

**University of Montana**  
**Political Science 504: Organization Theory**  
**Tuesdays: 4:10-6:30 p.m.**  
**Fall 2015**

**Instructor Information**

Three (3) credit hours

Classroom: Liberal Arts 401

Instructor: Dr. Sara Rinfret

Professor's Office: Liberal Arts 352

Email: sara.rinfret@mso.umt.edu (email is the most reliable way to contact me)

Office Hours: Tuesday (2-3p.m.), Wednesday (noon-1p.m.), Thursday (2-3p.m.), or by appointment

**Course Description**

Organizations exist in virtually every sector of contemporary social life. We do not need to plan a field trip to observe organizations in action. Because of their ubiquity, however, they fade into the background, and we need to be reminded of their functions and impacts. In brief, the presence of organizations in every arena of social and economic life is one indicator of their importance. You might be wondering what organization theory is about. When we speak of organization theory we do not mean a single theory. "Rather, it is a loosely knit community of many approaches to organizational analysis." The explanatory models employed are quite diverse. The field is multidisciplinary in nature. You will find contributions from sociologists, anthropologists, economists, psychologists, and political scientists in the literature. Although organizations share similar elements and features, this course provides a comprehensive overview of organization theory, particularly as it relates to public management. Our goal is to determine what each major school of thought can tell us about how to structure and manage complex organizations and to develop our own theory of organizational excellence. More specifically, this course will be run as a seminar, with students analyzing, writing about, explaining, and comparing literature in the field of public administration (organization theory).

**Expectations for Student Learning for this Course and the University of Montana's MPA Program**

1. Apply theory to practice (knowledge to inform your current or future career)
2. Demonstrate graduate level writing, public speaking, critical thinking, research, and analytical skills
3. Understand the major concepts or schools of thought driving organization theory
4. Understand differences between public and private organizations
5. Develop a concept of what it means to manage, lead, and organize well
6. Understand the meaning behind agency mission statements

**Course Readings**

Books required for the course:

1. Rainey, Hal. 2014. *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
2. Goodsell, Charles T. 2011. *Mission Mystique: Belief Systems in Public Agencies*. Washington, D.C.: CQ

Press.

3. Moodle Required Readings – noted with an asterisk (\*) in the course schedule
  - a. Most of the Moodle readings originate from: Shafritz, Jay, Ott, Steven, and Young Suk Jang. 2005. *Classics of Organization Theory*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition.

For students interested in cheaper versions of books for this course, I suggest using the university's inter-library loan – great way to decrease costs.

## **Course Expectations**

Although it goes without saying that students get out of a course what they put into it, it is important to emphasize several key expectations.

### **Class Preparation and Participation:**

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the graduate study of human resource management and that can only be accomplished by engaging the material inside and outside of class. During class, this means participation is a must. Everyone - students and the instructor - can and should learn from one another. Learning is a process and is enhanced by dialogue. Additionally, engaging the material requires that students come to class having rigorously read the assignments so that they are prepared to thoughtfully and productively contribute to the class discussion.

### **Attendance and Tardiness:**

In any graduate course attendance is crucial; students who are not in class do not have the opportunity to learn from the rest of the class and the class does not have the opportunity to benefit from an absent student. Since this course only meets once a week, students are allotted one absence for the semester for any reason. Upon a second absence, a student must meet with the instructor to determine what extra assignments need to be submitted to make-up for the additional absence. Any more than two absences during the semester will merit a serious consideration of whether the course should be dropped and attempted in the future.

Students who are frequently late to class or who leave early should also expect to have their overall grade reduced. After all, being late to a class is problematic for the student who is tardy, fellow students, and the instructor. A student who arrives to class late is disruptive to everyone. Students are expected to get to class on time and stay for the duration of the class. Excessive tardiness will negatively impact a student's final grade.

