

School of Government
School of History, Philosophy, Political Science and International
Relations

PUBL 206/POLS 238
POWER AND BUREAUCRACY

Trimester 1 2007

COURSE OUTLINE

<u>Course Co-ordinator:</u>	Associate Professor Bob Gregory 04 436 - 5047 Bob.Gregory@vuw.ac.nz	RH 804
<u>Administrators:</u>	Francine McGee 04 463 – 6599 Francine.McGee@vuw.ac.nz	RH 821 (Reception)
Other lecturers:	Dr Russell Harding 04 463 – 7488 Russell.Harding@vuw.ac.nz	RH 817

Class Times and Room Numbers

Lectures:	Tuesday		
	Wednesday and Friday	2.10pm – 3.00pm	HU 221
Tutorials:	Tuesday	1.10pm – 2.00pm	OK 523
	Wednesday	3.10pm – 4.00pm	HU 113
	Friday	1.10pm – 2.00pm	HU 113

Tutorial Allocation Procedure

Tutorial groups will be arranged in the first week of the trimester. Tutorial membership will be posted on the Murphy 2nd floor Public Policy noticeboard, and the Mezzanine Floor, Rutherford House. Changes can be made only in consultation with the Course Organiser.

Aim

The paper aims to develop students' critical appreciation of the organisation context of modern governmental management and administration, with particular reference to the exercise of public power by three (broadly defined) groups of officials – bureaucrats, technocrats, and professionals. A principal focus will be the political and moral dimensions of administrative action, and the dehumanising impact of the organisational context on the ways officials think and act.

Objectives

Students who pass the paper should be able to:

- a) understand the central ideas in Max Weber's concept of 'rationalization' as it related to the historical development of Western civilisation' and important differences between Weber and Karl Marx in their interpretation of modern industrial society;
- b) identify the central features of modern bureaucratic organisation, and the sources of bureaucratic organisation, and the sources of bureaucratic power;
- c) contrast traditional bureaucratic forms with contemporary approaches to organising governance for the delivery of public goods and services;
- d) identify and understand important commonalities and differences among concepts of bureaucracy, technocracy, and professionalism in modern governmental systems;
- e) raise challenging questions about the foundations of bureaucratic and professional knowledge and power;
- f) critically examine various approaches to 'overcoming bureaucracy' and 'humanizing' large governmental agencies;
- g) understand and principal dynamics of bureaucratic politics';
- h) compare and contrast the different approaches adopted by public choice theory and 'traditional public administratio' in interpreting the behaviour of public officials;
- i) distinguish between the ideas of accountability, on the one hand, and responsibility, on the other, and
- j) think reflectively about bureaucracy's capacity to facilitate morally outrageous acts carried out by 'ordinary' people.

Course Content

The paper will begin by throwing students into 'the deep end'. They will confront some reading on the dehumanising dimensions of bureaucracy, and will be invited to thin about its validity, with some reference to their own personal experiences.

The early lectures will outline the nature of bureaucratic 'psychopathology' and will discuss the emergence of the modern bureaucratic state, with particular reference to Max Weber's (1864 – 1920) analysis of the historical process of 'rationalisation', which embodies norms and values that are now taken-for-granted in modern society. Reference will also be made to the differences and similarities between Max Weber's interpretation of modern industrial capitalism and that provided by Karl Marx.

Attention will then be focused on the modern bureaucratic organisational form, and its central defining characteristics. Particular attention will be given to the central paradox of bureaucracy – well elaborated by Ralph Hummel’s course textbook – that between *control* and *purpose*, commonly (and misleadingly) referred to as ‘goal displacement’, whereby means tend to become ends in themselves.

James Q. Wilson’s typology of public bureaucracies – production, procedural, craft, and coping organisations – is then used to provide insights into different types of public organisation; and discussion moves to contemporary ‘non-bureaucratic’ ways of organising the delivery of governmental goods and services, with reference to some aspects of New Zealand’s state sector reforms.

