

Syllabus for PL SC 419, Section 401
The Bureaucratic State
Maymester 2015
MTWThF 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm, 268 Willard Building

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Office Hours: By appointment (via e-mail)

Course Description: Bureaucrats, from police officers to welfare caseworkers, play an important role in making government work, but they sometimes have different preferences than their supervisors, elected officials, and citizens like you. A welfare caseworker, for instance, may want to be lenient on a client that is not fully compliant with the welfare rules, but is making a good effort. Their supervisor, however, wants them to strictly enforce those rules so that the office does not look bad to legislators who are accountable to voters and, thus, focused on increasing the efficiency and reducing the costs of welfare. What happens when these preferences collide and how does it affect whether government succeeds or fails? Bureaucratic structure is a necessary component of modern governance and this course examines how scholars and practitioners answer the questions above in order to design and evaluate these structures at different levels of government. Students will learn how to evaluate the competing demands placed on bureaucrats and how well they respond to those demands. To do so, we will utilize recent examples of bureaucratic performance, including the Deepwater Horizon spill, Benghazi, NSA surveillance, and more, in order to explore how practice meets theory. Students will also try their hand at designing a well-functioning bureaucracy.

Prerequisites: PL SC 001 Introduction to American Government. This course will assume that the students have a grasp on the basic structure and function of the American federal government.

Learning Goals and Objectives:

- Goal 1: Understand the history and purpose of government bureaucracy
 - Objective 1a: Students will learn about the history of American bureaucracy
 - Objective 1b: Students will learn to compare and contrast competing theories of public goods provision

- Goal 2: Identify competing preferences in a governmental system
 - Objective 2a: Students will dissect the motivations of different actors in the provision of public goods
 - Objective 2b: Students will compare and contrast these motivations, identifying how they contribute to, or detract from, a bureaucracy's efficiency and effectiveness
- Goal 3: Develop critical thinking and problem solving skills
 - Objective 3a: Students will learn to critically evaluate the structure and performance of government bureaucracy
 - Objective 3b: Students will design their own bureaucratic agency for the purpose of addressing a pressing national problem

Methods for Learning and Teaching: This course will contain a mix of lecture, class discussion, and in-class activities. It is vital for your own comprehension of the course material that you come to class prepared to discuss the readings and any relevant happenings in the news. Periodically, you will be tested on your comprehension of the core concepts of the class.

Expectations

Attendance: Your attendance in class is always expected. Attending class will allow you to keep up with the rapid pace of a summer session course and provide for meaningful discussion as a class. I will be taking attendance in order to grade participation, but also as a way to get to know you. Please contact me via [e-mail](#) if you are unable to attend class. I will follow the University's attendance policy when it comes to excused absences. See <http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/42-00.html#42-27>.

Preparation and Participation: Since this is a 400-level course, I expect you to read the assigned material before class and be able to discuss what you read. Contributing to class discussion will make the course more interesting and will enhance your understanding of the material. Furthermore, it is important to keep up with current policy debates in the news, since they will be useful for reinforcing the concepts discussed in class.

Do Not Suffer in Silence: Please do not suffer in silence throughout the course if you are struggling. Instead, let me know — as soon as possible — what things are not making sense and we can work it out. If you are having a problem of any kind in the course, please talk to me about it.

Be Flexible: While the syllabus represents an agreement between us, I reserve the right to revise and modify it throughout the course, if it is necessary to achieve our goals. Situations beyond either of our control can also emerge that require changes to the course. I will notify you right away when any changes are made.

Cell Phones and Laptops: Please be respectful of your fellow students and me by silencing your cell phone during class and limiting laptop use to only class-related activity.

Current Events: Politics happens in real time and the material we cover in class relates to these events. This is a great opportunity to become informed about political happenings nationally and in Pennsylvania. We will regularly discuss current events that are related to the class. Please be aware of what is going on, particularly as it relates to government bureaucracy.

E-mail Policy: I will work to respond to e-mails within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend.

