



PBPL-860 & URST-360/860 Public Management

Fall Semester 2024

Time: Tuesdays, 6:30-9:00 pm

Classroom: Seabury N128

Instructor: Sean Fitzpatrick

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Syllabus

Course Description:

This course will survey the core principles and practices of management in the public sector. Many modern commentators have argued that a public institution must be “run like a business” to achieve its mission in an efficient and accountable way. Is this argument valid and, if not, how must the management of public institutions adapt or depart from basic business principles? Course readings will focus on the key elements of successful management in the public sphere, including goal setting and accountability, financial stewardship, cooperation with stakeholders, public transparency and inclusion, and workforce management. Students will engage with the course material through a series of short memoranda, as well as an independent research project analyzing the management of an individual public institution or agency and making recommendations for enhancements to its management structure and practices.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS:¹

1. Richard J. Stillman II, *Preface to Public Administration* (3rd ed. 2017) (“Stillman”)
2. Hal G. Rainey, *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations* (5th ed. 2014) (“Rainey”)
3. Martin Gurri, *The Revolt of the Public and the Crisis of Authority in the New Millennium* (2d ed. 2018) (“Gurri”)²
4. Jay M. Shafritz, Albert Clyde, and Sandra J. Parkes, *Classics of Public Administration* (5th ed. 2004) (“Shafritz”)³

Additional readings may be posted on Moodle—please check each week for assigned readings.

Class Ground Rules:

¹ Available at the Trinity College bookstore, unless otherwise noted.

² Available on [Amazon](#).

³ Although there are more recent (and expensive) editions of this book, the 5th Edition will be sufficient for this class and is [available used on Amazon](#) for under \$10.

Intellectual honesty is the obligation of all students to their classmates and the entire Trinity College community. The [Student Handbook](#) lays out the College’s policy on cheating and plagiarism. You are responsible for knowing and following all College policies, including the *nine rules of intellectual honesty* found on pages 13-14 of the Handbook.

In addition, to encourage a classroom environment that supports respectful, critical inquiry through the free exchange of ideas, the following principles will guide our work:

- Treat every member of the class with respect, even if you disagree with their opinion;
- Reasonable minds can differ on any number of perspectives, opinions, and conclusions;
- Because constructive disagreement sharpens thinking, deepens understanding, and reveals novel insights, it is not just encouraged, it is expected;
- All viewpoints are welcome;
- No ideas are immune from scrutiny and debate; and
- You will not be graded on your opinions.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

The format for the short writing assignments, which we will call “public policy memoranda” (PPMs) for purposes of this class, is attached as Appendix 1; the requirements for the independent research project are provided in Appendix 2. All written assignments are due as indicated in Moodle.⁴

For any assistance you may require with these assignments, you are encouraged to use the College’s [Writing Center](#), staffed by specially trained Writing Associates, to improve your writing, no matter your skill level. To make an appointment using the online scheduling system, use <https://trincoll.mywconline.com>.

GRADING:

Course grades will be based 30% on class participation; 40% on the short writing assignments; and 30% on the independent research project.⁵

⁴ In addition to accessing readings, students should submit all written assignments, including the final research paper, via Moodle, in Microsoft Word format.

⁵ The grading scale is based on the 100 total points possible from the above percentages:

A+ = 97.5-100	A = 93.5-97.49	A- = 89.5-93.49
B+ = 87.5-89.49	B = 83.5-87.49	B- = 79.5-83.49
C+ = 77.5-79.49	C = 73.5-77.49	C- = 69.5-73.49
D+ = 67.5-69.49	D = 63.5-67.49	D- = 59.5-63.49
F = 0-59.49		

Written assignments turned in late will be subject to a 5-point deduction in grade for each day late, absent an extension granted by the Instructor prior to the due date.

Class Schedule & Readings

Class 1—What are we all doing here?

What *is* Public Management? Why study it? Reading: Shafritz, pp. 22-34 (Woodrow Wilson, “The Study of Administration,” (1887); Stillman, Ch. 1, pp. 1-17; Rainey, Ch. 1, pp. 3-15.

Additional Reading: J. Fenwick & J. McMillan, *Public Administration: What is it, why teach it and does it matter?*, 32(2) Teaching Pub. Admin. 194-204 (2014).

