



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

Public management

PROF. EUGENIO ANESSI PESSINA

Course aims and intended learning outcomes

The course will introduce students to the basic principles and recent developments in the field of public administration and management. The public sector is a crucial component of the economy and public management has changed enormously in recent years as a result of reform initiatives in many countries. Therefore, the course will cover the fundamentals of public administration and management; it will then examine both empirical developments and new theories of public management from an international perspective.

By the end of the course, students will:

- reach a better understanding of both public administration and management as a field of study and of the environment of public-sector organisations;
- be knowledgeable about the fundamentals of public administration and management, with specific respect to the foundations, features, and limitations of both traditional public administration and new public management;
- be knowledgeable about the recent theoretical and empirical developments that have emerged as a reaction to the limitations of new public management;
- understand how managerial practices and techniques can drive behaviours and decision making in public-sector organisations;
- understand how to effectively design and implement managerial solutions in public-sector organisations, taking into due account the peculiar goals and features of such organisations;
- be able to identify public management issues, outline possible responses, and identify the main advantages and disadvantages of each potential response;
- be familiar with basic public administration and management terminology;
- be able to communicate the results of their analyses;
- have acquired the learning skills to undertake further studies in public administration and management with some degree of autonomy.

Course content

Theories and logics

- Taxonomy of public sector activities and organisations.
- The traditional model of public administration.
- The role of government and the nature of public management.
- Public and private management: Definitions and implications.
- New public management: privatisation, decentralisation, managerialism.
- Post NPM: Public governance, Public value, Whole of government, Neo-Weberianism.

Developments and emerging practices

- Introduction to policy analysis and program evaluation.
- Strategic management.
- Organisational design.
- Management control and performance management.
- Personnel management.
- Financial management and accounting.

Conclusions: Accountability in public-sector organisations.



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Reading list

HUGHES-E. OWEN, Public management and administration: An introduction, Palgrave, New York, 2017 (5th ed.) (ISBN: 978-1-137-56007-0).

Further readings and case studies will be posted on Blackboard or will be available through library resources.

Teaching method

Teaching methods include formal lectures as well as the discussion of cases and exercises. Students will be expected to study all assigned materials and to complete specific homework assignments prior to each class meeting.

The instructor will normally devote a part of each class period to the discussion of the homework assignments and of other selected items from the course materials. The objective of these discussions is to clarify and elaborate on certain items because of their special relevance or difficulty.

Class participation is recommended. In particular, students are encouraged to ask questions and to request that particular points be explained in more detail if they remain confused or uncertain about specific items.

Assessment method and criteria

Grading will be based on written tests.

More specifically, students are expected to take a mid-term test and an end-term test, respectively covering the first and the second parts of the course and each counting for 50% against the final grade. The mid-term test will be offered only once. The end-term test will be offered twice, but it can only be taken once. Students who (i) choose not to take these tests, (ii) fail at least one of these tests, or (iii) choose to retake the exam despite passing both tests, will be offered a written comprehensive final exam according to the official exam schedule.

All exams (be they mid-term, end-term, or comprehensive) are composed of essay questions and exercises. Essay questions are useful to assess the students' overall understanding of public administration and management; their knowledge of the fundamentals of both traditional public administration and new public management; their awareness of the recent theoretical and empirical developments that have emerged as a reaction to the limitations of new public management; their understanding of the use of managerial practices and techniques to drive behaviours; their ability to identify public management issues and to outline and assess possible responses; and their command of terminology. Exercises are intended to test the students' ability to effectively design and implement managerial solutions in public-sector organisations.

The final grade achieved in the written exams may be improved by voluntarily taking the lead in the preparation and discussion of homework assignments, consisting of case studies and exercises. These assignments are intended to improve the students' ability to identify public management issues, outline and assess possible responses, and effectively design and implement managerial solutions in public-sector organisations, as well as to strengthen their written and oral communication skills. Volunteering students will hand in a written report at least 24 hours before class; in class, they will then lead their classmates in the plenary discussion of the assignment. For this activity, these students will receive an overall score ranging from -3 to +3 depending on the quantity and quality of their work. This score will be added to the grade achieved in the written exam(s) to produce the final grade for the course.