

GOVT 351 Bureaucracy

Spring 2014

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Course Meetings: Students must attend the section for which they have registered.

- Section 01 (CRN 20427): Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:50, Morton 39
- Section 02 (CRN 27590): Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00-12:20, Morton 39

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:30-5:00, Thursdays 3:30-5:00, and by appointment

1. Course description

Welcome to GOVT 351. This class addresses a common but understandable misperception about American government. Many people believe that elected officials and judges are the most consequential actors in the country's political system. However, policies and judicial decisions are not self-executing. Collectively, they rely on public bureaucracies and thousands of public administrators and others to implement them. John Adams recognized this back in 1785 when he wrote: "the laws are a dead letter until an administration begins to carry them into execution."¹ To understand how that "execution" occurs, this class explores different theoretical perspectives and examples to help students understand the bureaucrats who manage and implement policy, the tools they use, and the organizational and political environments in which they work.

2. Readings

These required books are available on-line and at the college bookstore.

- Martha Derthick. 1990. *Agency Under Stress: The Social Security Administration in American Government*. Washington, DC: Brookings. ISBN 9780815718239.
- John D. Donahue and Mark H. Moore (eds.). 2012. *Ports in a Storm: Public Management in a Turbulent World*. Washington, DC: Brookings. ISBN 9780815722373.
- Kenneth J. Meier and Laurence J. O'Toole, Jr. 2006. *Bureaucracy in a Democratic State: A Governance Perspective*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. ISBN 9780801883576.
- James Q. Wilson. 1989 [or 1991]. *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. New York: Basic Books. ISBN 9780465007851.

Other required readings are on the course Blackboard site.

¹ You can see the full context of the quote here: http://www.constitution.org/jadams/ja1_55.htm.

3. Assignments and grading

3.1 Overview

The course stresses three skill sets—discussing ideas, writing, and thinking on your feet—that all students trained in the liberal arts should possess. Mastering these skills will help you make positive contributions in your future classes, the workforce, and the communities where you eventually reside. Grades are based on these items.

30%	Class participation and attendance
20%	Midterm exam in-class part
15%	Midterm exam take-home part
20%	Final exam in-class part
15%	Final exam take-home part

I will calculate final course grades using the following scale, with partial-percents typically rounded to the nearest full percent: A 93-100, A- 90-92, B+ 88-89, B 83-87, B- 80-82, C+ 78-79, C 73-77, C- 70-72, D+ 68-69, D 63-67, D- 60-62, F <60.

Finally, please keep a copy of all work you submit until I have processed final grades.

3.2 Class participation and attendance

Attendance every day and active class participation are essential components of this class. On Blackboard, I have posted a grading rubric that outlines my specific expectations. In sum, everyone should arrive prepared to have thoughtful and energetic discussions about the class material. If generally you are shy in classes you should see me immediately so I can help you overcome that fear of speaking out.

Here are four specific things you should do to prepare to participate in class each day.

- Read the discussion questions I will post on Blackboard for each topic.
- Do the readings while thinking about the discussion questions I have posted.
- Prepare some notes on the discussion questions, and bring them to class.
- On days when we will read from an assigned book, you should bring the book to class.

3.3 Midterm exam and final exam

The in-class parts of the exams will primarily contain short answer questions that call for a brief paragraph response. The take-home parts will require you craft a brief (approximately 3-4 pages) essay to a question that I provide. More details about the exam formats and expectations will be forthcoming.

In fairness to everyone, students who arrive late for an exam may not work overtime. The only valid reasons for missing and rescheduling an exam are due to a documented illness, religious observance, death in the family (or other grave emergency), a W&M-sponsored travel commitment that you have discussed with me before the exam, or, during final exams only (as W&M allows), you have several exams in a row. If you miss an exam for another reason you can take a makeup exam for which the maximum grade you can earn is a C (75%).

4. Other notes

4.1 *Common courtesy in class.*

Please show your classmates and me respect by following these basic common-sense practices. Students who do not will see their class participation grade suffer.

Arriving to class: Class will begin promptly so please arrive on time. If on a rare occasion you are late then you should take your seat quietly and not disrupt the conversation that is already underway.

