

POLI 301—Bureaucracy and Bureaucratic Politics
Fall, 2015

Arthur Felts
M & W 2:00 – 3:15
Maybank 111

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Hours M & W 9:30-11:30

Contacting Me

If you correspond with me by email it is very important to follow these rules:

Address the email to feltsa@cofc.edu.

In the subject header please put : Am Pol Thought (your last name).—exactly as it is written (so I can route messages to an assigned mailbox). Putting last (not first) name is required. Failure to do this may mean I miss your message.

“That vast network of administrative tyranny ... that system of bureaucracy, which leaves no free agent in all France, except for the man at Paris who pulls the wires.”

John Stuart Mill, "Westminster Review" XXVIII, 1837

The disease which inflicts bureaucracy and what they usually die from is routine. ...

John Stuart Mill

The bureaucracy is a circle from which no one can escape. Its hierarchy is a hierarchy of knowledge. The top entrusts the understanding of detail to the lower levels, whilst the lower levels credit the top with understanding of the general and so all are mutually deceived.

...Karl Marx

Our two greatest problems are gravity and paper work. We can lick gravity, but sometimes the paperwork is overwhelming. ...

Werhner von Braun

“The future belongs to bureaucratization.”

Max Weber, Economy and Society

As the quotes above illustrate, the word “bureaucracy” usually has a negative connotation. A bureaucratized system is filled with elaborate procedures and rules that often make no sense—we call that red tape. Bureaucrats are often characterized as more robots than human. Sometimes rules seem to change in a whimsical fashion. When we question why we have to do something, we are usually not given any reasons—rather, ‘it is the way we’ve always done it.’ On a more pragmatic political level, politicians are fond of telling us repeatedly that our bureaucracies are “bloated,” wasteful, inefficient and bungling. Individual bureaucrats are lazy, unmotivated and work very little, if at all. To be called a ‘mindless bureaucrat’ is a pretty big insult.

The word “bureaucracy” was coined by a French economist, Jean Claude Marie Vincent

de Gournay, by combining the early Greek suffix “*kratia*” with the French word “*bureau*.” *Kratia* means “power of.” The French word “*bureau*” literally means desk but can also be used to mean “office.” Hence, bureau-crazy means power of desks or offices. As strange as it might sound, bureaucracy is rule by means of offices. This may sound confusing, but it really is not as we will see in this course.

The bottom line is that massive amounts of political power has accumulated in the hands of public administrators and this raises crucial issues/problems for the operations of our democratic society and presented us with some deep dilemmas in making democratic decisions. I can sharpen those goals as follows:

In *Democracy and the Public Service* (1968: 1), Frederick C. Mosher maintains that:

- governmental decisions and behavior have tremendous influence upon the nature and development of our society, our economy, and our policy;
- the great bulk of decisions and actions taken by governments are determined or heavily influenced by bureaucratic officials, most of whom are appointed, not elected;
- the kinds of decisions and actions these officials take depend upon their capabilities, their orientations, and their values; and
- these attributes depend heavily upon their backgrounds, their training and education, and their current associations.

In addition, recent research and analysis suggest a fifth premise:

- the actions and behaviors of administrators and bureaucracies are also conditioned (albeit imperfectly) by their larger political and economic environment.

The twentieth century in the US has been frequently characterized as one that saw the rise of what we call the “Administrative State.” So far, the twenty-first century has not seemed to be much different. After 9/11, we witnessed the creation of a major new bureaucratic arm of government—the Department of Homeland Security—with vast powers. It may seem trivial, but think about airline security. It has progressed far beyond a stage of someone making you take your shoes off (which would have been outrageous in 2000) to a point where full body scanners can image your anatomy (see through your clothes) quite accurately. Far less trivial is pointing out that the National Security Agency (NSA) has put in place monitoring activities so refined that (as Edward Snowden told us) he could read the emails of an ex girlfriend.

There are two major learning goals for this course:

The first is to fully understand that bureaucracy is, in the end, a form of organization and not something specifically attached to governmental organizations. Most all organizations exhibit bureaucratic attributes in a “more or less” fashion. In the end, there may be greater organizational and systemic similarities between General Motors and the US Department of Agriculture than between Google, Inc. and General Motors. (It is true that both Google and General Motors are profit-making entities, but the recent bankruptcy of GM signals that survival is equally as strong a motivation in this private bureaucracy as any public one.) Put differently, it may be that the US and France are much more alike now than there were in, say, 1900—most certainly that is the case if we compare the US

and Russia or even China. Vincent Ostrom, in *The Intellectual Crisis of American Public Administration* argues that the US specifically has failed to evolve with a democratic model of public administration.

The second learning goal is a pragmatic one—to appreciate the driving forces behind the American Bureaucracy—why we create bureaucratic forms of administration, why they gain power and how they use it. The Department of Homeland Security (created in your lifetime) had good, sound reasons behind its creation. But in short order, it began to have its critics on both the left and the right. You should come to appreciate and understand those reasons—both those that created it and those that now critique it. Attendant to this learning goal is how we view bureaucrats. We tend to see them in very negative ways—and for some that may be deserved, but as a blanket statement it is too crude. Required text:

As mentioned above, there are two required texts for the course (I will supplement them with readings from time to time).