### **Lap Top Computers and Cell Phone Policy:**

Because class participation and discussion are vital to this class, it is imperative that class discussions be conducted in an appropriate manner that benefits the larger university environment. Therefore, debate is encouraged as long as it is conducted with respect and civility. Courtesy in class discussion extends to making sure *cell phones are silenced* and are *not accessed* during class. Additionally, laptops and tablets provide a great distraction and often detract from the classroom setting. *Laptops and tablets are only permitted in the classroom if their use compliments rather than detracts from the educational environment.*

### **Using Moodle:**

This semester each student is enrolled in Moodle. Moodle is where students can find additional copies of the course syllabus, required readings, assignment instructions, grades, dropboxes for assignments, and class announcements. Here is the link for Moodle access: <http://umonline.umt.edu/>

Keep in mind that our Moodle course site is organized by three tabs:

1. Course information – extra copy of the course syllabus or any sign up lists

2. Readings – organized by week to coincide with the course schedule
3. Assignments – where you submit assignments via a Word doc or docx file, find samples, or additional assignment instructions

### **Firing Option When working with a Group or Partner:**

The firing option links to any of our coursework assignments that you work with a partner or group. Often working in groups can be difficult, thus each group reserves the right to use the firing option. For underperforming team members, a group can fire a team member after first providing a written warning and consultation with the professor. If the performance does not improve after the warning, the group can fire their teammate. Fired students will then have to conduct an additional research project on their own in addition to any remaining assignments.

### **Guidelines for Written Work:**

**All** written assignments should meet the following criteria unless otherwise noted in the assignment instructions or the professor:

1. All work must be typed, double-spaced, utilize 12 point font, and have one inch margins.
2. Citations should follow a proper style guidelines such as, MLA, Chicago, or APA (in-text citations and a reference page are necessary)
3. Assignments are due on the date listed in the course schedule; late assignments will not be accepted. If a student is absent on the day an assignment is due, he/she should make arrangements to turn in the assignment ahead of time.
4. All assignments must be turned in electronically (unless otherwise noted in the course syllabus) via Microsoft Word to the designated Moodle assignment dropbox. If the instructor cannot open the document, the student will not receive a grade. Submission of assignments via e-mail will not be accepted unless specific arrangements have been made.
5. Written work will be evaluated both in terms of content, following instructions, organization, and writing/grammar.
6. Student collusion is not allowed for individual assignments and will be treated as an act of plagiarism.

### **Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students are evaluated according to their performance in the following areas:

#### **Critical Assessment Outlines (15 points apiece x 6 = 90 points possible):**

Critical assessment outlines are intended to encourage reflective reading and informed discussion. These two page (double-spaced) outlines demonstrate your command of the weekly readings and to engender classroom discussion. Stated differently, the goal of these weekly outlines is not to regurgitate what you have read, but rather to analyze ideas you found compelling in the reading. More specifically, each outline should be organized by the following or include:

1. Arguments (3 points)
  - a. List each of the authors for the week and their argument, citing evidence
2. Connections (3 points)
  - a. List 3-4 ways that the readings connect for the week, citing evidence
3. Critiques (3 points)
  - a. List 2-3 criticisms you have about the readings for the week, citing evidence
4. Questions (3 points)
  - a. List 2-3 questions you have about the readings for the week
5. Grammatically correct, 2 page maximum, in-text citations (no reference page necessary), and outline

format used (3 points)

Specific readings and key ideas should be clearly cited with the author reference **in text** (however, a formal reference list is not needed at the end). Please be prepared to share your ideas with your colleagues each week. Over the course of the semester, several outline assessments are possible and students are required to submit 6 total outlines. All students must submit an outline for class 2. Also, critical assessment outlines should incorporate all readings for the week. Bring a hard copy to turn in at the end of the class session.

### **Examination (1x100 points apiece = 100 points possible).**

There will be one take-home exam. You are permitted to use materials for the course, including notes and readings; however, the exams should be completed without assistance or discussion from anyone else and instructions must be followed. The exam will be distributed in class at least one week before they are due.

