PA895 Performance Management
Spring Semester 2016

Instructor: Donald P. Moynihan
Time: Wednesday 9.00-10.55am
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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Objectives
How societies govern – what goals they set, and how they seek to achieve those goals – has become increasingly tied to the use of managerial techniques that are broadly understood as performance management. These techniques include strategic planning, measuring performance data, and using that data to reorganize public services or contract with private or nonprofit actors.

This class treats performance management as a tool applied in a democratic context with dynamic effects. What does this mean? The class will explain what the tool of performance management is, and what it is intended to do. We will examine how this tool interacts with the democratic context of the public sector, where performance is the subject of political disagreement, and where multiple values compete with performance for attention. The class will also consider the dynamic effects of performance management by examining how it changes the behavior of public officials, for good or for ill.

The course balances and academic and practical perspective, with guest speakers, and case studies providing a sense of how performance management is actually implemented. In some classes we will look at the politics of performance management, in some cases we will look at particular techniques, and sometimes look at empirical evidence of how these processes work in practice. Students will also be asked to write a paper on performance management in a particular organization or policy.

Readings

The rest of the course readings will be a series of book chapters and articles which are available on Learn@UW. Materials not on Learn@UW (including some cases) will be distributed in hardcopy. I may add some additional readings during the semester that seem salient to the topic and there will occasionally be links to readings directly in the syllabus.

Course Requirements
Students will need to fulfill the following requirements:
1. Complete all reading assignments. Come to class with questions/comments to ask of the instructor and fellow students. Class sessions will not summarize the reading but rather
will provide the larger systemic context, integrate the materials and explore the implications of the readings.

2. Participate in class discussion. This means actively engaging in discussions of the reading and the cases. For all classes student participation will be a major component. In particular, any class with a case study assigned will focus on student debate of the case. To participate, you will need to be in class, so please let me know in advance if you cannot attend. For each class I will assign a number of class discussion questions that we will engage in during class. When you read your readings, keep the questions in mind, and keep notes. Come to class prepared to discuss these questions. Note that 5% of your grade will be assigned to participation, enough to move you between grades.

3. Complete grading requirements on time. Case memos must be submitted by the beginning of the class on the day the case is assigned in the syllabus. Email me all work as a Word document.

Cases
There will be a number of cases memos scattered throughout the class. The goal of the case studies is to improve your ability to think about a complex scenario, and write a short and concise analysis of this situation. Some of the memos will use hypothetical case studies. Some of the memos will require you to look at a real professional situation. For instance, on project will require students to compare, assess and rank the performance information of five state governments in the same functional area. The memos should display a critical analysis of the main issues of the case, not a summary.

A typical teaching case tells a story (that is, something happened, then something else happened, then something else happened, and so on) about a problem or issue facing a public manager and brings the reader to a point at which a decision must be made. A good way to get to the heart of a case is to try and summarize the story in case in one sentence. You may be asked for such summaries during case discussions.

A quality of a good teaching case is that there is no obvious right answer. Rather, there are many possible answers (decisions, solutions), each of which has advantages and disadvantages and about which reasonable people may disagree. You will be asked to make a good argument for the answer that you believe is the best one. Each case is intended to force a decision of some kind, and if you complete a memo without making some sort of recommendation you will lose points. You must take account of the pros and cons of the approach you are recommending, supporting your answer with evidence from the case and theoretical insights from the readings. Good arguments usually require a close and insightful reading of the case.

Case discussions will generally focus on the actions or problems of public managers in the case as they are caused or influenced by contextual (structural or institutional) factors. You may be asked, “What would you do (and why)?” You may be asked to play the roles of actors in the case, and there may be brief, spontaneous, in-class “role plays.” You should take this role playing (that is, the issues facing the actors in the case) seriously, but it is OK to have some fun with it.

To prepare for a case discussion, read the case and answer the following questions:
• Who is the decision maker? What decision is to be made?
• What are the decision maker’s objectives?
• Are there other important actors?
• What are their objectives?
• What are the key issues (matters of fact or assumption that must be resolved in reaching a decision)?
• What is the context (constraints/opportunities)?
• What alternatives should the decision maker consider?
• What would you do, and why?