Cell phones: Please turn off your phone and put it away out of sight before class starts. On a particular day if you are expecting an unusually important call (e.g., family emergency, possible job interview, etc.), please let me know as you arrive in class that you may need to step out briefly to take a call. Even on those rare days you should set your phone to vibrate and put it away when class starts. There is no reason for you to have your phone out during class.

Other electronic devices: I would discourage you from taking notes on a laptop because students who rely on them often tend to become stenographers rather than careful listeners and engaged participants. Still, if you prefer to take notes this way, the only programs that should be up and running on your machine are a document where you have your notes for the day and the course Blackboard site. That's it. Other programs or web sites will distract you and the people sitting around you, so please turn them off before class starts. Finally, at times I will call "screens down," and when I do so you should close your machine.

4.2 *Academic misconduct*

I begin by assuming academic misconduct will not become an issue in this class. If it does, for any questions about policies regarding cheating, plagiarism, or other types of academic dishonesty, please see the William & Mary Honor Council's web site and the discussion of the Honor Code in the Student Handbook. If I discover a student cheating, I will initiate an Honor Council proceeding and, at a bare minimum, recommend that the student receive an F for the course. I take this issue extremely seriously, and I hope you do, too.

4.3 *What you can expect from me*

So far I have described what I expect from you. But what can you expect from me? Several things. First, I will not ask you to do things that waste your time. I am convinced that students respond best when professors encourage them to think hard about interesting ideas and questions. I will work all semester to create that kind of environment. Second, I will give you lots of honest feedback in class discussions, office hours, email exchanges, and on your written work. Finally, I promise to treat you with respect. I anticipate that we will sometimes disagree about government and politics this semester. In fact, I hope we do because that will make the course more interesting. I will not penalize you if you do not embrace my political beliefs, nor will I reward you simply because we happen to agree on political matters.

5. Schedule of topics, readings, and exams

We will adjust this schedule as needed.

BB = Reading is posted on Blackboard. Occasionally, I will post other current events readings, or simply email them to the class list. Those additional readings will be optional.

5.1. How does the bureaucracy fit into the larger context of the American political system?

Th 1/16	Course introduction
T 1/21	The demands of democracy and the imperatives of bureaucracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meier & O'Toole, Ch. 1 Governance and the bureaucracy problem. • Derthick, Ch. 1 The governmental setting (read pp. 7-19; skip the rest for now). • Wilson, Ch. 18 Rules.
Th 1/23	Bureaucracy and governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB. Laurence J. O'Toole and Kenneth J. Meier. 2011. <i>Public Management: Organizations, Governance, and Performance</i>. Ch. 1 Public management and performance: An evidence-based perspective (pp. 23-28). It'll be best to read this first, then the next piece from the book you have bought for class. • Meier & O'Toole, Appendix. A specific model of governance (pp. 155-157).
T 1/28	Three cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and the disability review of the Social Security Administration. Derthick, Ch. 1. The governmental setting (read pp. 3-7 and 20-21). • Port security and the Coast Guard. Donahue & Moore, Ch. 1 Introduction (skim pp. 1-6; read pp. 6-8 [discussion of Varley's chapter]; skim pp. 8-12); Ch. 2 Sea change: Rewriting the rules for port security. • BB. Texas school districts. Laurence J. O'Toole and Kenneth J. Meier. 2011. <i>Public Management: Organizations, Governance, and Performance</i>. Ch. 1 Public management and performance: An evidence-based perspective (pp. 42-51).

5.2. What is the bureaucracy?

Th 1/30	People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 1 Armies, prisons, schools; Ch. 2 Organization matters.
T 2/4	People (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donahue & Moore. Ch. 5. Pursuing public value: Frameworks for strategic analysis and action. • Wilson, Ch. 10 Turf; Ch. 12 Innovation.
Th 2/6	Government organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 6 Culture; Ch. 9 Compliance.
T 2/11	Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB. Lester M. Salamon. 2000. <i>The Tools of Government</i>. Ch. 1 The new governance and the tools of public action. (pp. 1-6).