The American Bureaucracy: The Core of Modern Government, Third Edition, Richard Stillman II.

The End of Liberalism: The Second Republic of the United States, Theodore Lowi

Deliberate Discretion?: The Institutional Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy, John D. Huber and Charleston R. Shippan

1. Wed 26-Aug Intro class—The different approaches taken to bureaucracy in the class
2. Mon 31-Aug **Read: Max Weber: The Types of Legitimate Authority, pp 212-226, Available on Oaks. Read the section on Stanley Milgram, “Obedience to Authority” @ http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Staley_Milgram**
Discussion

Weber’s initial question, like most great and complex research, begins with a simple question. “Why do we obey when we are told to do something?” Another way to think about this question is to ask yourself why you would NOT obey if you were told to do something? Another question: If you did most everything you do because you fear being punished, what do you think would happen over a long period of time?

3. Wed 2-Sep **Read: Max Weber: The Types of Legitimate Authority, pp 226-254. Available on Oaks.**

Discussion

Charisma can be defined or understood in a broad, loose, fashion that does not really help us understand it with any precision. For example, there is little argument that John Kennedy and Ronald Reagan had a charismatic appeal and there is little argument that George W. Bush did not have much, if any. But by and large, all three worked within and were constrained by a legal-rational framework of institutions. Be prepared to explain this. Weber’s use of the term was more focused—he viewed Charismatic Leaders in a world-historical frame where they changed things for many down to the core of their everyday life. Be prepared to talk about who you think such world-historical figures were and what they did.

4. Mon 7-Sep **Weber on rationality, disenchantment v re-enchancement, gesellschaft v gemeinschaft. Realizing the rational vision: Frederick Taylor and Scientific Management.**

Discussion

Today, no one argues much that a lot of what we call “work” is dull, boring (even mind-numbing), routine, not very challenging, and so on. Even Adam Smith, who praised the emergence of capitalism admitted that much of the work under a capitalist system was pretty dehumanizing. Can you explain this? A hint might be to suggest to you that I suspect that one of the reasons you are in college is that you do not want a dull, mind-numbing boring, job—even one that might pay very well.

Wed 9-Sep NO CLASS

5. Mon 14-Sep **Read: Michael Nelson: A Short, Ironic History of American National Bureaucracy. Available on Oaks.**

Discussion

Administration has always been an essential feature of any system of government. Yet our Founders had very little to say about it. Why were they largely silent? List out the current cabinet level offices in the US Government, their date of creation, and what their major purpose is. What does this tell you (if anything) about American history?

6. Wed 16-Sep. **Read: Lowi, Chapter 1, “The Old Public Philosophy, Capitalistic Ideology, and Sociological Monstrosity.**

What has been the growth pattern of the “Great Industrial Cities” in Lowi’s figure 1-2 since 1980? Is this consistent with his idea of capitalism? Why or why not?

7. Mon 21- **Read Stillman: Chapter 1. Stillman’s definition of bureaucracy and defense. Note on Goodsell and *The Case for Bureaucracy***

Discussion

Weber stated that bureaucracies has a ‘penchant for secrecy.’ Stillman reiterates this, but says the perception that they operate in secret is largely wrong. Over the past few years you have watched a massive controversy about the National Security Agency (NSA) and its gathering of data on Americans (leaked by Edward Snowden). Given our Constitution and national security needs, is secrecy warranted in some cases by government organizations?

8. Wed 23-Sep **Read Stillman, Chapter 2, pp 35-55. Evolution of American Bureaucracy by purpose. Example for class: FDA, history and evolution.**

Discussion

Frequently we hear that some drugs available in foreign countries (even Western European ones) are available but are not allowed to be dispensed in the United States. Read enough about the FDA to be able to explain this. If you want to go further, look up how the FDA treats GMOs (genetically modified organisms) versus how nations in the European Union (EU) do.

9. Mon 21- Mon 28-Sep **Read Stillman: Chapter 2, pp 55-73. Social Service and New Deal/Great Society, national security agencies, growth of staffing functions. Example, The National Security Agency.**

Discussion

The US is frequently referred to as a “Welfare State.” There are numerous short histories of how and when we created it as well as why—the ‘welfare queens’ who drive Cadillacs. Find a couple of articles about welfare scammers and see what you discover. Then, find a couple of cases of Medicare fraud. What do you find there?

First Paper due by beginning of class...

10. Wed 30-Sep **Read Stillman: Chapter 3, pp 77 – 102. External actors, First and Second Level. Third: Media and Clients. Brief into to systems theory/perspective**

Discussion

Pick out two current members of President Obama’s cabinet and write a brief biography—where they are from, education, previous experience, how long they have been in current office.

