

Reforming Public Organizations

Fall 2012

Public Administration 620

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Overview

There is broad agreement that public institutions play a critical role in society and that their improvement, or harm, through reform matters. Yet there was a time when it was difficult, despite a long history of criticisms about them, to locate serious efforts to substantially improve public organizations (“Change the bureaucracy! Are you kidding?”). In the United States, change, or attempts at change, typically did not go beyond responding to an instance of corruption, or appointing special panels and commissions that tried to fix specific policies or fussed with the organization charts. In other countries the bureaucracy was “owned”, and therefore protected, by the civilian or military regime in power, or so powerful itself that it count not be touched.

This is less the case today. In the United States and elsewhere there has been, if anything, a surplus of advice and initiatives. Substantial work on, or at least calls for, reform is occurring locally, nationally and globally. It has not been uncommon in Hawai'i for legislators, mayors, the governor, and hopeful candidates to focus on government reform, and agencies are expected to “reinvent” themselves in response to these calls. Similar patterns are found nationally and globally.

Why is this happening, what does it mean, and what is needed to make it more likely that reforms will take place that make a difference to people working in government and nonprofit organizations and to their public missions?

This course addresses these questions by exploring, through discussions, exercises, readings, guests, lectures, and projects, topics directly associated with organizational reform, looking to balance conceptual understandings with the ability to use what has been learned. We are fortunate that enough time has passed since the “era of reform” started that studies are now available that help us understand the impact of reforms on the public nature of “public” organizations.

Finally, our work will include using the class as a mini-laboratory for reflecting on how we react individually and together to issues associated with innovation and change.

Course Goals

At the end of this course you should be able to:

- 1) Recognize the broad context of public organization reform.
- 2 Identify the problems that reform tries to address.
- 3) Share ideas on what makes up a successful public organization.
- 4) Anticipate the challenges presented by the need for change.
- 5) Understand the range of approaches to reform and recognize the elements of a reform strategy used in a specific situation.

Readings

The following book has been ordered for the class: Chandler and Pratt, *Backstage in a Bureaucracy – Politics and Public Service* (2011) The book describes what it is like to run a large, traditional public organization in the state of Hawai'i. It will be distributed in class the first night. TRUE?

In addition, a binder of assigned readings created for the class will be available for purchase. It consists of excerpts from books, articles and case studies. The readings have been selected carefully for appropriateness, quality and length.

Each session will include a list of "Useful Resources," some of which are annotated. These are provided as optional readings on that week's topic, and as future references. Please note that they also may be helpful for the reports and the project.

Guests

Guests will be invited to join us during the semester to discuss some aspect of the issues we are addressing. We will talk together about a guest before he or she visits. If you know of an individual or individuals who might be valuable as a resource, please mention her or him to me for us to discuss.

Requirements

A. Participation.

Participation includes being prepared for class by completing the assigned reading, expressing opinions, listening carefully to what others are saying, asking thoughtful questions, and other activities that signify engagement and contribute to the over-all value of the class.

Subject to any re-negotiation, there are two other requirements. You will receive a list of journals and to help with both, and guidelines for each report will be given out ahead.

B. Two Short Reports -- Individual; each no more than six pages.

(1) A reform effort in another part of the world (i.e., outside of Hawai'i or outside of where your home is). The task is to locate an example of a serious effort at reform, successful or otherwise, with which you are unfamiliar. Your source or sources must provide you with enough reliable information to enable you to understand what is happening or has happened. Your paper should include a summary as well as your interpretation of what you've read. Due October 2

(2) Some aspect or element of reform relevant to this course and/or to your organization (e.g., accountability, leadership, employee participation in change, cultural factors, politics of reform, evaluations of success). For this you should make use of a scholarly source or sources (this can include longer analytic pieces in major newspapers or magazines, such as the *New York Times* or the *Atlantic Monthly*). Due November 4.

C. Project -- Group (i.e., two or more). A project in one of these areas (or others that are proposed and agreed to): civil service reform, budgetary reform, procurement reform, decentralization, technology and reform, privatization. The goal of this project is for you and your group to be able to answer questions such as these about the area you have chosen: What problems is the reform trying to solve? What are some specific goals of reform in this area? What approaches have been used to make the reform? Where does resistance come from? What problems does the reform create?

The projects will be presented to the class at semester's end. We will decide on the date or dates in class. The presentation should be accompanied by a summary outline (not a paper) provided to class members. Whichever is chosen should be undertaken making use of what has been done

during the semester.

Evaluation

The course grade will be based on the following criteria:

Participation:	30%
Short Reports:(2)	40%
Project:	30%

Course Schedule and Outline (** = from assigned text)

I. The Context for Reform – Global Perspectives

Session One - 8/21/12 Introduction to one another, and to the course.

Discussion: Class Goals, Processes

Focus: Learning goals, and why any of this matters.

