

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

**PUBL 404/POLS 433**  
**BUREAUCRATIC POWER IN WESTERN**  
**DEMOCRACIES**

Full Year 2007

**COURSE OUTLINE**

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Course Co-ordinator: Associate Professor Bob Gregory RH 804  
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Administrator: Francine McGee RH 821 (Reception)  
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**Class Times and Room Numbers**

Seminars: Friday 10.30am – 12.20pm RWW 414 (Pipitea  
Campus)

Commencing Date: Friday, 9 March

**Course Objectives**

To enable students to think critically and constructively about the nature of bureaucratic rationality and action, and the exercise of bureaucratic power. The ways in which the actions of public officials are shaped by the organisational and professional contexts of their work provide a central focus. A range of theoretical perspectives is adopted, from structural-functionalism to critical theory; and the possibilities for alternative organisational forms are considered. Special attention will be given to aspects of state sector reform, and illustrative material will be drawn from, but not limited to, the New Zealand experience. There will be scope for particular cross-national comparisons among western democracies.

## Course Content

The course will be divided into three parts.

The first will examine the theoretical underpinnings of what is known as ‘Weberian’ bureaucracy, drawing upon the ideas and concepts provided by the German polymath, Max Weber (1864 – 1920) on the nature of a modern ‘rationalised’ society, with reference also to some of the ideas of Karl Marx regarding the political economy of capitalism.

In the second part we will discuss a range of issues, theories and ideas relating to the structures and operation of modern governmental organisations, including ‘the bureaucratic paradox’; technocratic theory and managerial ideology; professionalism; defining official reality; street-level and market bureaucracy; the rise, strengths and weaknesses of the New Public Management (NPM) ‘movement’, including cross-national perspectives; the nature of ‘governance’ and the ‘hollowing out of the state’ thesis; the remuneration of public officials; bureaucratic corruption, including cross-national comparisons; economic (public choice) interpretations of bureaucratic behaviour; and bureaucratic politics, with special reference to issues surrounding ‘11 September’.

In the final part, we will examine the ways in which bureaucratic organisations tend to ‘dehumanise’ people, how people become complicit in the pursuit of morally repugnant state and organisational purposes, and how these factors raise pressing questions about the nature and exercise of governmental and individual responsibility and accountability.

## Text and Readings

A full reading list will be available at the beginning of the trimester. R. P. Hummel, *The Bureaucratic Experience*, St Martin’s Press (3<sup>rd</sup> edn., 1987 or 4<sup>th</sup> edn., 1994) is a central text. The following five works are especially useful: C. R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, HarperCollins, 1998; G. Burrell and G. Morgan, *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*, Heinemann, 1979; M. Hill, *The Policy Process in the Modern State*, Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997; D. A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*, Basic Books, 1983; and J. Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*, Basic Books, 1989.

Copies of these five books will be available on Closed Reserve in the library. Some of them may be available for purchase from the Victoria Book Centre.

Class handouts will be made available from time to time.

## Assessment

In-term work, 50%; final (registry-conducted) examination, 50%.

In-term work:

Students will be required to **either**

- a) complete one research paper of approximately 8,000 words, on a topic decided upon in consultation with the course organiser; **or**
- b) write three essays, each of 2,500 words, on topics to be provided by the course organiser.

Both (a) and (b) will count for 50% of the final mark. In the case of (b) all three essays will be equally weighted. Indicative deadlines will be given for the three essays, but all in-term work must be completed by **5pm, Monday, 1 October 2007**. (**Important Note:** In keeping with standards of professionalism appropriate to this academic programme, it is expected that deadlines will be honoured. In fairness to students who complete work on time, work submitted after the due date/time will incur penalties for lateness. The penalty is up to 5% of the report's grade per day (or part thereof) late. Unusual or unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. serious illness, family bereavement) may lead to a waiver of this penalty but need to be discussed with the course coordinator as soon as possible).

Word limits should be adhered to, especially so when they provide a guide to limiting the student's coverage of a topic.

### **Mandatory Course Requirements**

If students cannot attend a weekly seminar they are expected to advise the course organiser, beforehand if possible. Attendance at a minimum of 80% of the course sessions **and** the completion of the written assignments constitute the Mandatory Course Requirements.

The satisfactory completion by an internal student of any University course involves more than the presentation to the required standard of certain pieces of assessed work and the passing of examination. Lectures, tutorials, practical and field work are offered as an integral part of the learning experience of all internal students and participation in this programme is regarded as necessary to the satisfactory completion of any course of study. Written, oral or practical work which is not assessed as part of the final mark for a course may be required as an aid in teaching that course or to assist students in understanding a particular aspect of the course. For this reason an internal student must meet requirements set out in this Course Outline (generally referred to as 'keeping Terms').

Extramural students in certain cases are required to complete course work in addition to the work required for assessment, and for this reason are also covered by the Terms Statute. At the beginning of every course, a Course Outline must be provided to students and reference copy must be available before the end of the second week of any course. Students affected by a breach of these requirements should refer to the Academic Grievance Policy.

Students who fail to satisfy a mandatory requirement for passing a course, other than the requirement to obtain a C grade overall, will not pass the course and will receive a K grade.

### **Notices**

Notices will be handed out in class.

### **Work Requirements**

The course will comprise 22 weekly two-hour sessions, 10 in the first trimester and 12 in the second trimester. All members are expected to contribute, and must prepare themselves to that end. The course organiser will provide a list of readings for each subsequent session. The estimated weekly workload for the course should be *one quarter* of the total amount of time and energy that each student is prepared to put into their complete Honours programme.

## **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](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy).

For information on the following topics, go to the Faculty's website [www.vuw.ac.nz/fca](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:pacific-support-coord@vuw.ac.nz) or phone (04) 463 5842.