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PSCI 504.01: Organizational Theory

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University of Montana
Political Science 504: Organization Theory
Wednesday: 4:10-6:30 p.m.
Fall 2014

Instructor Information

Three (3) credit hours
Classroom: Liberal Arts 337
Instructor: Dr. Sara Rinfret
Professor's Office: Liberal Arts 352
Email: sara.rinfret@mso.umt.edu (email is the most reliable way to contact me)
Office Hours: Monday (10-11a.m.), Wednesday (10-11a.m.), Friday (10-11a.m.), or by appointment

Course Description

Organizations exist in virtually every sector of contemporary social life. We do not need to plan a field trip to observe organizations in action. Because of their ubiquity, however, they fade into the background, and we need to be reminded of their functions and impacts. In brief, the presence of organizations in every arena of social and economic life is one indicator of their importance. You might be wondering what organization theory is about. When we speak of organization theory we do not mean a single theory. "Rather, it is a loosely knit community of many approaches to organizational analysis." The explanatory models employed are quite diverse. The field is multidisciplinary in nature. You will find contributions from sociologists, anthropologists, economists, psychologists, and political scientists in the literature. Although organizations share similar elements and features, this course provides a comprehensive overview of organization theory, particularly as it relates to public management. Our goal is to determine what each major school of thought can tell us about how to structure and manage complex organizations and to develop our own theory of organizational excellence. More specifically, this course will be run as a seminar, with students analyzing, writing about, explaining, and comparing literature in the field of public administration (organization theory).

Expectations for Student Learning

Therefore, by the end of the semester, students in this course should be able to:
1. Understand the major concepts or schools of thought driving organization theory,
2. Apply theory to practice,
3. Understand differences between public and private organizations,
4. Develop a concept of what it means to manage, lead, and organize well,
5. Understand the meaning behind agency mission statements, and
6. Demonstrate graduate level writing, critical thinking, and analytical skills.

Course Readings

Books required for the course:
1. Rainey, Hal. 2014. *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations.* John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
2. Goodsell, Charles T. 2011. *Mission Mystique: Belief Systems in Public Agencies.* Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
3. Moodle Required Readings – noted with an asterisk (*) in the course schedule
    a. Most of the Moodle readings originate from: Shafritz, Jay, Ott, Steven, and Young Suk Jang. 2005. *Classics of Organization Theory.* 6th edition.

For students interested in cheaper versions of books for this course, I suggest using the university's inter-library loan – great way to decrease costs.

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Course Expectations

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Although it goes without saying that students get out of a course what they put into it, it is important to emphasize several key expectations.

Class Preparation and Participation:
The goal of this course is to introduce students to the graduate study of organization theory and that can only be accomplished by engaging the material inside and outside of class. During class, this means participation is a must. Everyone - students and the instructor - can and should learn from one another. Learning is a process and is enhanced by dialogue. Additionally, engaging the material requires that students come to class having rigorously read the assignments so that they are prepared to thoughtfully and productively contribute to the class discussion.

Attendance & Tardiness:
In any graduate course attendance is crucial; students who are not in class do not have the opportunity to learn from the rest of the class and the class does not have the opportunity to benefit from an absent student. Since this course only meets once a week, students are allotted one absence for the semester for any reason. Upon a second absence, a student must meet with the instructor to determine what extra assignments need to be submitted to make-up for the additional absence. Any more than two absences during the semester will merit a serious consideration of whether the course should be dropped and attempted in the future.

Students who are frequently late to class or who leave early should also expect to have their participation grade reduced. After all, being late to a class is problematic for the student who is tardy, fellow students, and the instructor. A student who arrives to class late is disruptive to everyone. Students are expected to get to class on time and stay for the duration of the class. Excessive tardiness will negatively impact a student's grade.

