

**University of Nebraska at Omaha, School of Public Administration**  
**PA 9400, The Environment of Public Administration, spring 2005**  
**Professor: Dr. Richard Box, [rcbox@cox.net](mailto:rcbox@cox.net), 554-6022**

### **Course Description**

Public administration is an applied field, so it is natural that practitioners and academicians often focus attention on technical and methodological questions internal to organizations and professional practice. However, developing understanding of the role of public administration in the broader society requires attention to the nature of that society, including political culture, social structures, and systems related to economics, institutions, and human action in the public sphere. This course offers an introduction to the study of the environment of public administration, including an international, comparative approach, study of relationships between citizens and the public sector, and linkage of the environment to current theory in the field.

In a doctoral seminar, much of the learning experience depends upon interaction, so class members are expected to attend the full length of each session, to be prepared, and to take an active part in the dialogue. Student contributions to in-class discussion should be: based on solid understanding of related concepts; critical in the constructive sense of searching examination; and open to differing views, since knowing is more a process of discovery and change than finding universal truth. Class members will be expected to lead discussions and present research findings. The professor's role will be to provide a conceptual framework, draw out multiple perspectives, and facilitate learning.

This is a reading and research seminar. The writing assignments are a starting point for the student's exploration of relevant source materials beyond assigned readings from this or other courses. This does not mean filling papers with meaningless computer-generated search results, it means exercising the persistence and judgment required to competently explore complex ideas in the relevant literature, books and articles. Of particular importance is a skeptical and critical intellectual stance that seeks multiple perspectives and an expanded, balanced view rather than accepting ideas as presented or reiterating personal opinion or preference. The overall behavioral objective is thorough, independent scholarship well beyond what is assigned. The standard for performance is that of professional academia: solid research and writing based on thorough exploration of available evidence and argument.

The course is structured in three sections, arranged in order from general to specific: the international political and economic environment of public administration; the American environment of public administration; linking the environment to current public administration theory.

### **Details**

1. Writing must be clear, logical, and straightforward. See the Writing Guide at the end of the syllabus; grading on written work will be based in part on the Guide. It may be helpful to think of writing in two stages. First, describe the issues, ideas, or phenomena being discussed. Second, analyze the material, comparing and contrasting concepts and identifying possible strengths and weaknesses; where appropriate, discuss importance of the material for the public sector given the findings of the analysis. Writing in this course is not a matter of "opinion," meaning expression of personal preference, but rather a matter of thorough presentation of available evidence and, where appropriate, analysis based on knowledge and careful judgment.

2. When writing about or quoting the work of others, students must give proper attribution (see the *APA Manual* and related sections of the UNO Graduate Catalog, "Academic Integrity" and "Plagiarism").

3. In-text citation and reference list style shall be the parenthetical reference style of the most current edition of the *Publication Manual* of the American Psychological Association. See also the Writing Guide. There will be no exceptions and APA style will be followed exactly in all assignments. Incorrect style will result in significant reduction in grade or a failing grade. Correct journal page numbers will be given for all journals carried in the UNO Library or available in PDF format online. A good online guide to APA is:

[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_apa.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html)

4. All required books used in the course are available, in addition to the UNO Bookstore, from vendors online and locally. Some related books may be out of print but available from used book sellers online.

5. Useful research sources include the electronic indexes available through the Library, the *Social Sciences Citation Index*, reviews of books, and PA and other journals. Excellence in the course depends on thorough research outside assigned readings, including books, scholarly articles, and, where appropriate, items from professional and popular media. Electronic access is important but can be fragmentary and cannot completely replace library work.

6. It is a requirement of the course that the professor have e-mail access to students. It is the responsibility of students to ensure the professor has at the beginning of the semester an e-mail address for them usable throughout the semester, and that they check frequently for messages.

All assignment materials will be submitted and returned by e-mail attachment in a virus-free format readable by Word. Assignments will be returned only to the e-mail address from which they are sent. Files containing papers should be labeled with the student's last name, the course number, and the section of the course (first, second, third). Using Jane Jones as an example of student name: Jones 9400 second. Professor's comments show in red font in attached word files—if not, the student's computer settings need to be changed.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure the correct format is used and materials are submitted on time. Problems with saving, transmitting, etc. should be resolved in advance to avoid late penalties. Please do not send complex graphics, tables, figures, etc. electronically.

7. Reading notes and handout summaries of presentations will be no more than two single-space pages in length, plus references.

8. Papers will not exceed six single-space pages in length (narrative only; references are additional). Papers will include a reference page but no cover page, just name, date, and a title that indicates the assignment, at the top. They will be divided into sections and sub-sections as appropriate. For all written work, use Times New Roman font, 11 point. Papers are due two days, or 48 hours, before the start of the class session during which they will be discussed.