### **Discussion Leader(s) (50 points possible):**

Each student is responsible for leading a portion of a class session (at least 30 minutes) through a facilitated discussion of not only assigned course readings for the week (see course schedule for readings to focus on), but must also use a contemporary case to convey this information to the class. Depending on class size, this assignment will be conducted in small teams, pairs, or individually. The goal is to move from theory (class) to practice (real world example/case). Regardless, you are required to facilitate a sustained discussion of the assigned reading(s). This may be a difficult task, one that requires prior development of an interrelated set of questions, along with references to specific textual passages that you think helpful in addressing those questions **Please make sure to set up a time to meet with the professor prior to presenting. Moreover, be prepared to present at the beginning, middle, or end of class (it will vary by week).**

More specifically, this assignment will be evaluated on the following:

1. 3 page preparatory paper (15 points)
  - a. You and/or a partner/small group will put together a 3 page paper that demonstrates how you prepared for this assignment. In this paper, you should include (no particular order): school of thought, lessons learned, connection between articles and contemporary case/organization, where does this topic fits more broadly within organization theory, questions for consideration, and concluding thoughts/recommendations for the future. This paper is to help students prepare for their presentation. This paper is due (hard copy, 1 per group) the day you present to the class (15 points)
  - b. 3-4 scholarly sources should be included in this paper
2. Presentation (35 points)
  - a. It is up to the student(s) in the selection of your presentation format, but the point is to **engage** students and increase their understanding about a particular issue.
  - b. Student groups are required to link readings to a contemporary case or organization that has been in the news
  - c. The presentation grade will consider: organization, command of materials, class engagement, preparedness, and presentation format.

Please Note: In the event that you work with a small team or partner, each group receives the same grade for the paper, the 35 points for the presentation portion is individually graded.

### **Understanding Organizations Project (3 assignments = 125 points possible).**

This semester students, on their own, will embark on studying an organization of interest through various schools of thought – (1) classical (a.k.a. the machine/scientific management/rational, closed system); (2) neoclassical (a.k.a. open systems, organisms/human relations/interpretivist/new public management; (3) contemporary (a.k.a. critical/postmodern/new public service). With these schools of thought in mind, students

will put together a collection of assignments to grasp the pros and cons of each school of thought. In particular, each student will select one public agency (local, state, or federal) to carry out this project and its 3 assignments. The 3 assignments and instructions can be found at the end of the syllabus in the appendix.

**Totals Points for the Course:**

Exam	100 points
Critical Assessment Outlines	90 points
Understanding Orgs Project	125 points
Discussion Leader Participation	50 points Attends all classes/professional (up to 30-50 points deducted from total score)
<b>Total</b>	365 points possible (If no alterations to the syllabus)

**Grading Scale:** The University of Montana uses the Plus/minus grading system and a Credit/No Credit system (the CR/NCR replaces the Pass/Fail system used in the past). *General education courses must be taken using the traditional letter grade to count toward one's general education requirements.* To accommodate the Plus/Minus system the grading scale shown below will be used.

Grade	Point Scale	Point Range	GPA
A	93-100	8 points	4.00
A-	90-92	3 points	3.67
B+	87-89	3 points	3.33
B	83-86	4 points	3.00
B-	80-82	3 points	2.67
C+	77-79	3 points	2.33
C	73-76	4 points	2.00
C-	70-72	3 points	1.67
D+	67-69	3 points	1.33
D	63-66	4 points	1.00
D-	60-62	3 points	.067
F	59 or lower	N/A	0.00

## Course Schedule

I require that you to stay up with the readings in order to maximize your classroom experience and minimize personal discomfort for the exams and seminar sessions. Although this is the general outline of readings, the schedule may change as the semester proceeds. If this is the case, students will be notified of any changes. The readings marked with an asterisk (\*) are available on Moodle and required.

