Introduction

Formal organizations can do a vast number of things that unorganized or informally-organized individuals cannot hope to do. Indeed, one can view the remarkable achievements of industrial civilization as the product, in good part, of our formal organizations. Most of us will also spend most of our working lives inside these formal organizations. Hence, it is well worth our while to understand these kinds of institutions.

Everyone who works in a formal organization quickly learns that the organization has some kind of external life: there are things that go on outside the organization that critically affect it. Hence, our first topic, treated very briefly, involves the external environment of public bureaucracies. That is, what is the nature of their relationships with critical external actors such as the president or governor, Congress or the legislature, interest groups, the bureaucracies, and the public?

Everyone who works in a formal organization also quickly learns that the organization has a rich and complex internal life. Hence, our second topic involves various aspects of the internal environment of public bureaucracies. That is, how does its formal structure define who does what, and what incentives will motivate people to do what they are supposed to do?

Finally, everyone who works in a formal organization learns that the relationship between the organization and its environment is mediated, to a substantial degree, by the organization's leaders. Hence, our third topic involves the problem of administrative leadership. That is, how can the leaders induce employees to achieve the goals which the external environment needs or demands?

Central Purpose of the Seminar

While the readings will be mostly theoretical, the central purpose of our seminar will be to help you develop a deep understanding of some organization which is vitally important to you. This may be an organization for which you previously worked, for which you currently work, for which you hope to work, or which you simply find of great interest. Our various papers and exercises will be aimed to helping you think about a variety of different aspects of your chosen organization.

Readings

The following books are assigned and are available for purchase:


There is also a coursepack of readings which is available at Ned's Bookstore on Grand River.
Choice of Organization

Each student will be encouraged to select one organization -- either a public agency or some non-profit organization -- which will be the focus of his or her thinking and writing throughout the semester. In effect, every time you read some book or article, I want you to think about what the reading tells you about your organization. I have two goals for this. One goal is simply to understand your chosen organization very well. That is, by the end of the semester, you will have analyzed your organization from a wide variety of critical perspectives. My other goal is for you to gain practical experience in applying the course's theoretical perspectives to real-world organizations; I want you to learn how to apply these perspectives to the organizations that will be important to you throughout your career.

For the most part, I also intend that the research paper you write at the end of the course will be on this organization which you have already been studying and analyzing all semester. I will need to work with you to define what this research topic will be.

To help you select this organization I want to have a serious conversation with each of you individually, whether in person or by telephone. For some of you, the choice of organization may be easy and obvious. For others, the choice may be considerably more difficult. My goal in each of these conversations is to help you select an organization from which you can learn the most. In my experience, it is very important in this class to select an organization with which you are already rather familiar, or an organization to which you are willing to devote a great deal of time and energy this semester to come to know.

Requirements

There will be four different kinds of activities in the class:

(a) Application papers: Each student will write several papers (5-7 page max) which apply some piece of literature which is read for the class to the organization the student has chosen. The purpose of the application papers is to get students to learn to analyze their organization from the perspective of the theory or argument in the each piece of literature. Value: a total of 60% of the grade.

(b) Application presentations: Each student writing an application paper -- see item (a) above -- will also make an oral presentation of this paper to the class. The presentations should be approximately 15 minutes long and no longer. The purposes of the presentations are (a) to show other students how the piece of literature might illuminate some real-world organization, (b) to teach other students about some real-world organizations other than the ones they have personally chosen, and (c) for the presenter to develop his or her skills at oral presentations. These presentations will not be graded by the instructor. The seminar room has a computer projector, so you will be able to use a laptop and do a PowerPoint presentation if you wish; if you need a laptop, I can arrange to have one delivered to the classroom for use in your presentation. The room also has a traditional overhead projector for use with transparencies.

(c) Presentation critiques by observers: For each presentation, there will be 2 individuals -- we will call them "observers" -- each of whose job is to write a short (1-2 page) analysis of the quality of the oral presentation, with the sole purpose of helping the presenters improve their oral communication skills. Each written analysis will be given to the oral presenter a week after the presentation, and another copy will be given to the instructor. These presentation critiques will not be graded by the instructor. The instructor may also experiment with video-taping presentations so that the presenter can review his or her own presentation in private after the class.

(d) Research papers: Students will work individually with me to define a topic. This paper is due Wednesday, December 11 by 5:00 pm at my office. Value: 40% of the grade. You will be required to submit a written (4 or 5 page) project proposal before starting significant work on the project.
This proposal will describe your question, explain your general approach or research strategy, how you specifically expect to address your question, and the conclusions you initially expect that you might reach. *Even before you draft your project proposal, you must discuss your proposed project with me.*

**Seminar Format**

Each Monday evening, the instructor will open the seminar by presenting a 20-30 minute description of the week's readings.

