

POLS 641
Seminar in Advanced Public Management

Spring 2006

Instructor: Kenneth J. Meier (kmeier@politics.tamu.edu)
2033 Allen Building
5-4232
Office Hours: Monday 2-4

This is a research seminar focused on policy performance and public management. The course is designed to enhance participants' knowledge and skills in the analysis of government performance — in particular performance in converting public policy, as organized into public programs — into effective action. Emphasis is on the role of public management and public managers in shaping performance within and through broader systems of governance. The course emphasizes the development and testing of models of governmental performance to enhance scholars' and practitioners' systematic knowledge on this topic. Objectives are to familiarize participants with recent significant perspectives and debates on performance, governance, and public management; and especially to have participants each complete original empirical research on governance, public management, and performance. Statistical analysis is required of all participants, both to complete the main course project and also to participate in regular seminar sessions and activities. Accordingly, competence in research design and methods, including basic multivariate techniques like regression, is a requirement for enrollment.

Participants will read and critically analyze a set of readings drawn from the developing research literature on public program performance, governance, performance management, and efforts to model the impact of public management on performance. Special emphasis is placed on the O'Toole-Meier research program aimed at modeling and estimating the impact of public management, and related forces, on the outputs and outcomes of public programs. All those enrolled will complete an individual research paper (the goal is a publishable quality paper)¹ involving empirical analysis of data to probe for managerial and related influences on public program performance. Papers will be designed around the objectives of developing and expanding theory and evidence on this subject. Data sets used in the O'Toole-Meier agenda will be available to all seminar participants, although they may tap other sources of data as access and interest allow.

Initial meetings of the seminar frame the subject and consider the research program now underway. Participants are to read and critically examine a sample of the existing literature on performance, governance, and related themes. These sessions will also call for participants to identify appropriate research questions and execute preliminary analyses. The preliminary work will be subject to review and discussion in seminar, and participants can expect to reconsider,

¹This is a realistic goal. Seven of the 18 students in the original A&M-Georgia seminar published solo articles based on class papers. At least two other students could have done so.

revise, conduct additional analyses, and ultimately submit a complete research paper before the end of the semester. The last seminar session will be a miniconference where students will present their papers before an audience of course alums and other professionals in the field. Students will also act as discussants for other papers presented at this miniconference.

Students are encouraged to think of their participation in this seminar as something akin to enrollment in a course on pottery making. Completing original research is a craft, just as is composing a new vase or dish. Reading and discussion are useful, but these activities cannot substitute for getting one's hands dirty in trying to produce something. Therefore, original work begins early in the semester for all participants, and all should be ready to expose highly imperfect products to the view of others. Similarly, all should be ready to contribute to the developing skills of others in perfecting the craft of research — by offering advice, criticism, ideas, and encouragement.

Two articles and two books will not be scheduled for explicit discussion in seminar (although participants are free to raise topics from them and ask questions about them) but are required as essential readings needed as background material. The two articles cover some basic information about networks and their importance for managing many public programs. The first-listed volume offers methodological approaches for data analysis, particularly for finding results that have relevance to improve practice. The second is the best comprehensive coverage of the range of issues and themes on public management. The books are available at the bookstores:

Laurence J. O'Toole, Jr., "Treating Networks Seriously: Practical and Research-based Agendas in Public Administration. *Public Administration Review* 57, 1 (January-February 1997):45-52

Thad E. Hall and Laurence J. O'Toole, Jr., "Structures for Policy Implementation: An Analysis of National Legislation, 1965-66 and 1993-94," *Administration and Society* 31, 6 (January 2000): 667-686

Kenneth J. Meier and Jeff Gill, *What Works: A New Approach to Program and Policy Analysis* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2000)

Hal G. Rainey, *Understanding and Managing Public Programs* 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003) .

The additional required readings are found in three books (available at the bookstores) and a set of papers — published and unpublished. Most of the papers are available on the course web site. The readings are listed below under the dates by which they should be completed and ready for discussion.

The other required books are:

Laurence E. Lynn, Carolyn J. Heinrich, and Carolyn J. Hill. 2001. *Improving Governance: A New Logic for Empirical Research*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Robert Agranoff and Michael McGuire. 2003. *Collaborative Public Management*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Patricia Ingraham and Laurence E. Lynn. 2004. *The Art of Governance: Analyzing Management and Administration*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Seminar participants will also have the opportunity to interact with Professor Laurence J. O'Toole who will visit the seminar for a few of the sessions.

