

Comedy and Public Administration Bureaucratic Stereotypes

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Many universities (including Rutgers University Newark) have used The HBO series ‘The Wire’ as a teaching tool. While not as in-depth or serious as ‘The Wire’, the NBC comedy ‘Parks and Recreation’ takes a look at a small town parks and recreation department, and is essentially a step by step guide to bureaucracy that can accompany any Introduction to Public Administration course. Often, portrayals of public administrators in mainstream media are of individuals who engage in waste, fraud, abuse of government funds and other unethical missteps. ‘Parks and Recreation’ deals with issues that many public administrators face on a daily basis. Our students (especially undergraduates) can learn by watching quick clips of comedy and applying those lessons to a course material much like a case study application.

Bennett, D. (2010). This will be on the midterm. You feel me? Why so many colleges are teaching The Wire. *Slate magazine*, 24, 78-153.

Chaddha, A., & Wilson, W. J. (2010). Why we’re teaching ‘The Wire’ at Harvard. *The Washington Post*, 9.

Moore, A. (2011). Teaching HBO’s the wire. *Transformative Dialogues: Teaching & Learning Journal*, 5(1).