Overview

Effective policy analysis and implementation often depend on understanding cultures, organizations and technologies and how they interact with one another. Whether considering the culture of political groups, military or business organizations, religions, the old or the young, farm or non-farm, or any other differentiation scheme, significant issues are involved. Failing to take note of cultural aspects in societies can cause even the most carefully crafted public policy plans to fail. This course aims to provide insights and skills to assess and understand such failures, and also to determine preconditions for success. We focus on the role of culture in the context of groups, organizations and societies together with culture-related economic and technological processes at several levels of impact: organizational, regional, national and international. The course also emphasizes the culture of teams and team approaches to learning.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes—Knowledge and Understanding

Overall course objectives include greater competence in these areas:

- Understanding how policy questions are framed in the context of cultural considerations
- Observing and describing the manifestations of culture at micro and macro levels through blogs, news stories, analyses, reports, etc. (samples of a few well-known policy blogs are provided at the end of this syllabus)
- Observing and describing the interrelated roles of technology and culture in a global context
- Clarifying the role of culture as it relates to the practice of leadership in a technological age
- Identifying both cultural enablers and barriers in the context of effective policy development and program implementation
- Examining some of the tools used to measure cultural issues, like polling, interviewing and other assessment techniques
- Learning other culture-related skills like leveraging high performance teams, recognizing and evaluating culture-related statistics, etc.
• Using teaming and class participation to sharpen understanding of culture’s role in public policy analysis
• Taking note of popular culture interpretations, like Gladwell’s The Tipping Point and others

Assignments, Grades and Examinations

There are three main requirements for the course: focused written assignments, a final exam (take home), and extensive participation in class discussions, presentations and projects.

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Four written assignments</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final examination (take home)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly class discussions and individual/team projects</td>
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Written assignments (35%) there will be four written assignments, each requiring about 700 or more words plus appropriate diagrams or footnotes, as needed. These assignments will be given by the instructor about every three weeks. See detailed requirements for submission of written work at end of this syllabus.

The final examination (25%) will be a take-home test of four or five questions. It will be distributed in early November and will require about 10-12 hours of your time to be completed successfully.

Class discussion and team projects (40%)

Class presentation (20%) An individual or team presentation will cover a segment of the course reading assignments. The presentation should be carefully prepared and demonstrate good understanding of the material and should be aimed at stimulating discussion by the rest of the class. The instructor will develop a schedule for the presentations early in the course.

Class participation (20%) This covers all aspects of interaction from the first class to the last, like actively joining in class discussions, emails, required weekly culture-related snippets from the media and other activities.

Missed class sessions Missing class is discouraged but sometimes is necessary. More than two absences can impact the final grade. Please talk to the instructor if you must miss a class and work out with him an assignment to demonstrate that you have done the required readings for the week. Normal procedure is a 500-600 word summary of assigned weekly readings for the missed class.

Required Textbooks

Lawrence Harrison and Samuel Huntington, Culture Matters-How Values Shape Human Progress (CM) (Basic Books, 2000), paperback
Edgar Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership, 3rd edition (OCL)* (Jossey-Bass, 2004), paperback


**Optional Reading**

Murphy, Cullen *Are We Rome?* (Houghton Mifflin, 2007), paperback


Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat -- A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century Release 3.0*


Steven D. Levitt, and Steven D. Debnar, *Freakonomics*, (Morrow, 2005)


Read, Herbert, *To Hell With Culture* (Schocken Books, 1963)

Gladwell, Malcolm, *Outliers* (Little Brown, 2009), paperback


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**Class Schedule** (Note: some weeks there may be an additional handout or URL added to the reading assignment)

**September 2 Week 1:** Read CM 1 (Landes); watch streaming lecture “Culture: an International and Organizational Perspective” (2007) or “Technology, Telecommuting and Culture” (2008) at http://www.gmutv.gmu.edu/ruthlectures.asp

**Lecture Topics:** Definitions of culture; introduction to class texts and topics; several views of culture; Daniel Moynihan’s perspective; approaches to class presentations

