structure of the federal executive branch

Reading: Birkland, Ch. 1 and 2

D. Organization theory and characteristics of bureaucracy (1/26)

Reading: James Fessler and Donald Kettl, “Organization Theory”

E. **Group project** (1/31)

F. Goals

1. Equity (2/2)

Reading: Stone, Ch. 2

2. Efficiency (2/7)

Reading: Stone, Ch. 3

3. Liberty (2/9)

Reading: Stone, Ch. 4

4. Security (2/9)

Reading: Stone, Ch. 5

G. Accountability and performance (2/14)

Reading: Gormley and Balla, Ch.1

II. The Policy Process

A. Stages of the policy process (2/16)

1. Agenda setting and problem definition

2. Formulation

3. Implementation

4. Evaluation

B. Political culture, public opinion and problem definition (2/21)

Reading: Stone, Ch. 6

C. Congress, the President and the Courts (2/23)

Reading: Gormley and Balla, Ch.3; Birkland, Ch. 3

NOTE THE SHIFT IN DATES OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS WITHIN THE SECTION OF THE OUTLINE

D. Constituencies, clientele and networks (3/14-3/16)

Reading: Gormley and Balla, Ch. 4, 5; Birkland, Ch.4; Stone, Ch. 9

E. Policy types (3/23)

Reading: Birkland, Ch. 6

III. Decision Making and Formal Policy Analysis

A. Social science and causal theory (2/28)

Reading: Stone, Ch. 8

B. Measurement (3/2)

Reading: Stone, Ch. 7

C. Methods of decision making (3/28-3/30)

Reading: Stone, Ch. 10

IV. Policy design and policy tools

A. Policy tools

1. Inducements (4/6)

Reading: Stone, Ch. 11

2. Rules (4/11)

Reading: Stone, Ch. 12

3. Facts (4/13)

Reading: Stone, Ch. 13

4. Rights and powers (4/18)

Reading: Stone, Ch. 14 and 15

B. Implementation (4/20)

Reading: Birkland, Ch. 8

V. **Project Reports** (4/25)