Grading the Cases
My way of scoring the memos is that everyone starts with a maximum score, and I mark down where I observe a serious problem. The overall criterion is whether you make a strong and clear argument. A strong argument requires the use of evidence where possible, including theory and evidence from course readings, logical claims that are persuasively presented, an ability to meet counter-claims. More specifically, here are the major items I look for:

• Does it cover the major points? Or is there some major aspect of the case you overlooked? In practice, this means that you should deal with the central issue of the case, and when making a recommendation, demonstrate awareness of arguments against your point of view.

• Is there a significant flaw in the logic of your argument? If I think the flaw is so bad as to lead you to offer bad advice, the penalty is doubled.

• If you present the right conclusions, but do not support them with the level of analysis or detail to be really persuasive.

Any of the above failings will usually see you lose a point or more on a memo. Style, and basic errors will be included as considerations if you are on the borderline between a grade, unless they actually weaken your ability to deliver a coherent memo, in which case they will be counted for more. If you failed to fundamentally understand or answer the assignment question you are looking at a possible fail.

The syllabus includes instructions for each memo. You may use single space (unless otherwise specified), 12-font and one inch margins. Your memo should be no longer than a page (not including endnotes or references). In drawing on materials to use you should look for support from the readings assigned for that topic, and other readings in the course. If you wish to look on the web for additional resources and arguments, by all means do so, but always cite any external source for quotation, fact, idea, etc.

Supplementary readings:
To facilitate discussion and learning, students will sign up to be discussion leaders. Sign up is by lottery on the first day of class. You should plan to work on this project for at least a couple of weeks before the scheduled presentation.
The discussion leader will be responsible for completing a supplemental reading, and presenting this to the class with a partner. The presentation should be about 10 minutes, and anticipate another 5 minutes for questions, discussion.

In presenting the reading, identify what you think the core point(s) is, and how you think it relates to the topic of the class, and how it might be presented. This sort of discussions will move you beyond a straightforward summary of the topic. As a general matter, focus on the overall content and conclusions within the articles instead of the critiquing the specific methodologies employed.

Assume your classmates will not have read the supplementary readings; thus, it is your job to provide the key management concepts from these readings. You have the option of using PowerPoint, but think seriously about whether it is the best medium to convey your essential point. If you use powerpoint, no more than 5 slides, and email to the Professor at least an hour beforehand. You should also create a one to two-page summary each of the supplementary readings, which you and your classmates will use as a reference. Consistent with the electronic nature of distribution, please email to the class at least 24 hours before class. Make sure to include the full reference for the article on the memo.

One tip on writing style for the summary: resist the temptation to rely on bullet points as a means of summary. It’s a lazy approach that leads to a type of shorthand writing that can be opaque. As with all of your written work, utilize fully developed sentences that form coherent paragraphs.

Ensure that you relate the reading to the topic of the day. (If you are having trouble finding these connections, come and talk to me). To stimulate discussion you may, for instance, use a set of discussion questions, group work, or a class activity that complements the readings. I encourage you to be energetic and to be engaged with the materials. Creativity is encouraged.

**Class Paper**

The class paper is the major research component of the class. In this assignment, the student will be expected to undertake an applied analysis or task in a public or nonprofit agency that has some practical dimension. The subject of the topic, research strategy, and structure and content of the paper should be decided in consultation with the Professor through a series of meetings throughout the semester. I am happy to meet with you as frequently as needed to put together a project you can be proud of.

*What are class projects like?*

This will be a semester-long project and you should start as soon as possible. Within the first couple of weeks you will be assigned to a group, and matched with a client project. There will be short descriptions of the projects developed by clients. Treating the organization as a client means providing a copy of the final paper to the client, and being receptive to their requests (such as the nature of the research questions you pursue, a desire to see drafts, a presentation of your analysis to members of their organization).
To maintain incentives for respectful interaction and shared responsibility I will ask the team members to anonymously evaluate one another at the conclusion of the semester. Failure to behave as a responsible team member will mean the loss of up to one letter grade.

_How long is the paper?_
Suggested length is 20-30 double-space pages, not including appendixes and citations, but students may produce a longer paper with the Professor’s permission. The paper should demonstrate the application of the different topics covered throughout the course. The paper will be due on May 9th at 9am. All final papers will be presented to the class on May 4th.

