

Department of Public and International Affairs
George Mason University
PUAD 620 002 Organization Theory and Behavior
Robinson A 203; Tuesday 1:30-4:10
Fall 2003

Julianne Mahler Robinson A 213
Open Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00-12:00
Wednesday and Thursday by appointment
Phone 993-1414/1400
or email jmahler@gmu.edu for appointment

Course Objectives: The goal of this course is to introduce some of the major ideas about organizations, management, and leadership. Research about organizations is multidisciplinary, and theories range from models of organizations as cybernetic systems to organizations as cultures. The applications of organization theory are similarly broad ranging from improving the efficiency and responsiveness of management practice to new ideas about decision making and program development. Many innovations in public management such as re-invention and organization learning are based in large part on the developments in theory over the past fifteen years. The course is designed to track some of these developments and to improve our understanding of public management. In the end, these ideas are offered to help you become an even more successful manager and more sophisticated about the ways that organizational processes shape the creation and execution of organization programs and practices.

Course Requirements. Thoughtful, timely reading of class assignments, thorough preparation of public management cases, and informed participation in class discussions are the first requirements. Readings will be taken up on the week they are listed in the schedule below. Written assignments include three Incident Analyses from your own experience, each around 5-8 pages in length. There will also be a set of final summary, written, take-home essays in which students can discuss what they have learned about organizations and about their own management strategies.

Public Management Cases for In-class Discussion. Two cases of public management problem solving will be distributed in class for class discussion. We will discuss the issues one week and group solutions the next. In the session, we will identify some of the dimensions of the problems presented in the case. Then next week we will propose a diagnosis and solution based on concepts from class readings. We will (1) Characterize the problem or the issues in the case using concepts from the course, (2) Describe in reasonable detail what would be a feasible solution or plan of action in the case to address the problem, again using ideas, theories, or research findings to analyze problems or suggest solutions. The object of our analyses will be to conceptualize the key organizational and managerial issues in the case and what course of action follows from that conceptualization. These discussions will form part of the participation grade for the course. They also help prepare you to think about applying theories to explain events.

Written Incident Analyses. The principal written assignments will be three essays examining an incident exemplifying culture, leadership, decision making in an organization with which you have some experience. Each essay should begin with a description of an event followed by an examination or analysis of that event from the standpoint of the concepts, theories and research findings relevant to the situation. What does the event tell us about how organizations operate? What lesson does the incident teach us?

What can you learn from the incident about how to manage well? The incident may be characterized as a successful or unsuccessful organizational event, but in either case evidence of why you characterize it that way must be provided from the theories and research discussed in the course. That is, if you characterize an event as an example of poor leadership, you must explain, using concepts and research about leadership, why the action illustrates poor leadership. If you describe a culture as contribution to organizational success, you must show how it supports the effective work of the organization.

Grades will be based on the clarity and colorfulness of your description of the event, appropriateness of the theories and research you have used to analyze the event, and the reasonableness of your discussion of the management lesson the event teaches us. The case analysis invites you to stand back from an event and use the ideas, research, and theory you are reading to stimulate your thinking about ways to approach managerial problems. The purpose of the assignment is to provide the opportunity to show that you are able to use theory in practice. Doing so will lead to a wider capacity for innovation and problem solving in practice. Papers should be around 5 pages (1500 words) in length.

Proper citations of articles and books is required for all assignments in the course. See the following website to link to a description of the APA citation which is generally preferred in the social sciences: <http://wally.rit.edu/pubs/guides/apa.html> If you are already familiar with and like to use the MLA style (also linked from the page just noted) you may use it, but do not mix styles.

The first Incident Analysis will be weighted 15% of the total grade, the second and third will be 20% each, and the final essays will count 25%. A record of informed participation in discussions of readings and cases will count 20% of the final grade. Students who must miss more than two classes will be encouraged to take the course another semester since so much of the course material will be taught through discussion of readings and management cases. Grades of incomplete will be considered only if a student applies in writing at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled final exam time, detailing the reason for requesting the incomplete, the work done so far toward completing the work in the course, and a timetable for finishing the coursework.