Th 2/13	Networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meier & O’Toole, Ch. 2 Democracy and political control of the bureaucracy; Ch. 3 Structural barriers to political control.
T 2/18	Networks (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 7 Constraints (read pp. 113-115, 129-131, and 134-136; skip the rest). • Donahue & Moore. Ch. 6. The tummler’s task: A collaborative conception of port protection; Ch. 7. Toward a higher purpose: Captain Englebert navigates the choppy waters of network governance.
Th 2/20	Allocation of responsibility to the bureaucracy and its partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 17 Problems; Ch. 19 Markets. • Donahue & Moore, Ch. 8. Improving port security: A twenty-first century approach.
T 2/25	Catch up day.
Th 2/27	MIDTERM EXAM. Take-home part is due when you arrive to take the in-class part.

Tuesday, March 4 and Thursday, March 6 – No class due to spring break.

5.3. *What influences how bureaucrats think?*

T 3/11	Bounded rationality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB. Herbert A. Simon. 1997. <i>Administrative Behavior (4th ed.)</i>. Commentary on Chapter V: The psychology of administrative decisions (pp. 118-129).
Th 3/13	Circumstances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 2 Organizations (re-read pp. 25-27); Ch. 6 Culture (re-read pp. 109-110); Ch. 3 Circumstances. • Derthick, Ch. 5 Agency leaders.
T 3/18	Values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 4 Beliefs. • Meier & O’Toole, Ch. 4 Political control versus bureaucratic values.
Th 3/20	Task demands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meier & O’Toole, Ch. 5. Inside the bureaucracy: Principals, agents, and bureaucratic strategy.
T 3/25	Comparing two cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derthick, Ch. 2 What went wrong? • Donahue & Moore. Ch. 3 Unraveling a risk management challenge.

5.4. *To whom is the bureaucracy accountable?*

Th 3/27	Dimensions of accountability: Top-down vs. bottom-up democracy revisited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meier & O’Toole, Ch. 1 Governance and the bureaucracy problem (re-read pp. 9-14). • BB. Paul Light. 1997. <i>The Tides of Reform: Making Government Work, 1945-1995</i>. Ch. 1 The tides of reform (pp. 15-43).
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T 4/1	Executive branch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 14 Presidents. • Derthick, Ch. 3 The policymaking presidency; Ch. 6 The administrative presidency.
Th 4/3	No class. Manna at MPSA conference.
T 4/8	Legislative branch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 13 Congress. • Derthick, Ch. 4 Congress as legislator; Ch. 8 Congress as overseer.
Th 4/10	Judicial branch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 15 Courts. • Derthick, Ch. 7 The courts.
T 4/15	Attentive publics and organized interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 5 Interests; Ch. 11 Strategies (read pp. 202-205; skip the rest). • Donahue & Moore, Ch. 9 Calling publics into existence: The political arts of public management (pp. 180-197; skip the rest for now).
Th 4/17	Attentive publics, organized interests, and the rulemaking process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BB. Jason Webb Yackee and Susan Webb Yackee. 2006. A bias towards business? Assessing interest group influence on the U.S. bureaucracy. <i>Journal of Politics</i> vol. 68, no. 1 (pp. 128-139). • Donahue & Moore, Ch. 9 Calling publics into existence: The political arts of public management (pp. 197-206).
T 4/22	Catch up day.

5.5. Overall, what to conclude about the bureaucracy's role in a democracy?

Th 4/24	Some generalizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derthick, Ch. 9 An administrative perspective. • Wilson, Ch. 20 Bureaucracy and the public interest. • Meier & O'Toole, Ch. 6. Democracy, bureaucracy, and modern governance. Required: pp. 121-125 and 131-138. Optional: pp. 145-152. This optional section will be of interest to those of you who are considering pursuing further research in areas related to our work this semester.
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5.6 Final exam schedule and notes

In-class part: You must take the in-class part with your regular section unless you clear a change with me first.

- Thursday, May 1 at 2:00pm: GOVT 351-02 (11:00am section)
- Tuesday, May 6 at 9:00am: GOVT 351-01 (9:30am section)

Take-home part: The take-home part is due for all students (both sections) by Tuesday, May 6 at 9:00am. I am glad to accept them earlier than that as well.