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignments
<b>Week 1:</b> Tuesday, September 1	Course Overview and Introductions Public or Private Organizations?	<i>Sign up for discussion leader, discussion about format of class, assignments for week 2</i> <b>Read:</b> Rainey Ch. 3 (skim for main distinctions)
<b>Week 2:</b> Tuesday, September 8	<b>Approach 1: Organizational Machine</b> Classical Organization Theory	<b>Read:</b> Rainey's preface, Ch. 1, and review Ch. 3 (skim for main distinctions), Goodsell Ch. 1, *Overview of Classics <b>Due:</b> 1. UM Mission Statement – pros/cons 2. Outline Assessment 1 (each student is required to complete – always bring a hard copy to class)
<b>Week 3:</b> Tuesday, September 15	Historical Underpinnings of the Field	<b>Read:</b> Rainey, Ch. 2 (only pages 1-26), Goodsell Ch. 2, *Gulick, *Taylor, *Weber, *Smith, *Wilson, *Organizations as Machines <b>Due:</b> Outline Assessment 2 <b>Discussion Leaders: Focus on goodsell and Wilson readings/your own example</b>
<b>Week 4:</b> Tuesday, September 22	<b>Approach 2: Organizational Humanism</b> Closed versus open systems?	<b>Read:</b> Rainey Ch. 2 (rest of the chapter), *OrganismsMorgan,*Overview of Neoclassic, *Follett, *Hawthorne Experiment <b>Due:</b> 1.Mission Statement Analysis, 4p.m., Moodle 2. Outline Assessment 3 *be prepared to discuss mission statement in class <b>Discussion Leaders: Focus on Hawthorne and Follett/your own example</b>

<p><b>Week 5:</b> Tuesday, September 24</p>	<p>Responsiveness and New Public Management: Knowing the Environment</p>	<p><b>Read:</b> Rainey, Ch. 4, Goodsell Ch. 4, *Selznick, *Friedrich and Finer; discussion about interview questions <b>Due:</b> Outline Assessment 4 <b>Discussion Leaders: Focus on Goodsell and Friedrich and Finer readings/your own example</b></p>
<p><b>Week 6:</b> Tuesday, September 29</p>	<p>Power and Decisionmaking</p>	<p><b>Read:</b> Rainey Chs. 5 and 7, Goodsell Ch. 3, *Lindblom, *MarchPowerofPower <b>Due:</b> Outline Assessment 5; potential interview questions for major project, 4p.m. Moodle <b>Discussion Leaders: Focus on lindblom and Goodsell readings/your own example</b></p>
<p><b>Week 7:</b> Tuesday, October 13</p>	<p>Organizational Culture and Understanding Personnel (we do not meet in person this week)</p>	<p><b>Read:</b> *Rainey Chs. 10 and 11, *OrgCultureMorgan, *Stivers, *Acker <i>Receive Exam 1 – begin to work on</i></p>
<p><b>Week 8:</b> Tuesday, October 20</p>	<p>Exam 1 – no class meeting</p>	<p><b>Read:</b> Review materials <b>Due:</b> Exam, 6:30p.m., Moodle</p>
<p><b>Week 9:</b> Tuesday, October 27</p>	<p><b>Approach 3: Contemporary Organizations</b> Managing the Impossible</p>	<p><b>Review:</b> Organizational Culture Readings <b>Read:</b> Rainey Chs. 12 and 13, *Janis <b>Due:</b> Outline Assessment 6 <i>Discussion about Exam 1 and sign up for final presentations</i></p>
<p><b>Week 10:</b> Tuesday, November 3</p>	<p>A New Public Service?</p>	<p><b>Read:</b> *Denhardt, *Perry, Goodsell Ch. 7 <b>Due:</b> Outline Assessment 7 <b>Discussion Leaders: Focus on both Denhardt and Perry Readings/your own example</b></p>
<p><b>Week 11:</b> Tuesday, November 10</p>	<p>Practitioner as Theorist</p>	<p>Read: *Denhardt and Catlaw, *Scicchitano, Ch. 8; Goodsell Ch. 8 <b>Due:</b> Outline Assessment 8 <b>Discussion Leaders: Focus on Denhardt/Catlaw and Scicchitano/your own</b></p>