Lap Top Computers and Cell Phone Policy:
Because class participation and discussion are vital to this class, it is imperative that class discussions be conducted in an appropriate manner that benefits the larger university environment. Therefore, debate is encouraged as long as it is conducted with respect and civility. Courtesy in class discussion extends to making sure *cell phones are silenced* and are *not accessed* during class. Additionally, laptops and tablets provide a great distraction and often detract from the classroom setting. *Laptops and tablets are only permitted in the classroom if their use compliments rather than detracts from the educational environment.*

Using Moodle:
This semester each student is enrolled in Moodle. Moodle is where students can find additional copies of the course syllabus, required readings, assignment instructions, grades, dropboxes for assignments, and class announcements. Here is the link for Moodle access: http://umonline.umt.edu/

Keep in mind that our Moodle course site is organized by three tabs:
1. Course information – extra copy of the course syllabus
2. Readings – organized by week to coincide with the course schedule
3. Assignments – where you submit assignments via a Word doc or docx file, find samples, or additional instructions

Guidelines for Written Work:
All written assignments should meet the following criteria unless otherwise noted in the assignment instructions (e.g. critical assessments):
1. All work must be typed, double-spaced, utilize 12 point font, and have one inch margins.
2. Citations should follow one of the following style guidelines: Turabian or APA
   a. In text citations and a reference page
3. Assignments are due as noted in the course schedule. Late assignments will not be accepted. If a student is absent on the day an assignment is due, he/she should make arrangements to turn in the assignment ahead of time.
4. All assignments must be turned in by the due date electronically via Microsoft Word to Moodle. If the instructor cannot open the document, the student will not receive a grade. *The only assignments that should be turned in as a hard copy to the instructor are the weekly critical assessments and handout for discussion facilitation.* Submission of assignments via e-mail will not be accepted unless specific arrangements have been made.
5. Written work will be evaluated both in terms of content, following instructions, organization, and writing/grammar.
6. Student collusion is not allowed for individual assignments and will be treated as an act of plagiarism.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes:

Students are evaluated according to their performance in the following areas:

Critical Assessments (15 points apiece x 6 = 80 points possible):
Critical assessments are intended to encourage reflective reading and informed discussion. These two page (double-spaced) efforts should briefly sketch central questions arising in the readings for you each week. You should suggest two or three ideas that were of interest to you as well as why you found them of interest. Ideas may be intriguing because they puzzled you for some reason but they may also trigger a range of other insights or raise questions. Stated differently, the goal of these essays is not to regurgitate what you have read, but rather to analyze ideas you found compelling in the reading. A sample can be found on Moodle.

Specific readings and key ideas should be clearly cited with the author reference **in text** (however, a formal reference list is not needed at the end). Please be prepared to share your ideas with your colleagues each week. Over the course of the semester, several critical assessments are possible and students are required to submit 6 total essays. All students must submit an essay for class 2. Also, critical assessments should incorporate all readings for the week and the maximum is 2 pages – please be clear and concise. Bring a hard copy to turn in at the end of the class session.

Examinations (2x100 points apiece = 200 points possible).
There will be two exams during the semester and both will be take-home. You are permitted to use materials for the course, including notes and readings; however, the exams should be completed without assistance or discussion from anyone else and instructions must be followed. The exams will be distributed in class at least one week before they are due.

Reading Leader(s) (50 points possible):
Each student is responsible for leading a portion of a class session (at least 40-45 minutes) through a facilitated discussion of assigned course readings for the week (see course schedule for readings to focus on). Depending on class size, this assignment will be conducted in small teams, pairs, or individually. The goal is to move from theory (class) to practice (real world organization). Put differently, the idea is to **engage** your classmates in learning about a particular aspect of organization theory. The emphasis should be on raising questions, identifying points that need clarification, presenting alternative points of view, and drawing what the significant contribution is that this article or chapter makes to the field. You might want to also assess the implications of the article or chapter for practice. Regardless, you are required to facilitate a sustained discussion of the assigned reading(s). This may be a difficult task, one that requires prior development of an interrelated set of questions, along with references to specific textual passages that you think helpful in addressing those questions **Please make sure to set up a time to meet with the professor prior to presenting. Moreover, be prepared to present at the beginning, middle, or end of class (it will vary by week).**

How Will You Be Evaluated?
Your will be graded on a **one-page** handout (15 points) that you prepare for the class (make enough copies for each student and instructor, if this is too costly, let the professor know) and your ability to engage your classmates in learning about an aspect of organization theory (presentation) (35 points). In this handout (should be outline format/bullet points), you should include (no particular order): school of thought, lesson learned, the role of the organization(s), where does this topic fits more broadly within organization theory, questions for consideration, and concluding thoughts/recommendations for the future. This handout should be clearly organized and grammatically correct and its purpose is for students to use with their notes, but should not be the leading point of your presentation. It is up to the student(s) in the selection of your presentation format, but the point is to **engage** students and increase their understanding about a particular issue. Please make sure to pay attention to the course schedule. Failure to present = 0 points. Please Note: In the event that you work with a small team or partner, each group receives the same grade for the handout, the 35 points for the presentation portion is individually graded. The presentation grade will consider: organization, command of materials, class engagement, preparedness, and presentation format.

