

# **PAD 604: Comparative Public Institutions**

Prof. Gregory Saxton, PhD

Class Hours: W 7:00 – 9:40pm, Business 1108

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## **Overview of the Course**

This course applies a comparative methodology to explore theories and models of public institutions in the United States and in selected developed and developing countries. We will focus on administrative structures and practices, with an emphasis on the relationship between administrative practice and its cultural, economic, and political context. Institutions examined will include inter-jurisdictional comparisons within the United States—at the local, state, and federal levels—as well as among other countries and the United States.

After introducing the course and examining the pertinent theory, we will move to an investigation of the specific ways in which administrative context and practice are similar and/or different in distinct settings. In addition to examining different national administrative systems as a whole, we will also compare in-depth the administration of environmental programs and institutions at a variety of levels. Finally, we will examine several of the most important administrative tools in a comparative perspective, including government reinvention programs, benchmarking efforts, the use of performance measures, strategic planning, and the move to “digital governments.”

## **Course Materials**

There is no text for this class. Readings are available in a variety of formats: on reserve at the library, via electronic library sources, or on the Internet.

## **Methods of Instruction**

This course integrates a variety of active learning techniques into the seminar format, including case studies, group discussions, debates, student presentations, video clips, and simulations.

## **Assignments & Grading**

### *Participation*

Active participation in the classroom is an essential element of all graduate classes. For optimal discussion to occur, it is imperative that you develop ideas and ask questions that are relevant to the subject matter. Such participation is difficult, however, unless you come to class prepared. In order to do well, you must complete all assigned readings and come to class ready to participate.

### *Tests*

There will be two tests in total, one in-class mid-term and one take-home final.

### *Benchmarking Project*

Each student must conduct a benchmarking report for “best practices” in a substantive administrative area of his or choice. The cases examined must come from a variety of local, state, and national settings. A fundamental requirement of this project will be to integrate central

concepts and lessons learned in the course. In particular, students must spend time addressing the similarities and differences of the jurisdictions examined with their “home” jurisdiction. After analyzing the distinct and/or similar manner in which context impacts administration in each of these cases, the student must persuasively argue which aspects of the lessons learned from each case are or are not applicable to his or her “home” jurisdiction.

This assignment is designed to help the student integrate many of the lessons learned in the class sessions. In particular, I will be interested in two things: (1) how each of you analyzes the way in which the administrative practices in each case are determined by the unique cultural, political, institutional, and economic context in which it is found; and (2) given those differences in context-administration settings, what lessons can and cannot properly be transferred between cases.

Writing good research papers is difficult and time-consuming; at the same time, it is an invaluable skill to learn. Accordingly, I will be spending a fair amount of time ensuring that you succeed in writing a good paper. We will spend part of one class going over the essential elements of writing a benchmarking project. In addition, I will be available during office hours (or by special appointment) and via e-mail to address any questions or concerns you may have about the assignment.

### *Case Study Presentation*

Each student will be required to prepare a 15-minute presentation on one of the cases to be discussed during one of the class sessions.

15%	Case Presentation	
20%	Class Participation	
20%	Mid-Term Exam	(October 18 <sup>th</sup> )
25%	Benchmarking Project	(Due December 6 <sup>th</sup> )
20%	Take-Home Final	(Due December 13 <sup>th</sup> )

### **Grading Scale**

85% - 100% = A  
70% - 84.9% = B  
60% - 69.9% = C  
50% - 59.9% = D  
Less than 50% = F

### **Make-up Policy**

Make-up exams will be given only to students with medical or personal emergencies with appropriate documentation. If an emergency arises, you need to contact me **before** the exam. I will be strict on this policy. If you fail to communicate with me (in person, via e-mail, or voice mail) prior to the exam, you will receive a grade of 0 for that exam. The make-up exam will be different and more difficult than the original, scheduled exam. There will be no make-up for in-class exercises or the class presentation.

## Late Papers

Research projects are due at **the start of class** on the due date. Papers that are turned in after this will receive an immediate penalty of 5%, with an additional 5% penalty per day.

## Classroom Etiquette and Attendance

You are expected to attend class regularly and take notes. A large segment of the exams is taken from the mini-lectures and seminar discussions, and we will often deal with material that is not covered in the readings. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get the notes from a classmate. It would also be a good idea to come and discuss the class material you have missed, once you have acquired the notes from one of your classmates. As an added reminder, outstanding class participation might bump you up part of a grade, while showing up late and missing classes will result in deductions from your participation grade.

## Miscellaneous

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 require Virginia Commonwealth University to provide an “academic adjustment” and/or a “reasonable accommodation” to any individual who advises us of a physical or mental disability. If you have a physical or mental limitation that requires an academic adjustment or an accommodation, please arrange a meeting with me at your earliest convenience.

## Case Studies

During most class sessions in the last two-thirds of the course we will examine a unique case relevant to that session’s material. One student (or group of students) will be responsible for conducting a brief (15-minute) presentation introducing the case and touching on the key questions implied by the case. The rest of the class will be responsible for reading and thinking about the case.