Readings

The following book is required for the course:

Gormley, Willilam T. Jr. and Steven J. Balla. 2013. *Bureaucracy and Democracy: Accountability and Performance*. Third Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1-60871-717-0.

There are other required readings for some classes. Additional readings drawn from books will be made available on the course [ANGEL](#) page. Articles from scholarly journals should be found using [LionSearch](#). Finally, links are provided in the course schedule and on the [course website](#) for material located on the Internet.

Lecture Slides

I will be using lecture slides throughout the course. These will be uploaded to the [course website](#) prior to each class period.

Grading

In order for you to keep track of your grades, and to prevent miscalculation at the end of the semester, I encourage you to keep account of your grades. Each component of your final grade will receive the following weight:

Testing Concepts 1	15%
Testing Concepts 2	15%
Testing Concepts 3	15%
Testing Concepts 4	15%
Bureaucracy Design Project	30%
Attendance and Participation	10%

We will use the following grade scale:

Letter	Percent
A	94 to 100
A-	90 to 93
B+	87 to 89
B	83 to 86
B-	80 to 82
C+	76 to 79
C	70 to 75
D	60 to 69
F	59 and below

Testing Concepts: After each week of the course there will be a medium-sized take-home assignment. This assignment will test your understanding of the previous week's material and get you to think about how they apply to your final bureaucracy design project. Each of the four assessments will be worth 15 percent of your final grade, or 60 percent in total. All of the Testing Concepts assignment question can be found in [Appendix B](#) of this syllabus. I give them to you now so that you can be working on each assignment throughout the relevant week of class instead of having to wait until the weekend.

Bureaucracy Design Project: Each student will choose a government agency that they would like to evaluate and re-design. I will need to know which agency you have chosen by **Friday, May 15** because you will use this agency to complete part of each Testing Concepts assignment. At each stage, you will evaluate different aspects of the agency's design and the motivations of its principals and agents. Then, in the final assignment (**Due June 10th**), you will re-design the agency to make it effective and efficient (or, more likely, a balance of the two). Please see Appendix [B](#) at the end of the syllabus for more details and grading rubrics.

Attendance and Participation: Attending class is a must regardless of the semester, but with the intense nature of a summer class, it becomes even more important not to fall behind. Also, being a 400-level course, class discussion is very important. Thus, attendance and participation will represent 10 percent of your final score. Half of this grade will depend on the percentage of classes that you attend and the other half will be based on your level of participation in class. See Appendix [A](#) for participation grading guidelines.

Make-Up Grades: You are allowed to make-up academic work only in the case of excused absences. These absences may include missing class for a University-sanctioned activity (with proper documentation), illness, religious observance, or family emergency. If you know in advance that you are going to miss class, please contact me before the absence to make arrangements for completing the work. If you are absent for an unexpected reason, please check in with me as soon as possible. You will have one week from the day of your return to class to make up a missed assignment.

Academic Dishonesty

The Department of Political Science, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor.

In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in class or take home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at this [link](#).

Disabilities

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services. For further information regarding policies, rights and responsibilities please visit the Office for Disability Services (ODS) [website](#). Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable accommodations.

Course Schedule

We will attempt to follow this schedule as closely as possible, but we may take more time on some concepts and less time on others. For this reason, a digital version of this syllabus can be found on [my website](#). Slides used in class will also be posted on the online syllabus before class. All changes to the schedule will be announced in class or via e-mail and the online syllabus will be constantly up-to-date. Required course readings and due dates for concept tests and the final project are listed in bold. Links to each additional reading are included in the syllabus on my website. If you have trouble with these links or with finding the scholarly journal articles, please do not hesitate to e-mail me. Gormley and Balla refers to the book *Bureaucracy and Democracy*.

Week 1:

- May 11: Introduction to the class and each other
 - Read the syllabus
- May 12: The Development of American Bureaucracy
 - Nelson, Michael. 1982. "A Short, Ironic History of American National Bureaucracy." *Journal of Politics* 44(3): 747-778.
 - Murphy, Jan. 2015. "[Food stamp assets test to be eliminated, as of Monday.](#)" *Pennlive*. April 22.