Theory to Practice Project (3 assignments x 25 points apiece = 75 points possible).
This semester students will embark on studying organizations through various schools of thought – (1) classical (a.k.a. the machine/scientific management/rational, closed system); (2) neoclassical (a.k.a. open systems, organisms/human relations/interpretativist/new public management; (3) contemporary (a.k.a. culture/critical/postmodern/new public service). With these schools of thought in mind, students will put together a collection of assignments or a portfolio project to grasp the pros and cons of each school of thought. The project consists of 3 assignments - instructions are listed below:
1. Newsworthy: Students should identify a current newspaper article (online or print) that focuses on a specific state, local, or federal public organization. The first school of thought readings should be used to examine this newspaper article or to demonstrate the pros/cons of this school of thought. For instance, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has adopted an adaptive management plan for species protection – the question becomes whether this approach is the most efficient and effective for the agency. Each student should research the topic and prepare a **5-6 page** analysis. The analysis should

include: a very brief description of the issue/article, the public organization, interests, and officials involved, the direct connection to organization theory, and an analysis of the issue drawing upon four of the readings discussed in class (first school of thought). Remember to follow the writing requirements listed above and follow assignment deadlines listed in the course schedule. Also, each student needs to select a different newspaper article; we don't want everyone in the classes focusing on the same issue. Thus, let the professor know in advance what article you are considering to avoid overlap.

2. Agency-makers: Each student is required to select a public federal or state agency of interest and investigate why this agency behaves the way it does (e.g. how the agency is organized, what incentives do the offer). The selection of your agency cannot be your place of employment because it is often difficult to examine something that you are already part of. Also, each student in the course must select a different agency and notify the professor as soon as you know what agency you would like to examine in order to prevent overlap. Nevertheless, students should address the following in their papers: 1) how is the agency organized and its mission statement; 2) how does this agency manage its workforce; 3) is this a good place to work – why or why not; and 4) suggestions for improvement. Also, in writing this analysis, each student is required to use at least 2-3 organizational theorists to examine this agency. Moreover, students should include the following sources in taking the time to research this organization – public administration journal articles, call and talk to an agency staffer, news reports about this agency, GAO report, agency reports, and additional scholarly sources. If the agency is large such as the EPA, a student may opt to focus on one particular division such as the water or waste.
Additional considerations: The best papers will begin their research early in the semester, state and pursue a theme, develop a logical argument with respect to why this agency was chosen, show creativity in developing new arguments (or analyzing old ones) on behalf of your position, and show a capacity to integrate the concepts discussed in class and in the readings. This paper should be **6-7** pages in length.

3. Lessons learned presentation (25 points possible): This project is a brief tour of organization theory. The goal of this final presentation is select 2-3 major theorists we have examined this semester to present the theme that brings together the elements of your project or what you have learned from this class. The suggested length of this presentation is 15-20 minutes, plus 5-10 minutes for questions – PPT is not required, but a handout/outline is required (part of your presentation grade) and visuals are encouraged. Student presentations should be well organized and identify a clear theme. The presentations will be evaluated based upon the following: appropriate eye contact, preparedness, mastery or materials, well organized, ability to answer questions, and engagement. Reminder: Late papers are not accepted and students should adhere to writing expectations listed above.
All these assignment should be turned in electronically via Moodle by the due date listed in the course schedule. The papers should be in a Word format and if the professor cannot open and read, then no grade.

Totals Points for the Course:

Exam #1	100 points
Exam #2	100 points
Critical Assessments	80 points

(complete 5)	
Theory to Practice Portfolio	75 points
Discussion Leader	50 points
Participation	Attends all classes/professional (up to 30-50 points deducted from total score)
Total	405 points possible (If no alterations to the syllabus)

Grading Scale: The University of Montana uses the Plus/minus grading system and a Credit/No Credit system (the CR/NCR replaces the Pass/Fail system used in the past). *General education courses must be taken using the traditional letter grade to count toward one's general education requirements.* To accommodate the Plus/Minus system the grading scale shown below will be used.

