THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
(FORMAL MODELS OF BUREAUCRACY)

POLS 643[1]

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Course Day/time: Tuesday: 9:00 – 11:50
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Bureaucracy is the institution (or, collection of institutions) in which Congressional policy pronouncements take concrete form. Even a policy clearly articulated by Congress is usually implemented by bureaucrats. Bureaucratic action is far-reaching and touches on basically all aspects of governmental policy and, in turn, citizen lives. For this reason, Congress, the president, courts, and interest groups all seek to influence bureaucracies. Moreover, bureaucrats are very rarely elected in the U.S. and are insulated by civil service protections from political demands from Congress. This raises a potential problem for democratic governance: are bureaucratic decisions compatible with democracy given that bureaucrats are unelected and insulated from the public? This question drives a large literature examining the role that bureaucracy plays in policy development, formation, and implementation with a particular focus on the interesting positive and normative concerns about American political institutions, their effects on policy, and the capacity to recognize, address, and solve public problems. For all of these reasons bureaucratic politics has been a fertile area of research on American political institutions.[2]

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[1]Most of this syllabus, with respect to structure, is borrowed from Justin Fox's "Formal Models of Elections and Representation" course taught at WashU. Many thanks are owed to Justin for sharing his resources with me.

[2]Of course, the emphasis need not be on the U.S. exclusively but in this course we will largely deal with literature in American politics.

This seminar provides an overview of this literature — the major substantive issues covered in American insitutions literature on bureaucratic politics — and the theoretical and empirical tools commonly used to contribute to it. The goals of the seminar are to enable graduate students to contribute to this and related literatures themselves, and to make sense of the structures and activities that characterize bureaucracies' involvement in the policymaking process. With these goals in mind the structure of the course is really two-fold. First, it provides a representative, though not even close to exhaustive, overview of the most prevalent and important themes in the study of bureaucratic politics (largely in political science and economics). Second, much of this literature has utilized game-theoretic modeling and/or sophisticated empirical modeling to explore different questions and issues facing bureaucracy, and we will spend a significant portion of time in the seminar breaking down the mechanics of articles. Thus, the course is simultaneously a concise survey of theories of bureaucratic politics and a skills-based seminar to help students develop the ability to model (formal or otherwise) political situations of interest to them.

PREREQUISITES

This is not a class on formal modeling. However, an important part of this literature employs formal models and the course will be more useful if you have a baseline level of familiarity with fundamental formal modeling techniques. Accordingly, while this course does not have formal prerequisites, I strongly recommend that all students that enroll have taken graduate-level game theory. Many, though not all, of the papers we discuss in depth in this course will employ game-theoretic argumentation (formal or not) and I will not spend much time in the course teaching basics of game theory that are covered in the first-year grad game theory course. Note that this does *not* mean that you ought to understand all the modeling in all of the papers on this syllabus ex ante.

COURSE MATERIALS

Most of the course will involve reading published articles that are easily found online. I do recommend, however, as a general reference the book, "Formal Models of Domestic Politics" by Scott Gehlbach. There should be some available for sale in the bookstore or it is easily found online. This is a great reference to have for applied formal modeling. We will likely not engage the book directly in the course, but it's good to have on your bookshelf. Additionally I am happy to recommend extremely good sociological or ethnographic books about (largely American) bureaucracy to those interested in delving deeper into the study of bureaucratic agencies.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The grading will be done according to the following rubric:

(6) Analytical summaries	40%
(1) Research prospectus	20%
(?) Participation/presentations	40%

Assignments **will not be accepted late except in cases of University-recognized excuses.** Each component of the grading rubric above is described in more detail below.

ANALYTICAL SUMMARIES (2/5 OF GRADE)

You will write six short analytical summaries over the course of the semester. Each summary should not be longer than 4 pages (double-spaced, 12pt font) and focus on **one** class reading. Each summary should (1) identify the paper's research questions; (2) provide a brief overview of the paper's model; (3) identify the paper's main results; and (4) explain the logic underlying key results with as little mathematical notation as possible.[3] I will circulate an example of one that I wrote in grad school in a similarly organized course. The "meat" of each summary should be devoted to explaining the logic of the results. When writing the summary, think of your audience as a scholar who knows the literature, knows game theory, but hasn't read the paper you're reviewing very closely. Summaries are to be e-mailed to me (irturner@tamu.edu) by noon the day before class. So, if you write a summary dealing with an article we will discuss on February 2nd you need to email it to me before 12:00PM on February 1st.

