

PIA5301: MANAGING PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Managing Public Institutions and Organizations

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

5301

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

POL5301 Managing Public Institutions and Organizations

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

Gleaning information from organization theory (OT), organizational behavior (OB), and institutional analysis, this course is designed to advance students' knowledge and skills in leading and managing public organizations and their institutional environments. The first half of the course will be devoted to familiarizing students with the history and development of institutional and organizational research. The second half of the course aims to provide students an overview of the central concepts, strategies, and practices in the institutional and organizational dimensions of public administration. Drawing on materials from different academic disciplines, including psychology, political science, law, sociology, public policy, and public administration, this course enables students to contemplate, make sense of, and critically analyze solutions for specific issues pertaining to the management of public institutions and organizations in both their workplace and the broader community.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Acquire main theories, arguments, concepts, and issues in OT, OB, and institutionalism.	x	x	
2	Evaluate critically the extent to which the core assumptions and historical roots of organizational research can be applied to the current context(s)	x	x	x
3	Become conversant with organizationally-relevant issues and capable of analyzing these issues from fine-tuned theoretical or practical standpoints	x	x	x
4	Gain broad familiarity with theory and research concerned with managerial processes, and develop the analytical skills necessary to critically evaluate the institutional environment they are currently in	x	x	x
5	Have as much hands-on practical experience as possible within the confines of the classroom and become an intuitive public manager who is adept at developing effective and creative solutions for specific managerial challenges	x	x	x
6	Collaborate with peers to prepare, conduct and critique group research on a cutting-edge topic traversing the OT and OB disciplines with a focus on communicating and interacting productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large	x	x	x
7	Constructively reflect on their own engagement with theory and practice	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Workshops Course lecturer responds to questions raised by students attending the workshops.	1, 2, 4	3 hours per week
2	Canvas PowerPoint slides to support workshops posted for students to download. Moreover, weekly micro-engagement questions will be posted on Canvas. Students submit short responses on the platform.	1, 2, 4, 7	15 minutes per week
3	Independent reading and a reflection report Assigned readings are expected to be read by every student. In addition, each student must write a reflection report on the implications of the readings of their choosing so that solutions to a contemporary public management challenge or an organizational predicament can be developed.	1, 2, 4, 5, 7	This will vary from student to student: average: 4-5 hours per week
4	Group work for simulation project Students work in groups to analyze a real public-sector management problem, apply course theories, and develop a video pitch and written executive summary presenting theory-informed interventions.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	Group preparation varies from group to group

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Weekly Micro-Engagement	1, 2, 4	20	Each week, each student will complete one short written response (approx. 100 words) to a question related to the previous class. The questions will be posted on Canvas.	No

2	Individual Reflection Paper	2, 3, 5, 7	30	<p>Each student is expected to write a reflection report in which they (1) identify a real-world public management challenge (from their workplace, society, or a documented case); (2) select 2–3 theories or readings from the course; (3) critically analyze the key assumptions, strengths, and limitations of these theories/ readings; (4) apply the theories / insights from the readings to explain or interpret the challenge; (5) reflect on what these theories or readings reveal (or fail to reveal) about the problem and what they personally learned from the exercise. The paper should be a maximum of 1,500 words (excluding the title page, references, and essential appendices), double-spaced, and draw on materials from the assigned readings or lecture slides.</p>	No
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3	Group management simulation project	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	50	<p>Students work in groups of approximately six to diagnose a real public sector management problem and propose theory-informed interventions. The project contains two components:</p> <p>(1) Groups will create a 5-7 minute recorded video in which they (a) identify a real public management problem in an existing public organization; (b) apply two theories from OT/OB/Public Management covered in the course; (c) provide a brief diagnosis of the problem using these theories; (d) propose two practical interventions grounded in theory; (e) explain why these interventions are expected to work. (2) Write a group paper, which includes (a) a description and diagnosis of the selected public management problem; (b) the two theories used and how they explain the issue; (c) the proposed intervention(s); (d) hypotheses or expected effects related to the proposed interventions; (e) a simple research design (e.g., survey, interview, comparative case.</p>	No
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Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

Weekly Micro-Engagement (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Quality of conceptual understanding and application demonstrated in weekly responses.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Demonstrates clear and accurate understanding of the week's concept(s). Response fully answers the prompt, applies theory effectively, and shows original insight or thoughtful reflection. Writing is clear and concise.