The books available in the bookstore for this class include:

Hal Rainey, Understanding and Managing Public Organizations (3rd. ed., 2003)

Edgar Schein, Organization Culture and Leadership (2nd edition, 1992)

Norma Riccucci, Unsung Heroes, (1995).

A number of other essential readings will be available online or through electronic reserve at the GMU Library online. Password is: kramer

Schedule of Topics and Readings

1. Introduction: Organizational analysis (August 26)

What are the important attributes of complex organizations? How are public and private organizations similar and different? What are the differences in incentives and motivations? constraints? goals? authority? environments? What do these differences suggest about the challenges of public management? Rainey, Ch. 3.

2. Getting Organized-I: Models of Bureaucracy (September 2)

What are the defining characteristics of the traditional bureaucracy? How did they evolve? How are the characteristics of bureaucracies linked to law and the authority of the state? Does the American public service sector constitute a bureaucracies? In what ways is the bureaucratic form here and in other nations and institutions still evolving? Why? What are the consequences of different forms of

organization. How are organization and program strategies linked?

Rainey, Ch 2.

Wilson, Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why they Do It. Ch 1- 2, pp 3-28. e-Reserve

3. Getting Organized-II: Designs for Coordinating Work in Agencies (September 9)

Reorganization is still one of the first remedies managers try when confronting problems, but typically the principles of structure used date from the 40s and 50s.. How can we design structures that support the flow of work and the need to communicate and coordinate efforts

in the organizations? How can structures support efforts to adapt to or cope with complex external environments? Can we design structures that respond to or learn from past experience?

Rainey, Ch. 8 and Table 10.3

Brown and Duguid (1991). Organizational learning and communities-of-practice (JSTOR)

Korten, David. 1980. Community organization and rural development. Public Administration Review. 40:480-511 (esp 495-511). (e Reserve)

Class discussion of King County Library case

4. Getting Motivated I: Motives, Incentives and Individual Behavior in Agencies (September 16)

What are the underlying motivators for public servants? What is the logic behind the incentives they are offered? What results are rewarded? What conditions constrain the work efforts of government employees? What contributes to greater productivity and effectiveness? How do family-friendly policies affect motivation and productivity?

Rainey, Ch. 10

Group discussion and presentation of solutions to King County Library case

5. Getting Motivated II: Motives, Incentives and Individual Behavior in Agencies (September 23)

What are the incentives for you in your position? What kinds of motivation do you experience?

Human resources reforms and their contributions to organizational effectiveness.

Rainey, Ch. 9

6. Culture and Identity (Who do these people think they are?)(September 30)

How are values or assumptions that comprise organizational culture linked to motivation? commitment? control? productivity? Do you see such links in your organization? How does the culture perspective differ from the other views of motivation and coordination? Is culture a management tool or an organizational condition?

Schein, Ch. 1-7

7. Culture and Organizational Life (October 7)

What artifacts of organizational culture do you see in organizations you know well? What values or beliefs do they symbolize? Does every organization have a culture? How do leaders shape culture?

Schein, Ch 8 and 9; 11-16

Discussion of Culture Incidents Analyses

Culture Incident Analysis Due

8. Leading: Strategy and Constraints in Government Agencies. (October 21) * **note date***

What constitutes leadership in public management? How does leadership differ at the supervisory and

executive levels? Are transformational or entrepreneurial leadership styles desirable in bureaus? What constrains leadership in public agencies?

Rainey, Ch 7, pp. 143-150; Ch. 11

Etheredge Hardball Politics, pp 147-159 in Can Governments Learn, 1985. (eReserve)

9. Leadership, Power and Politics. (October 28)

How do leaders shape culture? How do public managers shape culture? How do tactics change with the age and maturity of the organization? What conditions determine the need for change? What limits the capacity and desirability of culture changes?