Session Two - 8/28/12 Patterns of Reform

Focus: What are public organizations, why are they important, and why are they so hard to change?

Readings:

Peters, *The Future of Governance*, chps. 2 and 3

Useful Resources:

Kamarck “Globalization and Public Administration Reform” from *Governance in a Globalizing World* (A survey of the types of reform that have been tried globally.)

Giauque, “New Public Management and Organizational Regulation,” from *International Review of Administrative Sciences*

Session Three - 9/4/12 Challenges to New Images of Public Organizations

Focus: What are we to make of “New Public Management”, and “Good Governance”?

Readings:

Peters, Chps. 4 and 5

Useful Resources:

Gareth Morgan *Images of Organization* (An acclaimed book, now in its 2nd edition, which provides an intellectual history of the way we have viewed organization and in the process gives the reader different ways of interpreting an organization and diagnosing its problems.)

Manning “The Legacy of the New Public Management in Developing Countries” from *International Review of Administrative Sciences*
“Dividing the Pie,” from *Advancing Public Goods* (An analysis of what

responsibilities are handled best by the private, nonprofit and public sectors.)
Kettl *The Global Public Management Revolution* Brookings Institution Press, 1999.
(A review and interpretation of the origins of reform and the paths reform has taken
in different parts of the world. Kettl argues that the reform of systems of
management is tied directly to an international debate about the future of
governance.)

Session Four - 9/11/12 What factors act on public organizations for change?

Focus: Looking at a Case of What We've Been Reading

Reading:

Pratt and Tsedev, "Public Administration Development and Reform in a Post-Communist Regime: The Case of Mongolia," *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*, 2009. USE CHP. As A Resource

Pratt, "New Public Management, Globalization, and Public Administration Reform" from Dator, Pratt and Seo, *Fairness, Globalization and Public Institutions*, University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

Guest: Tsedev Damiran, Professor and Dean, National Academy of Governance, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Useful Resources

Pratt and Tsedev, "Institutional Reform in Mongolia in the Post-Soviet Period" *Public Administration in Post Communist Countries*, CRC Press, forthcoming summer 2012.

Cheung, "The Politics of Administrative Reform in Asia." From *Governance - An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*.

Pratt, "Reforming Reform -- Bringing Realism and Urgency to Improving Asia and Pacific Public Institutions" paper written for the Network of Asia and Pacific Schools and Institutes of Public Administration and Governance, December 2008.

Zhang, "Crossing the River by Touching Stones: A Comparison Study of Administrative Reforms in China and the United States", *Public Administration Review*, October 2009.

Rees and Hossain, "Perspectives on Decentralization and Local Governance in Developing and Transitional Countries," *International Journal of Public Administration*, 2010.

Andrews, Christina, "Legitimacy and Context: Implications for Public Sector Reform in Developing Countries," *Public Administration and Development*. 2008. (Looks at the implications of contextual factors for public sector reform in developing nations, concluding that the legitimacy of public institutions is necessary for a successful reform.)

Larbi, "Applying the New Public Management in Developing Countries" in *Public Sector Reform in Developing Countries*, 2006.

II. Can't Live With It Or Without It

Session Five – 9/18/12 Behind the Scene in a Traditional Public Organization

Focus: Figuring Things Out

Reading:

**Chandler and Pratt *Backstage in a Bureaucracy* (2011)

Useful Resources:

"Is Bureaucracy the Enemy of the People?" from *Public Administration Debated* (An exchange of views.)

James Q. Wilson *Bureaucracy* (Provides a detailed review and interpretation of studies about how people in public organizations operate and the forces that act on them. Often sympathetic to the way normal public agencies function.)

Session Six – 9-25-12 Behind the Scene at a Traditional Public Organization

Focus: The Day-to-Day Experience

Reading:

**Chandler and Pratt *Backstage in a Bureaucracy* (2011)

Useful Resources:

Osbourne and Gabler, *Reinventing Government* 1992 (The book that set the stage for a national conversation about reform, and a statement of the American reform gospel of government reinvention. It provides broad outlines of how public agencies might take on what they refer to a “steering” rather than “rowing” function.)

Osbourne and Plastrik, *Banishing Bureaucracy* 1997 (A follow-up to *Reinventing Government* that attempts to address what is involved in moving government toward more flexibility and entrepreneurialism. The authors name several core issues that need to be addressed in order to have any chance of converting rigid, unresponsive bureaucracies into flexible and adaptive organizations.)

Session Seven – 10/2/12 Challenges of Change

Focus: If These are the Challenges, What Can We Do”

Reading:

**Chandler and Pratt *Backstage in a Bureaucracy* (2011)

Pratt “Musashino Place – The Public Organization of the Future for Japan?” July 2012.