Grade	Point Scale	Point Range	GPA
A	93-100	8 points	4.00
A-	90-92	3 points	3.67
B+	87-89	3 points	3.33
B	83-86	4 points	3.00
B-	80-82	3 points	2.67
C+	77-79	3 points	2.33
C	73-76	4 points	2.00
C-	70-72	3 points	1.67
D+	67-69	3 points	1.33
D	63-66	4 points	1.00
D-	60-62	3 points	.067
F	59 or lower	N/A	0.00

Course Schedule

I require that you to stay up with the readings in order to maximize your classroom experience and minimize personal discomfort for the exams and seminar sessions. Although this is the general outline of readings, the schedule may change as the semester proceeds. If this is the case, students will be notified of any changes. The readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available on Moodle and required.

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments
Week 1: Wednesday, August 27	Course Overview and Introductions Public or Private Organizations?	*Sign up for discussion leader, discussion about format of class, assignments for week 2* **Read:** Rainey Ch. 3
Week 2: Wednesday, September 3	**Approach 1: Organizational Machine** Classical Organization Theory	**Read:** Rainey, preface, Ch. 1, and review Ch. 3, Goodsell Ch. 1, *Overview of Classics, *Organizations as Machines

		Due: 1. What is organizational theory? 2. Critical Assessment 1 (each student is required to complete) Email newsworthy preferences
Week 3: Wednesday, September 10	Historical Underpinnings of the Field	**Read:** Rainey, Ch. 2 (only pages 1-26), Goodsell Ch. 2, *Gulick, *Taylor, *Weber, *Smith, *Wilson **Due**: Critical Assessment 2 **Discussion Leaders: Focus on goodsell and Wilson readings**
Week 4: Wednesday, September 17	**Approach 2: Organizational Humanism** Closed versus open systems?	**Read:** Rainey Ch. 2 (rest of the chapter), *OrganismsMorgan,*Overview of Neoclassic, *Follett, *Hawthorne Experiment **Due**: 1.Newsworthy, 4p.m.., Moodle 2. Critical Assessment 3 *be prepared to discuss newsworthy in class **Discussion Leaders: Focus on Hawthorne and Follett**
Week 5: Wednesday, September 24	Responsiveness and New Public Management: Knowing the Environment	**Read:** Rainey, Ch. 4, Goodsell Ch. 4, *Selznick, *Friedrich and Finer **Due**: Critical Assessment 4 **Discussion Leaders: Focus on Goodsell and Friedrich and Finer readings**
Week 6: Wednesday, October 1	Power and Decisionmaking	**Read:** Rainey Chs. 5 and 7, Goodsell Ch. 3, *Lindblom, *MarchPowerofPower **Due**: Critical Assessment 5 **Discussion Leaders: Focus on lindblom and Goodsell readings**
Week 7: Wednesday, October 8	Organizational Culture and Understanding Personnel	**Read:** *Rainey Chs. 10 and 11, *OrgCultureMorgan, *Stivers, *Acker **Due**: Critical Assessment 6 **Discussion Leaders: Focus on Stivers and**

		Acker readings
Week 8: Wednesday, October 15	Exam 1 – no class meeting	**Read**: Review materials **Due**: Exam, 6:30p.m., Moodle
Week 9: Wednesday, October 22	**Approach 3: Contemporary Organizations** Managing the Impossible	**Read:** Rainey Chs. 12 and 13, *Janis **Due:** Critical Assessment 7 *Discussion about Exam 1 and sign up for theory to practice presentations*
Week 10: Wednesday, October 29	A New Public Service?	**Read:** *Denhardt, *Perry, Goodsell Ch. 7 **Due:** Critical Assessment 8 **Discussion Leaders: Focus on both Denhardt and Perry Readings**
Week 11: Wednesday, November 5	Practitioner as Theorist	Read: *Denhardt and Catlaw, *Scicchitano, Ch. 8; Goodsell Ch. 8 **Due**: Agency-makers, Moodle, 4p.m.; Critical Assessment 9 **Discussion Leaders: Focus on Denhardt/Catlaw and Scicchitano**
Week 12: Wednesday, November 12	The Future of Organization Theory: Our Own Model of Excellence?	**Read:** Rainey, Chs. 13 and 14 *In-class assignment due, possibly begin presentations*
Week 13: Wednesday, November 19	Theory to Practice Presentations or individual meetings with Professor Rinfret	
Week 14: Wednesday, November 26	No class, Happy Thanksgiving!	
Week 15: Wednesday, December 3 **Final Exam Due – Wednesday, December 10**	Theory to Practice Presentations	*Receive final exam/exam 2 questions* **Due: Exam 2, Moodle, 7:30p.m.**