Course Grades:

Five written assignments and their discussion, 10% each for 50%.

Final course paper and presentation, 50%.

The ability to meet deadlines in teaching and research is a bona fide occupational qualification for a political scientist. Accordingly, the instructor does not accept late work without a university sanctioned excuse.

Warning: At times the instructor is considered “a bit blunt.”

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities in Room 126 of the Koldus Building, or call 845-1637.

Texas A&M has an honor code. Students are expected to be familiar with the code (<http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/>). Integrity in the process of research and scholarship is a requirement in this class and, the instructor thinks, in the profession. If you have questions, ask.

SEMINAR SESSIONS, READINGS, AND ACTIVITIES

January 23: Initial Class Meeting

The initial session covers the design, format, readings, and requirements of the seminar. Course use of the web site is also explained. Background reading is assigned, for those who may not have completed it prior to enrollment.

The following data sources will be discussed:

The 2000, 2002, and 2005 School superintendent management surveys (available on the class web site).

The 1995-1999 base data set used in the initial studies.

The 2000-2002 data set used in later studies.

The 1995-2002 combined data set.

And possibly the new 2003-2004 data set and the Hurricane Katrina data set.

January 30:

Required readings for these dates:

O'Toole and Meier, "Modeling the Impact of Public Management: Implications of Structural Context," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 9, 4 (October 1999): 505-526

O'Toole and Meier, "Networks, Hierarchies and Public Management: Modeling the Nonlinearities." In Heinrich and Lynn, *Governance and Performance* (2000), pp. 263-91.

Meier and O'Toole, "Managerial Strategies and Behavior in Networks: A Model with Evidence from U.S. Public Education," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 11, 3 (July 2001): 271-93.

Meier and O'Toole, "Public Management and Educational Performance: The Impact of Managerial Networking," *Public Administration Review* 63 (November 2003) , 675-685.

Participants are introduced to the O'Toole-Meier model and to some of the issues associated with governance, public management, and performance. *Written assignment 1* (worth 10% of final grade) is also explained: by the date of the next seminar meeting (that is, February 6), each participant should have grappled with one issue associated with this research agenda and produced a five-page double-spaced written product. These should be posted to the course email reflector by February 3 and will be discussed during the next seminar session. All participants should read all such posted written products prior to the seminar meeting, bring them to class, and be prepared to discuss. The written products are not necessarily presented per se, but all participants should be prepared to explain and defend their work. Some of these short papers might reflect an effort to grapple with issues of modeling, some might deal with other substantive, theoretical issues directly relevant to an effort to model the relationship between public management and public program performance. Both O'Toole and Meier papers list possible areas for additional modeling; papers can be based on these ideas or others.

February 6. Seminar discussion of initial papers.

February 13:

Required readings for these dates:

Meier and O'Toole, "Public Management and Organizational Performance: The Impact of Managerial Quality," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 21, 4 (fall 2002), 629-643.

O'Toole and Meier, "*Plus ça Change*: Public Management, Personnel Stability, and Organizational Performance," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 13 (January 2003), 43-64.

Meier and O'Toole, "Managerial Networking: Issues of Measurement and Research Design." *Administration & Society* 37 (November 2005), 523-541.

Goerdel, "Taking Initiative: Proactive Management and Organizational Performance Networked Environments" *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* (forthcoming).

Gonzalez Juenke, "Managerial Tenure and Network Time: How Experience Affects Bureaucratic Dynamics." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 15 (2005).

Particular attention is devoted to the ways that public management can help shape the outputs and outcomes of public policy and public programs. The quality and quantity of managerial efforts and impacts are examined. *Assignment 2* (worth 10% of total grade) is explicated. By the next pair of class meetings, participants will have performed and written a five-page summary (plus any supporting table(s)) of some data analysis. The educational data sets used by O'Toole and Meier in recent work is available for use by any participant. Alternatively, participants may use another data set of their own choosing. Any data set used must contain a large-N set of organizational or governmental cases, one or more public program performance measures, and one or more defensible measures of public management quality and/or quantity/activity. Those wishing to use a data set aside from the educational ones available generally should check with the instructor prior to use. Each participant should briefly analyze relationships between some aspect of management and a dependent variable representing some aspect of program performance. Those using the educational data set might use the measure of managerial networking, or some part of it, in the analysis. Products of the analysis should be posted by participants on the course email by February 17. All participants should review all these postings prior to the class meeting on February 20.