From ‘structural’ dimensions of bureaucratic and technocratic power, the paper will move to an interpretation of organisational authority as a function of language, beliefs, and symbols; and they ways in which ‘official realities’ are socially/politically – constructed, rather than being objective, concrete, and ‘out there’. The concept of reification will be an important aspect of this discussion.

Professionalism, being the search for power, status, and influence based on a claim to specialised theoretical knowledge, will then be scrutinised from a critical perspective. Particular attention will be given to the language, theories, and beliefs of the so-called ‘helping’ professions, including questions raised by the radical critique of institutional psychiatry, and to problems of professional and organisation learning.

The focus then returns to the insights of James Q. Wilson, and the importance of understanding the culture of public organisations. The bureaucratic politics of the search for autonomy, and the definition of mission, are two central ideas that explain organisational behaviour – for example, the reorganisational history culminating (thus far) in the establishment in 2001 of the Ministry of Social Development. The Wilsonian interpretation of bureaucratic behaviour is compared to that adopted by public choice theorists. Some experiences relating to ‘11 September 2001’ are illustrative.

Attention shifts from the ‘upper’ reaches of organisational power to the ‘micro’ encounters at the ‘street-level’. A central proposition is that public policy outcomes are shaped at least as much by the discretion of officials at the organisational ‘street-level’ as by the grand intentions of policymakers at the political level. The emerging paradigm of ‘governance’ (as distinct from government) will be discussed, together with the role of networks in the delivery of goods and services, with particular reference to inter-agency collaboration. In this context, the paper may also take a critical view of the theory of ‘representative bureaucracy’, especially the claim that making a public organisation more socially representative, in terms of the ethnic minorities and gender, will necessarily render it more ‘responsive’.

The concluding part will revisit ideas about malevolent (or benevolent) bureaucracy outlined at the start of the course, and will tie together course themes by focusing on the concepts of bureaucratic accountability and official responsibility. The central Proposition here is that there are certain ‘psychopathological’ features of bureaucracy that tend to diminish the official’s sense of personal responsibility for the ways in which public power is exercised. Stanley Milgram’s famous experiments on obedience will be considered to see what light they throw on bureaucratic behaviour. Reference will be made to the experience of Nazi Germany

and the Holocaust, in historical context, and to Hannah Arendt's concept of 'the banality of evil'.

A detailed lecture and tutorial schedule, with essay topics, will be provided in a separate notice, available at the start.

Text and Readings

- a) A set of photocopied readings will be available for purchase from the Student Notes Distribution Centre, at the Kelburn Campus. Price \$20.90, inc GST. A number of class handouts may also be made available from time to time.
- b) Hummel, R P (1994) *The Bureaucratic Experience: A Critique of Life in the Modern Organization* 4th edn.), St Martin's Press. Copies on Closed Reserve.
- c) Wilson, J Q (1989) *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*, Basic Books. Copies on Closed Reserve.
- d) Hill, M (1997) *The Policy Process in the Modern State*, 3rd edn., Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf. Copies on Closed Reserve.

Assessment

Two essays

Essay 1 (2,000 words) due 5pm, Thursday, 5 April – 25%

Essay 2 (2,000 words) due 5pm, Fri, 25 May – 25%

Final Examination 50%

Essays should be deposited in the Course Organiser's box (no. 30) in the foyer area outside Murphy 200. See advice on essay writing in the separate course notice, Tutorial Schedule and Essay Topics.

Note: Extensions for essays may only be granted to those who meet the University's aegrotat rules, viz. medical certificate or personal bereavement, or critical personal circumstances involving the health of a close relative, or exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control.

Late essays must be handed to the Course Organiser, or to Francine McGee, Administrator, School of Government (Rutherford House RH821, Reception), who will record the date and time it was received before giving it to the Course Organiser. Essays not handed in by the due date or by the date of extension will have a mark out of 100 reduced by 5% for each late day. Essays handed in by the due date or by the date of extension will have a mark out of 100 reduced by 5% for each late day. Essays handed in more than 5 days after the due date, or after the date of extension, will not normally be accepted.