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## Schedule of Topics

### (I) COURSE OVERVIEW

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#### August 30: Introduction

- Central Questions Guiding Investigation of Course Material:
    - Why should a public administrator care about differences in public institutions?
    - “What exactly is it that is *different* about public institutions in different settings?”
    - What lessons can public administrators learn from comparing institutions?
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#### September 6: History & Background

- The Rise of the Administrative State in Comparative Perspective
- Background for Comparative Analysis

### Required Readings:

- Riggs, Fred W. “Modernity and Bureaucracy.” *Public Administration Review*, July-August 1997 v57 n4 p347(7)
  - Heady, Ferrel. *Public Administration: A Comparative Perspective*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Marcel Dekker, 1996.
    - Chapter 2: “A Focus for Comparison”
    - Chapter 4: “Historical Antecedents of National Administrative Systems”
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## **(II) THEORIES AND MODELS FOR COMPARING INSTITUTIONS**

September 13: Theories and Models of Public Institutions

### Required Readings:

- Thomas R. Dye. 1998. *Understanding Public Policy*.
  - Chapter 2: “Models of Politics.” 13 – 38.
- Heady, Ferrel. *Public Administration: A Comparative Perspective*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Marcel Dekker, 1996.
  - Chapter 10: Overview of Bureaucracies and Political Systems
- Kenneth N. Hansen and Daniel T Krejci. “Rethinking neoinstitutional interaction: Municipal arena-specific strategies and the base closure process.” *Administration & Society*. May 2000. [available via *Proquest*]
- Lisa A. Zanetti. “Advancing praxis: connecting critical theory with practice in public administration.” *American Review of Public Administration*, June 1997 v27 n2 p145(23).

### Recommended Readings:

- John Forester. “Bounded rationality and the politics of muddling through.” *Public Administration Review* Jan-Feb 1984 44 n1 p23-31
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September 20: **No class meeting**

September 27: Understanding the Context-Administration Setting

- The impact of the cultural, political, and economic context on administration in different (local, state and national) settings.

### Required Readings:

- Jeffrey L. Brudney; F. Ted Hebert. “State agencies and their environments: examining the influence of important external actors.” *The Journal of Politics*, Feb 1987 v49 p186(21).

- L. Douglas Kiel; Euel Elliott. 1999. "Long-Wave Economic Cycles, Techno-Economic Paradigms, And The Pattern Of Reform In American Public Administration." *Administration & Society* 30: 616- 627.
- Frank Anechiarico. "Administrative culture and civil society: a comparative perspective." *Administration & Society*, March 1998 v30 n1 p13(22)
- William T. Gormley Jr. "Regulatory enforcement: accommodation and conflict in four states." *Public Administration Review*, July-August 1997 v57 n4 p285(9)

**CASE:**

- "PUGET SOUND WATER QUALITY AUTHORITY." Building consensus.

**(III) THE CONTEXT: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES ACROSS SETTINGS**

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Oct. 4: Similarities & Differences across Administrative Settings

- Comparison of:
- Developed versus developing nations
  - United States vs. the rest of the world
  - Intra-US differences

**Required Readings:**

- Michael Howlett, "Policy Instruments, Policy Styles, and Policy Implementation: National Approaches to Theories of Instrument choice." *Policy Studies Journal*. Spring 1991. pp. 1-21.
- Eric Welch; Wilson Wong. "Public administration in a global context: bridging the gaps of theory and practice between Western and non-Western nations." *Public Administration Review*, Jan-Feb 1998 v58 n1 p40(10)
- Fred W. Riggs. "Public administration in America: why our uniqueness is exceptional and important." *Public Administration Review*, Jan-Feb 1998 v58 n1 p22(10) (SICA Silver Jubilee).
- James Q. Wilson. 1989. *Bureaucracy*. (Basic Books).
  - Chapter 16: "National Differences." pp. 295 – 312.
- Mark W. Huddleston. "Innocents Abroad: Reflections from a Public Administration Consultant in Bosnia." *Public Administration Review*, March 1999 v59 i2 p147(1)

**CASE:**

- "INTRODUCING THE QUALITY CONTROL TO URUGUAY: WILL JAPANESE MANAGEMENT BE ACCEPTED IN ANOTHER CULTURE?"

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## October 11: The Impact of Globalization on Administration

- Analysis of globalization: one of the most powerful contextual components impacting the administration of public institutions throughout the world.
- Examination of implications of globalization for administration, such as the growing need for inter-jurisdictional solutions to complex administrative problems.

### Required Readings:

- Lubatkin MH, Ndiaye M, Vengroff. "The nature of managerial work in developing countries: A limited test of the universalist hypothesis." *Journal of International Business Studies* 28: (4) 711-733 1997
- Farazmand A. 1999. "Globalization and public administration" *Public Administration Review* 59: (6) 509-522.
- Andres Perez Baltodano. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Oct 1997 v7 n4 p615(24) "The study of public administration in times of global interpenetration: a historical rationale for a theoretical model."
- *Administration & Society*, July 1998 v30 n3 p248(26) Global challenge and institutional capacity: or, how we can refit local administration for the next century. H. V. Savitch.

