

PIA2308: WORKING WITH CLIENTS IN PUBLIC SERVICE

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Working with Clients in Public Service

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

2308

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

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

SA2308 Customer Service in a Diverse Society

POL2308 Customer Service in a Diverse Society

POL/PIA2308 Working with Clients in Public and Nonprofit Sectors

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to introduce students to the basics, tools, and cases of service management, with the goal of equipping them to effectively engage in hands-on innovation across a wide range of public services. Throughout the course, students will develop essential service design skills for working with clients in order to create services for the public good. To facilitate the design of value-added services, the curriculum will cover current and emerging issues in the management of public services, such as assessing service quality, fostering the participation of service users, managing administrative discretion and burdens, and handling service failure and recovery in different settings. By the end of this course, students will possess a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of public service management and will be well-prepared to apply these concepts in practice.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 DEC-A2 DEC-A3 app.)			
1	Become conversant with the key concepts, tools, and best practices of service management and the application of service-oriented strategies in different public service environments.		x		
2	Develop a deep and holistic understanding of client needs and expectations in relation to services provided by public service organizations.			x	
3	Apply practical skills and tools to engage in hands-on innovation across a wide range of public services.				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	Lectures	1, 2, 3	3 hours
2	Readings	1, 2, 3	2 hours
3	Consultations to enhance the understanding of lecture handouts and reading materials and to advise students to undertake a case study	1, 2, 3	Subject to request/need

4		A combination of individual and group work. Students are required to conduct a case study of a selected service organisation. (Students have to go through the problem-solving process and apply the concepts and theories they have learnt from this course to the case study. Moreover, they have to give recommendations on how to improve the current situation of the organization with innovative ideas and new perspectives.)	2, 3	
5		Examination	1, 2	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class Participation	1, 2	10	-	Yes
2	Individual-based Research	2	20	-	Yes
3	Group Presentation and Paper	2, 3	30	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

60

Examination (%)

40

Examination Duration (Hours)

2

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Class Participation

Criterion

The quality and quantity of participation in class discussions through providing examples, synthesizing, analyzing, appraising, and reflecting on other students' responses.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstrating very positive and proactive attitudes in class discussions, superior preparation of the essential readings before class, and very active interaction with unique ideas and insightful questions.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstrating good and positive attitudes in class discussions, good preparation of the essential readings before class, and active interaction in class with some stimulating ideas and insightful questions.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Demonstrating good attitudes in class discussions, adequate preparation of the essential readings before class, and some interaction in class but no stimulating ideas and few insightful questions.

Marginal (D)

Demonstrating non-positive attitudes in class discussions, inadequate preparation of the essential readings before class, and little interaction in class with no stimulating ideas or insightful questions.

Failure (F)

Demonstrating negative attitude in class discussions, poor preparation of the essential readings before class, and no interaction in class at all.

Assessment Task

Individual-based Research

Criterion

The ability to engage in hands-on innovation within a relevant public service in Hong Kong.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstrating a strong understanding of service management concepts and approaches with very relevant examples from Hong Kong or other jurisdictions.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstrating a good understanding of service management concepts and approaches with very relevant examples from Hong Kong or other jurisdictions.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Demonstrating an adequate understanding of service management concepts and approaches with some relevant examples from Hong Kong or other jurisdictions.

Marginal (D)

Demonstrating a limited understanding of service management concepts and approaches with few relevant examples from Hong Kong or other jurisdictions.

Failure (F)

Demonstrating a poor understanding of service management concepts and approaches with no relevant examples from Hong Kong or other jurisdictions.

Assessment Task

Group presentation

Criterion

Organization, Content, Use of Presentation Tools, Ability to Respond to Audience Questions, Style of Presenters

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent organization of the presentation, insightful content, strong ability to respond to audience questions, excellent presentation skills

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good organization of the presentation, good content, good ability to respond to audience questions, good presentation skills

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Fair organization of the presentation, adequate content, weak ability to respond to audience questions, weak presentation skills

Marginal (D)

Poor organization of the presentation, weak content, inadequate ability to respond to audience questions, very poor presentation skills

Failure (F)

Very poor organization of the presentation, inadequate content, almost no ability to respond to audience questions, almost no presentation skills

Assessment Task

Group Essay

Criterion

Main ideas, Representation of understanding and Integration, Analysis, Structure, Conventions of Standard English

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Main idea is very clearly stated; consistently represents a high level of understanding in the field and application or integration of concepts, theories, principles, policies, practices, new trends; consistently demonstrates rigorous ability to analyze and evaluate issues and concepts; organization & structure are very evident; few minor errors in sentence construction, usage, grammar, or mechanics.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Main idea is clear but topic is partially defined; overall, represents a high level of understanding in the field and application or integration of concepts, theories, principles, policies, new trends; overall, demonstrates rigorous ability to analyze and evaluate issues and concepts in the field; organization & structure are clear; there may be a few minor or major errors in sentence construction, usage, grammar, or mechanics.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Main idea is not clear enough though topic is defined; overall, represents an adequate level of understanding in the field and application or integration of concepts, theories, principles, policies, new trends; adequately demonstrates ability to analyze and evaluate issues and concepts in the field; organization & structure are mostly clear; there are some common errors (major and minor) in sentence construction and mechanics but the writer generally demonstrates a correct sense of syntax.

Marginal (D)

Main idea is unclear and topic is not clearly defined. overall, does not represent an adequate understanding in the field and application or integration of concepts, theories, principles, policies, practices, new trends; overall, weak ability to analyze and evaluate issues and concepts in the field; the organization & structure are not clear; there are numerous minor errors and some major errors. Sentence construction is below mastery and may display a pattern of errors in usage and mechanics.

