



Syllabus for PAPA 501-501  
Public Organizations – Online  
Department of Public Administration and Policy Analysis  
Winter Session 2025-2026  
12/15/25-1/04/26

## About the Instructor

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Office Hours: Thursdays (9:00 AM-Noon) and by appointment. Students are encouraged to make an appointment during office hours to ensure availability, better fit the student's schedule, and reduce waiting time.

## Welcome

The course has been designed to offer you a foundation of knowledge, skills, and abilities related to understanding and applying that knowledge to the structure and operation of organizations. The course will provide you with a solid base of information drawn from multiple sources and experiences and offer you the opportunity to apply that information to an organization of your choice. Through the application of various assessment mechanisms, you will access and apply that information. As questions or concerns arise, please contact me, and I will respond as quickly as time permits. After the course, you will have had the opportunity to develop a solid foundation that will assist you in other MPA courses, the MPA Comprehensive Examination, and in your career as a public or nonprofit administrator.

## Bio

My name is Dr. Drew Dolan. I am a Professor in the Department of Public Administration and Policy Analysis and serve as the Program Director for the Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree, as well as other degrees and certificates offered by PAPA. I have been working in the field of Public Administration for more than 35 years. My MPA and Ph.D. were earned from Northern Illinois University. The Ph.D. is in Political Science with areas of emphasis in Public Administration, Public Policy, and Local Government Administration. I have also earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Rockford College and an Associate in Applied Science in Business degree from Rock Valley College.

My research interests center on local governments and nonprofit organizations. Research efforts have included studies on rural local governments and schools, managing small cities and counties, the impact of fragmented government, and leadership. Research on the role of nonprofit organizations ranges from the training needs of nonprofit organizations to the impact of riverboat gambling revenues on nonprofits and the local governments within which they operate. Most recently, the research has centered on a comparative analysis of e-government in Illinois municipalities. I have also served as a consultant to numerous nonprofits, local government organizations (city and county, and the State of Illinois). Consulting has concentrated on areas such as leadership, local government structure, program development, and staff development. Current teaching assignments focus on Leadership, Public Policy, Organization Theory, and E-Government and Cybersecurity.

## Teaching Philosophy

Aristotle shared that it is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it. The material covered in my classes is offered to you as something to consider. I will always attempt to share with you information that ranges from foundational to state-of-the-art in the area that the course represents. However, as a candidate for a master's degree in the field of public administration, you must learn to never accept what is offered to

you as factual or state-of-the-art without first questioning the material and determining for yourself its validity. My classes are designed to require you to think critically regarding course materials, whether the materials are readings, lectures, discussions, or assignments. In so doing, you will gain a foundation of knowledge, skills, and abilities that will serve you well as a career public administrator in the public or nonprofit arena. You will also learn to question all, even those which is considered factual or unquestionable because of science, before making decisions that may impact the lives of hundreds, thousands, or even more.

### **Communicating with the instructor**

Email is currently the best method of communication. Your email communications will receive a response in a timely fashion, typically within 12-48 hours. Please keep in mind that the volume of emails that I receive daily may cause situations that push the response time to the latter part of that range. Always feel free to ask additional questions.

## **About the Course**

### **Course description**

Organizational Theory refers to the set of interconnected concepts and definitions that explain the behavior of individuals or groups that interact with each other to perform activities intended to ensure the accomplishment of an organization's mission and goals. For public administrators, the demand to create greater efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness in organizations is constant. Public administrators will examine how things are done, the management of staff, the structure of the organization, and the influence of key variables on the organization and its staff as they seek to improve the operation of the organization. Diverse organizational settings require the capacity to develop appropriate decision-making and planning strategies to produce the desired organizational goals, given the organization's environment. The course will provide you with the opportunity to develop an understanding of the myriads of theories and concepts that have been developed concerning the structure and management of organizations. This foundation will serve as a base from which to analyze the many components that go into the operation of the organization. The course has been designed to provide students with an introduction to those characteristics and variables that play a role in the functioning of public organizations. Students will be introduced to such topics as the components of the environment of organizations, the diverse designs available in structuring organizations, appropriate decision-making, planning, and coordinating strategies to produce organizational goals, behavior within the organizations, and strategies for leadership and implementing change within organizations.

Catalog Description: Theoretical analysis of environment, structure, communication patterns, leadership, informal groups, and decision-making of government and nonprofit agencies.

### **Prerequisite knowledge and credit hours**

No prerequisites. 3 credit hours.

