

# PLS 308 – Public Administration

## Summer I 2011

**Instructor:** Mark T. Imperial

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**Office Hours:** T 5:00 – 6:00 by appointment

**Course website:** [http://people.uncw.edu/imperialm/UNCW/PLS\\_308\\_Summer/PLS\\_308\\_Sum11.htm](http://people.uncw.edu/imperialm/UNCW/PLS_308_Summer/PLS_308_Sum11.htm)

**Classroom:** LH 110

**Class times:** 2:45 – 4:50 (see course schedule)

**Secretary:** Donna Treolo (910) 962 -3220

**Office:** LH 260

### Course Objectives:

This survey course is designed to give you a greater appreciation of the breadth and scope of public administration theory in order to improve your ability to effectively manage public and nonprofit organizations. Specifically, the course objectives are to:

- Learn and apply theories, concepts, tools and techniques associated with managing public and nonprofit organizations;
- Develop an appreciation of the context and complexity of issues, problems and challenges associated with effective management of public and nonprofit organizations; and,
- Develop an ability to think, act, and communicate more effectively in today's public and nonprofit organizations.

These objectives will be met by introducing you to a variety of theories and conceptual frameworks as well as the related management tools and techniques that emerge from this research. The course will develop your critical thinking abilities through case analysis while the preparation of case memos and a group project will improve your ability to communicate your ideas and arguments in written form.

### Readings:

The following book is required for this course and can be purchased at local book stores or through vendors on the Internet:

- Starling, Grover. 2011. *Managing the Public Sector*. Ninth Edition. Cengage Learning.

Additional required readings are on reserve in the library. A list of the reserve readings is provided on the course web site. Copies of the lecture notes and overheads used in class are also available on the class web site.

### Expectations and Approach:

Given the small number of students this semester, the course will be delivered using a hybrid that combines class sessions combining lectures, videos, and discussion with online content. In addition, there are individual case analysis assignments that are designed to have you apply the theories and concepts from the readings. Case studies are compilations of problem situations actually faced by public managers. A case places you into a real world situation and forces you to sort through and analyze various issues or courses of action. The cases vary in terms of their length and complexity. You will be asked to prepare a memo that responds to a specific question and this essentially involves a role-playing exercise. The memo also needs to include an attachment that describes how various theories and concepts covered in the readings are reflected in the case. There is also a short individual project that allows you to apply the theories and concepts by interviewing public managers and applying theories and concepts to a real public or nonprofit organization. These assignments are described in more detail below. I encourage you to prepare yourself for, and be open to, the variety of ways that you can learn from this course.

**Course Requirements:**

Your grade in this class will be based on your ability to understand and apply the theories discussed in the course readings. More specifically, your grade will depend on your performance on the following course requirements:

***Class Participation***

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and come to class prepared to discuss all readings, handouts, and assignments that are due. Given the small class and seminar approach, it will be obvious to all whether you are prepared to discuss and ask questions about the readings. Each student should be prepared to share with the class questions that the readings raised and be able to identify the most significant point or contribution that the author makes to the practice of public administration. Poor classroom attendance may result in a failing participation grade since you cannot participate if you are not in class. Therefore, you should notify the instructor when you are unable to attend class or have to arrive late or leave early. If you should miss a session when a video is shown, it may be possible to make arrangements to view the film privately at the library or to borrow the video. Your participation grade will also be lowered due to the frequent inability to respond to the instructor's questions, poor class preparation, lack of enthusiastic participation in class exercises, or the failure to treat others in the classroom with respect (e.g., talking while others are talking, ridiculing other students, etc.). Simply put, in order to receive an "A" in this class you must be a civil, active contributor to class and not merely score well on exams and assignments.