### Recommended Readings:

- Public management in an interconnected world : essays in the Minnowbrook tradition / edited by Mary Timney Bailey and Richard T. Mayer. New York : Greenwood Press, 1992.

### CASE:

- "DISAGREEMENTS BEHIND AN AGREEMENT"

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## October 18: **MID-TERM EXAM**

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### **(IV) IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION OF INSTITUTIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS**

## October 25<sup>th</sup>: Environmental Administration

### Required Readings:

- Thomas R. Dye. 1998. *Understanding Public Policy*.
  - Chapter 7: "Environmental Policy" [public choice perspective]. 169 – 194.
- Paul S Weiland. "Environmental Regulations and Local Government Institutional Capacity." *Public Administration Quarterly*; Randallstown; Summer 1998
- Five brief (1-2 page) news reports on Leaf Blowers:

- Dan Hyde. May 2000. “The Lost Resource ...or...’Quiet Please’ *Reprinted from the Peninsula Pulse*. Door County, Wisconsin.
- By John Miller. May 2000. ”Leaf-Blower Terrorism.” *San Francisco Chronicle*.
- Portable Power Equipment Manufacturers Association. May 2000. “Why Bother with Blowers?”
- Citizens For A Quieter Sacramento. May 2000. “Why Leaf Blowers Should Be Banned.”
- Citizens For A Quieter Sacramento. 1997. “CQS Rebuttal to the California Landscape Contractors Association Position on Leaf Blowers.”

**CASES:**

- “SOLID WASTE LANDFILL CRISIS.” Set in Eastern Europe.

November 1<sup>st</sup>: Environmental Administration (continued)

Required Readings:

- Paula C. Murray. 1999. “Inching Toward Environmental Regulatory Reform—ISO 4000: Much Ado about Nothing or a Reinvention Tool?” *American Business Law Journal*
- Tomas M Koontz. 1999. “Administrators and Citizens: Measuring Agency Officials’ Efforts to Foster and Use Public Input in Forest Policy.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*.
- Ruth Greenspan Bell. 1999. “Environmental Policy, Legislation, and Regulation in Central and Eastern Europe.” *Resources for the Future*.

**CASES:**

- “WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS AND THE EPA.” Compelling history of beginning of EPA.

November 8<sup>th</sup>: Government “Reinvention” in Comparative Perspective

- Examination in a comparative light of the “reinventing government” reform movement.

Required Readings:

- Browse the web site of the book *Businesslike Government: Lessons Learned from America’s Best Companies*, by Al Gore. Read each of the short chapter summaries. <http://www.npr.gov/library/nprprt/annrpt/vp-rpt97/bg.html>
- Kettl, Donald F. 1994. *Reinventing Government? Appraising the National Performance Review*. A Report of the Brookings Institution’s Center for Public Management. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

- B. Guy Peters and Donald J. Savoie. 1996. "Managing Incoherence: The Coordination and Empowerment Conundrum." *Public Administration Review*.
- James L. Sundquist. 1995. "The Concept of Government Management: Or, What's Missing in the Gore Report." *Public Administration Review*. 398-399.
- Jeffrey L. Brudney; F. Ted Hebert; Deil S. Wright. "Reinventing Government in the American States: Measuring and Explaining Administrative Reform." *Public Administration Review*, Jan 1999 v59 i1 p19-30.

Recommended Readings:

- Barbara A. Coe. 1997. "How Structural Conflicts Stymie Reinvention." *Public Administration Review*. 6 Pages.

**CASES:**

- "MANAGING STUDENT AID IN SWEDEN."

November 15: Benchmarking; Performance Measures; Strategic Planning

Required Readings:

- *Public Administration Review*, March 1999 v59 i2 p101(1) Mini-Symposium on Intergovernmental Comparative Performance Data. Harry Hatry.
- Kenneth A. Bruder Jr., Edward M. Gray. 1994. "Public-sector benchmarking: a practical approach." (Benchmarks of Performance: Special Section). *Public Management*.
- Judy Ikerd. 1994. "Catawba County redesigns its budget system." *Public Management*.
- Harry Hatry, Craig Gerhart, Martha Marshall. 1994. "Eleven ways to make performance measurement more useful to public managers." *Public Management*.
- Richard Fischer. 1994. "An Overview of Performance Measurement." *Public Management*.

**Cases:**

- "DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF OUTCOME INFORMATION IN GOVERNMENT: PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA." [ASPA web site]

November 29: Digital Government

Required Readings:

- Don Tapscott; David Agnew. "Governance in the Digital Economy." *Finance & Development*, Dec 1999 v36 i4 p34
- *The Economist*. 2000. A series of seven short articles (total = 20 pages) on the implications of the Internet for governance.

- Joseph W. Grubbs and Jason Hansen Alexander. “Wired Government: Information Technology, External Public Organizations, and Cyberdemocracy.” *PAMIJ*.

**CASES:**

- “‘CYBER CITY’ AND THE ‘ELECTRONIC ISLAND’” Analysis of electronic government programs in Grand Prairie, Alberta and the island state of Singapore.

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December 6: Review and Synthesis of Course

- Synthesis of primary lessons of the course material.