

# ORGANIZATION THEORY AND BEHAVIOR

Pols 6320 01

Dr. James F. Gilsinan

Department of Political Science

Saint Louis University

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Course Description: The theme of this class is that organizational failure takes work. Major organizational crises are preceded by numerous warning signs that something is amiss. For example, the Big Branch mine disaster was preceded by years of safety violations; the BP oil spill was preceded by warning signals that the equipment was under stress; the financial crisis was predicted by some to be inevitable and therefore these prescient individuals bet against the investments being made and reaped considerable profits. Equifax was alerted to a data breach by Homeland Security in March of 2017. Equifax disabled the compromised Web application on July 30<sup>th</sup> after 145.5 million people's records were hacked.

Since organizational disasters are predictable, and indeed such failures are produced because time and money are devoted to them, why do they continue to occur? By studying various models of organizational dynamics, it will be possible to understand why organizations sometimes fail and sometimes succeed. Moreover, the study of organizational theory can provide insights into how failures can be avoided or at least managed.

Three elements of organizations will be explored as we focus on the reasons for organizational success and failure: people, structures, and culture. Of course, while these elements are analytically distinct, they interact with each other in ways that make the study of organizations fascinating and frustrating at the same time. Since most of us will spend our working lives in organizations, we need to be aware of the various influences that shape our behavior and how we in turn can exercise agency to change the things within our organized lives that need changing.

Course Objectives: At the end of this seminar, the student will be able to:

1. Diagnose the reasons for both organizational success and failure.
2. Diagnose personal leadership, management and work traits.
3. Analyze and act upon the ethical implications of organizational life and decision making
4. Critique the major theoretical approaches to understanding organizations and name the dominant proponents of each approach.
5. Integrate and apply the various organizational theories to problems facing public sector and not for profit managers and policy makers.
6. Articulate specific management and motivational techniques and demonstrate how they would or would not be applicable in the public sector or not for profit sectors.

Texts:

O'Leary, Rosemary, The Ethics of Dissent – Managing Guerrilla Government, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

Fry, Brian R. and Raadschelders, Jos C.N., Mastering Public Administration: from Max Weber to Dwight Waldo, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2013).

Fox, Charles J. and Miller, Hugh, T. Postmodern Public Administration; toward discourse, revised edition.

## Assignments:

Three pedagogical principles guide this course. First, while the instructor has the responsibility for framing and organizing the course, its success depends upon the participation of all members of the class. Second, students learn and retain information if they are responsible for presenting material to colleagues. This requires that individuals wrestle with the ideas and concepts presented and translate these into language that is accessible and understandable to a broad audience. Finally, new knowledge should change the view one has of both the self and the world. The assignments reflect these pedagogical principles.

The class will be divided into four groups. Each group will be responsible for leading five class discussions of approximately fifteen to twenty minutes in length and providing the instructor with a five to eight-page written synopsis of their presentation.

Besides the group assignments, each individual student will be responsible for presenting and submitting an eight to ten page essay, responding to the following three questions:

1. What have I learned about organizations that will influence how I function as subordinate, a colleague, a boss?
2. What have I learned about myself that will allow me to exercise agency no matter what my position is?
3. When my organization is not functioning in a way that I think it should, how will I attempt to bring about organizational change? In grappling with this question, be sure to deal with the issue of "Who died and left you in charge," i.e. how do you know your view of how an organization should function is the correct one?

## Class Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
January 16	Course Orientation	Show up
January 23	Lecture	Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Disneyland and Pope Francis!
January 30	Group led discussion	The Ethics of Dissent Completed
February 6	Lecture	Development of the Culture of Management
February 13	Group led discussion	Weber, Taylor, and Gulick
February 20	Lecture	The Revolution Begins
February 27	Group led discussion	Follett, Mayo, and Barnard
March 6	Lecture	Organizational culture
March 13	No class	Semester Break
March 20	Lecture	Moving to Complexity
March 27	Group led discussion	Simon, Lindblom and Waldo
April 3	Lecture	Organizations as Systems of Conflict
April 10	Lecture	There is no there there – post modernism and organizations
April 17	Group led discussion	Fox and Miller, Postmodern Public Administration
April 24	Individual Presentations	Lessons Learned
April 30	Final Essays due by noon	Lessons Learned

## Grading Rubric

Because this is a seminar, your participation is required for a successful learning experience. You are expected not only to take away information and insights but also to contribute the same to your seminar colleagues. Of course, in order

to accomplish these outcomes, you need to be in class. Therefore, class attendance will count for 20% of your final grade according to the scale below:

- No absences = A
- Up to two absences = B
- More than two unexcused absences = F

The five group led presentations and papers will count for 40% of your grade

The individual essay and presentation will count 40% of your grade

### Frameworks for Group Assignments

First Assignment: **Due January 30**

Groups 1, 2, and 3:

Answer the following questions in the context of your group's subject

Group 1 – Bradly Manning

Group 2 – Edward Snowden

Group 3 – Edward R. Lane

1. What kind of guerrilla does your subject represent?
2. Was their behavior ethical; would it have been unethical to do nothing?
3. Comparing your case study to the Nevada Wetlands case, what personal qualities are needed to become a guerrilla – is your subject a hero or a crazed malcontent?
4. What does your case as well as the Nevada Wetlands case tell us about networks and network governance?
5. Compare and contrast the role of media in the Wetlands case with your case. Were they being used or were they users.
6. What conditions encouraged guerrilla actions in your case and how do these compare with the conditions discussed in the case of the EPA?
7. What should the boundaries be for an employee who disagrees with his/her agency policy? Was it correct to bring a law suit against the National Forest Service over the issue of off the road vehicles; did your subject cross boundaries?

