PS 299A: Organizations: Institutions and Behavior

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HOURS: 1:00–3:00 MW

This class is intended to acquaint graduate students and advanced undergraduates with the theory of organizations and organizational behavior. The organization of political life is one of the central constructions of politics across subfields and over diverse research domains. While this course is classified as an "American politics" course, the material here should be intrinsically useful to students of comparative politics, international relations, and political theory, too.

This course consists of three sections.

We will first discuss research on 'organizations' as political entities. Questions about whether institutions determine political behavior, how groups acquire collective goods, optimizing party performance in the electorate, and such forth are questions about the perspective of organizations as institutions. Organization theories on organizations as institutions extends back over 200 years, to Adam Smith's reflections on industrial design. Even in contemporary research on such problems as principal–agency, one can find echoes of earlier scholarship on supervision in the firm.

The second third of this course discusses 'decision making,' or organizational behavior. Instead of a focus on the broad outlines of organizations, we will take a micro-level approach to individual decision making. In this second part, we will examine a variety of models of decision-making, ranging from rational cost-and-benefit approaches to symbolic and cybernetic models of decision-making. The evidence is abundant that individuals cannot be comprehensively rational in all decisions — but how different are predictions which stem from models of the mind which postulate limited cognitive abilities?

In the final third of this course, we will apply the study of organizations and organizing to a set of recurring political problems. The goal of the course in total is to make the ideas of organization theory useful in our substantive interests in politics. In this final portion of the course, we will take questions such as the "iron law of oligarchy," and analyze them from both the institutional and behavioral perspectives on organizations.

The grading for this class will be based on (nearly) weekly one page essays, a "research" paper, and class participation. The weekly essays should be of one of two forms: either an application of theoretical ideas discussed in that weeks' readings to a substantive problem of interest to yourself, or an evaluation of the theoretical work in light of a specific substantive problem. The final "research" paper should be an expanded treatment of a substantive problem under both an institutional and behavioral lens.

There are three required books available in the bookstore:

Miller, *Managerial Dilemmas*
Shafritz and Ott, *Classics of Organization Theory*
Wilson, *Bureaucracy*

In addition, there will be a selection of required readings available on the electronic reserve system.

16 Jan — What this course is about

Institutions

21 – 23 Jan — Division of Labor and Political Control

- Adam Smith, "Of the Division of Labour," Shafritz and Ott, pp 40–45.
- Henry Towne, "The Engineer as an Economist," Shafritz and Ott, pp 48–51.
- James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy,* Ch. 1.
- Richard Edwards, "Forms of Control in the Labor Process," (Reserve).
- Peter Rachleff, "Machine Technology and Workplace Control," (Reserve).

28 – 30 Jan — Scientific Management & Challenges

- FW Taylor, "The Principles of Scientific Management," Shafritz and Ott, pp 66–79.
- Henri Fayol, "General Principles of Management," Shafritz and Ott, pp 52–65.
- Luther Gulick, "Notes on the Theory of Organization," Shafritz and Ott, pp 86–95.
- Mary Parker Follett, "The Giving of Orders," Shafritz and Ott, pp 156–162.
- Chester Barnard, "The Economy of Incentives," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 101-111.
- Harry Braverman, "The Real Meaning of Taylorism," (Reserve)
- Sid Haring, "The Taylorization of Police Work," (Reserve).

4 – 6 Feb — Bureaucracies

- Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 80–85.
- Herbert Simon, "Proverbs of Administration," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 112–127.
- Thomas Hammond, "In Defense of Luther Gulick" (Reserve)
- James March and Herbert Simon, "Theories of Bureaucracy," (Reserve).
- Richard Cyert and James March, "A Behavioral Theory of Organizational Objectives," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 138–148.

11 – 13 Feb — Are hierarchies artifacts or outcomes?

- Herbert Simon, "The Architecture of Complexity," *The Sciences of the Artificial,* (Reserve).
- Herbert Kaufman, *The Forest Ranger,* Ch. 2–3, pp. 25–87 (Reserve)
- James Wilson, *Bureaucracy,* Ch. 2.
- Gary Miller, *Managerial Dilemmas,* Ch. 1–3.