Next, the application papers will be presented. Each will be approximately 15 minutes long.

After the first presentation or two, we will take a break. The instructor will provide instant coffee, tea bags, and hot water. Edible goodies will be provided by the students, by pre-assignment.

Following the break, one or more application papers will be presented.

Each application paper must be delivered to the instructor by 12:00 Noon on the day of the seminar. Sending the paper via an e-mail attachment is a perfectly acceptable means of getting the paper to me. My email address is: thammond@msu.edu.

**Office Hours**

My office is 343 South Kedzie Hall. My office telephone number is 517-353-3282. Telephone messages can be left for me at 517-355-6590 on Mondays-Fridays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (I don't have voice mail or an answering machine.) If absolutely necessary, I can be reached at home at 517-349-4525, but please, no later than 10:00 p.m. or earlier than 8:00 a.m. My e-mail address is thammond@msu.edu.

My drop-in office hours this semester will be on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. On Mondays, I will normally try to get some dinner between 5:30 and the start of class at 7:00, but I can sometimes make arrangements to see you from 5:30 to 6:45, when I have to leave for class.

On days other than the day of the class, I always have to leave my office at 5:30 p.m. (or very soon thereafter) because of childcare responsibilities.

I am almost always in my office weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**WEEKLY READING SCHEDULE**

**Week 1 -- Monday, Aug. 26: Orientation and Introduction**

- Describe course
- Discuss each week's subject and readings
- Assign application and discussion papers for each week
- Assign preparation responsibilities for edible goodies

**Week 2 – Monday, Sep. 2: NO CLASS DUE TO LABOR DAY**
Week 3 -- Monday, Sep. 9: Models of Organizational Policymaking


Application Papers: Write an essay in which you describe your organization from the perspective of Allison's three models (perhaps as modified by Bendor and Hammond).

1. Adrian Hemond
2. Krista Kallenbach
3. Sharisa Jones
4. Alan Knapp

Observers: 1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________________________

Edibles: Mila Kasalica
Week 4 -- Monday, Sep. 16: The Constraints of Institutional Environments


Application Papers: Write an essay in which you describe the chief external constraints on your organization, and discuss the extent to which (and how) the leader of your organization can overcome these constraints.

1. Sarah Latta
2. Bob McCann
3. Alan Knapp
4. Sharisa Jones

Observers:  1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________
4. ________________________________________________________________

Edibles:  Andrea Bediako
Week 5 -- Monday, Sep. 23: Conflicting Values in Public Management


Application Papers: To "solve" the dilemma described by Sen's theorem, discuss the costs and benefits of the four potential strategies -- for your organization -- which are implied by Sen's theorem.

1. Amy Wilmers
2. Mila Kasalica
3. Andrea Bediako
4. Jim McEvoy

Observers:
1. _________________________________________________________________
2. _________________________________________________________________
3. _________________________________________________________________
4. _________________________________________________________________

Edibles: Krista Kallenbach
Week 6 -- Monday, Sept. 30: Hierarchy and Incentive Systems -- A

Read: Anthony Downs (1967). *Inside Bureaucracy*, ch.11, "The basic nature of control problems in bureaus" and ch.12, "Control processes and devices."

Application Papers:

1. I assume that there are "control problems" (as described by Downs) in your organization. Write an essay in which you consider the origins of, or the reasons, for these control problems in your organization. (Consider Downs' description of "control problems" and Miller's description of "voting failures" in his chapters 2 and 3.)
   a. Carol Kraklan ______________________________________________________
   b. Krista Kallenbach ________________________________________________

2. Write an essay, based on Miller's discussions in chapters 1-3, in which you discuss the most fundamental reasons why your organization is organized as an administrative hierarchy.
   a. Sharisa Jones ______________________________________________________
   b. Andrea Bediako ________________________________________________

Observers:
1a. ________________________________________________________________
   b. __________________________________________________________________
2a. ________________________________________________________________
   b. __________________________________________________________________

Edibles: Amy Wilmers ________________________________________________
Week 7 -- Monday, Oct. 7:  Hierarchy and Incentive Systems -- B


Application Papers:

1. Write an essay in which you discuss why the administrative leader of your organization is seldom able to get his or her subordinates to do precisely what he or she wants them to do.

   a.  Pooja Naik______________________________________________________
   b.  Alan Knapp____________________________________________________

2. In your organization, which problem seems to be most important reason for control problems: hidden information or hidden action?