Useful Resources:

Solomon, Editor *The Tools of Government* (An insightful analysis and assessment of the different forms that public institutions take, with an emphasis on the challenges presented by “indirect government -- that is, the increasing use of

non-governmental providers of “public” services.)

Note: First Paper is Due

III. Images of Organization and Images of Change

Session Eight - 10/9/12 Looking for Basic Principles

Focus: What is a healthy public organization?

Reading:

Ricardo Semler, “Managing Without Managers,” from *Harvard Business Review*

Useful Resources:

Robert Denhardt, “A Revolution in Public Management,” from *The Pursuit of Significance* (Images of public organizations as observed in mainstream public administration.)

Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science* (A breakthrough book in which the author argues that the appropriate model for organizations is not Newtonian, but the concepts that are central to quantum physics, chaos theory and evolutionary biology.)

Session Nine - 10/16/12 Looking for Principles

Class Exercise: Creating the Elements of a Healthy Organization As a Guide

Session Ten - 10/23/12 Issues in Organizational Change

Focus: What do we expect change to be like? Your experience with change.

Reading:

Fernandez and Rainey “Managing Successful Organizational Change in the Public Sector: An Agenda for Research and Practice” *Public Administration Review* 2006.

Useful Resources:

Rockman and Thiam “The United States: The Political Context of Administrative Reform” in *International Handbook of Public Management Reform* 2009.

Paul Light “The Tides of Reform Revisited: Patterns in Making Government Work, 1945 – 2002” *Public Administration Review* January/February 2006.

Jonathan Koppell, “Reform in Lieu of Change: Tastes Great, Less Filling,” *Public Administration Review* January/February 2008. (A critical response to Paul’s Light argument that the pace of reform has increased in recent years.)

Session Eleven - 10/30/12 Issues in Organizational Change

Focus: Are there differences in types of change? How do we get started?

Guest: Donna Fouts, Executive Director, Cerebral Palsy Foundation.

Reading:

Nigro and Kellough, "Civil Service Reform in Georgia: A View From the Trenches" from *Civil Service Reform in the United States*

Useful Resources:

Senge *The Fifth Discipline* (An influential book that popularized the application of systems thinking to organizational improvement.)

Hammer Reengineering *the Corporation* (Business process reengineering concepts Developed by one of the founders of the strategy.)

Davenport "The Fad That Forgot People," from *Fast Company* (A critical review of how re-engineering evolved and its negative impacts by one of its creators.)

Note: Second paper is due November 4.

Session Twelve - 11/13/12 The Process of Change

Focus: What images do we have of the change process?

Guest: Charlene Young, Consultant to Public Organizations

Reading:

Nigro and Kellough, "Personnel Reform in the States: A Look at Progress Fifteen Years after the Winter Commission." *Public Administration Review*, 2008.

Useful Resources:

Cohen and Eimicke, *Tools for Innovators* (Description and interpretation of six major tools that have been used in the public sector -- strategic planning, reengineering, TQM, benchmarking, teams and privatization -- along with a few illustrative case studies.)

Kiningham and Sawai, "Is Change Possible: Learning From Hawai'i's Public Employees," Public Administration Program, UHM. (Interviews with individuals in public service organizations in Hawai'i about their orientations to change and what it would take for them to become advocates in a reform process.)

Levin, "Inevitable Tensions in Managing Large-Scale Public Service Reform" in *Managing Change in the Public Services* 2007.

Session Thirteen - 11/20/12 The Process of Change

Focus: What images do we have of the change process?

Guest: Randy Perreira, Executive Director, Hawaii Government Employees Association.

Reading:

Kriegel and Brandt**, Chps. Introduction, 1, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15

Useful Resources:

Dawson, *Understanding Organizational Change*, chps. 2 and 3 (Argues that too much of

organizational change has been presented as a formula and that instead what is needed is an approach that is shaped by the specifics of an organization.)

Linden, *Seamless Government* (The application of the principles of business process re-engineering to the reform of government organizations.)

Pinochet and Pinochet, *The End of Bureaucracy and the Rise of the Intelligent Organization* (Advocates the idea Intrapreneurship, which emphasizes using market forces inside organizations, but coupling them with norms of fairness and democratic process.)

Pratt, "Looking In: Notes from a Visiting Scholar" from *Journal of General Education*. (Observations of a change process at a large U.S. university to which the author was a consultant.)

Session Fourteen - 11/27/12 The Psycho-Dynamics of Change

Focus: Why do people react the way they do?

Reading:

Excerpt from Bridges, *Managing Transitions*

Richard Hallstein *Memoirs of a Recovering Autocrat*

Useful Resource:

Quinn, *Deep Change* (Argues that people in organizations are often faced with a choice between promoting, or accepting, change, and "slow death.")

Session Fifteen 12/4/12 Final Projects. To be discussed. (December 6 is last day of classes.)