### **Course goals and objectives**

- Cultivate an extensive understanding of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that Public Organizational Theory offers public and nonprofit administrators.
- Successfully communicate that which serves as the foundational underpinnings of Organizational Theory.
- Describe the schools of thought that form the field of organizational theory and the variables that influence the structure and operations of public and nonprofit organizations.
- Provide a framework for public administrators to grasp how the tools of organizational theory will allow them to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness of public and nonprofit organizations.

### **Course textbooks**

There is no textbook for the class. Given that there is not a single text that sufficiently covers the multiple aspects of Organizational Theory in the public and nonprofit sectors, this class will rely on an assortment of readings. Collectively, these readings will cover the multiple facets of Public Organizational Theory needed to achieve the goals and objectives of the course.

Note: The readings for the course are highlighted in the course schedule section of this syllabus, the Weekly breakdowns in your Blackboard, and collectively in the Coursework section of the Blackboard. Citations are purposely not provided. As you choose to cite a reading for an assignment, you will need to develop the correct citation for the reading. You may cite the instructor's work, but that citation will not count toward the required citations for an assignment or discussion.

## Other course materials

Supplemental readings and other material may be assigned periodically to cover issues that may arise or to address questions brought forward by students. Students will be given ample notice when this occurs.

## Course requirements

### Course activities/assessments

- ❖ **Peer Introduction.** This introduction is an effective way to begin the process of building a network of MPA Candidates and Public Administration Professionals who can assist you in this program, with the Comprehensive Exam at the end of your MPA program, and in your careers. **(Maximum of 25 points)**
- ❖ **Choice of Topic.** Under the Discussion section of your Blackboard, locate the section entitled "Topic Selection." It is also located in the content for week 1. There will be two parts to this assignment. First, you will need to select one of the selected schools of thought or one of the influential variables. Once you have selected a topic, summarize and submit the topic chosen in a brief statement (3-5 sentences) through the discussion link. The second requirement of this assignment is to select an organization or component of an organization that will be the focus of some of your assignments in the course. You are encouraged to select an organization with which you are familiar or, at a minimum, one in which you have an interest. The organization can be public (City of Edwardsville or SIUE), a nonprofit organization (St. Louis Art Museum or Salvation Army), or a private for-profit business (Walmart or Hobby Lobby). You may choose to examine the larger organization or a component, SIUE or Human Resources, or Public Administration and Policy Analysis. A topic may only be selected by one student. Do not choose a topic already chosen by another student. **(Maximum of 25 points)**
- ❖ **Discussion Forum.** In your statement, inform your peers about the nature and specifics of the School of Thought or Influencing Variable that you selected as a topic earlier in the course. Post a statement that provides peers with an introduction to the topic. For Schools of thought, define the school, highlight the foundation of beliefs that support the school, and offer a look at a minimum of two researchers who support the school with different concepts. For influencing variables, define the nature of the variable, highlight how the variable can influence organizations, and offer a look at a minimum of two researchers who have conducted research on the variable from different perspectives. Class materials (lectures and readings) and outside research should be used for preparing the statement. The discussion statement will be a minimum of 275-350 words in length and must follow the writing standards outlined in the syllabus. They are subject to the penalties discussed in the syllabus for not following the writing standards. Proper citations must accompany the statement. The Discussion Statement is to be posted by 11:59 PM on the assigned due date.

**Comments to Peers to Extend Discussion:** After completing the initial statement, you are to respond to at least 5 peers and may not respond to more than 2 peers on any given day. Although you may pose questions to the initial statement, the questions will not count as part of the comment. Your comments regarding their general like or dislike for the statement will also not be counted. All comments and questions are to be civil. Responses should add materials concerning the theories and work of additional researchers concerning the school or variable highlighted in the discussion statement. You may also provide comments on the impact of the school of thought or variable on today's public administrator. The threads are to be properly edited, grammatically correct, and follow the writing standards listed in the syllabus. Overall, your contributions to the discussion forums should demonstrate that you have been actively completing the assigned readings and developing a thorough understanding of the material. All comments are to follow the writing standards offered in the syllabus for the course. Each comment should have a minimum of one supporting citation. All comments are due by 11:59 PM on the assigned due date.

