

Political Science 8226
Fall 2013
Monday 4:10-6:00pm
Office hours: M 2:15-3:30
W 3:30-4:30

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POLITICS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Course Overview

Most of contemporary politics is heavily bureaucratized; political actors are very often not individuals but organizations which, in turn, are nested inside other organizations and which interact with yet more organizations. Organization theorists disagree about many things but one thing on which they all agree is that organizations do not behave as individuals do. Organizations have behavioral peculiarities of their own, and to understand contemporary politics we must understand the way organizations or bureaucracies behave.

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the variety of approaches to organizational behavior in social science and help them apply these to specific political problems. Political science as a discipline has generated little insight into organizational behavior. Instead, the two main streams of thought about organizations have been developed in sociology and economics and the course is set up loosely as a debate between partisans of these two disciplinary approaches.

Reading

Most readings for this course are articles which are readily available online through the university's databases or through Blackboard. We will read almost all of one book:

Steven Weber, *The Success of Open Source*, Princeton University Press, 2004.

You can order it online, new or used, from your favorite bookseller.

Course Requirements and Grading

1) Students may choose one of two options for written assignments. Either:

(a) Three short papers (5-7 pages) each 25% of grade (100 points each). Three times during the course of the semester each student must write a short "think piece" about the readings for that week. Students may choose which weeks they write. These papers should critique, compare, extend and/or apply the arguments we read for the week. Papers are evaluated on the level of understanding they demonstrate and the originality and sophistication of the arguments they make.

(b) One 20-page research paper (75% of grade—300 points). If you have focused empirical interests in the politics of particular organizations and want to use this course to explore them, this is an opportunity. Papers might be drafts of potential conference papers, journal articles, or a dissertation prospectus. Papers should use ideas aired in the course to construct good research questions and involve enough research to provide at least preliminary answers to the questions asked. Students choosing this option should discuss their research project with the professor **before OCTOBER 21**. A 2 page précis of the paper is due **NOVEMBER 11**. Final paper is due **DECEMBER 10**.

2) Discussion questions for each class session (10% of grade or 40 points total.) Each student is responsible for emailing three discussion questions related to the week's readings to the professor by **10am the morning of class**. Everyone starts with 40 points in this category; you lose 5 points every time you fail to submit questions on time.

3) Memo and leading class discussion. (7.5% of grade or 30 points) Each student must sign up to begin class discussion one week by writing a 2 page memo and giving a 5 minute presentation to the class outlining important issues or making an argument about those issues for the class to discuss.

Students must post their memo to the class via Blackboard by 5pm the day before they are to present (i.e. the Sunday before Monday class.) [Students leading class discussion do not have to submit discussion questions for that week.] **Everyone is responsible for reading the memo before class.**

Memos should not simply repeat and summarize the readings. They should probe the readings for important themes, debates, problems, and issues the class could discuss. You will not be able to cover all aspects of a week's readings. Instead, pick some aspect(s) that seem particularly intriguing or promising for discussion and draw out new insights. Memos should be succinct, well written and, of course, engaging.

Presentations should do more than simply rehash the memo. Assume we have all read it. Use the memo as a foundation or basis for your oral remarks and use your remarks to start discussion. What was interesting or important in these readings that you believe we should talk about and why?

Oral presentation skills are essential in the academic profession. We have all heard bad presentations. We have also heard good ones. Think hard about what goes into a good presentation—one that will engage the class and start a good discussion. At a minimum, good presentations are NOT read aloud from prepared text. They have a more conversational style but also have a well thought-out structure.

4) Class participation (7.5% of grade or 30 points.) This is a seminar, not a lecture course. Students are expected to come to class well prepared and to contribute to each week's discussion of ideas and readings.

Learning Objectives

As a result of completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify and explain major theoretical approaches to the study of organizations.
2. Understand the complementarity and/or competing nature of major theoretical approaches to the study of organizations.
3. Evaluate and discuss critically the utility of various theories of organizations for understanding particular political problems.
4. Apply theoretical approaches to the study of real world organizations.
5. Analyze and write competently at a doctoral level.