RESEARCH PROSPECTUS (1/5 OF GRADE)

Your research prospectus is due at 5PM, Thursday May 12th and should be about 5 pages long, double spaced. We will schedule a special session of class where you will be given ten to fifteen minutes to present your prospectus followed by questions from your classmates and I.

Your research prospectus should consist of an extension of an *existing model*. Two potentially fruitful approaches are the following: (1) Begin with a question of interest, e.g., "Does increased transparency of policymaking lead to better public policy?", and use an existing theoretical setup to address your question;[4] or (2) take an existing paper, modify one of its key assumptions in an interesting manner, and explore how the key insights of the original paper are affected.[5] The way to do this is by constructing a simple example that illustrates the primary effect of changing one of the original model's assumptions. A third possibility, though I am not strongly endorsing this option, is to take a primarily empirical article we read and try to develop a formal model that leads

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[3]Statements like, "option A and option B" are fine, but don't include equations. For a nice example of how to discuss a model with no math that still conveys a good idea of the model and its results see the introduction in Stephen Morris, 2001, "Political Correctness," Journal of Political Economy 109:231-265.

[4]For example, Justin Fox, 2007, "Government Transparency and Policymaking," *Public Choice* 131:23-44.

[5]For example, Richard Van Weelden 2010, "Deliberation Rules and Voting," *Quarterly Journal of Political Science.*

to the implications of that article. An article of this sort will already have strong verbal theory (or I wouldn't have chosen it) so this would be an exercise in formalizing a non-formal argument. Note that this option is not easy, and I often find it much more difficult than starting from scratch. In any case, we will meet to discuss the different options throughout the course.

The ultimate aim of this assignment is to get practice developing the "essential insight" that underlies a research paper. Students are required to meet with me no later than March 15th to discuss initial ideas about their research prospectus and to begin the conversation about what will constitute an acceptable prospectus.

CLASS PARTICIPATION (2/5 OF GRADE)

This is very likely the most important component of the course. First, you are expected to come to class prepared. This means that you have read, very closely, the articles assigned for the week. Further, this means that you should be able to discuss the articles in some detail as well as come prepared with questions, concerns, confusion, etc. related to the articles. This is really where the most learning in this course can occur. Aside from being prepared (which I really shouldn't have to list for a graduate seminar), students will engage in class presentations of papers we read during the semester.

Student presentations: All students will be expected to present one to two papers over the course of the semester (the total number of presentations will depend on the number of students taking the course). To the extent possible, I will take student preferences into account when papers are assigned to everyone.

Each presentation should be roughly 60 minutes long. The presentation should have the following general structure: (1) The first couple minutes should be devoted to framing the question the paper is seeking to address; (2) the presenter should then go through the model's setup in detail. Be sure to clearly articulate who the players are, their respective strategies, and the solution concept employed; (3) the presenter should then work through the paper's main results on the white board/chalk board. Here the aim is not to reproduce every step of the paper's proofs, but to give a deep sense of the model's mechanics (this sometimes requires using figures, sometimes examining simplified variants of the model being discussed, etc.) and the general logic underlying the paper's main results. By watching me work through the papers during the first few class meetings, what I'm looking for in presentations will become more concrete. *Presenters should meet with me before their presentation to discuss the details of their talk.*

Readings and class format: All readings are available online. For most weeks, we will cover two theoretical papers (though I reserve the right to add papers—theoretical, empirical, or otherwise— as I see fit). Typically, I'll spend the first couple minutes at the start and end of class highlighting how the assigned papers connect to a larger literature and broader questions of interest in political

science and economics. Your analytical summaries will also help guide the discussion in these periods. We'll devote roughly 75 minutes per paper.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, currently located in the Disability Services building at the Student Services at White Creek complex on west campus or call 979-845-1637. For additional information, visit `http://disability.tamu.edu`.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. The Aggie Honor Code: "An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do." As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as ones own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with the definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of the person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the Aggie Honor System Office website (`http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor`) or the latest version of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section "Scholastic Dishonesty."

