

## **POLI 279: Introduction to Public Administration**

Bridgewater State University  
Department of Political Science

Prof Seth J. Meyer, LMSW, PhD  
s2meyer@bridgew.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm.

Fall Semester, 2018  
Thursdays, 2:00 – 4:40 pm.

### **Course Description**

This course serves as a general introduction to the field of public administration. It provides students with an overview of the administrative structure of government, the role and function of bureaucracy, and the practical problems faced by public administrators. It also serves as an introduction to the institutions, processes, and players that influence the development and implementation of policy in the United States. After an introduction to the development of public administration and the impact of these ideas on contemporary public bureaucracy, we will investigate the major areas of the discipline.

**Primary learning goal:** Improve students' ability to identify and assess the systematic factors that underlie political processes and systems in the United States and abroad as they exist today and have existed in the past.

### **Other student learning objectives:**

- 1) Begin the process of developing students' core competencies in leadership and service in the public sector.
- 2) Lay the foundation for developing core competencies in public service management and leadership, guided by ethical and accountable practice, and powered by theory-based skill development.
- 3) Begin the process of understanding the role of public administrators in the policy-making continuum, including problem identification, design and assessment of policy alternatives, appropriation and authorization processes, implementation, and the use of evaluative techniques and procedures.
- 4) Begin to develop the ability to identify and solve complex problems, make effective decisions, lead organizations, manage public and nonprofit resources, and effectively communicate outcomes using theoretical support, strong research methodology, and critical thinking skills.
- 5) Build toward possessing the ability to synthesize through reflective practice the theoretical underpinnings of public administration with the practical content of ethical and accountable practice in public and community service work.
- 6) Practice skills that foster ability to communicate and collaborate productively with diverse populations in the workplace and in the larger community.

Class meetings will include a combination of lecture, discussion, practical exercises, and student presentations. Students are expected to complete all assignments (reading and written) prior to class, and actively participate in class discussions and exercises. You should also follow current events in the world of public policy and administration. In addition to reading newspapers, you will find it useful to visit websites such as: [www.governing.com](http://www.governing.com), [www.govexec.com](http://www.govexec.com), [www.aspanet.org](http://www.aspanet.org), and [www.stateline.org](http://www.stateline.org).

## **Instructional Perspective**

My efforts in this course aim at supporting and guiding *your* efforts to become a better public leader, manager, and citizen. The values of professional excellence, integrity, accountability, and proactive engagement will underpin all our work together. It is my hope that these values are now and will continue to be guiding principles for you in all your endeavors, including this course.

As a tangible expression of those values, my job includes continuously updating course content and my teaching methods, with an eye to new thinking in the field and practical application of the concepts we discuss. Wherever it seems helpful, I will for your benefit draw on my experiences.

I am available to you by e-mail, phone, and in-person discussions. Please arrive in class well-prepared for our interactions, and ready to respond to course issues in a proactive manner.

## **Required Textbooks and Capabilities:**

Rosenbloom, D.H., Kravchuk, R.S., & Clerkin, R.M. (2014). *Public administration: Understanding management, politics, and the law in the public sector (8<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Stillman, R.J. II. (2010). *Public administration: Concepts and cases (9<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

*Readings in the class schedule below are identified as coming from "Rosenbloom," or "Stillman," respectively.*

## **Evaluation and Related Policies:**

- Please note that grades for assignments and your final grade will not be scaled.
- Make-up exams will be given at the discretion of the instructor only in cases of verifiable illness or emergency. Please contact your instructor as soon as possible if such a situation should arise. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, a make-up exam must be taken within one week of the initial examination date.
- Written assignments are considered "late" if handed in after the class period in which they are due. Assignments are docked one-half a letter grade for each day late. Assignments are not accepted if submitted more than three days after their due date, unless clear advance arrangements have been made with the instructors.
- Attendance and participation are mandatory. The student must be aware that unexplained absences, or ones that are explained after the fact, may result in reductions in the course grade. You must commit to attending this class to the best of your ability throughout the semester.
- This syllabus does not constitute a contract. The time schedule for assigned readings, assignments and the course content may change to accommodate student/instructor interests and logistical modifications resulting from weather or other unforeseen circumstances.
- Please note that dates for exams and all written assignments will be adhered to strictly, save for class cancellations due to weather, instructor illness, or other circumstances identified by

the instructors and announced in advance. This should allow you to budget your time at the onset of the course.