Classroom Policies

➤ **Extra Credit:** This is a graduate level class, extra credit is not available

- ➢ **Make-up Exams**: Not an option since the exams are take-home
- ➢ **Classroom Etiquette:** Students are expected to observe proper etiquette in class. Disruptions, such as talking to a classmate and leaving in the middle of class must be avoided. I expect all students to maintain a high level of professionalism in their classroom conduct with me, and with their fellow students. This means **coming to class on time**, being respectful during class discussions, and in all communications with the professor and others.
  - o Rude behavior will not be tolerated. Any student who acts in an inappropriate manner will be asked to leave the class. Second offenders will have a meeting with the department chair and a complaint filed with the Office of Student Affairs.
- ➢ **E-mail Etiquette:** E-mail is a wonderful tool for you to contact me with questions, but it does not replace office hours. If you have involved questions about course material, you should come see me during office hours or during an alternate appointment. Office hours are the best opportunity to get your questions answered. Plus, you can get to know your professors.
  - o **DO NOT email Dr. Rinfret asking did I "missed anything" due to student failure to attend class** (ask a classmate).
  - o **Before emailing Dr. Rinfret you must ask yourself the following:**
    1. **Can I find the answer to my question in the syllabus?**
    2. **Can I find the answer to my question on Moodle?**
- ➢ **Incompletes or Withdrawals "W" for the Course**: If for some reason the course is not working out for you please adhere to the University's policies for the last day to drop a class. If you need an incomplete for the course, you MUST come to my office hours or set up a meeting with me <u>four weeks</u> from the end of class in order to make this request. A written medical excuse or documentation will be needed for the professor to grant such a request.
- ➢ **Late Assignments**: Students are expected to submit all work on the date specified in the course calendar <u>and</u> be present for examinations. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the instructor 72 hours <u>before</u> the date in question. Students must complete all assignments to receive a grade for the course.
- ➢ **Miss a Lecture**: Lectures will not be repeated, nor will the instructor provide them. Ask a friend for his/her notes.
- ➢ **University Attendance Policy**: (please make sure to follow the participation course policies listed above too) Students who are registered for a course but do not attend the first two class meetings may be required by the instructor to drop the course. This rule allows for early identification of class vacancies and to permit other students to add classes. **Students not allowed to remain must complete a drop form or drop the course on the Internet (http://cyberbear.umt.edu) to avoid receiving a failing grade.** Students who know they will be absent should contact the instructor in advance.
- ➢ **Wikipedia**: This online source is not reliable and should not be cited in <u>any</u> course assignment. Students that cite Wikipedia in the text or list on a reference page will receive 0 points for the assignment. The goal is to become accustomed to using scholarly sources for all work in any of your courses at the University of Montana.
- ➢ **Academic Dishonesty (Plagiarism)**: Students must follow the University's policies for academic dishonesty. For detailed information, please view: http://www.umt.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy. As such, all work submitted must be your own; no duplicate work (work completed for another class) will not be accepted. Acts of cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of ZERO (0) for the assignment. Moreover, acts of plagiarism will also be reported to the Academic Court. To avoid acts of plagiarism, cite each reference or source you use and give proper credit for the ideas, opinions, and findings of others. When you are using the exact words of others, you must use quotation marks and include the page number where you found the quote in your citation.
- ➢ **Moodle**: This class is supported by Moodle. Please refer to this site regularly for additional readings,

announcements, grades, submitting assignments, or updates to the schedule. When submitting assignments on Moodle, students should attach Microsoft Word doc or docx files. Students that turn in documents' that are unreadable will receive zero points.

➢ **Sensitive Course Materials:** College education aims to expand student understanding and awareness. Thus, it involves engagement with a wide range of information, ideas, and creative representations. In college courses, students can expect to encounter—and critically appraise—materials that may differ from and perhaps challenge familiar understandings, ideas, and beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss these matters with the professor.

➢ **Disability Assistance:** The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors. The link for this is information: [Disability Services for Students](). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.