_Prospectus_
On Feb 17th send me a 1 page memo updating me on progress for the final paper, your schedule for completing tasks, and any questions you may have. At this point you should have met the client and fleshed out the project. This would be a good time to schedule a meeting with me to talk about the project.

_Use Theory!
_The most frequent mistake that students make with their final paper is that they write very good descriptive accounts of the organization they are studying but neglect to apply theory from the class readings or other sources. Theory provides a means to explain and generalize what you find, so that you can generate lessons beyond one specific case. Think about how theory matters to your project. In some cases, you may develop findings that challenge existing theory or raise new questions. Think about which theories apply to your case, present them in the paper, and explain what sort of analytical pay-off they provide. In other cases, the client might want a specific product, and you might think about structuring a separate note on theory that frames the practical work._

_Grading_
The grading for the class will be made up of case memos (4x10% = 40%), a supplemental reading (15%), participation (10%), and your final paper (35%).

_Grading Standard:_

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_Academic Integrity_
Failure to cite, or otherwise present written material prepared by others as your own work, will be considered plagiarism and treated accordingly. As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one’s own ideas, the words, writings, music, graphs/charts, etc that were created by another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you have the permission of that
person. It does not matter from where the material is borrowed—a book, article, material off the
web, another student’s paper—all constitute plagiarism unless the source of the work is fully
identified and credited. Plagiarism is cheating and a violation of academic and personal integrity
and will not be tolerated. It carries extremely serious consequences. To avoid plagiarism it is
necessary when using a phrase, a distinctive idea, concept or sentence from another source to
reference that source in your text, a footnote, or endnote. I reserve the right to use search tools
such as turnitin.com to examine student’s work for plagiarism. By turning in memos and papers
you will be giving me your permission to examine that work for plagiarism. Please note that
unless otherwise explicitly specified all of the assignments are intended to be completed by
individual students, without aid from other members of the class.

American with Disabilities Act
The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides
comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this
legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that
provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability
requiring accommodation, please advise the instructor
1/20 Understanding our Need for Performance Management

Readings:
Hatry, Chapter 1-4


Class Discussion Questions:
• What does performance mean?
• Why do we need performance management in the public sector?
• What assumptions underpin performance management in the readings presented?

Online resource: Some of you might be interested in joining a listserv of academics/practitioners that deals with practical performance management issues they encounter. To join, go to: https://email.rutgers.edu/mailman/listinfo/ppmrn_listserv A website that provides a host of practitioner-oriented materials on performance management is here: http://spaa.newark.rutgers.edu/ppmrn

Additional Readings: How to write a good memo
Electronic Hallways Materials: Memo Writing,
Brief Guidelines for Writing Action Memos,
Writing Effective Memos.

1/27 State Level: Adopting Reforms

Readings
Hatry 5-7


Class discussion questions:
• The Moynihan (2006) paper argues that US states have only half completed the job of implementing the New Public Management recipe for successful organizations. Should the US states pursue the other half of the reform equation, or are there reasons to believe that would be a mistake?
• What does the Berry et al piece on Florida tell us about how legislators work with new performance management systems?

_Supplemental reading:_


2/3 Federal Level

_Readings:_


Performance management chapter FY 2016:  

A) describe what you consider to be the most important management factor for the success of GPRA in the SSA, and b) consider the extent to which the SSA lessons are transferable, or the extent to which they are particular to that agency.

Go to the federal website performance.gov Pick out either an agency priority goal or a cross agency priority goal. Be ready to talk about it in class.

Supplemental


2/10 Organizational Learning
Arygris, Chris and Donald Schon, chapter 1, _What Is An Organization That It May Learn?_
Partnership for Public Service, *From Data to Decisions II: Building and Analytics Culture*


*Supplemental reading:*


*Class discussion question:*
- Why is performance information used so rarely in decisions, and is it possible to encourage increased use?
- How can agencies make performance data more useful?
- What can organizational learning teach us about performance management?
- What barriers limit organizational learning? Are such barriers more common in the public/nonprofit sector?