		<b>example</b>
<b>Week 12:</b> Tuesday, November 17	The Future of Organization Theory: Our Own Model of Excellence?	<b>Read:</b> Rainey, Ch. 14; <a href="#">NY Times Article</a> <b>Due:</b> Agency Officials in Action, 4p.m. (moodle); be prepared to discuss in class <i>Prep time for presentations</i>
<b>Week 13:</b> Tuesday, November 24	No Class, Happy Thanksgiving	
<b>Week 14:</b> Tuesday, December 1	The Future of Organization Theory Continued and Presentations	
<b>Week 15:</b> Tuesday, December 8  <b>Final Exam/Paper – Tuesday, December 15 (8p.m.)</b>	Presentations/Final Class Session  Turn in on Moodle, Do not Meet in Person	<b>(future of Org Theory Paper)</b>

### **Classroom Policies**

- **Extra Credit:** Not available for this course.
- **Make-up Exams:** Our exam is take-home and listed in the course schedule, so make up exams are not available.
- **Classroom Etiquette:** A driving component of our MPA program is professionalism and your ability to work well with teams/groups. Thus, the expectation is that students will maintain a high level of professionalism in their classroom conduct with me, and with their fellow students. This means being respectful during class discussions, and in all communications with the professor and others.
- **E-mail Etiquette:** E-mail is a wonderful tool for you to contact me with questions, but it does not replace office hours. If you have involved questions about course material, you should set up a time to come see me or set up a phone conversation.
- **Incompletes or Withdrawals “W” for the Course:** If for some reason the course is not working out for you please adhere to the University’s policies for the last day to drop a class. Since this is a 10 week course, incompletes will not be an option.
- **Late Assignments:** Students are expected to submit all work on the date specified in the course calendar. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the instructor 72 hours before the date in question. Students must complete all assignments to receive a grade for the course.
- **University Attendance Policy:** (please make sure to follow the participation course policies listed above too) Students who are registered for a course but do not attend the first two class meetings may be required by the instructor to drop the course. This rule allows for early identification of class vacancies and to permit other students to add classes. **Students not allowed to remain must complete a drop form or drop the course on the Internet (<http://cyberbear.umt.edu>) to avoid receiving a failing**

- grade.** Students who know they will be absent should contact the instructor in advance.
- **Wikipedia:** This online source is not reliable and should not be cited in any course assignment. The goal is to become accustomed to using scholarly sources for all work in any of your courses at the University of Montana.
  - **Academic Dishonesty (Plagiarism):** Students must follow the University’s policies for academic dishonesty. For detailed information, [please view](#). As such, all work submitted must be your own; no duplicate work (work completed for another class) will not be accepted. Acts of cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of zero (0) for the assignment. Moreover, acts of plagiarism will also be reported to the Academic Court. To avoid acts of plagiarism, cite each reference or source you use and give proper credit for the ideas, opinions, and findings of others. When you are using the exact words of others, you must use quotation marks and include the page number where you found the quote in your citation.
  - **Moodle:** This class is supported by Moodle. Please refer to this site regularly for additional readings, announcements, grades, submitting assignments, or updates to the schedule. When submitting assignments on Moodle, students should attach Microsoft Word doc or docx files.
  - **Sensitive Course Materials:** College education aims to expand student understanding and awareness. Thus, it involves engagement with a wide range of information, ideas, and creative representations. In college courses, students can expect to encounter—and critically appraise—materials that may differ from and perhaps challenge familiar understandings, ideas, and beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss these matters with the professor.
  - **Disability Assistance:** The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors. The link for this information: [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

### **Appendix: Instructions for Understanding Organizations Project (Assignments 1-3)**

Each student should select one public agency at the local, state, or federal level to examine. Keep in mind that this agency will be used for assignments 1-3. The goal is to not only apply theory to practice but also to use this as a networking opportunity to work for a new organization in the future or help to enhance your current place of employment. Due dates for each assignment are listed in the course schedule and on Moodle.

