

Study of Public Organizations (26:834:601) [3 credits]

Course Description

The primary goal of this doctoral-level course is to introduce students to the foundational questions and theoretical perspectives in organization studies, as well as their applications in public and nonprofit management settings. The course will explore organization studies from multiple disciplinary perspectives, including sociology, economics, political science, etc., and examine the intellectual debates within the field. Due to the semester's time limitation, the course only surveys the theories that are most pertinent for public and nonprofit management research.

The course will be organized as a doctoral seminar. The primary activities in the classroom will include critical discussion of assigned reading materials and how these materials shed light on our research in public and nonprofit management. The instructor will begin the discussion with an overview of the readings for the day and summarize the discussion at the end. In between there will be student presentations on the readings for that day. Students are responsible for completing all assigned readings and preparing for in-depth discussions about the materials.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the foundational questions and theoretical perspectives in organization studies
- Explore organization issues from multiple theoretical perspectives
- Apply organization theories in public and nonprofit management settings

Requirements

Requirements will vary by instructor and may include:

- Class participation, weekly memos, discussion leadership, and final paper.

Schedule / Outline of Topics

- Week 1: Introduction and Overview
- Week 2: Research in Organization Studies
- Week 3: Organizations as Rational Systems
- Week 4: Organizations as Natural Systems
- Week 5: Contingency Theory
- Week 6: Resource Dependence Theory
- Week 7: Transaction Cost Economics
- Week 8: Agency Theory & Stewardship Theory
- Week 9: Network Theory
- Week 11: Organizational Ecology
- Week 12: Institutional Theory
- Week 13: Other Theories
- Week 14: Final Presentations

Texts / Materials / Resources

The selection of textbooks and readings will vary by instructor. Listed below are some of the possible textbooks, materials, and resources an instructor may select for this course:

- Scott, W. R., & Davis, G. F. (2015). *Organizations and Organizing: Rational, Natural and Open Systems Perspectives*. Routledge.