

Dr. Warren
POLS6320 -01/Organizational Theory and Behavior
Fall 2023, August 23 – Dec. 6, 2023
Room 144, McGannon Hall

Course Description

This course focuses on how organizations function from various perspectives. How could any person working in an organization, especially anyone aspiring to function at a managerial level in an organization, not want to understand how organizations work? This course is one of the most interdisciplinary courses taught SLU, as well as any university. In fact, years ago I was asked by the Graduate School to examine the number of organizational theory and behavior courses taught at SLU. The reason was that the Graduate School was concerned that too many organizational and theory courses were taught at SLU, so the Graduate School sought to eliminate some of these courses in the name of efficiency. I found that seven departments were teaching organizational theory and behavior. This should tell you something about how relevant this course is to so many disciplines. For the record, no department wanted to stop teaching this course in their department because their approach was more suitable for their students.

In the past several years SLU has “played around” with so many different ideas about how to make SLU more cost-effective and better at promoting their organizational goals/mission. Ideally, all organizations try to make their organizations better, whether they are public or private organizations, big or small, for-profit or not-for-profit. Managers, as well as stakeholders, do not want their organizations to fail, yet many do every year. In this course we will explore the “makings” of organizations. We will examine organizational structures and management theories. We will study classics in organizational theory and behavior to gain insights into organizations. We will also study what organizational theorists said about organizations long ago, as well as what modern organizational theorists say about organizations today. What we will find is that theorists of the distant past say things that are not that much different than what organizational theorists say today. This is because all organizational theorists and managers have one basic goal in common. How can we make this organization work to achieve our objectives, whether it was Julius Caesar wanting his army to fight better or GM wanting to sell more cars or the EPA wanting to improve air and water quality? The focus has always been on organizational basics: how should we structure our organization, how can we use workers more efficiently and effectively, and how can we promote a healthy and productive organizational culture? In this course we will examine all of the above. We will spend more time on public organizations.

By the way, I have always been fascinated with organizations. My doctoral dissertation focused on employee turnover due to intense dissatisfaction ultimately resulting in enough stress to cause workers to quit. I am particularly fascinated with motivational theorists. One of the biggest challenges of organizations is to motivate employees to help achieve organization’s goals. Since researchers have found most employees to be “indifferents” (an organizational personality type identified by Robert Presthus in *The Organizational Society*), this is a great challenge.

Organizational theory is deeply rooted in studies for the business sector, but we will spend most of our time applying such studies to the public sector. Although business and public organizations have much in common, they also differ in very important ways. Most executives coming from the private sector find the public sector more difficult since public leaders must satisfy all sorts of democratic “clearance points” to implement a program.

Required Readings

Shafritz, Jay, Ott, J. Steven, and Yong Suk. *Classics of Organization Theory*, 8th edition (2016). The Shafritz book provides classic articles in organizational theory and behavior. I will assign readings from this book that I believe will provide a basic background on the various schools of thought in the field. Other readings will be selected from current, academic publications, and reputable news journals and newspapers reporting and critiquing organization developments and challenges. We will also watch a series of videos that provide a quick summary of the topic that we will be discussing. The focus of our readings will be on the organizational challenges public administrators face when trying to make and implement public policies to promote the public interest.

Course/Topical Outline*

Date and Topic

Assignments/Readings*

August 23 – December 6

Flexibly assigned readings on a weekly basis because this seminar will be run as a directed readings course since not enough students are in the seminar. Readings will be assigned and we will meet often throughout the semester to discuss the assignments in an Informal setting. Questions about the topics will be posed and questions raised, discussed, and answered.

Note: On the first day of class we will meet in my office to discuss the course. Office: 135 McGannon Hall

Contact Information

Email: Kenneth.warren@slu.edu or warrenkf@slu.edu

Office telephone number: 314-977-3036

Home landline phone number: 314-963-0451 (best number to call)

Cell phone number: 314-498-1923

Office hours: My office hours are flexible. It is best to arrange to meet me just before or after class. Also, personal Zoom meetings can easily be set up at our mutual convenience.

Grading Policies

Participation/attendance	125 points
Oral Report	50 points
Seminar Paper	223 points
Total Points	400 points

Your grade is determined by dividing your total points by 400 to give a percentage. The letter grade is determined by your percentage as follows:

94-100% = A	91-93% = A-	88-90% = B+	82-87% = B
	80-81% = B-		
77-79% = C+	73-76% = C	70-72% = C-	65-69% = D
	Below 65 = F		

Attendance Policy

Attendance is very important when “directed readings” meetings are scheduled since these meetings will give us a chance to discuss and critique the readings. It will give me a chance to put these readings into perspective and provide “lessons to be learned” or important takeaways. You will also have a chance to ask me questions that you may have.

At these meetings we will also be able to discuss your “seminar paper”, although I will arrange one-on-one meetings as well to discuss your paper as you develop it.

Skills/Knowledges Being Assessed

By the end of the course students should:

1. Have greater knowledge of organizational theorists who have contributed to our knowledge of organizations.
2. Have knowledge of the different schools of thought in organizational theory.
3. Be able to critique the pros and cons of the various organizational theories.
4. Be able to understand the difference between public and private organizations, especially regarding the unique conditions under which public organizations must operate.
5. Have greater insights into what seems to motivate employees to work and produce for the organization.
6. Have a better understanding of the goals of Human Resources Management, especially in public organizations, as HR seeks to promote a more efficient organization while simultaneously seeking diversity and comply with federal and state laws

In-Class Activities

In-class activities will consist of thorough discussions of various topics in organizational theory and behavior, including discussions of what seems to contribute to successes and failures in private and public organizations in modern America . Students will be expected to keep up with the reading assignments so we can discuss them intelligently. These in-office discussions are very important, so a significant percentage of the final grade depends upon your conveyed understanding of the material..

Student Success Center Syllabus Statement

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student

success are available on campus. The Student Success Center assists students with academic and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite, 114). Students can visit www.slu.edu/success to learn more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning).

Title IX Syllabus Statement

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; akratky@slu.edu; [314-977-3886](tel:314-977-3886)) and share the basic facts of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web addresses:

<http://www.slu.edu/general-counsel-home/office-of-institutional-equity-and-diversity/sexual-misconduct-policy>

www.slu.edu/here4you .

Academic Integrity and Honesty

<http://www.slu.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences-home/undergraduate-education/academic-honesty>

<http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml>

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination

without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

Any clear violation of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. Possible sanctions for violation of academic integrity may include, but are not limited to, assignment of a failing grade in a course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University. Students should review the College of Arts and Sciences policy on Academic Honesty, which can be accessed on-line at <http://www.slu.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences-home/undergraduate-education> under “Quicklinks for Students” or in hard copy form in the Arts and Sciences Policy Binder in each departmental or College office.

Students with Special Needs - Disability Services

<http://www.slu.edu/x24491.xml>

Any student who feels that he/she may need academic accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this course—as outlined in the syllabus, due to presence of a disability, should contact the Office of Disabilities Services <<http://www.slu.edu/x24491.xml>>. Please telephone the office at 314-977-8885, or visit Suite 331 in the Busch Student Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.