

GOVT 351 Introduction to Public Administration

Spring 2009

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

Section 01 (CRN 20427): MWF, 1-1:50, Morton 38

Section 02 (CRN 25361): MWF, 2-2:50, Morton 38

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. Rather, they rely on public bureaucracies and thousands of public administrators to implement them. To understand the role of public administration in the United States, GOVT 351 examines the administrators who manage and implement policy, the tools they use, and the environments in which they work.

2. Readings

These required books are available at the college bookstore.

- James Q. Wilson. 1989 [or 1991]. *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. New York: Basic Books. ISBN 978046500785.
- Donald F. Kettl. 2007. *System Under Stress: Homeland Security and American Politics (2nd ed.)*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. ISBN 978087289333.
- Roger W. Cobb and David M. Primo. 2003. *The Plane Truth: Airline Crashes, the Media, and Transportation Policy*. Washington, DC: Brookings. ISBN 0815771991

Other required readings are in a course pack available at the Swem Library Copy Center.

3. Assignments and grading

The course stresses three skill sets---discussing ideas, writing, and thinking on your feet in timed settings---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.

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

I will base final course grades on 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, because errors sometimes creep into grade calculations---and on rare occasions papers become lost as they are handed in---please keep a copy of all work you submit until I have processed final grades.

3.2 Class participation

Attendance every day and active class participation are essential components of this class. Everyone should arrive prepared to have thoughtful and energetic discussions about the class material. If generally you are shy in class you should see me early in the semester so I can help you overcome that fear of speaking out. I will distribute a class participation rubric to help you understand what I consider to be excellent class participation.

3.3 Midterm exam and final exam

Each exam will contain a take-home (essay) portion and an in-class (short answer) part, with each part weighted equally. The take-home parts will be distributed approximately 2 days before they are due.

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 similarly grave family emergency), a William and Mary-sponsored travel commitment that you have discussed with me before the exam, or, during final exams only (as the College allows), you have several exams in a row. If you miss an exam for another reason you can take a makeup for which the maximum grade you can earn is a C (75%).

4. Other notes

4.1 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 William and 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 hope you do too.

4.2 What you can expect from me

You can expect several things from me this semester. 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 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 assignments

We will adjust this schedule as needed.

CP = course pack reading.

I. Overview

W 1/21	Course nuts and bolts
F 1/23	Public and private bureaucracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 17 Problems

II. Analytical frameworks

M 1/26	Organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 1 Armies, prisons schools; Ch. 2 Organization matters
W 1/28	Organizations (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 9 Compliance
F 1/30	Organizations (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new reading
M 2/2	Decision-makers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, re-read pp. 27-28 • Mark Moore. 1995. <i>Creating Public Value</i>, Ch 3 (excerpt) Organizational strategy in the public sector (pp. 57-76). CP
W 2/4	Decision-makers (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 3 Circumstances; Ch. 4 Beliefs
F 2/6	Decision-makers (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 6 Culture; Ch. 12 Innovation
M 2/9	Principals, agents, and networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carole Kennedy Chaney and Grace Hall Saltzstein. 1998. Democratic control and bureaucratic responsiveness: The police and domestic violence. <i>AJPS</i>. 42:3 (pp. 745-68). CP
W 2/11	Principals, agents, and networks (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 10 Turf • Robert Agranoff. <i>Managing within Networks</i>. Ch. 1 Public networks (pp. 1-22); Ch. 2 Networks in public management (pp. 23-33). CP
F 2/13	Principals, agents, and networks (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new reading
M 2/16	<i>System Under Stress</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 1 Stress test; Ch. 2 Coordination dilemmas; Ch. 3 Reshaping the bureaucracy
W 2/18	<i>System Under Stress</i> (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 4 The federalism jungle; Ch. 5 The political costs of managing risk
F 2/20	<i>System Under Stress</i> (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 7 Gauging the stress test

II. Politics

M 2/23	Legislative and executive branch politics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 13. Congress; Ch. 14 Presidents
W 2/25	Legislative and executive branch politics (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new reading
F 2/27	Interest group politics / Midterm exam discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 5 Interests
M 3/2	Interest group politics (cont.) / Judicial branch politics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 15 Courts
W 3/4	Judicial branch politics (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new reading
F 3/6	MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The take-home part is due when you arrive to take the in-class part
M 3/9	No class -- Spring break
W 3/11	No class -- Spring break
F 3/13	No class -- Spring break
M 3/16	<i>The Plane Truth</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 1. Plane crashes and public policy; Ch. 2. After the crash
W 3/18	<i>The Plane Truth</i> (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 4. The crash of USAir Flight 427; Ch. 5. The crash of ValuJet Flight 592; Ch. 6. The crash of TWA Flight 800
F 3/20	<i>The Plane Truth</i> (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 8. Safety and symbolism in aviation politics

III. Reform

M 3/23	Tides of reform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Light. 1997. <i>The Tides of Reform: Making Government Work, 1945-1995</i>. Ch. 1 The tides of reform (pp. 15-43). CP
W 3/25	Tides of reform (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new reading
F 3/27	Centralizing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diane Ravitch. 1995. Ch. 1 The idea of standards. <i>National Standards in Education: A Citizen's Guide</i>. pp. 7-32. CP
M 3/30	Decentralizing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe. 1990. Ch. 6 Better schools through new institutions: Giving Americans choice. <i>Politics, Markets, and America's Schools</i>. pp. 185-229. CP
W 4/1	Constraining <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilson, Ch. 7 Constraints
F 4/3	No class – Manna at MPSA conference

M 4/6	Structural choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terry M. Moe. 1989 (excerpt). The politics of bureaucratic structure. In John E. Chubb and Paul E. Peterson (eds.) <i>Can the Government Govern?</i> (pp. 267-85, 323-9). CP
W 4/8	Structural choice (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilson, Ch. 20 Bureaucracy and the public interest

IV. Tools of government

F 4/10	Tools perspective on public administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review your class notes from 1/26 to 1/30 on “Organizations” and from 2/2 to 2/6 on “Decision-makers”
M 4/13	True size of government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul C. Light. 1999 (excerpt). <i>The True Size of Government</i>. Ch. 1 The illusion of smallness (pp. 1-9). CP Paul C. Light. 2003. Fact sheet on the new true size of government (pp. 1-9). CP
W 4/15	Direct government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> President’s Commission on the United States Postal Service. 2003. <i>Embracing the Future</i>. Ch. 1 Adapting to a new world (pp. 1-13); Ch. 2 Delivering the mail (pp. 14-33). CP
F 4/17	Direct government (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new reading
M 4/20	Contracts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GAO. 2006 (excerpt). High-level DOD Action Needed to Address Long-standing Problems with Management and Oversight of Contractors Supporting Deployed Forces. December (pp. 1-39). CP
W 4/22	Contracts (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new reading
F 4/24	Grants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. 2008. Notice of Availability of Funds and Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) for YouthBuild Grants. <i>Federal Register</i>, October 7. (pp. 58653-67). CP
M 4/27	Grants (cont.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new reading
W 4/29	Applying the tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> James P. Lynch and William J. Sabol. 2001. Prisoner Reentry in Perspective. Washington, DC: Urban Institute (pp. 1-24). CP
F 5/1	Applying the tools (cont.) / Final exam discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new reading

V. Final exam

As with the midterm, the take-home part is due when you arrive to take the in-class part.

Schedule

- Tuesday, May 12, 2-5pm: Section 02 (2pm section)
- Wednesday, May 13, 2-5pm: Section 01 (1pm section)