- All participants in the class are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. See the College Catalog for specific policies on academic integrity.
- The use of cell phones or non-course related computer use is prohibited in the classroom. I ask that you have your phone either turned off or on silent. On the rare occasion that a student receives an emergency call, please leave the classroom without disturbing others.
- The use of inappropriate, disrespectful language is prohibited in the classroom. Use of language that is disrespectful or unprofessional will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom and a grade reduction.
- Your professor expects that written communications from students, including e-mails, will use full sentences, good grammar and spelling, and include a formal salutation and closing. Missives that do not follow this protocol will be returned with a request to revise and resubmit the message.

### Assignment Points

Assignment	Total Percentage of Grade
Group Case Study Discussions (3)	30%
First Examination	30%
Class Participation	10%
Second Examination	30%
	Total Percentage: 100%

### Course Assignment Descriptions

#### Written Examinations (First Examination – 30 percent / Second Examination – 30 percent of course grade)

There will be two essay examinations. See the syllabus for exam dates. Examinations will cover material found in the textbooks and from lectures and in-class discussions. The first exam will be a take-home exam. The professor will send you an e-mail of the exam and the student will have the full day to submit the exam via Blackboard. The second examination will have an emphasis on material covered since the first examination.

#### Group Case Study Papers/Discussions (Each case study is 10 percent of the course grade. The presentation and paper each comprise half the grade for each case. (Total is 30% of overall grade)

The group case study papers are comprised of three parts:

Part I: Course Concepts

Part II: Integration of Course Concepts and Case Study

Part III: Conclusion

The groups will each handle three case studies from the Stillman text (see course schedule for titles and dates). Each **group** will be required to hand in a three-to-five page paper (double spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman or 11 pt Arial) for the assigned case study.

For the first case study, each group will be assigned an element to address (i.e., one of the three Rosenbloom lenses [managerial, political, legal] and the classics assigned for that week). The paper and presentation will focus on the element assigned.

For the last six cases, each group will be assigned two case studies. The assigned group will handle all elements and parts. The paper should include the three parts listed above. Each assigned case study (Stillman text) is related to a chapter discussing concepts within the Rosenbloom textbook. The group will use Rosenbloom to describe the course concepts along with the Stillman readings and to integrate them with the assigned Stillman case study.

During the assigned classroom meeting, the group will lead a discussion about the case study. The group can decide its own presentation method and style. If the group requires special technology for the presentation beyond what is immediately available in the classroom (projector, document viewer, etc.), the students must contact the instructor one week prior to presentation date to make arrangements. These are professional presentations – consider this opportunity as a “job talk” where you are presenting a concept and illustration to your potential employer.

The group’s grade for the case study will be a blend of the quality of the paper and the discussion. For the first case, each group’s summary of the material should consume no more than 10-15 minutes. For the last two cases, the group’s summary of the material should last no longer than 30 minutes. For any case, there is no pre-determined limit on the amount of time that may be consumed by lively and informed discussion.

**Class Participation (10 percent of course grade)**

During the course of the semester, students are expected to engage in lively and informed discussion of assigned readings.

**COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Presentation Topic</b>	<b>Assignment Due</b>	<b>Additional Comments/Notes</b>
<b>9/6</b>	<b>Introductions and Course Overview</b>		<b>The session will be devoted to an introduction to POLI 279.</b>
<b>9/13</b>	<b>Approaches to the Study of Public Administration Overview of the Discipline</b>  Readings: Rosenbloom--Chapters 1, 2 Stillman Chapter 1.	Readings	

<p><b>9/20</b></p>	<p><b>Public Administration and the American State</b></p> <p>Stillman Preface and Chapter 1</p> <p><b><u>Case Study 1</u></b> (“The Blast in Centralia No. 5: A Mine Disaster No One Stopped”)</p>	<p>Readings</p> <p>Groups present and submit papers.</p> <p>(Each group’s summary of the material should last no longer than 10-15 minutes.)</p>	
<p><b>9/27</b></p>	<p>Opening with: <b><u>Case Study 2</u></b> (“How Kristin Died”)</p> <p><b>Federalism, Intergovernmental Relations, and Devolution</b></p> <p>Readings: Rosenbloom--Chapter 3. Stillman—Chapter 5.</p>	<p>Readings</p> <p>Group #1 presents and submits paper</p> <p>(The group’s summary of the material should last no longer than 30 minutes.)</p>	
<p><b>10/4</b></p>	<p><b>Organization Theory</b></p> <p>Readings: Rosenbloom--Chapter 4 (All, but skim pp. 185-201). Stillman—Chapter 6 and <b><u>Case Study 6</u></b> (“American Underground: Unbuilding the World Trade Center”)</p>	<p>Readings</p> <p>Group #2 presents and submits paper</p> <p>(The group’s summary of the material should last no longer than 30 minutes.)</p>	
<p><b>10/11</b></p>	<p><b>Political P.A. and New Public Management</b></p> <p>Readings: Rosenbloom--Chapter 4 (reread pp. 185-201) Stillman-Chapter 3 and <b><u>Case Study 3</u></b> (“William Robertson: Exemplar of Politics and Public Management Rightly Understood”)</p>	<p>Readings</p> <p>Group #3 presents and submits paper</p>	

<b>10/19</b>	<b>Decision Making</b>  Readings: Rosenbloom—Chapter 7. Stillman, Chapter 8, and <b><u>Case Study 8</u></b> (“How a City Slowly Drowned”)	Readings  Group #4 presents and submits paper  (The group’s summary of the material should last no longer than 30 minutes.)	
<b>10/25</b>	<b>Midterm Examination</b>		
<b>11/1</b>	<b>Budgeting Approaches –</b>  Readings: Rosenbloom--Chapter 6 Stillman—Chapter 12, and <b><u>Case Study 12</u></b> (“Death of a Spy Satellite Program”)	Readings  Group #1 presents and submits paper  (The group’s summary of the material should last no longer than 30 minutes.)	
<b>11/8</b>	<b>Policy-making Continuum Performance Measurement and Accountability Systems</b>  Readings: Rosenbloom-Chapter 8. Stillman-Chapter 15 and <b><u>Case Study 15</u></b> (“Torture and Public Policy”)	Readings  Group #2 presents and submits paper	
<b>11/15</b>	<b>No class</b>		
<b>11/22</b>	<b>No class (Thanksgiving)</b>		
<b>11/29</b>	<b>Administrative Ethics in the Public Sector</b>  Readings: Rosenbloom—Chapter 12 (special attention to Box 12-5). Stillman-Chapter 16, and <b><u>Case Study 16</u></b> (“George Tenet and the Last Great Days of the CIA”) Roberts, A. (2018) “Shaking Hands with Hitler” (Available on Blackboard)	<b>Guest Speaker: Alasdair Roberts</b>  Readings	

<p><b>12/6</b></p>	<p><b>Workforce Management in the Age of Technology</b></p> <p>Readings: Rosenbloom-Chapter 5. Stillman-Chapter 11 and <b><u>Case Study 11</u></b> (“Who Brought Bernadine Healy Down?”)</p>	<p>Readings</p> <p>Group #3 presents and submits paper</p> <p>(The group’s summary of the material should last no longer than 30 minutes.)</p>	
<p><b>12/20</b></p>	<p><b>Final Examination – 2:00-4:00 pm</b></p>		