How do executives lead? What do they do? How do they do it? What strategy and tactics do they use?

Are they transactional or transformational leaders? What does organizational politics mean in practice?

Ricucci, Unsung Heroes (specialize in selected leaders)

10. Decision Making, Information Processing and Strategic Management. (November 4)

Most organizational decisions are routine, preprogrammed, but when they are not, managers, economists, political scientists, and policy analysts have devised a wide range of prescriptive and descriptive models to guide our understanding of how decisions should be or are made. Contrast these models. Which are more likely? How DO we make decisions and what are the consequences for agency success? How should we make choices?

Rainey, Ch. 7, pp.150-169.

Delbeque, Van de Ven and Gustavson, Profile of small group decision making from Group Techniques for Program Planning. (eReserve)

Leadership Incident Analysis Discussion

Leadership Incident Analysis Due

11. Learning and Information Processing (November 11)

What kinds of information are critical to making good decisions? How is information collected, stored and retrieved? Can we improve choices over time as we learn the effects of different choices? How do intranets and other technologies contribute to learning?

Kettl "Managing on the Frontiers of Knowledge: the Learning Organization," in Ingraham and Romzek (eds) New Paradigms for Government, 1994. (eReserve)

Levitt and March, Organizational learning, in Annual Review of Sociology 14 (1988): 319-40. GMU online Database

Carver Hospital Case, group solutions

12. Agency Environments and Interorganizational Relations. (November 18)

In what specific ways does an agency adapt to its environment? How might different environmental characteristics affect agency structures? procedures? its culture or identity? its need to coordinate? the constraints on policy implementation? A related issue is how coordination is achieved in complex inter-agency/intergovernmental settings? What adaptations can organizations make to adjust or coordinate? What strategies work under what conditions? What are the implications of the difficulty of achieving coordination for policy making and implementation?

Chisholm, Coordination without Hierarchy 1989. Ch. 4 (eReserve).

Rainey, Ch. 4 and 5

Decision Incident Analysis Discussion

Decision Incident Analysis Due

13. Remaking, Renewing, Reforming Agencies. (November 25)

What similarities and differences do you see in the many bureaucratic reform movements emerging over the past thirty years? Is there a theme that flows through the innovations? What alternative views of how organizations can and should change have appeared? What constraints on change and innovation persist?

Rainey Ch. 13 and 14

14. Summary and Overview. Essay questions distributed. (December 2)

In what directions is the bureaucratic form here and in other nations and institutions evolving? What are the influences of changes in Information systems? Decision making? Motivational sources?

Expectations for Leadership ?

Take Home Essays to be Delivered in person or electronically by 5:00 p.m., Friday, December 12.

HONOR CODE POLICY

The Honor Code policy endorsed by the members of the Department of Public and International Affairs relative to the types of academic work indicated below is set out in the appropriate paragraphs:

Quizzes, tests and examinations. No help may be given or received by students when taking quizzes, tests, or examinations, wherever taken, unless the instructor specifically permits deviation from this standard.

Course Requirements: All work submitted to fulfill course requirements is to be solely the product of the individual(s) whose name(s) appears on it. Except with permission of the instructor, no recourse is to be had to projects, papers, lab reports or any other written work previously prepared by another student, and except with permission of the instructor no paper or work of any type submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of another course may be used a second time to satisfy a requirement of any course in the Department of Public and International Affairs. No assistance is to be obtained from commercial organizations which sell or lease research help or written papers. With respect to all written work as appropriate, proper footnotes and attribution are required.

Plagiarism: All work must be your own. Inappropriate use of the work of others without citation and attribution is plagiarism and a George Mason University Honor Code violation punishable by expulsion from the University. All students should familiarize themselves with this honor code provision (<http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html>). To guard against plagiarism and to treat students equitably, written work may be checked against existing published materials or digital data bases available through various plagiarism detection services.