COURSE OUTLINE

The following outlines the general structure of the course in terms of topics to be covered and articles. Some weeks I may include extra reading for those interested. Note that this may change/evolve as the semester progresses. That means I reserve the right to alter the course outline at any point in time. Of course, you will receive appropriate notice should this occur. Note that there are two many topics listed to cover in the allotted time. This is purposeful. It leaves me (and you) some flexibility based on interests and how the course progresses. My suggestion for seminar purposes is to go through the required readings closely and skim the supplemental readings to get a sense of the "bigger picture."

1. *Introduction/Course Overview*
   Required readings:

   - Gibbons. "An Introduction to Applicable Game Theory." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*.

- Sean Gailmard and John Patty. 2012. "Formal Models of Bureaucracy." *Annual Review of Political Science*.

2. *Delegation I*
   Required readings:

   - Bendor, Glazer, and Hammond. 2001. "Theories of Delegation," by Bendor, Glazer, and Hammond. *Annual Review of Political Science*.

   - Jonathan Bendor and Adam Meirowitz. 2004. "Spatial Models of Delegation." *American Political Science Review.*

   - Eric Maskin and Jean Tirole. 2004. "The Politician and the Judge: Accountability in Government." *American Economic Review*.

   Supplemental readings:

   - Justin Fox and Stuart Jordan. 2011. "Delegation and Accountability." *Journal of Politics* 73(3): 831–844.

   - David Epstein and Sharyn O'Halloran. 1999. *Delegating Powers: A Transaction-Cost Approach to Policymaking under Separate Powers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

3. *Delegation II*
   Required readings:

   - John Huber and Nolan McCarty. 2004. "Bureaucratic Capacity, Delegation, and Political Reform." *American Political Science Review* 98(3): 481–494.

   - Craig Volden. 2002. "A Formal Model of the Politics of Delegation in a Separation of Powers System." *American Journal of Political Science*.

   - Alan Wiseman. 2009. "Delegation and Positive-Sum Bureaucracies." *Journal of Politics* 71(3): 998–1014.

   Supplemental readings:

   - Michael Ting, James Snyder, Shigeo Hirano, and Olle Folke. 2013. "Elections and Reform: The Adoption of Civil Service in the U.S. States." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 25(3): 363–387.

   - Craig Volden. 2002. "Delegating Power to Bureaucracies: Evidence from the States." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 18(1): 187–220.

4. *Political Origins of Bureaucratic Structure*

   Required readings:

   - McNollgast. 1987. "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 3(2): 243–277.

   - Michael Ting. 2002. "A Theory of Jurisdictional Assignments in Bureaucracy." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(2): 364–378.

   - Rui DeFigueiredo. 2002. "Electoral Competition, Political Uncertainty, and Policy Insulation." *American Political Science Review* 96(2): 321–333.

   Supplemental readings:

   - Michael Ting. 2009. "Organizational Capacity." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*.

   - McNollgast. 1999. The Political Origins of the Administrative Procedure Act. *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 15(1): 180–217.

5. *Information Transmission and Bureaucratic Structure*

   Required readings:

   - Kathleen Bawn. 1995. "Political Control versus Expertise: Congressional Choice about Administrative Procedures." *American Political Science Review* 89(1): 62–73.

   - David Epstein and Sharyn O'Halloran. 1994. "Administrative Procedures, Information, and Agency Discretion," *American Journal of Political Science*.

   - Sean Gailmard and John Patty. 2009. "Congressional Development of the Institutional Presidency: Policy Advice under Separation of Powers." *Working paper.* Available at `http://johnwpatty.com/papers/GailmardPattySeparationOfPowers.pdf`.

   Supplemental readings:

   - Rui DeFigueiredo, Pablo Spiller, and Santiago Urbiztondo. 1999. "An Informational Perspective on Administrative Procedures." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 15(1): 283–305.

   - John Huber, Charles Shipan, and Madelaine Pfahler. 2001. "Legislatures and Statutory Control of the Bureaucracy." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(2): 330–345.