*(The discussion (including statement and comments) is worth a maximum of 150 points – See rubrics attached to discussions)*

- ❖ **Writing Assignment.** For this assignment, you will explore some of the characteristics of the organization you selected in your “Topic” assignment. See the course materials for additional assignment details and grading criteria. **(Maximum of 180 points – See Rubric attached to assignment)**
- ❖ **Participation Activities.** Over the semester, there will be brief assignments designed to offer you an introduction to a specific topic related to the course. The topics will be drawn from issues that arise as the class moves through the semester or from a set of topics that historically required additional coverage. Most frequently, the activities will involve additional writing activities. There are currently three activities scheduled for the class. **(Maximum of 75 points spread over the three Participation Activities assigned)**
- ❖ **Quizzes.** The quizzes serve as a mechanism for reviewing key materials covered in readings, lectures, and discussions. Quiz 1 will cover topics such as Public Organizational Schools of Thought, Theorists, and Theories. Quiz 2 will cover the variables that influence the structure and operations of organizations. A series of multiple-choice and matching questions will be used as a means of reviewing key material. **You will have the opportunity to retake the exam up to two additional times** to improve the score received on the exam. **(Each quiz will be worth 50 points)**
- ❖ **Final Assignment.** For the final assignment, the student may select to do either an **Essay** or a **PowerPoint slide presentation**. The expectations for each are detailed on Blackboard. Each will be worth the same amount of points (200 points) and will have the same due date.

## Submitting work

All materials to be turned in for the class are to be submitted via Blackboard. This will ensure that your work is received and time stamped. All writing assignments are to be produced using Word. However, students who are uneasy about trusting the Blackboard system may also send a copy of the work to the instructor’s e-mail address.

## Online discussions

Students should be aware that there is significant conflict concerning the appropriate role of public administrators in dealing with the politics of public and nonprofit organizations. There is also significant conflict concerning the political values that ought to guide public administrators. This means that class material and discussion may at times involve views and values that some may find to be “offensive” or politically incorrect. Students are encouraged to practice professional decorum when dealing with such subject material. The class is committed to civil dialogue, realizing that it is not always possible to discuss the role of public administrators without offending someone. Such is the nature of the public democracy within which we live and public administrators must work.

## Online class behavior

- **Reflect** before you post an emotional response and reread what you have written to be sure it is professional. Communicate as if your comments are printed in a newspaper.
- **Communicate** effectively.
  - Do not use all caps or multiple punctuation marks (!!!, ??, etc.).
  - Be sure to define or explain acronyms, jargon, or uncommon terms so everyone can understand and participate in the discussion.
- **Sign your name.** Take responsibility for your comments to build a strong classroom community.
- **Foster community.** Share your ideas and contribute to ongoing discussions. Make comments that add to, not detract from, a positive learning environment for the course.
- **Be constructive.** Challenge ideas and the course content but do so in positive ways. It’s fine to disagree, but when done politely, you stimulate and encourage helpful discussion, and you maintain positive relationships with fellow students.
- **Keep the conversation on topic.** Online dialogue is like a conversation. If there is a particular dialogue going on, please add it, but if you have something new to say, start a new thread.

# Course and University Policies

## Grading

The grade for the course will be based on the following requirements:

- Peer Introduction (25 points; 3%)
- Topic Selection (25 points; 3%)
- Discussion Forum (150 total points, 18.75%)
- Writing Assignment (150 points; 18.75%)
- Three Participation Activities (50 points each; 18.75%)
- Two Quizzes (100 total points - 50 points each; 12.5%)
- Research Assignment (Essay or PowerPoint) (200 points; 25%)

Thus, there are 800 total points to be earned for the course.

## Grading scale

90 – 100%	A
80 – 89%	B
70 – 79%	C
60 – 69%	D
< 60%	F

## Grading rubrics

Grading rubrics may be utilized in assessing certain components of the class. For these components, the rubric will be visible through Blackboard on an individual basis. Students are encouraged to identify and review any grading rubric that is used to help ensure they meet the necessary criteria for a deliverable.

## Writing Standards

Students in the MPA program or taking MPA classes are expected to demonstrate professional writing standards. All writing assignments in this course will be expected to meet minimal standards that require attention to spelling, punctuation, formatting, and basic grammar. A failure to meet these standards will result in a loss of points on the final grade for the assignment. Properly proofreading and correcting the paper before turning the paper to the instructor can avoid such. Using tools such as Word Editor, Grammarly, Spell Check, Grammar Check, and SIUE writing labs can assist the editing process, but should not be used in exclusion of individual editing.