- May 13: Theories of Bureaucracy — Traditional Public Administration
 - Weber, Max. 1922. “Bureaucracy.” In *Classics in Public Administration*. (ANGEL)
 - Wilson, Woodrow. 1887. “The Study of Public Administration.” *Political Science Quarterly* 2(2): 173-222.
- May 14: Theories of Bureaucracy — The Economic Critique
 - Holcombe, Randall G. 2008. “Why does government produce national defense?” *Public Choice* 137(1/2): 11-19.
 - Breton, Albert and Ronald Wintrobe. 1986. “The Bureaucracy of Murder Revisited.” *Journal of Political Economy* 94(5): 905-926.
- May 15: Bureaucracies as Policymaking Organizations
 - Gormley and Balla chapter 1
 - Kearns, Glantz, and Schmidt. 2015. “[Sugar Industry Influence on the Scientific Agenda of the National Institute of Dental Research’s 1971 National Caries Program: A Historical Analysis of Internal Documents.](#)” *PLOS: Medicine*. March 10.

Week 2:

- May 18: What do bureaucrats want?
 - Wise, Lois. 2004. “Bureaucratic Posture: On the Need for a Composite Theory of Bureaucratic Behavior.” *Public Administration Review* 64(6): 669-680.
 - **Testing Concepts 1 due in class**
- May 19: How do bureaucrats make decisions?
 - Gormley and Balla chapter 2
 - Whorisky, Peter. 2015. “[More scientists doubt salt is as bad for you as the government says.](#)” *The Washington Post*. April 6.
- May 20: What do politicians want from the bureaucracy?
 - Gormley and Balla chapter 3
- May 21: What do YOU (citizens) want from the bureaucracy?
 - Gormley and Balla chapter 4
- May 22: The Politics of Implementation by Lee Hannah

Week 3:

- May 25: Memorial Day — No Class
- May 26: A Complex Web of Interactions
 - Gormley and Balla chapter 5
 - “[10 Things to Know about Reading a Regression Table](#).” EGAP: Experiments in Governance and Politics.
 - **Testing Concepts 2 due in class**
- May 27: Controlling the Bureaucracy: Hierarchical
 - McCubbins, Matthew D. and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. “Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms.” *American Journal of Political Science* 28(1): 165-179.
 - Lewis, David E. 2007. “Testing Pendeltons Premise: Do Political Appointees Make Worse Bureaucrats” *Journal of Politics* 69(4): 1073-1088.
 - Weissert, Carol S. 1994. “Beyond the Organization: The Influence of Community and Personal Values on Street-Level Bureaucrats Responsiveness.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 4(2): 225-254.
- May 28: Controlling the Bureaucracy: Limited Government
 - Vickers, John and George Yarrow. 1991. “Economic Perspectives on Privatization.” *Journal of Economic Issues* 5(2): 111-132.
- May 29: Controlling the Bureaucracy: Non-Bureau Administration
 - Milward, H. Brinton and Keith G. Provan. 2000. “Governing the Hollow State.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 10(2): 359-379.

Week 4:

- June 1: Controlling the Bureaucracy: Competitive Bureaucracy
 - Huntington, Samuel P. 1961. “Interservice Competition and the Political Roles of the Armed Services.” *American Political Science Review* 55 (1): 40-52.
 - **Testing Concepts 3 Due**
- June 2: How do we evaluate a bureaucracy?
 - Meier, Kenneth J. 1997. “Bureaucracy and Democracy: The Case for More Bureaucracy and Less Democracy.” *Public Administration Review* 57(3): 193-199.
- June 3: How do we design a bureaucracy?
 - Gormley and Balla chapter 7
- June 4: The Politics of Disaster Management
 - Gormley and Balla chapter 6
- June 5: Choose your own adventure

Week 5:

- June 8: Design Workshop
 - **Testing Concepts 4 Due**
- June 9: Reading Day — No Class
- June 10: Final Exam Day
 - **Final design project due by Noon**

Appendices

A Participation Grading Guidelines

A = A student earning an A comes to nearly all classes prepared and can demonstrate superior comprehension of the material. They contribute to the class conversation, but don't dominate it. They make thoughtful contributions that advance conversation, showing interest in and respect for others views. They are demonstrably engaged in course material and content.