#### Assignment 1: Organization Mission Statement (25 points possible):

One of the fundamental aspects to understanding organizational theory is an agency’s mission statement. For this assignment, each student should select one agency, locate its mission statement, and use classroom materials to examine this mission statement. The analysis should include:

1. Introduction: a very brief description of the public organization, why you selected it, and what readings you will use to examine its mission statement
2. Examination: explain the mission statement and its pros and cons. Make sure to use multiple organizational theorists for this evaluation.
3. Conclusion: What suggestions/changes would you make to this mission statement? Is it perfect?
4. Make sure to use up to 4-5 scholarly sources and follow the course writing guidelines listed in the beginning pages of the course syllabus
5. 4-5 page paper (double-spaced)

#### Assignment 2: Agency Officials in Action (50 points possible – 5 points for interview questions; 45 points for paper)

For your second assignment, you are required to interview 2-3 agency officials that work for the organization

that you have selected to examine for the semester. These interviews should either be conducted over the phone or (preferably) in person. The same interview questions should be used for each interviewee and instructor approval of the interview questions is required (please see date in course calendar) – please do not start to interview without approval. Upon approval, students should set up interviews and then write a **4-5 page** paper that includes:

1. Introduction: Who did you interview and why
2. Examination: What did you learn about the organization from your interviews? More specifically, consider some of the following questions: Did the interviewees appear to embody the organization's mission statement? What school of thought did these interviewees seem to demonstrate? Is this a good place to work?
3. Conclusion: What challenges or examples of innovation are present in this organization? What are your suggestions for the future?  
Additional considerations: The best papers will begin their research early in the semester, state and pursue a theme, develop a logical argument with respect to why this agency was chosen, show creativity in developing new arguments (or analyzing old ones) on behalf of your position, and show a capacity to integrate the concepts discussed in class and in the readings. This paper should be **6-7** pages in length.
4. Make sure to use up to 4-5 scholarly sources and follow the course writing guidelines listed in the beginning pages of the course syllabus
5. 4-5 page paper (double-spaced)

Assignment 3: The Future of Organizational Theory (50 points possible): This project is a brief tour of organization theory. The goal of this final assignment is twofold – paper and presentation. More specifically, each student should create their own theory or model to help public agencies flourish into the next century.

Thus, your final paper and presentation should include:

Paper (25 points possible, due during the final exam period):

1. Introduction: Based upon your own research this semester, what does the study and practice or organizational theory mean to you? What's your argument for the future?
2. Your Own Theory: Use theorists and your own research from the semester to develop your own theory for organizational theory. What is this theory called and what are the driving components?
3. Conclusion: Why is your approach innovative for the future?
4. Make sure to use up to 4-5 scholarly sources and follow the course writing guidelines listed in the beginning phases of the course syllabus
5. 3-4 page paper (double spaced)

Presentation (25 points possible):

1. The suggested length of this presentation is 15-20 minutes, plus 5-10 minutes for questions – PPT is not required, but visuals are encouraged
2. Student presentations should be well organized and identify a clear theme, demonstrating a clear command of course materials when presenting your own/new theory for the future
3. The presentations will be evaluated based upon the following: appropriate eye contact, preparedness, mastery or materials, well organized, ability to answer questions, and engagement.

Reminder: Late papers are not accepted and students should adhere to writing expectations listed above.

**All these assignment should be turned in electronically via Moodle by the due date listed in the course schedule. The papers should be in a Word format and if the professor cannot open and read, then no grade.**