Group 4 – The effective management of guerrilla governance

1. What is the role of SOP's in fostering or hindering guerilla movements?
2. What is the role of Silos/group think in fostering/hindering guerrilla movements?
3. What other instances of guerrilla movements are you familiar with?
4. What does the phrase "ethics is not a spectator sport, it's a contact sport," mean?
5. Based on the first interlude (Chapter 2), how/why do bosses get like that?
6. The author argues in chapter 6 that guerrillas are here to stay – on what basis does she make that claim?
7. "Guerrillas can do it to you in ways you'll never know." What does this mean in the context of the professional bureaucrat?

Each group will lead a fifteen to twenty minute class discussion of the questions posed for the four cases. At the end of class, each group will hand in a typed, five to eight page summary of their answers to the questions as they relate to the group's specific case.

**Assignment 2: Due February 13**

Group 1 – Max Weber

Group 2 – Frederick Taylor

Group 3 – Luther Gulick

Group 4 – Legacy and Contemporary Applications in the context of The Ethics of Dissent

**Assignment 3: Due February 27**

Group 1 – Mary Parker Follett

Group 2 – Elton Mayo

Group 3 – Chester Barnard

Group 4 – Legacy and Contemporary Applications in the context of The Ethics of Dissent

**Assignment 4: Due March 27**

Group 1 – Herbert Simon

Group 2 – Charles Lindholm

Group 3 – Dwight Waldo

Group 4- The Study of Public Administration: Origins, Development, Nature

For each of the theorists, the following questions should guide the discussion and paper:

1. Did the theorist's life experience influence his/her theoretical approach to organizations? How?
2. What are the main points of the theory?
3. Thinking about your own experience with organizations, how does the theory square with your understanding of organizational life? Give specific examples of congruencies and incongruencies with what you've experienced.
4. Finally, does the theory have any relevance to you personally in your organizational life – does it suggest ways of being a good subordinate, colleague, boss? Or does it suggest the opposite; what not to do as exemplified in some of the managers in The Ethics of Dissent.

Group 4 should use a basis of their discussion of the theory applications, the Legacy mini chapters at the end of each main chapter. They should then apply the Lessons Learned to the issues raised in The Ethics of Dissent. The last assignment for Group 4 involves a summary of the last chapter of the book and should conclude with overall lessons learned about organizational life.

**Assignment 5: Due April 17**

Group 1 – Preface and Chapter 1, Miller and Fox

Group 2 – Chapter 2, Miller and Fox

Group 3 – Chapters 3, Miller and Fox

Group 4 – Chapters 4 and 5 Miller and Fox

Instructor led discussion of concluding Chapter 6

Guiding Questions:

The Miller and Fox book is a difficult read. The language will be unfamiliar to most of you. Therefore, in presenting your chapter(s), the first question to be answered is:

1. What are all the strange terms in the chapter(s) and what are their definitions?

From there:

2. What is the overall point of the chapter(s)
3. Compare and contrast Miller and Fox's view of organizations with the more traditional organizational theories. Does their approach echo any themes we've already explored?
4. Does the post-modern approach have any practical management, leadership applications? What are they?

Assignment 6: **Presentation due April 24**

**Final essay due April 30 by noon**

While the final essay is personal, it should be anchored in the readings, discussion and assignments that structured this semester. If you have the same view of yourself, your place in organizations, and how best to meet the challenges of organized life that you had when the semester began, you did not get the most bang for your tuition buck. So the main organizing question for your essay should be, "How do I situate myself differently within my organizational life?" The following grid may help orient your essay and answer to this question.

Theorist	Main Points	Personal Insight	Personal Action:		
			Subordinate	Colleague	Boss
O'Leary					
Weber					
Taylor					
Gulick					
Follett					
Mayo					
Barnard					
Simon					
Lindblom					
Waldo					
Miller and Fox					

## Academic Honesty Policy

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 or quiz without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, sharing or receiving the questions from an on-line quiz with another student, taking an on-line quiz with the help of another student, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

All clear violations of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. In this course, academic dishonesty on an assignment will result in *an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment* and a report of academic dishonesty sent to the Academic Honesty Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the case of Class B violations, the Academic Honesty Committee may impose a larger sanction including, but not limited to, assigning a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

Students should refer to the following SLU website for more information about Class A and B violations and the procedures following a report of academic dishonesty: <http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml>

### **Student learning, disability 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.

Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to [www.slu.edu/success](http://www.slu.edu/success).

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at [314-977-8885](tel:314-977-8885) or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.