Writing assignment (PPM 1): Please write an 800 to 1000-word PPM answering these questions: (i) what *is* Public Management, (ii) what should be its most important goals, and (iii) what skills or competencies are most important to the success of a public administrator?

Class 2—Goals and Essential Elements of Public Management

Americans did not begin to examine the appropriate goals and operational essentials of Public Management in depth for almost a century after the ratification of the U.S Constitution. Why? How did the governing philosophy and sometime contradictory political principles of the Constitution’s Framers influence the development of Public Management in this country? How has Public Management evolved in the United States toward its current state, and what academic and scientific theories have influenced that evolution? Reading: Stillman, Ch. 2 and 3, pp. 18-69; Rainey, Ch. 2, pp. 16-52; Gurri, Ch. 1, pp. 19-32.

Class 3—Professionalism and Public Management

What is the role of the “professional” in effective Public Management? Who *is* a “professional?” Is Public Management (a.k.a. Public Administration) a profession, like law or medicine, or simply an evolving collection of skills and competencies? What are the pros and cons of giving discrete groups of professionally trained specialists greater relative influence in matters of public policy within their area of expertise? Reading: Stillman, Ch. 4, pp. 70-95; Rainey, Ch. 10 (excerpt), pp. 325-327; Shafritz, pp. 56-63 (L. White, “Introduction to the Study of Public Administration,” 1926); pp. 250-257 (Y. Dror, “Policy Analysts: A New Professional Role in Public Service,” 1967); pp. 271-284 (A. Wildavsky, “Rescuing Policy Analysis from PPBS,” 1969); Gurri, Ch. 6, pp. 173-218. Additional reading: Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism* (1976), pp. 80-92 & 121-128.

Writing Assignment (PPM 2): Please write an 800 to 1000-word PPM stating your views on the appropriate role of professionals in public management. What are the tradeoffs involved in an increasing dependence on professional specialists in Public Management? Are “professional” public managers (*e.g.*, those with graduate training in public administration) a special case, or do the same pros and cons involved in government service by traditional professionals (lawyers, doctors, engineers, *etc.*) also apply to them?

Class 4—Public vs. Private Management

A recurrent theme in U.S. politics since at least the 1970s, especially among self-styled political “outsiders,” has been that government should be run more “like a business.” Is this a legitimate goal of public management? If not, why not? If so, how far can we (or should we) push for “businesslike government”? Reading: Rainey, Ch. 3, pp. 53-86; Stillman, Ch. 5, pp. 97-132; Shafritz, pp. 131-135 (P. Appleby, “Government is Different,” 1945). Additional Reading: D. Osborne & T. Gaebler, *Reinventing Government* (1992), Introduction, pp. 1-24; L. Gunn, *Public Management: A Third Approach?* (1988); J. Buntin, “25 Years Later, What Happened to ‘Reinventing Government?’” www.governing.com (Sept. 2018).

Writing assignment (PPM 3): Please write an 800 to 1000-word PPM stating your views on the applicability of private-sector management approaches to the public sector. Are Osborne & Gaebler’s and Gunn’s suggestions of a “third way” still viable, or has more recent experience undermined their validity?

Class 5—Policy Development & Politics

How does public policy “get made” in the real world? How do politics affect the administrative realities of Public Management? How should a public manager approach the inevitable conflict among competing goals and harmonize the disparate interests of multiple stakeholders? Reading: Rainey, Ch. 5, pp. 109-144 and Ch. 7, pp. 173-206.

Class 6—Policy Priorities & Organizational Structure

In theory, the organizational structure of a public agency should reflect the policy priorities it is charged with pursuing. Given the barriers to change observed in the public sector, however, public managers face a particular challenge in adapting their organizational structures and work environments to evolving policy needs. Reading: Rainey, Ch. 4, pp. 86-108, and Ch. 8, pp. 208-250; Shafritz, pp. 446-457 (D. Rosenbloom, “Public Administrative Theory and the Separation of Powers,” 1983). Additional Reading: J. Madison, *The Federalist No. 51* (1788); Special Panel on the Future of the Port Authority, *Keeping the Region Moving* (2014), pp. 1-22; D. Rubenstein and R. Hutchins, “Murphy To Reinstate Scandal-Tarred Port Authority Position,” *Politico.com* (May 15, 2018); P. Berger, “Governors Headed for Showdown Over Port Authority,” *Wall St. Journal* (May 16, 2018).