9. Receipt of work will be acknowledged; if you do not have acknowledgment within 24 hours, the material was not received.

10. In-class presentations should be brief and to the point. Do not read from parts of a paper or present in the form of a review of book contents. Present a few key ideas from research and linkages to materials from this course or other courses if appropriate, tell the audience how this material is important in the context of the assignment and the course, and engage them in discussion. The intent is not to "fill up" class members with facts, but to offer interesting concepts for dialogue. Do not use presentation technology unless it is the only way of briefly presenting an image that cannot be effectively described orally.

11. Except as otherwise noted, select research topics, readings, or ideas with which you are relatively unfamiliar rather than those with which you are already familiar.

12. Students should avoid jargon terms unless sufficient research has been conducted to understand what they mean. Students should be able to place a term or idea in its historical and societal context, know the names of authors associated with it, and have some idea of its significance for current conditions. Examples of such words include “isms” such as capitalism, socialism, feminism, or postmodernism, ideas such as discourse or democracy, and historical periods such as the Founding Era or the Progressive Era.

13. Please do not submit work late (except in cases of serious personal emergency of which the professor has been advised). It will be either graded down significantly or rejected (in general, late penalty is one-half grade for each day late). Course grades of “incomplete” are discouraged and are given only when a specific part of the required course work from the later part of the course remains unfinished.

14. The following is a guide to weighting of assignments in the course, with grading criteria:

- a. Quality of in-class discussion, presentations, and notes (thoughtful comments, mastery of the material, concise presentation of key ideas), 40 percent.
- b. Three papers (quality of research, writing, and discussion), 20 percent each.

Much of the semester grade relates to the written assignments. There is no exam or accountability measure for student knowledge of material presented by the professor or class members. At the doctoral level, it is assumed that active participation in dialogue, plus awareness of the value of the material to the student's intellectual and professional growth, puts each person in the position of determining how to record, retain, and make use of the experience.

15. There are a number of reference works that may be useful during the semester and in other courses. One particularly well suited to this course is Goodin and Pettit, *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*.

16. During the semester there may be departmental events organized around visiting scholars. Discussion of course-related ideas generated from such visits will be a part of the course. Class members are expected to either attend the relevant events or be thoroughly familiar with them, for example by making and listening to tape recordings or reading related materials.

17. Accommodations are provided for students with verified disabilities. For more information contact Services for Students with Disabilities in Eppley 117 or 554-2872, TTY 554-3799.

### **Awareness**

Developing an understanding of the environment of public administration requires attention to sources of information. There is so much material available it is difficult to recommend specific sources and it is to be expected that we will learn of sources from each other during the semester.

This said, it is possible to identify some key sources, in addition to books and scholarly articles, of awareness about the environment of public administration. These few sources are readily available and can serve to give participants in the course common discussion points. It is recommended that students begin using these outlets immediately.

The first set of sources includes media outlets such as CNN, C-SPAN, *Frontline*, *The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*, *The Charlie Rose Show*, national newsmagazines, and newspapers with national scope. They cover current affairs and on occasion offer useful background analysis

of events. C-SPAN carries interviews with authors (“Booknotes”), and talks by authors during weekends devoted entirely to books. Schedules are online, [cspan.org](http://cspan.org).

Second, every morning and evening National Public Radio news programs (in Omaha on KIOS, 91.5 fm; online, [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)) offer a unique view of public affairs, science, arts, and so on. There is no substitute for this source; it requires time and patience to sort through the many hours of material or to browse through it online after the fact, but it is irreplaceable.

Third, *The Atlantic Monthly* carries in-depth articles on topics such as democracy, citizenship, social equity, and government and political issues. Some of the ideas of authors to be discussed this semester first appeared here in article form. The magazine has an excellent website and online archive, [theatlantic.com](http://theatlantic.com).

Fourth, it is often helpful to gain perspective from outside the U.S. One useful source is the British newspaper *The Guardian* online, [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk).

### ***First Section*** **The Global Political and Economic Environment of Public Administration**

Readings and Schedule. Students should be prepared to discuss important concepts in each assigned reading. The objective is to identify primary themes, supporting arguments, and implications for public administration. Make notes and plan to lead a discussion on concepts you find interesting from each reading. This is not a book report, it is a preparation for teaching. Research outside the assigned materials is not required. Instead, good discussions will make linkages to historical and current events and to reading materials and concepts from public administration coursework or other sources with which presenters are familiar. This paragraph applies to readings in the first and second sections of the course. Bring to class handout copies of your reading notes for the professor and class members.

January 11. Introduction.

January 18. Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *The Postmodern Adventure: Science, Technology, and Cultural Studies at the Third Millennium*.

January 25. Richard Box, *Critical Social Theory in Public Administration*

February 1. David Harvey, *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*.

February 8. No class.

February 15. Presentation and discussion of Comparative papers.

February 22. Comparative papers, continued.