Introduction/revisitation to iron triangles

11. Mon 5-Oct: **Read: Stillman: Chapter 3, pp 96-124. External actors, Public Interest Groups, revisiting other governmental institutions...Read: http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/military/2009-11-17-military-mentors_N.htm**

Discussion

Formally, the distinction between an interest group and political party is the former tries to influence legislation through a variety of tactic and the latter tries to elect individuals to office who can actually make public policy (or at least vote on it). Who are the largest interest groups in the US? We usually tie these to Congress and to funding, but what are their ties to the federal bureaucracy?

12. Wed 7-Oct **Read: Stillman Chapter 4, pp 129-171. Appointees, Careerists (SES), Specialists.**

Discussion

Find a list of those who have served as administrators of the EPA. How many have been given “Acting” status? What is their average term in office? What is the average term in office for those appointed as EPA Administrators? Select three or four (from different decades) and find out a bit about them...where the were educated, their career paths, etc.

Go to the EPA Website and find the office of any Assistant Administrator. Write a brief biography.

13. Mon 12-Oct **Read: Stillman, Chapter 4, pp 171-195. Government employees and Contractors**

Find a couple of articles online about the use of contractors by the US Department of Defense in the Middle East. Come to class prepared to discuss what you discovered.

14. Wed 14-Oct: **Read: Stillman, Chapter 5. Outputs. Issues in measuring performance. What price efficiency?**

Discussion:

You know that sometimes setting measureable goals can create some negative results—as appears to be the case in trying to measure student performance in K-12 sometimes teachers just “teach the test.”

Go to:

<http://www.performance.gov/>

at the bottom of the page, click on “Agency Goals and Objectives” and drop down to “Agency Priority Goals.”

Pick one priority goal from the list (it is several pages long) and be prepared to describe it. Thinking carefully, in what ways might this performance measure help? In what ways might it not be so helpful?

Mon 19-Oct Fall Break

15. Wed 21-Oct **Read: Huber and Shipman, Chapter 1. Delegation and its complexity. The problem of bureaucratic expertise.**

16. Mon 26-Oct **Read: Huber and Shipman, Chapter 2. Anticipating Lowi, The politics of delegation.**

17. Wed 28-Oct **Read Huber and Shipman, Chapter 4, pp 78-96.**

18. Mon 2-Nov **Read Huber and Shipman, Chapter 8.**

19. Wed 4-Nov **Read Lowi: Chapter 2, Pluralism....**

20. Mon 9-Nov **Read Lowi: Chapter 3, Interest Group Liberalism. A brief review of E E. Schattschneider**

Second paper due

21. Wed 11-Nov **Read Lowi: Chapter 5, Liberal Jurisprudence**

22. Mon 16-Nov **Read Lowi: Chapter 8, Interest-Group Liberalism and Poverty**

23. Wed 18-Nov **Read Lowi: Chapter 10, Toward Juridical Democracy**

24. Mon 23-Nov **Individual presentations**

25. Wed 25-Nov Thanksgiving Break

26. Mon 30-Nov **Individual presentations**

27. Wed 2-Dec **Individual presentations**

28. Mon 7-Dec **Individual presentations and wrap-up**

Three formal assignments will be due—these will be no more than five typed pages, 1” margins, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font.

- The first paper is due Sept 29th and must be submitted before that day’s class starts. Submission will be in a designated drop box on Oaks. Later papers will be penalized.
- The second paper will be due by the beginning of class on Oct 29th.
- Depending upon how you do (as a class) there will either be a final exam administered during the designated period, **Tues, Dec 15th at 12 PM or a third paper. If a paper is required it will be due Sat, Dec 12, no later than 5PM.**

In addition to the papers, you will be responsible for working with a group of fellow students and presenting a class on an appropriate topic of your choosing. Group assignments will be made after the beginning of the semester and enrollment has firmed. Each group will be required to provide me with a formal proposal for presentation—including how it is appropriate for the course. As well, at least three members of each group will be required to meet with me twice during the semester to allow my advice/input into your topic.

I expect for you to stay up with the reading assignments. Should I suspect that many of you are not on a regular basis I will administer brief quizzes at the beginning of the class that ask basic questions about the reading assignments.

I reserve up to 10 percent of your grade to reflect class attendance and participation. A written sign-up sheet will be circulated at the beginning of each class to record attendance.

Grades will be calculated based on the following:

Paper #1	20 %
Paper #2	30 %
Paper #3	35 %
Participation ...	10 %
Group Project....	5%

Mid-term and Final Grades will be calculated as follows:

93-100 A 90-92 A- 87-89 B+

83-86 B 80-82 B- 77-79 C+

73-76 C 70-72 C- 67-69 D+

63-66 D 60-62 D- 59 and below F

I expect for you to attend class and actively participate in discussions. I have oriented this class accordingly. I reserve up to 10 points on your final grade to reflect both class attendance and participation. Please note this can be positive or negative. There will be no open laptops in class. I consider texting to be the same as talking in class—call me old-fashioned if you will, but it is discourteous to me as well as your classmates. So, no texting is permitted either. Violation of either of these rules will result in punishment at my discretion.

COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON HONOR CODE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved. Incidents where the instructor determines the student's actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board. Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance. Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor. Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at

<http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>