February 20: Discussion of the second paper.

February 27: Required readings:

O'Toole, Meier, and Nicholson-Crotty, "Multi-Level Governance and Organizational Performance: Investigating the Political-Bureaucratic Labyrinth." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 23 (Winter 2004), 31-48.

O'Toole and Meier, "Parkinson's Law and the New Public Management? Contracting Determinants and Service Quality Consequences in Public Education," *Public Administration Review* 64 (May/June 2004), 342-352.

O'Toole and Meier, "Bureaucracy and Uncertainty," in Barry Burden, ed., *Uncertainty in American Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 98-117.

O'Toole and Meier, "Public Management in Intergovernmental Networks: Matching Structural Networks and Managerial Networking." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 14 (October 2004), 469-495.

Additional aspects of public management, governance, and performance are addressed. Extensions of the core model are examined, and additional plausible public management measures are considered. Analyses conducted by seminar participants are discussed. *Assignment 3* (worth 10% of total grade) is made: prior to the next pair of seminar meetings, each participant is to revise and refine an empirical analysis. The product should be either an improvement on the earlier analysis or a new line of analysis that is stronger and more defensible than that produced thus far. Emphasis, once again, should be on explaining some aspect of performance. A focus on high- or low-performing units is permissible, if desired and appropriate. The written product, to be posted to the course email by March 3, should be short (less than 10 pages, plus any needed tables) and succinct.

March 6: Discussion of Assignment 3:

March 20: Required Reading:

Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., Carolyn J. Heinrich, and Carolyn J. Hill, *Improving Governnace: A New Logic for Empirical Research* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2001)

Assignment 4 (10% of total grade): each participant writes a *new* five-page analysis or further development of either some aspect of the instructor's research agenda or a short research design that could be used to investigate some aspect of this agenda. Written products are to be posted on the course email by March 24, and all participants should have reviewed these ahead of the next class meetings.

March 27: Discussion of assignment 4.

April 3: Required reading:

O'Toole and Meier, "Desperately Seeking Selznick: Cooptation and the Dark Side of Public Management in Networks." *Public Administration Review* 64 (November/December 2004), 681-693.

O'Toole, Meier and Nicholson-Crotty, "Managing Upward, Downward, and Outward: Networks, Hierarchical Relationships and Performance." *Public Management Review* 7 (Issue 1 2005), 45-68.

Meier, O'Toole, and Goerdel, "Management Activity and Program Performance: Gender as Management Capital." *Public Administration Review* 66 (January/February 2006).

Robert Agranoff and Michael McGuire. 2003. *Collaborative Public Management*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Additional aspects of empirical governance research are considered, with particular emphasis on the public management component. Analyses produced by seminar participants are examined

and discussed. *Assignment 5* (10% of total grade): Participants draft a five-page report based upon Agranoff and McGuire. The report should specify how one might systematically test some portion of Agranoff and McGuire with a large N data set. Written products should be posted to the course email by April 14, and all participants should have reviewed these ahead of the next class meetings.

April 17: Discussion of assignment 5.

April 24: Required Reading:

Patricia Ingraham and Laurence E. Lynn. 2004. *The Art of Governance: Analyzing Management and Administration*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.

Meier, O'Toole, Boyne and Walker, "Strategic Management and the Performance of Public Organizations: Testing Venerable Ideas against Recent Theories" American Political Science Association, 2005.

Meier and O'Toole, "Unsung Impossible Jobs: The Politics of Public Management." American Political Science Association, 2004.

Fernandez, Sergio. "Developing and Testing an Integrative Framework of Public Sector Leadership." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 15 (2005), 197-217.

Pitts, David. "Diversity, Representation and Performance." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 15 (2005), 615-631.

May 1: Papers are due to the instructor by Noon. They will also be sent to a designated discussant for the miniconference.

May 5-6: Miniconference on Public Management

Each student is responsible for a 12-15 minute presentation of their paper and responding to questions from discussants and the audience. This presentation and the final paper itself counts 50% of the total course grade. Research papers should be improved and further developed extensions of work begun earlier in the semester, complete with relevant literature review, explication of data and measures, and discussion of findings and implications. Manuscripts should be no longer than 25 pages of double-spaced text, with references, tables, and figures not counted in this total.