Comparative Paper. Write a comparative paper that examines the environment of public administration in another country, as compared to that of the United States. The country should be one with which you are not particularly familiar. Examples: Great Britain, Japan, China, Germany, France. You may choose a country other than one of these five. Countries in Asia, Africa, or Latin America would be especially interesting, provided the student finds sufficient source material. Issues of interest for the paper include, but are not limited to:

The relationship of the private economy and the public sector;

Governmental structures, including relationship of national and sub-national units;

Expectations about the role of public employees in society;

Historical events that have shaped the environment of public administration;  
Cultural features that influence the above.

This assignment requires thorough research of appropriate literature. Be prepared to present your findings to the class and lead a discussion. Bring to class handout summaries of your presentation for the professor and class members. The paper is due February 13.

***Second Section***  
**The American Environment of Public Administration**

Readings and Schedule.

March 1. Richard Dagger, *Civic Virtues: Rights, Citizenship, and Republican Liberalism*.

March 8. Donald Kettl, *The Transformation of Governance: Public Administration for Twenty-First Century America*;  
and,

Richard Box, "Running Government Like a Business," *American Review of Public Administration*, 29 (March 1999), 19-43. [Available electronically from Richard Box]

March 15. Spring break, no class.

March 22. John Logan and Harvey Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*.

March 29. Presentation and discussion of Book Review papers.

April 5. Book Review papers, continued.

Book Review Paper. Choose a book (or books, where two are listed together) from the list below, in consultation with the professor. It should not be one with which you are familiar. Write a paper presenting the central argument of the book(s), plus, from thorough research of related literature: relationship to other work by the same author; comments, critiques, citations or reviews; interpretations of this work and/or related concepts in the work of others; and, linkage to the theme of this section of the course, through books and/or articles from course materials in this or other courses. Be prepared to present your findings to the class and lead a discussion. Bring to class handout summaries of your presentation for the professor and class members. The paper is due March 27.

Robert Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*.

John S. Dryzek, *Democracy in Capitalist Times: Ideals, Limits, and Struggles*.

Camilla Stivers, *Bureau Men, Settlement Women: Constructing Public Administration in the Progressive Era*;  
and

Kevin Mattson, *Creating a Democratic Republic: The Struggle for Urban Participatory Democracy During the Progressive Era*.

Sanford Lakoff, *Democracy: History, Theory, Practice*.

C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*.

Garrett Ward Sheldon, *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson*;  
and  
Richard Matthews, *The Radical Politics of Thomas Jefferson*.

Michael Spicer, *The Founders, the Constitution, and Public Administration: A Conflict in Worldviews*; and, *Public Administration and the State: A Postmodern Perspective*

David Szatmary, *Shay's Rebellion: The Making of an Agrarian Insurrection*;  
and  
Thomas Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution*.

Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*.

### ***Third Section*** **Linking the Environment to Current Public Administration Theory**

#### Schedule.

April 12. No class.

April 19. Presentation/discussion of Topical papers.

April 26. Topical papers, continued. Also, each student will give an assessment of the possible effects of the semester's work on her/his thoughts about public administration and her/his future scholarly work. The assessment will be accompanied by a handout summary for the professor and class members.

Topical Paper. Choose a topic, idea, or author in public administration directly related to 9400 course material and write a paper that thoroughly explores descriptive and normative aspects in PA and related journals. (Depending on the topic, useful material may be found in journals of fields such as economics, history, political science, sociology, urban affairs, and so on. However, research will begin in public administration.) The paper should operate at a level of generality appropriate for the subject matter of the course, avoiding significant concentration on detailed or narrow matters. Bring a handout summary of the paper for the professor and class members.

Substantive areas directly related to the course include (alphabetic, non-exclusive list): bureaucracy; citizenship and self-governance; civil society and public administration; critical approaches; democracy; discourse; economics; feminist approaches; historical eras and events; modernism and postmodernism. Journals that may prove useful include (not an exhaustive list, but work should begin with some of these): *Administration & Society*; *Administrative Theory & Praxis*; *American Review of Public Administration*; *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*; *Public Administration Review*; *Public Performance and Management Review*.

The paper is due April 17.