Failure (F)

Main idea and topic cannot be defined; overall, represents a lack of understanding in the field and application or integration of concepts, theories, principles, policies, practices, new trends; overall, does not demonstrate the ability to analyze and evaluate issues and concepts in the field; the organization & structure must be inferred by the reader; there are many minor errors and major errors. Sentence construction is far below mastery and errors in usage and mechanics are found.

Assessment Task

Examination

Criterion

Subject knowledge and skills, Innovativeness, Analytical skills, Ability to manage the crisis in customer-driven service environment

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Knowledge and skills in the customer service & service marketing is excellently demonstrated and applied to customer service situation. Highly innovative ideas and critical attitude in analysing the customer service practice in different types of organization. Thorough analysis & excellent ability to successfully manage different crisis occurred in customer-driven service environment.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Knowledge and skills in the customer service & service marketing is fairly well demonstrated and applied to customer service situation. Fairly innovative ideas and critical attitude in analysing the customer service practice in different types of organization. Fairly good analysis and substantial effort & attempt to manage different crisis occurred in customer-driven service environment.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Knowledge and skills in the customer service & service marketing is adequately demonstrated and applied to customer service situation. Little innovative ideas and critical attitude in analysing the customer service practice in different types of organization. General understanding and effort & ability to manage different crisis occurred in customer-driven service environment.

Marginal (D)

Only limited knowledge and skills in the customer service & service marketing is demonstrated and applied to customer service situation. Very little innovative ideas and critical attitude in analysing the customer service practice in different types of organization. Superficial understanding and insufficient effort & ability to manage different crisis occurred in customer-driven service environment.

Failure (F)

Knowledge and skills in the customer service & service marketing cannot be demonstrated and applied to customer service situation. No innovative idea and critical attitude in analysing the customer service practice in different types of organization. Inaccurate understanding and no effort & attempt to trial for managing different crisis occurred in customer-driven service environment.

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

public service, service management, service design, design thinking, administrative burden, administrative discretion, service quality, service failure, service recovery.

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

Title	
1	Stickdorn, M., Hormess, M. E., Lawrence, A., & Schneider, J. (2018). This is service design doing: Applying service design thinking in the real world. O'Reilly Media, Inc

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Efficiency Unit, HKSAR Government. 2008. Customer Service in the Delivery of Public Services: International Experience. Hong Kong: Government Logistics Department.

2	Hirschman, A. O. (1970). <i>Exit, voice, and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states</i> (Vol. 25). Harvard university press.
3	Hong Kong Association for Customer Service Excellence. 2001. <i>A Practical Guide to Delivering Excellent Customer Service</i> (3). Hong Kong: HKACSE. http://www.hkace.com.hk/files/publication_detail/hkace_publication%20-%203.pdf3 .
4	Hong Kong Association for Customer Service Excellence. 2002. <i>A Practical Guide to Satisfying Customers in Service Recovery</i> (1). Hong Kong: HKACSE. http://www.hkace.com.hk/files/publication_detail/hkace_publication%20-%201.pdf
5	Hong Kong Association for Customer Service Excellence. 2003. <i>Development of People Competencies for Customer Service Excellence</i> (4). Hong Kong: HKACSE. http://www.hkace.com.hk/files/publication_detail/hkace_publication%20-%204.pdf
6	Hong Kong Association for Customer Service Excellence. 2003. <i>EQ and Communication</i> (5). Hong Kong: HKACSE. http://www.hkace.com.hk/files/publication_detail/hkace_publication%20-%205.pdf
7	Hong Kong Association for Customer Service Excellence. 2007. <i>Challenges to Achieving Service Excellence</i> (12). Hong Kong: HKACSE. http://www.hkace.com.hk/files/publication_detail/hkace_publication%20-%2012.pdf
8	Hsieh, C. W. (2014). Burnout among public service workers: The role of emotional labor requirements and job resources. <i>Review of Public Personnel Administration</i> , 34(4), 379-402.
9	James, O. (2009). Evaluating the expectations disconfirmation and expectations anchoring approaches to citizen satisfaction with local public services. <i>Journal of public administration research and theory</i> , 19(1), 107-123.
10	McCull-Kennedy, J. R., Daus, C. S., & Sparks, B. A. (2003). The role of gender in reactions to service failure and recovery. <i>Journal of Service Research</i> , 6(1), 66-82.
11	Smith, A. K., Bolton, R. N., & Wagner, J. (1999). A model of customer satisfaction with service encounters involving failure and recovery. <i>Journal of marketing research</i> , 36(3), 356-372.
12	Van de Walle, S. (2016). When public services fail: a research agenda on public service failure. <i>Journal of Service Management</i> .
13	Yap, K. B., & Sweeney, J. C. (2007). Zone - of - tolerance moderates the service quality - outcome relationship. <i>Journal of services marketing</i> .
14	Babin, B. J., & Harris, E. G. (2016). <i>CB: Consumer Behavior</i> . (Student edition 7.). Cengage Learning.
15	Brandsen, T., Steen, T., & Verschuere, B. (2018). <i>Co-production and co-creation: Engaging citizens in public services</i> (T. Brandsen, T. Steen, & B. Verschuere, Eds.). Routledge.
16	Denhardt, J. V., & Denhardt, R. B. (2015). <i>The new public service: Serving, not steering</i> . Routledge.
17	Guy, M., Newman, M., & Mastracci, S. (2008). <i>Emotional labor: Putting the service in public service</i> . Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.
18	Herd, P., & Moynihan, D. P. (2018). <i>Administrative Burden Policymaking by Other Means</i> . Russell Sage Foundation
19	Lipsky, M. (1980). <i>Street-level bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the individual in public services</i> . New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
20	Oliver, R. (2010). <i>Satisfaction: A behavioral perspective on the consumer</i> (2nd ed.). Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.