Class 7—Goal-Setting and Accountability

While public managers face special challenges in maintaining clear and consistent performance goals, and in driving and demonstrating accountability for results, public managers must work to overcome these challenges while recognizing the inevitably “reactive” nature of day-to-day work government. Reading: Rainey, Ch. 6, pp. 147-172, and Ch. 11, pp. 335-381; Shafritz, pp. 556-563 (National Performance Review, “From Red Tape to Results: Creating a Government That Works Better and Costs Less,” 1993); Gurri, Ch. 7, pp. 225-265.

Class 8—Communication and Public Management

Effective communication with stakeholders is crucial to effective public management. The explosion of social media and other non-traditional sources of news and information in recent years has both empowered and challenged public managers in this area. What are the keys to a successful social media strategy for public managers? Reading: Rainey, Ch. 8, pp. 251-56; Gurri, Ch. 2-3, pp. 35-93. Additional Reading: E. Gordon, J. Baldwin-Philippi & M. Balestra, “Why We Engage” (2013); Rutgers University, “How Social Media is Changing Public Administration” (2018); I. Mergel & S. Bretschneider, “A Three-Stage Adoption Process for Social Media Use in Government, *73 Public Admin. Rev.* 390 (2013); C. Beveridge & T. Tran, “Social Media in Government: Benefits, Challenges, and How It’s Used,” *Hootsuite.com* (June 8, 2022).

Class 9—It’s the People, Stupid: Personnel Management in the Public Sector

While managers of all organizations must effectively motivate, mentor, and manage their personnel, public managers have both unique challenges and valuable advantages in this sphere. Reading: Rainey, Ch. 9, pp. 257-296, and Ch. 10, pp. 297-334.

Additional Reading: B. Wright, R. Christensen & K. Roussin Isett, “Motivated to Adapt?: The Role of Public Service Motivation as Employees Face Organizational Change,” *73 Public Administrative Review* 738 (2013); F. Thompson, “Managing Within Civil Service Systems,” *Handbook of Public Administration* (1989) at 359.

Class 10—The Legislator’s Perspective

Elected representatives in the legislative branch of government—at the local, state, and federal level—are among the most important constituents of any public manager. How do legislators approach their duties of oversight and partnership with executive branch managers, and what practical steps can public managers take to win and maintain the support of legislators for key policy initiatives. Reading, Rainey, Ch. 5, pp. 122-125 (review). Additional Reading: L. Demaj & L. Summermatter, “What We Should Know About Politicians' Performance Information Need and Use?” *13 International Public Management Review* 85 (2012); L. Leviton & E. Hughes, “Research on the Utilization of Evaluations,” *5 Evaluation Rev.* 525 (1981).

Class 11—Helping Hands: Intergovernmental Cooperation and Public-Private Partnerships

Public managers must increasingly rely on intergovernmental cooperation for funding and implementation support of policy initiatives, and public-private partnerships (including partnerships with the not-for-profit sector) have become ubiquitous in public management. Reading: Rainey, Ch. 12, pp. 382-405; Shafritz, pp. 517-532 (D. Wright, “Federalism, Intergovernmental Relations, and Intergovernmental Management: Historical Reflections and Conceptual Comparisons,” 1990). Additional reading: Capital Region Development Authority, *2019-20 Annual Report*, excerpts.

Class 12—Grants & Grant-Writing: The *Real* Paper Chase

Public managers must increasingly obtain funding for important projects through grants from other levels of government as well as private and not-for-profit grant funding organizations. What are the basics that public managers need to know? Reading: U.S. Dept. of Education, “Grant Writing 101” (2018), *available at* <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/grantwrite101.pdf>. Additional reading: B. Browning, *Grant Writing for Dummies* (5th ed. 2014), pp. 7-20, 47-58, 73-85.

Class 13—“What Do We Do Now?”⁶—Reflections on Getting Sh... [Stuff] Done in the Public Sector

As our examination of public management theory and practice comes to a close, what are the key success factors for public managers we have identified? Returning to our Class 2 writing assignment, how could the professional education of public managers better reflect the “real world” challenges they will face?

Reading: Stillman, Ch. 7 and 8, pp. 162-214; Gurri, *Reconsiderations*, pp. 351-425.

⁶ See [The Candidate](#) (1972).