### **Writing Guide**

#### Problem areas

- Generally, avoid first-person narrative and familiar, "we" or "you" language, such as "now that we understand ethics," or "how do you understand ethics?"
- Avoid contractions.
- Note that "it's" means only "it is," and is not used for any other meaning.
- Punctuation.
  - Period and comma always appear before quotation marks, except when a

- parenthetical citation ends the sentence; then, the period is outside the citation.
  - Question mark, colon, semi-colon appear outside quotation marks (though a question mark appears inside the quotation mark if it applies to the quote, not the full sentence).
  - Quotation marks are double, not single, except for a quote within a quote.
- Quotations 40 or more words in length appear in block format. There are no quotation marks in block quotations except for quotes within the quote. The final period appears at the end of text, not outside a parenthetical citation.
- Avoid sentence fragments. Sentences must have a subject (noun clause) and predicate (verb clause) [predicate: proclaim, preach]. Example: “The governing body should create agency mission and goals statements. Also ensure that they are implemented” (no subject). To correct, delete period, change “Also” to “and.”
- Avoid use of “individual” in place of “person,” “people,” “citizen,” “woman,” etc. Use individual only to emphasize separation from a group.
- Do not use “where” to mean “in which”; “where” refers to a place, not an event or situation.
- Avoid exaggerated language such as “extremely,” “very,” or “enormous,” unless the circumstances described are in fact quite different from others.
- Avoid absolute or normative language such as “must,” “should,” “necessary,” or “required,” unless paraphrasing others or presenting a strongly supported argument involving no, or demonstrably undesirable, alternatives.
- Avoid re-creating lists from the work of others. They are usually a waste of space; briefly summarize their content in narrative form.
- In general, do not use dictionary definitions. Develop description and definitions from course-related source materials.
- Do not anthropomorphize. For example: “The welfare program believed that....” Programs cannot “believe”; employees in the program may do so.
- Miscellaneous items of spelling and word usage:
  - affect = verb, to influence or noun, emotion; effect = verb, to bring about or noun, a result or impact
  - ies/y's (agency's, possessive; agencies, plural)
  - moot (lacking practical significance)/mute (unable to speak)
  - populace (people living in an area)/populous (many people in an area)
  - principle (idea)/principal (first, primary)
  - separation/separation (second e is incorrect)
  - tenet (principle)/tenant (occupant in building)
  - there (location)/their (plural possessive)
  - the word “data” is a plural form, thus: “data are,” not “data is”; “the data show,” not “the data shows”
- Avoid pointless, redundant words that do not contribute to meaning. Examples (there are valid uses for these, but usually they are pointless and redundant):
  - “in order”
  - “in which”
  - “does,” as in, “the author does present evidence for....”
- Avoid colloquialism, instead writing exactly what is meant in plain, clear language.
  - “goes on to say” (referring to additional thoughts from the same author; alternatives include simply quoting what the author writes, or use phrases such as: \_\_\_\_\_ also writes that, “....”)
  - “looks at” (alternatives: “examines,” “explores,” “discusses”)
  - “the cards are on the table”
  - “sticks out in my mind” (alternative: “seems important”)
  - “sat down to a meeting” (alternative: “met”)
  - “what is the next step?” (referring to preferred next concepts addressed in a paper, or

- actions to be taken by academicians or practitioners)
- “take a hold of”
- “come up with” (alternatives: “create,” “produce,” “build,” etc.)
- “the author talks about” or “says” (alternatives: “writes about,” “states,” “argues”)
- Do not overuse quotation, which should be a small percentage of the text of a paper. Quotations should be explained and interpreted in surrounding text.
- The best written work is much like speech. Envision presenting your paper before an audience, for example a class, making good eye contact, speaking clearly, and giving emphasis where appropriate. Read your written work aloud, then make changes when you hear language that is awkward, unclear, confusing. Do the sentences as written flow well and make sense? Is each paragraph a complete thought composed of related sentences? Is the work interesting and its meaning clear?
- Never under any circumstances discuss, paraphrase or quote the work of others without giving proper and thorough attribution (parenthetical citations and reference-list entries), and placing quotation marks around all direct quotations. Failure to properly attribute is plagiarism. The result can be failure for the assignment and possibly failure of the course and removal from the program.

### APA

- Attribution: give in-text references when using ideas of others or quoting. All direct quotation is in quotation marks with page citation.
- For this course, show page number(s) in parenthetical references unless referring to entire work (APA sec. 3.39, p. 121; and 3.101, pp. 213-214). Page #s indicated by “p.” for one page, “pp.” for two or more.
- Reference list style: capitals are used in book and article titles only for first word, proper names, first word in sub-title following colon.
- Titles in text: first letter of each word of book titles capitalized, title in italics; article titles also in caps, quotation marks, no italics.
- Page numbers in the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the *APA Manual* for guidance on commonly used items.
  - parenthetical in-text citations, pages 207+
  - reference list entries for journal articles, pages 239+
  - ref. list, books, pages 248+
  - ref. list, electronic sources, pages 120 and 268+
  - block quotations, pages 117-118
- In APA, journal issue # is not given if the volume is numbered continuously.
- Online retrieval need not be shown when the source is in PDF format.
- See APA for block quotation format, use of italics, ellipsis points, etc.

### Editing

- “etc. below” indicating application of the correction note to later instances.
- Editing marks for letter or word reversal (curving line on top of one and under the other), delete item (circle around item, with tail), no caps (three lines above letter, top longest, bottom shortest).