

May 14, 2010

Dear Students:

Welcome to Introduction to Public Administration. This three-credit course provides a general overview of the field of public administration, including theoretical and practical aspects of nonprofit and governmental processes. When it is over, you should know more than other people about:

- The history and key theories of public administration as an academic field, including the major contributors to the field;
- How and why U.S. public administration differs from administration in the private sector and in other nations;
- Why public administrators act the way they do in making and implementing policies and budgets, including legal, political and constitutional constraints.

But wait; there's more! You should also get better at reading and analyzing both theoretical and applied articles, books, and so on, and at doing public administration research and communicating your results. Now what do you think? But that's not all:

We further suspect you will move forward in developing your own views on the role of government in society, and on the nature and content of public service ethics in the U.S. Pretty cool, huh?

We shall approach these questions, and evaluate your progress through them, by means of stimulating discussions, some extremely dreary writing assignments, and a breathtaking final paper. All of this is described in the most thrilling possible terms below.

We have a long way to go and a short time to get there, so you will have a lot of reading and writing to do in your copious free time for the next several weeks.

Reading will consist of the book chapters, journal articles and other relevant material that we find along the way. You are also required to participate in the online discussion forums.

Please be advised that anything in this syllabus is subject to change. Your feedback is often a valuable tool in the process so keep me informed of your concerns and suggestions.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Henry, *Public Administration and Public Affairs*, **11th ed.**, Prentice Hall, 2009

Shafritz, Hyde and Parks, *Classics of Public Administration*, **6th ed.**, Thomson/Wadsworth, 2004

Keep the Shafritz/Hyde and Henry books--you'll use them in at least one later MPA course. It is probably a good idea to keep them until the end of your MPA program; Henry is a pretty good handy reference book, and professors will be impressed if you quote from anything in Shafritz and Hyde, especially if they didn't assign it.

It is absolutely critical for you to complete your readings before each class and it is strongly advised for you to read ahead. Some reading assignments are larger than others and advance planning on your part will prevent the assignments from being too cumbersome for your schedule.

Cohort courses are usually 8 weeks long and we will condense this interesting subject into a short 6 week program. As a result, plan your time well.

Essential principles will be discussed in class but it is very important for you to raise questions on issues requiring clarification for your own benefit. Expect topics addressed in your readings will be on tests or assignments whether they are specifically discussed in class or not.

Many of you have rusty reading comprehension skills and may get nervous with the first few reading assignments. The material is written formally, unlike today's writings. Also, many of the concepts may be new to you. Don't panic! Ask questions, think about it, discuss the material with your fellow learners, and we will add clarity to it with our class discussions.

The course material is posted on iLearn under the "lessons" link. I have posted all of the lectures and the syllabus (the "syllabus" link) so that you will be able to read ahead if you choose. I strongly urge you to go on the iLearn website and navigate the course page so that you are familiar with how to use iLearn. Take time to introduce yourself in the discussion forum (this is located under the "forum" link). The class discussion will take place in the forum. The written assignments are located in the Assignments link. Please see syllabus for clarification.

I look forward to meeting each of you in cyberspace. I hope to have an intellectually stimulating semester. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the course.

Sincerely,

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