18 – 20 Feb — Principal–Agency

- Michael C. Jensen and William H. Meckling, "Theory of the Firm," in Shafritz and Ott, pp. 331–339.
- Armen Alchian and Harold Demsetz, "Production, Information Costs, and Economic Organization," (Reserve).
- Gary Miller, *Managerial Dilemmas,* Ch. 4-6.
- Brehm and Gates, *Working, Shirking, and Sabotage,* Ch. 2

25 – 27 Feb — Systems Theory

- Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn, "Organizations and the System Concept," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 274–286.
- James Thompson, "Organizations in Action," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 287–301
- Fremont Kast and James Rosenzweig, "General Systems Theory: Applications for Organization and Management," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 302–315.
- L. Douglas Kiel, "Nonlinear Dynamical Analysis: Assessing Systems Concepts in a Government Agency," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 592–606.

• Arthur Stinchcombe, *Information and Organization,* Ch. 3 (Reserve).

Behavior

4 – 6 Mar Rational and Boundedly Rational Decision-Making
• Simon, "Rational Decision Making in Business Organizations," (Reserve)
• March, "Bounded rationality, ambiguity and the engineering of choice" (Reserve).
• March and Simon, *Organizations,* Ch. 6 (Reserve).

11 – 13 Mar Routine-following Behavior
• John Steinbruner, "The Cybernetic Paradigm," *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision,* Ch. 3, pp. 47–87 (Reserve).
• James March, "Footnotes to organizational change" (Reserve).
• Harriott, Levinthal, and March, "Learning from experience in organizations" (Reserve).
• Harrison and March, "Decision-making and post decision surprises" (Reserve).
• Brehm and Gates, *WSS,* Ch. 3.

Spring Break

25 – 27 Mar Power
• Rosabeth Moss Kanter, "Power Failure in Management Circuits," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 400-411.
• Henry Mintzberg, "The Power Game and the Players," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 412–419.
• Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch, "Organization-Environment Interface," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 204–209
• Jeffrey Pfeffer, "Understanding the Role of Power in Decision Making," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 359–374.
• James March, "The Power of Power," (Reserve)

1 – 3 Apr Garbage Cans
• Cohen, March and Olsen, "People, Problems, Solutions and the Ambiguity of Relevance" (Reserve)
• Cohen, March, and Olsen, "A garbage can model of organizational choice," (Reserve)
• March, "The technology of foolishness," (Reserve)
• Cohen and Axelrod, "Coping with Complexity: The Adaptive Value of Changing Utility" (Reserve)
• Wilson, *Bureaucracy,* Ch. 6.
• John Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies,* Ch. 4 (Reserve).

Problems

8 Apr Leadership
• Robert Michels, "Democracy and the Iron Law of Oligarchy," *Political Parties,* pp. 365–392
• Gary Miller, *Managerial Dilemmas,* Ch. 9–11.
• Wilson, *Bureaucracy,* Ch. 11–12.

10 Apr	**No Class – Midwest Political Science Association Meetings**
15 – 17 Apr	Can Bureaucracies Be Responsive? • Wilson, Ch. 7, 9, 17. • Mathew McCubbins, Roger Noll, and Barry Weingast, "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control" (Reserve). • David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, "Reinventing Government: An Introduction," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 523–537. • Michael Hammer and James Champy, "Reingeneering the Corporation: The Enabling Role of Information Technology," Shafritz and Ott, pp. 607–617. • John Brehm and Scott Gates, "Smoke Detectors and Fire Alarms," (Reserve).
22 – 24 Apr	Organizational Failure • Charles Perrow, "Normal Accident at Three Mile Island," (Reserve). • Charles Perrow and Mauro Guillén, "The AIDS Crisis and Organizational Failure," (Reserve). • John Brehm and Scott Gates, "Policing Police Brutality," (Reserve). • Scott Sagan, "The Perils of Proliferation" (Reserve)