Course schedule

8/26 **Introduction and overview**
(no reading)

9/2 **Labor Day. No Class.**

9/9 **Politics and Organizations: Roots and Basics**

Read:

Charles Perrow, *Complex Organizations* ch1. "Why Bureaucracy?"

Herbert Simon, "Organizations and Markets" *J. of Economic Perspectives*. 5,2 (Spring 1991).

Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," Part II, section VIII, in Gerth and Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (pp.196-244 in my copy.)

Terry Moe, "Politics and the Theory of Organization" *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*. 7(1991):106-129.

Charles Perrow, "Society of Organizations." *Theory and Society* 20, 6(1991): 725-62.

9/16 **Early economic approaches, division of labor, principal agent models**

Read:

Coase, 1937. "The Nature of the Firm." *Economica* 4(386-405).

Alchian and Demsetz. 1972. "Production, Information Costs, and Economic Organization." *American Economic Review* 62 (1972): 777-95.

Gary Miller, "The Political Evolution of Principal-Agent Models" *Annual Review of Political Science* 8 (2005): 203-25.

Elinor Ostrom, "A Behavioral Approach of the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action" *APSR* 92, 1(Mar. 1998): 1-22.

Daniel Byman and Sarah Kreps, "Agents of Destruction: Applying Principal-Agent Analysis to State Sponsored Terrorism." *International Studies Perspectives* 11(2010): 1-18.

9/23 **The New Economics of Organization**

Read:

Oliver Williamson, "The Economics of Organization: The Transaction Cost Approach." *American Journal of Sociology* 87, 3(1981): 548-77.

Terry Moe, "The New Economics of Organization" *American Journal of Political Science* 28:739-777.

Douglas North, *Structure and Change in Economic History* (New York: Norton, 1981), pp.33-68 (chapters 4-6).

Douglas North, "A Transaction Costs Theory of Politics" *J. of Theoretical Politics* 2: 355-367.

9/30

Institutionalist approaches in sociology

Read:

Walter W. Powell and Paul DiMaggio. 1983. "Introduction" in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*.

John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan. 1977. "Institutional organizations: structure as myth and ceremony" *American J. of Sociology* 83: 340-63.

DiMaggio, Paul J. and Walter W. Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields" *American Sociological Review* 48:147-60.

Meyer, John W., John Boli, and George M. Thomas. 1987. "Ontology and Rationalization in the Western Cultural Account" in *Institutional Structure* ed. George Thomas et al.

Francisco Ramirez, Yasemin Soysal, and Susanne Shanahan, "The changing logic of political citizenship: national acquisition of women's suffrage rights, 1980-1990." *American Sociological Review* 62:735-45.

Finnemore, Martha. 1996. "Norms, culture and world politics: Insights from Sociology's Institutionalism" *International Organization* 50:325-47.

10/7

Organizational Boundaries: Networks, Resource Dependence, Embeddedness

Read:

Walter W. Powell. 1990. "Neither Market nor Hierarchy: Network forms of organization" in *Research in Organization Behavior* ed. Barry M. Staw and L.L. Cummings. 12: 295-336.

Mark Granovetter. 1985. "Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness." *American Journal of Sociology* 91:481-510.

Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik, *The External Control of Organizations* Chs 1,3,8. Blackboard.

Hannan & Freeman, "The Population Ecology of Organizations" *American Journal of Sociology* 85(March 1977):929-966.

Ronald Burt, "Structural Holes and Good Ideas" *American J. Sociology* 110 (2004): 349.

Emilie Hafner-Burton, Alexander Montgomery, Miles Kahler, "Network Analysis for International Relations." *International Organization* 63(2009): 559-592.

10/14

Institutional Design and Change

Read:

Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal, "The Rational Design of International Institutions," *International Organization* 55,4(2001): 761-799.