B = A student earning a B misses only a few classes, but attends having completed the readings and is able to demonstrate comprehension of the readings, perhaps lacking fully integrated views toward the material. They make thoughtful comments when called upon, show respect and interest in other students views, and occasionally contribute without prompting. This student is making a good-faith effort to participate in class, but may not have the integration of ideas of an A student or may not participate as often.

C = A student earning a C misses several classes, but arrives having completed the readings and able to discuss their most basic tenets. This student does not voluntarily contribute to class and gives only minimal answers when called upon. They are putting forward some effort, but appear to be uninterested in the material and do not participate much without prompting.

D = A student earning a D misses close to half of the classes, and when present has difficulty positively contributing. This student does not voluntarily contribute to class, and when prompted, gives responses that may be off-topic and demonstrate a lack of knowledge or preparedness. They are putting forth less than average effort in the course and may be having a negative impact on others.

F = A student earning an F misses over half of the classes, and when present, cannot demonstrate they have read the material or thought about the concepts. This student does not voluntarily contribute to class and does not give answers related to the question being asked when prompted. They do not appear to be interested in the content of the class and are putting forth a very minimal level of effort.

B Testing Concepts and Bureaucracy Design Assignments

The final project for this course builds successively throughout the class as we learn how to evaluate the goals and competing preferences that shape bureaucratic behavior and the effectiveness and efficiency of bureaucratic structure. Each Testing Concepts assignment will serve as a building block for the final bureaucratic design project. They will also allow me to evaluate how well you understand the material we are covering in class. The evaluations will require higher-order thinking. First, you will be required to select a bureaucracy that you would like to learn more about. It can be a federal, state, or local bureaucracy, including one here at the University. You will need to make your choice by the time the first Testing Concepts assignment is due (**May 18**). Each assignment relates to one of the major themes of the course and parts of each will help you learn how to evaluate your own chosen agency:

- Testing Concepts 1: History and Theories of Bureaucratic Politics (**Due May 18**)
- Testing Concepts 2: Motivations (**Due May 26**)
- Testing Concepts 3: Controlling Bureaucracy (**Due June 1**)
- Testing Concepts 4: Controlling and Evaluating Bureaucracy (**Due June 8**)

Each of these assignments will be graded independently, however they will form important pieces of your final project.

For the final project, you will need to go a step further from evaluating your bureaucratic unit to re-designing it. The summer session is very condensed, so this approach allows me to evaluate your learning, while also spreading out the work in a useful way. Below you will find the instructions for each assignment. Please follow them carefully and ask me questions. Finally, grading rubrics are provided following this section. **All assignments are due in print during class.**

Testing Concepts 1 - Due May 18

Please answer the following questions:

1. Briefly describe the assumptions of the traditional theory of public administration and the economic critique. These can include, but are not limited to, assumptions about market failure, the motivations of bureaucrats, the role of politics in administration, etc. Are there areas of overlap between the theories? If so, what are they? If not, how can we evaluate whether their assumptions are correct?
2. How have the mechanisms of bureaucratic accountability evolved over time? What are the challenges to holding bureaucracies accountable?
3. Provide a brief background on the agency you have selected for this course. What is its purpose? When was it created and what circumstances led to its establishment?

