

COURSE SYLLABUS
Political Science 535 (001)
Comparative Public Administration
University of New Mexico
Spring 2007

Instructor: Gregory Gleason
Room 2064, Social Science Building Office hours—Tue/Thurs 2:00-4:30 and by appointment.
<http://www.unm.edu/~gleasong>

PURPOSE The purpose of this course is to analyze government administration in a comparative perspective. Topics include administrative theory, public sector organization and public sector reform, international standards of policy and practice, and the role of international institutions in promoting public sector modernization.

CONTEXT Good governance is no longer a concern that is unique to a particular state. In a world of increased interdependence and globalization, good governance is increasingly a concern of the global community of states and of international organizations. Structural reform is one of the principal means of adaptation to international standards. The goal of structural reform is to create a favorable policy environment for accountable, transparent government with a well-defined public and private sector working in mutual reinforcing ways to promote prosperity and sustainable development. Structural reform programs usually consist of a package of inter-related policy correctives designed to improve both the external and internal policy environment. Improvements in the external policy environment are designed to enhance the country's ability to reap the gains of trade, enable access to foreign capital and benefit from technological innovation. Improvements in the internal policy environment are designed to improve the efficiency and equity of government functioning and to improve regulatory and oversight capacities with respect to the maintenance of a policy environment for private economic activity.

Improving institutional capacity does not merely mean articulating existing administrative structures or adding new administrative units to carry out previously undesignated tasks. Rather, improving institutional capacity implies integrating existing activities to increase effectiveness and efficiency. Economists and political administrative theorists generally understand institutions to include both formal political structures such as government agencies as well as the set of policies and procedures that radiate from these formal political entities. A society has a physical infrastructure—roads, bridges, telecommunications, water management systems, buildings, factories, in general, “objects”—but a society also has institutions that provide a framework for human behavior. Institutions in this sense constitute the “soft infrastructure” of the society. Policies, procedures, laws, and even widely accepted mutual understandings among parties constitute the “soft infrastructure” of the society. Government administrative departments (ministries) and agencies constitute the formal structures, but the informal and soft infrastructures often times play critical roles in the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of particular policies in achieving goals.

The standard definition of institutions in political theory and in economic theory is the set of “rules and procedures (both formal and informal) that structure social interaction by constraining and enabling actors' behavior.” (North, 1990, 3) Institutions are governed by rules. Rules “are the means by which we intervene to change the structure of incentives in situations.” (Ostrom, 1990, 6) Institutions are set of “rules and procedures (both formal and informal) that structure

social interaction by constraining and enabling actors' behavior." (March and Olsen, 735) The theoretical explanation of informal institutions is that they are grounded in rational calculations or pre-calculations (hunches) regarding expectations, risks and rewards in such a way that informal institutions tend to be enduring, self-reinforcing, and resistant to change. Public policy refers to the ways that governments design, organize and evaluate the achievement of public objectives. Public administration refers to the mechanisms, procedures, and processes of the implementation of public policy.

The goal of this course in Public Policy and Administration is to survey the state of the art on issues, conduct, and effects of government. The course is designed as a comprehensive introduction to the problems of governance in modern societies. The course also serves to prepare students for more advanced work in methodology, analytical approaches and substantive issues in public policy and administration.

CURRICULUM STRUCTURE AND COURSE ADMINISTRATION Gregory Gleason's office is located in room 2069 of the Social Science Building (Bldg. #78). Gleason's phone is 277-5447, fax is 277-2821 and his email is gleasong@unm.edu. Office hours are 10-11 on Tuesdays and Thursdays and 5-6 on Mondays. Other times are available by appointment. Grading for the course is based upon: 1) course participation (25 percent); 2) course presentation (25 percent); and final paper (50 percent).

READING ASSIGNMENTS

The required reading for this course is drawn from a number of sources. The first reading assignment for January 24 will include three articles from classic works in public administration. These articles will be distributed by email. These are:

- "The Study of Administration." (1887), Woodrow Wilson.
- "The Theory of the Firm." (1937) Ronald Coase
- "The Proverbs of Administration." (1946), Herbert A. Simon.

Readings will then commence with recent works which emphasize the role of international organizations and the influence of international standards. The three works we have selected are:

Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work* (ISBN: 0393061221 (W. W. Norton, 2006)

William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* (ISBN: 1594200378) (Penguin Press, 2006)

Jeffrey D. Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (ISBN: 1594200459) (Penguin Press, 2005)

These works are widely available through bookstores or the internet. Then the readings will turn to more specific lists developed in consultation.