Alexander Wendt, "Driving with the rearview mirror: on the science of rational institutional design." Response to Koremenos et al. *International Organization*. 55,4(2001): 1019-1049.

Paul Pierson, "The Limits of Design: Explaining Institutional Origins and Change" *Governance* 13,4(2000):475-499.

Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, "Drift and Democracy: The Neglected

Politics of Policy Inaction” Working Group for Institutional Change, February 2011.

10/21

Decisionmaking and the Behavioral Tradition

Herbert Simon. "Rational Decisionmaking in Business Organizations." *American Economic Review* (Sept. 1979):493-513.

March and Simon, *Organizations* chapter 6, "Cognitive Limits on Rationality".

Michael D. Cohen, James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice" *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17, 1(March 1972):1-25.

James March. 1999. "Understanding how Decisions Happen in Organizations," in his *The Pursuit of Organizational Intelligence*, Boston: Basil Blackwell, 13-38.

Lindblom, Charles. "The Science of Muddling Through" *Public Administration* 19(1959).

Heimer, Carol A. 2008. "Thinking about how to Avoid Thought: Deep Norms, Shallow Rules, and the Structure of Attention" *Regulation and Governance* 2:30-47.

10/28

Path Dependence, Increasing Returns & Lock in

Read:

Brian Arthur. "Competing Technologies, Increasing Returns, and Lock-in by Historical Events." *Economic Journal* 99(1988):116-131.

Paul Pierson, "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics" *American Political Science Review* 94,2 (June 2000): 251-67. Blackboard.

Kathleen Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics" *APSR* 1999: 369-404.

Orfeo Fioretos, "Historical Institutionalism in International Relations" *International Organization* 2011.

11/4

Culture and language in organizations

Read:

Swidler, Ann. 1986. Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies. *American Sociological Review* 51: 273-86

Helen Schwartzman, *The Meeting: Gatherings in Organizations and Communities* New York: Plenum Press, 1989. Chapters 1-3.

James Ferguson, *The anti-politics machine: "Development", depoliticization, and bureaucratic power in Lesotho* preface, chs 1-2.

Hull, Matthew S. 2012. "Documents and Bureaucracy." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41: 251-67.

11/11

Bureaucratic autonomy and expertise

Daniel Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*, introduction and chapter1.

Steven Brint, *In an age of experts: the changing role of professionals in politics and public life* chapters 1, 2, 7.

Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: an essay on the division of expert labor*,

pp.1-58.

Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World* chapter 3: “Expertise and Power at the International Monetary Fund.”

11/18

Explaining organizational dysfunction

Read:

Terry Moe. “The Politics of Structural Choice: Toward a Theory of Public Bureaucracy.” In *Organization Theory: From Chester Barnard to the Present and Beyond* ed. Oliver Williamson. New York, Oxford University Press, 1990.

Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World* chapter 2, “International Organizations as Bureaucracies.”

Amy Zegart, *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NCS*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. Introduction and Ch.1. Available as an ebook through the Gelman catalog.

Scott Sagan, *Limits of Safety*. Princeton University Press 1993. Introduction and ch.1.

11/25

Organizational hypocrisy

Read:

Nils Brunsson, *The Organization of Hypocrisy: Talk, decisions and actions in organizations* (2nd ed.) pp. 1-39.

Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* chapters 1-2. Available as an ebook through the Gelman catalog.

Michael Lipson, “Peacekeeping: Organized Hypocrisy” *European Journal of International Relations* 13 (2007): 5-34.

Catherine Weaver, *Hypocrisy Trap: The World Bank and the Poverty of Reform* Princeton University Press, 2008. Chapters 2 and 5.

Martha Finnemore, 2009. Legitimacy, Hypocrisy, and the Social Structure of Unipolarity.

12/4

Case Study: The Success of Open Source Software

Read:

Steven Weber, *The Success of Open Source*. Princeton University Press, 2004.

12/12

FINAL PAPER DUE FOR LONG PAPER WRITERS