Mandatory Course Requirements

Students must (a) complete the two essay assignments specified above; **and** (b) attend at least **80%** of the weekly tutorials (one per week). Students who fail to satisfy these mandatory course requirements will receive a K grade.

Workload Guidelines

The paper represents on sixth of a normal full-time, yearly load. The assessment provisions for this 200-level course require students to spend approximately (and no less than) **ten** hours per week on paper-related work, in **addition to** the four hours of class attendance.

Students' success will depend on their willingness to read and reflect on the readings specified, to prepare themselves for tutorial discussions, **and** to assimilate the material presented in lectures. There will always be scope for discussion during lectures, which are not to be regarded merely as a one-way note-taking exercise. Any student who is unable to attend lectures regularly (meaning at least two per week) should advise the Course Organiser.

Notices and Announcements

Announcements will be made at the beginning of lectures; and notices (e.g. tutorial lists, etc) will be posted on the Public Policy noticeboards, on the 2nd floor, Murphy Building, and on the Mezzanine Floor Rutherford House. Copies of any material handed out will also be available in the PUBL 206 pigeonhole, in the foyer area outside MY220.

Electronic Access

Notices, marks for assignments, and selected course materials will be posted on the Blackboard website. Only students who are registered for PUBL 206/POLS 238 will have access.

Instructions: Go to <http://www.blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>

'Login name' is the first six letters of your last name and the first four letters of your first name (typed as one word). 'Password' is your student ID number.

Copies of material handed out in lectures will be made available either on Blackboard (if an electronic version is available) or in the PUBL 206 pigeonhole on the second floor of the Murphy Building (i.e. in the foyer area outside MY220).

Availability of Course Organiser

Associate Professor Bob Gregory will be available for student consultation during normal working hours, in his office (Rutherford House, RH804). If he is not available by phone, please leave a voice message. Alternatively, messages may be left for him with Francine McGee, Administrator, School of Government (Rutherford House, RH821, Reception; Ph 463 – 6599).

Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices

Railway West Wing (RWW) - FCA Student and Academic Services Office

The Faculty's Student and Academic Services Office is located on the ground and first floors of the Railway West Wing. The ground floor counter is the first point of contact for general enquiries and FCA forms. Student Administration Advisers are available to discuss course status and give further advice about FCA qualifications. To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

Easterfield (EA) - FCA/Education/Law Kelburn Office

The Kelburn Campus Office for the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, Education and Law is situated in the Easterfield Building - it includes the ground floor reception desk (EA005) and offices 125a to 131 (Level 1). The office is available for the following:

- Duty tutors for student contact and advice.
- Information concerning administrative and academic matters.
- Forms for FCA Student and Academic Services (e.g. application for academic transcripts, requests for degree audit, COP requests).
- Examinations-related information during the examination period.

To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

General University Policies and Statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to www.vuw.ac.nz/policy.

For information on the following topics, go to the Faculty's website www.vuw.ac.nz/fca under Important Information for Students:

- Academic Grievances
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

Manaaki Pihipihinga is an academic mentoring programme for undergraduate Māori and Pacific students in the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, and Humanities and Social Sciences. Sessions are held at the Kelburn and Pipitea Campuses in the Mentoring Rooms, 14 Kelburn Parade (back courtyard), Room 109D, and Room 210, Level 2, Railway West Wing. There is also a Pacific Support Coordinator who assists Pacific students by linking them to the services and support they need while studying at Victoria. Another feature of the programme is a support network for Postgraduate students with links to Postgraduate workshops and activities around Campus.

For further information, or to register with the programme, email manaaki-pihipihinga-programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5233 ext. 8977. To contact the Pacific Support Coordinator, email pacific-support-coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5842.