Good

(B+, B, B-)

Demonstrates solid understanding of the core concept(s). Response answers the prompt and applies theory reasonably well. Some minor inaccuracies or limited depth.

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

Shows basic or partial understanding of the concept(s). Response may be superficial, incomplete, or contain minor misunderstandings.

Marginal

(D)

Shows minimal understanding of key concepts. Response is vague, off-topic, or largely descriptive. Very limited conceptual engagement.

Failure

(F)

Response demonstrates little or no understanding of the content. Off-topic, incorrect, missing, or AI-generated. Failure to meet submission requirements.

Assessment Task

Individual Reflection Paper (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Level of mastery in readings and critical thinking ability

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Demonstrates strong and accurate mastery of the selected theories/readings. Critical analysis is insightful, well-reasoned, and nuanced, clearly identifying assumptions, strengths, and limitations. Application to a real-world problem is highly appropriate and illuminating. Reflection is thoughtful and demonstrates deep learning. Writing is clear, organized, well-referenced, and academically rigorous.

Good

(B+, B, B-)

Shows solid understanding of theories/readings. Critical analysis is generally sound but may miss some nuance. Application to the problem is appropriate and coherent. Reflection shows good engagement. Writing is clear and adequately structured with proper referencing.

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

Shows basic familiarity with theories/readings but may contain inaccuracies or simplifications. Critical analysis is limited or mostly descriptive. Application to the real-world case is present but superficial. Reflection is limited. Writing and referencing are adequate but may lack clarity or depth.

Marginal

(D)

Demonstrates minimal understanding of theories/readings. Critical analysis is weak, descriptive, or flawed. Application is unclear or inappropriate. Reflection is vague or absent. Writing lacks coherence; referencing is inconsistent or incorrect.

Failure

(F)

Shows little or no understanding of the material. No critical analysis. No meaningful application or reflection. Writing is unclear, disorganized, missing or AI generated.

Assessment Task

Group Management Simulation Project (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Quality of the group's problem diagnosis, application of organizational theories, and clarity, creativity and persuasiveness in communicating well-justified managerial interventions.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Problem is clearly defined and compelling. Theories are accurately and insightfully applied. Interventions are highly relevant and well-justified. Expected effects are explained with strong, logical reasoning. Video pitch / presentation is engaging, clear, well-structured, creative and demonstrates excellent teamwork. Research design is appropriate, scientifically sound and clearly explained. Writing is polished, well-structured, and properly referenced.

Good

(B+, B, B-)

Problem is well stated. Theories applied correctly, with reasonable insight. Interventions are appropriate and justified. Reasoning behind expected effects is sound. Presentation / video pitch is clear and well-organized. Research design is realistic and clear. Writing is clear and reasonably structured.

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

Problem is somewhat clear but lacks depth / is incomplete. Theory application is basic or somewhat misapplied. Interventions are simplistic or lack strong theoretical justification. Expected effects only partially explained. Presentation / video pitch is understandable but may lack polish, structure and/or creativity. Interventions are basic Hypotheses and research design are present but underdeveloped. Writing is adequate but may lack clarity or coherence.

Marginal

(D)

Problem statement is unclear or very weak. Theories are misapplied or poorly understood. Interventions are unrealistic or insufficiently justified. Explanation of expected effects is weak. Presentation lacks clarity, organization, creativity or effective teamwork. Writing is disorganized or poorly referenced.

Failure

(F)

Little or no understanding of the problem or theories. No meaningful interventions. No reasoning. Video pitch is missing, incomplete, or shows academic integrity issues. Poor writing or missing work. Any academic integrity violation results in an F.

Assessment Task

Weekly Micro-Engagement (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Quality of conceptual understanding and application demonstrated in weekly responses.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Demonstrates clear and accurate understanding of the week's concept(s). Response fully answers the prompt, applies theory effectively, and shows original insight or thoughtful reflection. Writing is clear and concise.