6. *Effects of Bureaucratic Structure*

   Required readings:

- Canice Prendergast. 2003. "The Limits of Bureaucratic Efficiency." *Journal of Political Economy* 111(5): 929–958.

- Sean Gailmard and John Patty. 2007. "Slackers and Zealots: Civil Service, Policy Discretion, and Bureaucratic Expertise." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4): 873–889.

Supplemental readings:

- David Lewis. 2003. *Presidents and the Politics of Agency Design.* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

- David Lewis. 2008. *The Politics of Presidential Appointments.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

7. *Bureaucratic Preferences*
   Required readings:

- Jonathan Bendor. 1995. "A Model of Muddling Through." *American Political Science Review* 89(4): 819–840.

- Daniel Carpenter. 1996. "Adaptive Signal Processing, Hierarchy, and Budgetary Control in Federal Regulation." *American Political Science Review* 90(2): 283–302.

- Canice Prendergast. 2007. "The Motivation and Bias of Bureaucrats." *American Economic Review* 97(1).

Supplemental readings:

- Ian Turner. 2015. "Political Agency, Oversight, and Bias: The Instrumental Value of Politicized Policymaking." *Working paper.* Available at http://www.ianrturner. com/instrumental-bias-V1-submitted.pdf.

- Marissa Martino Golden. 2000. *What Motivates Bureaucrats?* New York: Columbia University Press.

- David C. Nixon. 2004. "Separation of Powers and Appointee Ideology." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 20(2): 438–457.

- Joshua Clinton and David Lewis. 2008. "Expert Opinion, Agency Characteristics, and Agency Preference." *Political Analysis*.

- Anthony Bertelli, Christian Grose, David Lewis, and David Nixon. 2012. "Separated Powers in the United States: The Ideology of Agencies, Presidents, and Congress." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(2): 341–354.

- Anthony Bertelli and Christian Grose. 2011. "The Lengthened Shadow of Another Institution? Ideal Point Estimates for the Executive Branch and Congress." *American Journal of Political Science* 55(4): 767–781.

8. *Coalition Building and Bureaucratic Autonomy*
   Required readings:

   - Kernell and McDonald. 1999. "Congress and America's Political Development: The Transformation of the Post Office from Patronage to Service." *American Journal of Political Science* 43(3): 792.

   - Daniel Carpenter. 2000. "State Building through Reputation Building: Coalitions of Esteem and Program Innovation in the National Postal System." *Studies in American Political Development* 14(2): 121–155.

   - Samuel Kernell. 2001. "Rural Service Delivery as a Critical Test of Alternative Models of American Political Development." *Studies in American Political Development* 15: 103–112.

   - Daniel Carpenter. 2001. "The Political Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy: A Response to Kernell." *Studies in American Political Development* 15: 113–122.

   Supplemental readings:

   - Daniel Carpenter. 2001. *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy.* Princeton University Press.

9. *Bureaucratic Implementation*
   Required readings:

   - Michael Ting. 2009. "Organizational Capacity." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*.

   - Alex Hirsch. Forthcoming. "Experimentation and Persuasion in Political Organizations." *American Political Science Review*.

   - Steven Callander. 2011. "Searching for Good Policies." *American Political Science Review* 105(4): 643–662.

10. *Bureaucracy & Congress I*
    Required readings:

    - Steven Callander and Keith Krehbiel. 2014. "Gridlock and Delegation in a Changing World." *American Journal of Political Science*

- John Ferejohn and Charles Shipan. 1990. "Congressional Influence on Bureaucracy." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 6(Special Issue).

- Patrick Warren. 2012. "Allies and Adversaries: Appointees and Policymaking under Separation of Powers." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 28(3): 407–446.

11. *Bureaucracy & Congress II*
    Required readings:

    - Sean Gailmard. 2002. "Expertise, Subversion, and Bureaucratic Discretion." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 18(2).

    - Charles Shipan. 2004. "Regulatory Regimes, Agency Actions, and the Conditional Nature of Congressional Influence." *American Political Science Review* 98(3): 467–480.

    - Sean Gailmard. 2009. "Discretion Rather than Rules: Legislative Choice of Instruments to Control Bureaucratic Policy-making." *Political Analysis*.