Testing Concepts 2 - Due May 26

Please answer the following questions:

1. What do bureaucrats, policymakers, and citizens want from their bureaucracy?
2. How are these preferences in conflict? Can they be reconciled? If so, how? If not, why not and whose preferences matter the most?
3. Describe the preferences of bureaucrats in your chosen agency. Then describe the preferences of policymakers. NOTE: Not all policymakers have the same preferences (e.g., Republicans and Democrats may want very different things from the Environmental Protection Agency), so be sure to highlight where policymaker preferences diverge. Finally, what do citizens want from your agency?
4. Whose preferences tend to win in your agency? Why? Are there aspects of the design of your agency that "stack the deck" for a particular group?

Testing Concepts 3 - Due June 1

Please answer the following questions:

1. In what ways do bureaucratic networks help and hinder bureaucratic effectiveness?
2. This week we learned about three methods of bureaucratic control: hierarchical, limited government, and non-bureau administration. Briefly compare and contrast these three approaches. Provide examples of when they are most useful and when they may fail.

3. Explain the bureaucratic networks in which your agency is connected. How do these networks affect that agency's effectiveness?

Testing Concepts 4 - Due June 8

Please answer the following questions:

1. Now that we have covered all four methods of bureaucratic control, which best applies to your particular agency? Is there only one or are there aspects of multiple control mechanisms? Provide evidence to support your conclusion.
2. Evaluate your agency based on Gormley and Balla's four factors (tasks, relationships, political support, and leadership), taking into account their twelve specific propositions.

Final Bureaucracy Design Project - Due June 10 by Noon via e-mail

In the first four Testing Concepts assignments, you described and evaluated the purpose, goals, design, and effectiveness of your chosen bureaucratic unit. Now you have the chance to re-design the agency however you see fit. Rely on your evaluations from those assignments, using the criteria below as a guide. Make sure you explain how and why you did or did not make any differences in each component. You do not have to change every aspect of your agency, but you still need to defend why you did not change something.

Criteria:

1. Why does the agency exist? What is its purpose and what goods/services does it provide?
2. What market failure do these goods and/or services seek to correct?
3. How will the agency be structured to best meet its purpose(s)?
4. Who are the principals and who are the agents?
5. What are the preferences of the principal(s) and agent(s) and how do you adjudicate between them?
6. How do the principals control the behavior of agents (choose and apply a method of bureaucratic control)?
7. How will you evaluate the effectiveness of the agency? Include specific criteria and examples of what an effective delivery of public goods/services looks like.

Testing Concepts 1-4

Component Dimensions	Levels of Achievement			
	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Accomplished 3	Exemplary 4
Application of theory (30%)	No or unclear application of class concepts	Most concepts are not appropriately applied	Appropriate application of most concepts, with a few errors	Clear application of each concept to the questions
Practical application (30%)	No connection between theory and your agency	Limited practical examples of concepts provided, but not all are appropriate	Practical examples provided for most, but not all, concepts	Practical examples provided for each concept
References to class material (30%)	No direct references to class readings	A few disconnected references to class readings	Some appropriate connections drawn with class material, with a few errors	Clearly integrates class material with each question
Grammar and readability (10%)	< 10 errors	6-10 errors	3-5 errors	0-2 errors

Final Agency Design

Component Dimensions	Levels of Achievement			
	Beginning 1	Developing 2	Accomplished 3	Exemplary 4
Application of previous feedback (10%)	No evidence of changes based on prior feedback	Minimal correction of past errors	Most, but not all, errors corrected	Adds all feedback relevant for the final assignment
Application of theory (25%)	No or unclear application of class concepts	Most concepts are not appropriately applied	Appropriate application of most concepts, with a few errors	Clear application of each concept to the questions
Practical application (25%)	No connection between theory and your agency	Limited practical examples of concepts provided, but not all are appropriate	Practical examples provided for most, but not all, concepts	Practical examples provided for each concept
Elements of the design (30%)	Few to no criteria are addressed	50% of the criteria are addressed	80% of the criteria are addressed	Nearly all of the criteria are fully addressed
Grammar and readability (10%)	< 10 errors	6-10 errors	3-5 errors	0-2 errors