   a.  Laura Romzek____________________________________________________
   b.  ________________________________________________________________

Observers:

1a.__________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   b.__________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

2a.__________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   b.__________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

Edibles:     Jane Hayes__________________________________________________
Week 8 -- Monday, Oct. 14: Hierarchy and Incentive Systems -- C


Application Papers:

1. In your organization, describe some of the obstacles to cooperation among "horizontal equals," and evaluate the costs and benefits of some strategies -- for your organization -- for eliminating these obstacles.
   a. Andrea Bediako
   b. Pooja Naik

2. For your organization, describe some of the obstacles to cooperation between "superiors" and "subordinates," and evaluate the costs and benefits of some strategies to eliminate these obstacles.
   a. Carol Kraklan
   b. Jim McEvoy

Observers:

1a. ________________________________________________________________
   b. ________________________________________________________________

2a. ________________________________________________________________
   b. ________________________________________________________________

Edibles: Laura Romzek
Week 9 -- Monday, Oct. 21: The Politics of Hierarchy -- A


Application Papers: Write an essay in which you apply Gulick's characterization of organization and hierarchy to your organization.

1. Jane Hayes______________________________________________________________
2. Pooja Naik_____________________________________________________________
3. Mila Kasalica__________________________________________________________
4. ______________________________________________________________________

Observers: 1. __________________________________________________________________
            2. ___________________________________________________________________
            3. ___________________________________________________________________
            4. ___________________________________________________________________

Edibles: Adrian Hemond______________________________________________________
Week 10 -- Monday, Oct. 28:  The Politics of Hierarchy -- B


Application Papers:

1. Write an essay in which you discuss the extent to which your organization's structure can be expected to affect outcomes.
   a. Amy Wilmers___________________________________________________________
   b. Laura Romzek__________________________________________________________

2. What do these papers tell you about redesigning your organization's structure?
   a. Jane Hayes______________________________________________________________
   b. _______________________________________________________________________

Observers:
1a. _______________________________________________________________________
   b. _______________________________________________________________________
2a. _______________________________________________________________________
   b. _______________________________________________________________________

Edibles:  Sarah Latta___________________________________________________________
Week 11 -- Monday, Nov. 4: Fallible Components, Redundancy, and System Reliability


Application Papers:  For your organization, write an essay in which you compare and contrast (a) the costs and benefits of improving component reliability for the pursuit of system reliability, and (b) the costs and benefits of duplication for the pursuit of system reliability.

1. Jim McEvoy
2. Adrian Hemond
3. Amy Wilmers
4. Mila Kasalica

Observers:  1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________
4. ________________________________________________________________

Edibles:  Alan Knapp
Week 12 -- Monday, Nov. 11: The Impact of Organizational Culture


Application Papers:

Write a paper which describes the culture (or ideology) of your organization and which discusses whether this culture (or ideology) is a help or a hindrance to the effective conduct of your organization’s work?

1. Carol Kraklan
2. Bob McCann
3. Sarah Latta
4. Krista Kallenbach

Observers:

1. ______________________ ______________________________________
2. ______________________ ______________________________________
3. ______________________ ______________________________________
4. ______________________ ______________________________________

Edibles: Pooja Naik
Week 13 -- Monday, Nov. 18: Administrative Leadership in Institutional Environments -- A


Application Papers:

1. For your organization, to what extent does the possibility of "leadership" depend on the nature of the "situation" that your organizational leader faces?
   a. Adrian Hemond__________________________________________________________
   b. Jane Hayes_____________________________________________________________

2. For your organization, to what extent is "leadership" something that can be taught by a school and learned by a student?
   a. Sarah Latta_______________________________________________________________
   b. _________________________________________________________________

Observers:

1a. ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   b. ____________________________________________________________

2a. ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   b. ____________________________________________________________

Edibles: Jim McEvoy__________________________________________
Week 14 -- Monday, Nov. 25: Administrative Leadership in Institutional Environments -- B


Application Papers:

1. To what extent do you think a person from the private sector could become an effective manager in your organization?
   a. Bob McCann______________________________________________________________
   b. Laura Romzek___________________________________________________________

2. To what extent can the leader of your organization transform -- and thereby loosen the constraints of -- the organization's institutional environment?
   a. Carol Kraklan____________________________________________________________
   b. _____________________________________________ _____________________________

Edibles: Bob McCann__________________________________________________________

Week 15 -- Monday, Dec. 2: Review and Overview

Note: Final papers are due Wednesday, December 11 by 5:00 pm at my office in 343 South Kedzie during exam week.