Good

(B+, B)

Demonstrates solid understanding of the core concept(s). Response answers the prompt and applies theory reasonably well. Some minor inaccuracies or limited depth.

Fair

(B-)

Shows basic or partial understanding of the concept(s). Response may be superficial, incomplete, or contain minor misunderstandings.

Marginal

(C+, C)

Shows minimal understanding of key concepts. Response is vague, off-topic, or largely descriptive. Very limited conceptual engagement.

Failure

(F)

Response demonstrates little or no understanding of the content. Off-topic, incorrect, missing, or AI-generated. Failure to meet submission requirements.

Assessment Task

Individual Reflection Paper (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Level of mastery in readings and critical thinking ability

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Demonstrates strong and accurate mastery of the selected theories/readings. Critical analysis is insightful, well-reasoned, and nuanced, clearly identifying assumptions, strengths, and limitations. Application to a real-world problem is highly appropriate and illuminating. Reflection is thoughtful and demonstrates deep learning. Writing is clear, organized, well-referenced, and academically rigorous.

Good

(B+, B)

Shows solid understanding of theories/readings. Critical analysis is generally sound but may miss some nuance. Application to the problem is appropriate and coherent. Reflection shows good engagement. Writing is clear and adequately structured with proper referencing.

Fair

(B-)

Shows basic familiarity with theories/readings but may contain inaccuracies or simplifications. Critical analysis is limited or mostly descriptive. Application to the real-world case is present but superficial. Reflection is limited. Writing and referencing are adequate but may lack clarity or depth.

Marginal

(C+, C)

Demonstrates minimal understanding of theories/readings. Critical analysis is weak, descriptive, or flawed. Application is unclear or inappropriate. Reflection is vague or absent. Writing lacks coherence; referencing is inconsistent or incorrect.

Failure

(F)

Shows little or no understanding of the material. No critical analysis. No meaningful application or reflection. Writing is unclear, disorganized, missing or AI generated.

Assessment Task

Group Management Simulation Project (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Quality of the group's problem diagnosis, application of organizational theories, and clarity, creativity and persuasiveness in communicating well-justified managerial interventions.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Problem is clearly defined and compelling. Theories are accurately and insightfully applied. Interventions are highly relevant and well-justified. Expected effects are explained with strong, logical reasoning. Video pitch / presentation is engaging, clear, well-structured, creative and demonstrates excellent teamwork. Research design is appropriate, scientifically sound and clearly explained. Writing is polished, well-structured, and properly referenced.

Good

(B+, B)

Problem is well stated. Theories applied correctly, with reasonable insight. Interventions are appropriate and justified. Reasoning behind expected effects is sound. Presentation / video pitch is clear and well-organized. Research design is realistic and clear. Writing is clear and reasonably structured.

Fair

(B-)

Problem is somewhat clear but lacks depth / is incomplete. Theory application is basic or somewhat misapplied. Interventions are simplistic or lack strong theoretical justification. Expected effects only partially explained. Presentation / video pitch is understandable but may lack polish, structure and/or creativity. Interventions are basic Hypotheses and research design are present but underdeveloped. Writing is adequate but may lack clarity or coherence.

Marginal

(C+, C)

Problem statement is unclear or very weak. Theories are misapplied or poorly understood. Interventions are unrealistic or insufficiently justified. Explanation of expected effects is weak. Presentation lacks clarity, organization, creativity or effective teamwork. Writing is disorganized or poorly referenced.

Failure

(F)

Little or no understanding of the problem or theories. No meaningful interventions. No reasoning. Video pitch is missing, incomplete, or shows academic integrity issues. Poor writing or missing work. Any academic integrity violation results in an F.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

The core assumptions and historical roots of organization theories; the uniqueness of public organizations; the institutional and behavioral dimensions of public management; managerial mantra and professionalism; organizational culture and diversity; employee motivation; leadership; condition and decision making; customer-oriented bureaucracy; the interplay between political and economic factors in public-sector issues.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	See course outline

Additional Readings

Title	
1	See course outline