***Case Memos***

The analysis of case studies essentially is self-learning through simulated experience. Therefore, its success depends on the lively interchange of information, ideas, and opinions brought out in class discussion. Students are required to complete 4 memos based on cases of varying length and complexity. Each memo must also include an attachment that describes how 3 sets of theories or concepts (see the review sheet for the final exam for examples) applies to that particular case. Since case analysis and writing memos may be a new experience, students can rewrite 2 memos and I will average the grades. Accordingly, students concerned about their final course grade should consider revising memos with poor grades. Failure to complete a memo results in a zero. Memo grades are reduced by a letter grade each day they are late. [Click here for detailed directions.](#)

***Organizational Assessment***

Each student must select a public or nonprofit organization to analyze for this assignment. It cannot be affiliated with UNCW and you should not be a past or present employee of the organization. It should also have at least 10 employees. You will have to interview at least 3 employees. During your interviews, you should attempt to find out the answers to a variety of questions and prepare a written report and present their findings to the class. A detailed description of this assignment is posted on the course web site.

***Exam***

There will be one final exam near the end of the course. The exam will contain short answer and essay questions. A review sheet is posted on the class web site and will be updated to include a list of terms and concepts and potential essay questions. Students will have the entire class period to complete the exam. Students should be sure to bring a blue book.

**Grading:**

All written work will be evaluated based on your analysis of the readings and cases, the organization of your ideas, the strength and substance of your arguments, your ability to properly apply the concepts discussed in class, and the quality of your writing (e.g., spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.). Failure to complete an assignment or failing to follow directions will result in a 0 for the assignment. The final course grade will be calculated based upon the following weights:

Class participation	20% (200 points)
Case Memos – 4 @ 10% each	40% (400 points)
Organizational Assessment	20% (200 points)
Final Exam	20% (200 points)

Course grades will be calculated based on the following: A (920 – 1000), A- (900 – 919), B+ (880 – 899), B (820 – 879), B- (800 – 819), C+ (780 – 799), C (720 – 779), C- (700 – 719), D+ (680 – 699), D (620 – 679), D- (600 – 619), and F (0 – 599). There is no rounding up or down. In the event that an assignment is given a letter grade, points are allocated by using the midpoint of the grade range and multiplying it the number of possible points. For example, an A for a 5% memo would equal 95% of 50 points or 47.5 while a B+ would equal 89% of 50 points or 44.5. There is no rounding up or down.

All members of UNCW's community are expected to follow the academic Honor Code. Please read the UNCW Honor Code carefully (as covered in the UNCW Student Handbook). Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in this class. Be advised that I have a zero tolerance policy for cheating or plagiarism. Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing an assignment will receive a failing grade for the course.

### **Late Assignments/Incompletes**

Tentative due dates for course assignments are listed on the attached course schedule and are subject to change based on class progress and student preferences. You should check the course schedule and announcements pages on the course web site periodically for changes in due dates. Students may bring forward requests for changing the dates of major assignments for class approval with a minimum of one-week advance notice to the class.

Unless I have agreed in advance, all assignments are due at the beginning of the class period they are due. Informing the instructor of your intention to be absent does not waive your obligation to submit the work that is due. Late assignments lose one full letter grade per day they are late. An incomplete will only be granted when there are serious extenuating circumstances that occur after the withdrawal period.

### **Disabilities, Respect, and Harassment**

Students with diagnosed disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (962-7555). Please give me a copy of the letter you receive from Office of Disability Services detailing class accommodations you may need. If you require accommodation for test-taking please make sure I have the referral letter no less than three days before the test.

UNCW has recently instituted a Respect Compact to affirm our commitment to a civil community, characterized by mutual respect. That Compact will soon be affixed to the wall of each classroom and can be accessed at: <http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/pdc/documents/SeahawkRespectCompact.pdf>. Students are expected to treat others in this class in accordance with this campus policy.

UNCW practices a zero tolerance policy for any kind of violent or harassing behavior. If you are experiencing an emergency of this type contact the police at 911 or UNCW CARE at 962-2273. Resources for individuals concerned with a violent or harassing situation can be located at <http://www.uncw.edu/wsrc/crisis.html>.

### **Other Class Policies**

Cell phone use will not be tolerated in this class. Turn off your cell phones prior to class. If your phone rings, the Professor reserves the right to answer the call and/or to confiscate the phone.

Laptops may be used in this class. Laptop users should sit in the back row to avoid distracting others. Laptops will be banned from the classroom for the rest of the semester the first time any laptop user is seen engaging in non-classroom related activity.