2/17 *Nonprofit Perspective*


*Supplemental readings*


*Online resource:*

The Urban Institute’s *Building a Common Outcome Framework to Measure Nonprofit Performance* provides guidance on how to measure nonprofit performance: http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411404_Nonprofit_Performance.pdf
The United Way has been perhaps the most influential actor in pushing nonprofits to report standardized outcome measures. A more detailed guide, authored for the United Way by Hatry et al can be found here: http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Professional_Development/Accreditation/COAPRT/Measuring_Program_Outcomes-UW.pdf

Final paper prospectus due

2/24 Performance Rankings, Scorecards an Value Added Modeling


Supplemental readings:


More information on value-added Research Center
https://www.youtube.com/user/VARCValueAdded

Take a look at the LA Times publication of teacher ratings in Los Angeles http://projects.latimes.com/value-added/. Is this a good idea?
3/2 The Stat Approach
Guest speakers: Becca Schwe, Department of Children and Families, Mark Nicolini, City of Milwaukee

Hatry, Chapter 8-12, 14


Behn, Bob. Ch 1 and Ch16 The PerformanceStat Potential

*Supplemental Reading*


Class questions:
Is the agency you are studying using performance information? If so, by what means? If not, what specific tactics recommended by Hatry might they usefully employ?

*Online resource:*
The state version for Maryland can be found here: [http://www.statestat.maryland.gov/](http://www.statestat.maryland.gov/), and a summary of this approach can be found here: [http://www.governing.com/article/stat-governor](http://www.governing.com/article/stat-governor)

*Case Due: Compstat Case*
The key question for the case, and for all the readings, is how to facilitate the use of performance information in decision-making. Prepare a memo on the NYC Compstat case. First, briefly identify what you consider the factors behind the success of Compstat. Second, consider whether this model can be adopted by other organizations, and what changes may be required. You may want to employ observations from the readings from this week and last week where you see them as relevant to the Compstat case.

3/9 Motivation and Leadership


**Supplemental reading:**


Case Due:
Holding Teachers Responsible for Failing Schools: The Battle Over Education Reform in Central Falls, Rhode Island
How is performance data used in this case to facilitate change? Is the approach of Commissioner Gist and Superintendent Gallo a model for other education officials to follow?

**3/16 Lean, Social Impact Bonds, Behavioral Insights**
**Guest speaker: Kevin Vesperman, Department of Administration**


Behavioral Insights Team. *Test, Learn, Adapt.*

Behavioral Science Insights and Federal Forms:

**Supplemental Reading**
OMB Social and Behavioral Science Team Annual Report

**3/23 Spring Break**
3/30 Performance Management and Contracting


*Supplemental reading:*


4/6 Perverse Use of Performance Data
Hatry, chapter 16


Rachel Aviv. 2014. The Wrong Answer. The New Yorker

*Case Due: Schools and Perverse Use of Data*
Basing your answers on either one or all of the cities discussed, describe:

- The incentive structure that caused the problems to occur
- Potential solutions to eliminate these problems in the future

Write from the position as an education analyst in the federal Department of Education, and address your memo to Secretary Duncan, head of the Department of Education. Your memo should not exceed one page.
Class discussion questions:

- Identify three ways in which performance measures negatively impact the incentives and behavior of public officials.
- Is it possible to have a performance management system that holds people accountable, but also encourages genuine performance?

Supplemental readings:


4/13 Performance Management as Storytelling

Class does not meet, instead watch:

PIC Summit Playlist on GSA

YouTube https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvdwyPgXnxxVfj0MIbNuH2XCt5noUcFA9

Summit storified https://storify.com/wykipite/the-power-of-story-give-voice-to-data


Class question: How would you present performance data as narratives in a way that is memorable and understandable?

4/20 Cognitive Biases in Performance Management

Hatry, chapter 15


Crazy Supplemental Reading Day!
Supplemental readings:


**4/27 Performance Management and Democratic Values**


Supplemental


Class discussion questions

- What values should performance systems reflect?
- What role should we expect citizens to play in performance systems? Are our expectations realistic?

Case: *This American Life* The Right to Remain Silent, Part 2
http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/414/right-to-remain-silent

Write a memo to the Mayor of New York. Has Compstat been worth it? Should it continue?

Online resource: There is also a story on the case described in the audio case here:
http://www.villagevoice.com/content/printVersion/1797847/ and a blog updating the fallout from the case here: http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninsscared/the_nypd_tapes/
Some student presentations as necessary

5/4 Student Presentations