Common Errors to watch for include:

- ✓ Lack of conformity with the assignment (i.e., answering questions as posed, structuring the answer properly)
- ✓ Correctly spelled, but inappropriate words (i.e., a word that spell check approves, but is incorrectly used: two for too)
- ✓ Run-on sentences
- ✓ Lack of capitalization at the beginning of a sentence
- ✓ Serious errors in punctuation
- ✓ Other serious grammatical errors
- ✓ Improper citation or failure to use citations.
- ✓ Failure to properly use paragraph breaks.

Errors that will lead to automatic grade reductions include:

- ✓ Any misspelled words
- ✓ The use of first-person
- ✓ The use of imperatives
- ✓ Failure to use appropriate citations and quotations.

## Feedback and grading timeline

The goal of the professor will be to complete all grading within 3-5 days of submission. You can find your grade by clicking the My Grades link on the left menu of the Blackboard course. If there is a rubric attached to the assignment, you can click on your score to see my feedback on the rubric.

## Late or Missed Assignments

Only in the most unusual and dire circumstances will a late paper, assignment, presentation, or examination be accepted. Sufficient latitude has been provided for you to turn in papers, assignments, and examinations early or on time, regardless of circumstance. Illness, work, computers blowing up, etc., are viewed as equivalent to the “dog eating my homework.” Professionalism dictates the timely preparation of required documents; as such, you will be expected at a minimum to e-mail, as a Word attachment, the work to the instructor before the due time and date, regardless of circumstances. Similarly, the date scheduled for any presentation is sufficiently scheduled in advance and will not be rescheduled. Should unusual circumstances arise that may cause a late or missed submission, notify the instructor as soon as possible.

## Participation

Graduate school is not a lecture-based experience. The real benefit to you and the other students comes from the exchange of knowledge and ideas between the seminar participants. As such, you are expected to keep up with the readings and virtually participate in an active and meaningful way throughout the course.

It is vitally important that our classroom environment promotes respectful exchange of ideas, including being sensitive to the views and beliefs expressed during online discussions. Your success in this course will depend on your communication, consistent engagement, and active participation in all course activities. Success in this course requires that you adhere to the deadlines provided as you complete assignments, discussions, and other course activities. Timely participation in online discussions is particularly important and is not optional. You are expected to post and reply to discussions on time, consistent with the requirements contained within the course syllabus and discussion rubric.

## Incomplete Policy

An incomplete grade is always a privilege exercised by the instructor. It is not a right ascribed to a student. According to SIUE Policy, A grade of “I” (Incomplete) may be awarded when a student has completed most of the work required for a class but is prevented by a medical or similar emergency from completing a small portion of the course requirement. You must be able to provide evidence associated with the exceptional circumstances and compelling reasons. A grade of “Incomplete” (I) should be given only in exceptional circumstances and only for compelling reasons. Non-attendance, personal activities (vacations, family issues, work conflicts, etc.), deficient performance, or intentions to repeat the course do not justify the issuance of an incomplete grade. You must be able to provide evidence associated with the exceptional circumstances and compelling reasons. To be eligible for consideration for an incomplete grade, 1) you must currently have a grade of “A” or “B” in the course and 2) have completed at least 75 percent of the coursework. You must contact your professor to request an incomplete grade before the end of the scheduled class session. In all circumstances where an “I” grade is received, you and the faculty member must complete an agreement form that specifies how and when the incomplete grade will be made up. The period of completion will be set by the instructor on the agreement form. That period is not to extend past one year from the course completion date. The agreement will be turned in to the PAPA Office Administrator within one week of the granting of the incomplete. The instructor expects that an incomplete be completed no later than the last day of the end of the next semester unless otherwise specified. An incomplete grade that is not completed within the specified period will automatically be changed to an “F” (graduation notwithstanding).

## Technology Privacy Information

According to [OSCQR Standard #14](#), the course should include links to privacy policies for technology tools to let students know what data may be collected and if their data is secure. If you are using Blackboard, keep the privacy statement below. Add links to privacy statements for any other technology tools you are using in the course.]

We will be using Blackboard in this course. View the [Anthology Blackboard Privacy Statement](#) to review how your data is being used and stored.

## Technology requirements

Technical requirements for students can be found in this [ITS Knowledge Base article](#).

## Technology capabilities

Students in an online course should be able to:

- Use a word processor, such as MS Word, to compose assignments and communicate with others in class.
- Attach files to emails or course areas.
- Navigate websites and course materials.
- Reach out to tech support staff when issues arise and troubleshoot to resolve problems.