12. *Bureaucracy & Courts*
    Required readings:

    - Ethan Bueno de Mesquita and Matthew Stephenson. 2007. "Regulatory Quality under Imperfect Oversight." *American Political Science Review*.

    - Brandice Canes-Wrone. 2003. "Bureaucratic Behavior and the Composition of Lower Courts." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(2): 205–214.

    - Ian Turner. Forthcoming. "Working Smart *and* Hard? Agency Effort, Judicial Review, and Policy Precision." *Journal of Theoretical Politics*. Available at `http://www.ianrturner.com/jtp_smartANDhard-R2.pdf`.

    Supplemental readings:

    - Matthew Stephenson. 2005. "A Costly Signaling Interpretation of Hard Look Judicial Review." *Administrative Law Review*.

    - William Eskridge and Connor Raso. 2010. "Chevron as a Canon, Not a Precedent: An Empirical Study of What Motivates Justices in Agency Deference Cases." *Columbia Law Review* 110: 1727–1819.

13. *Bureaucracy & The President/Executive Oversight*
    Required readings:

    - Ryan Bubb and Patrick Warren. 2014. "Optimal Agency Bias and Regulatory Review." *Journal of Legal Studies* 43(1): 95–135.

- Alex Bolton, Rachel Potter, and Sharece Thrower. Forthcoming. "Organizational Capacity, Regulatory Review, and the Limits of Political Control." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization.* Available at `http://pitt.edu/~sthrower/bpt_jleo_final.pdf`

- Alex Acs and Charles Cameron. 2014. "Regulatory Auditing at the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs." Working paper. Available at `http://www.alexacs.net/`

Supplemental readings:

- David Lewis. 2003. *Presidents and the Politics of Agency Design.* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

- Terry Moe. 1985. "Control and Feedback in Economic Regulation: The Case of the NLRB." *American Political Science Review* 79(4): 1094–1116.

- Joseph Cooper and William West. 1988. "Presidential Power and Republican Government: The Theory and Practice of OMB Review of Agency Rules." *Journal of Politics* 50(4): 864–895.

14. *Bureaucracy & Interest Groups*
    Required readings:

    - Mathew McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz. 1985. "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms." *American Journal of Political Science* 28(1): 165.

    - Nolan McCarty. 2013. "The Regulation and Self-Regulation of a Complex Industry." in *Preventing Regulatory Capture*, Daniel Carpenter (editor). (Will be distributed)

    - Daniel Carpenter. 2004. "Protection without Capture." *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 613–631.

    Supplemental readings:

    - Ernesto Dal Bo. 2006. "Regulatory Capture: A Review." *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 22(2): 203–225.

    - Sanford Gordon and Catherine Hafer. 2005. "Flexing Muscle: Corporate Political Expenditures as Signals to the Bureaucracy." *American Political Science Review* 99(2): 245–261.

    - Just about any Susan Webb-Yackee article.

15. *Bureaucracy & the Public (e.g., "street-level bureaucracy")*
    Required readings:

    - Brehm and Gates. 1993. "Donut shops and speed traps: Evaluating models of supervision on police behavior." *American Journal of Political Science*.

    - Selections from Brehm and Gates. 1997. *Working, shirking, and sabotage*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

    - Selections from Lipsky. 1980. *Street Level Bureaucracy*.

16. *The Politics of Appointments*
    Required readings:

    - Nolan McCarty. 2004. "The Appointments Dilemma." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(3): 413–428.

    - Jinhee Jo and Lawrence Rothenberg. 2102. "Rational Incompetence." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 24(1): 3–18.

    - Gary Hollibaugh, Gabe Horton, and David Lewis. 2014. "Presidents and Patronage." *American Journal of Political Science*.

    Supplemental readings:

    - David Lewis. 2008. *The Politics of Presidential Appointments*

    - Nolan McCarty and Rose Razaghian. 1999. "Advice and Consent: Senate Responses to Executive Branch Nominations, 1885–1996." *American Journal of Political Science* 43(4): 413–428.

    - Nick Gallo and David Lewis. 2012. "The Consequences of Presidential Patronage for Federal Agency Performance." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 2(2): 219–243.

17. *Final class: student presentations of research designs*

    - **Note:** Final research designs due by 12:00PM the Friday following this class period.