Additional guidance for taking online courses can be found on the [Online SIUE site](#).

## Academic integrity/plagiarism

Students are reminded that the expectations and academic standards outlined in the [Student Academic Code \(3C2\)](#) apply to all courses, field experiences, and educational experiences at the University, regardless of modality or location. Plagiarism is the use of another person's words or ideas without crediting that person. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and may lead to failure on an assignment, in the class, or dismissal from the University, per the [SIUE academic dishonesty policy](#). Students are responsible for complying with University policies about academic honesty as stated in the [University's Student Academic Conduct Code](#).

## University guidance on artificial intelligence (AI)

Unless expressly allowed by the instructor, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and applications (including ChatGPT, DALL-E, and others) to produce content for course assignments and assessments is a violation of SIUE's academic policy and is prohibited.

## Turnitin

This course may use the Turnitin plagiarism detection software. If used, a Turnitin link will be available anywhere written work is to be submitted in the course. [Find out more about using Turnitin](#). Visit the [Turnitin Services Privacy Policy](#) for additional information on their privacy policy.

## Additional University Policies and Information

University policies and guidance that address teaching, learning, and student support services are available at: <https://kb.siue.edu/132378>. Students are encouraged to visit this resource site for current information on: \

- Regular and Substantive Interaction
- Recordings of Class Content
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Pregnancy and New Parenting Policy
- Services for Students Needing Accommodations (ACCESS)
- Academic and Other Student Services (Library, Academic Success, Tutoring, etc.)
- Cougar Care
- Student Success Coaches

## Subject to change notice

All material, assignments, and deadlines are subject to change with prior notice. It is your responsibility to stay in touch with your instructor, review the course site regularly, and communicate with other students, to adjust as needed if assignments or due dates change.

## Course Schedule:

Sections	Content	Assignments	Due Dates All due at 11:59 pm CST
<b>Section 1 Parts A and B</b> <b>12/15-12/20</b>  Organizational Theory in the Public and Nonprofit Sectors.  Organizational Theory Schools of Thought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read the syllabus.</li> <li>Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, 1776</li> <li>Frederick W. Taylor, The Principles of Scientific Management, 1911</li> <li>Organizations as a Living Entity</li> <li>Five Phases of an Organization's Life Cycle</li> <li>Organizational Theory and Behavior</li> <li>Schools of Thought in Organizational Learning</li> <li>Summaries of Organizational Theories: A summary of Organizational Theories as presented in the classical text by Shafritz, Ott, &amp; Jang</li> </ul> </li> <li>Read: PowerPoints 1 through 4</li> <li>Read: Writing Assignment Instructions and Grading Criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction post</li> <li>Topic Selection</li> <li>Participation Activity 1</li> <li>Discussion Statement 1</li> </ul>	12/17 12/17 12/18 12/20
<b>Section 2: Parts A and B</b> <b>12/21-12/29</b>  Internal and External Variables Influencing the Structure and Operations of Organizations. The Influence of Environmental Variables, Communications, and Decision-Making on Organizations	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizational Design and Structure</li> <li>Dimensions of Structure in Effective Organizations</li> <li>Does Size Matter?</li> <li>Information Technology and Value Creation in the Public Sector Organizations (Pages 1-14 Only)</li> <li>Power and Politics in Organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization's External Environment</li> <li>Decision Making in Public Organizations</li> <li>The Effectiveness of Communications in Hierarchical Organizational Structure.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Read: PowerPoints 5 through 10</li> <li>Read: PowerPoint Presentation Instructions and Grading Criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation Activity 2</li> <li>Quiz 1</li> <li>Writing Assignment</li> </ul>	12/22 12/27 12/29



Sections	Content	Assignments	Due Dates All due at 11:59 pm CST
<b>Section 3</b> <b>12/30-1/4</b> The Influence of Accountability, Transparency, and Chaos on Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Readings:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Accountability in the 21st Century</li> <li>Chaos Theory and Its Applications in Our Real Life</li> <li>Applying Chaos Theory in a Project-Based Organization</li> <li>12 Trends Affecting the Future of The Public Sector and Public Sector Outsourcing</li> </ul> </li> <li>Read: PowerPoints: 11 and 12</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion Comments</li> <li>Participation Activity 3</li> <li>Quiz 2 – Influential variables</li> <li>Research Assignment</li> </ul>	12/30 1/2 1/3 1/4

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