**Skills:** Story-telling; culture narratives

**Other:** Individual culture narratives; class discussion
September 9 Week 2: Read CM 2 (Porter), 3 (Sachs), 22 (Harrison); read OCL Chapters 1-4
Lecture Topics: OC concepts, levels and cases; basic elements of change; artifacts, beliefs and assumptions; formation of groups; dependency theory; the “growth puzzle”; comparative vs. competitive advantage; clusters of productivity
Skills: Habits and culture of successful researchers and analysts
Cultural focus: Understanding cultural data
Other: Class discussion of assigned readings and snippets

September 16 Week 3: Read CM 4 (Grandona), 5 (Montaner); read OCL Chapters 5-7;
Lecture Topics: Cultural typologies; development-resistant cultures; behavior of elites; OC assumptions concerning external adaptation and internal integration; Weber’s “Protestant Ethic”; the blog culture; class CD discussed and distributed
Skills: Organizational and cultural observation and analysis
Cultural focus: Political cultures; culture in Latin America
Other: Class discussion of assigned readings and snippets; Team 1 discusses CM 4 (Grandona); review class blog list

September 23 Week 4: Read ES; read CM 9 (Lipset/Lenz), 12 (Shweder, including especially afternotes); Read OCL Chapters 8-9
Lecture Topics: Ethnographic studies; OC assumptions about time/space and human nature; Heclo on “Is America a Christian nation?” (class handout)
Skills: Open-ended interviewing; ethnographic analysis
Cultural focus: Religion and culture
Other: Class discussion of assigned readings and snippets; Team 2 discusses CM 9 (Lipset/Lenz); Team 3 discusses CM 5 (Montaner)

September 30 Week 5: Read CM 6 (Etounga-Manguelle) and 8 (Fukuyama); read OCL Chapters 10-11; skim GGS Part 1; watch “Creating Customer-Centric Cultures: Lessons From High-Performance Organizations” by Dr. Rohit Deshpandé, Harvard Business School Faculty Seminar
Cultural focus: Family culture; culture in Africa
Other Written assignment 1 (of 4) due; Team 4 discusses CM 8 (Fukuyama) or CM 22 (Harrison)

October 7 Week 6: Read CM 17 (Perkins); 18 (Pye); and 19 (Wei-Ming); skim GGS Part 2; read OCL Chapters 12-13; read Watts, Duncan. “Decentralized Intelligence: What Toyota Can Teach the 9/11 Commission about Intelligence Gathering,” (Available at: http://slate.msn.com/id/2104808)
Lecture Topics: Creating, embedding and transmitting OC; linking technology to culture (and vice versa); leadership’s role in OC; assessing traditional beliefs; Yali’s question; creating customer-centric cultures
Cultural focus: Culture in Asia
Skills: Polling and questionnaire development (CD tutorial by Dr. Mayer and Dr Marsh); organizational and cultural audits; blogs and bloggers—a new culture?
Other: Class discussion of assigned readings and snippets; Team 5 discusses CM 17 (Perkins) or CM 18 or 19 (Pye or Wei-Ming); Team 6 discusses Deshpande

**October 14th Week 7: read CM 7 (Inglehart), 13 (Crosette) and 10 (Edgerton); skim selections from HDR; Skim Parts 1-4 of TP; Watch streaming lectures “Telework and Technology” (2008) or “SPQR to ‘Power to the People’--20 Centuries of Analysis” (2003) at http://www.gmutv.gmu.edu/ruthlectures.asp
Other: Review tutorials on polling and questionnaire development (on class CD)

October 21 Week 8: Read CM 14 (Htun); skim GGS Part 3; read OCL Chapter 14; skim Parts 4-8 of TP; readings from WDR 2010 (including gender equality index)
Lecture Topics: Geography and culture; differentiation in OC; food production and culture; moral maps; collective wisdom; wisdom of crowds; cultural adaptations
Skills: Social network analysis; conducting ethnographic surveys
Cultural focus: Globalization and culture; culture of Europe; governmental and institutional cultures
Other: Class discussion of assigned readings and snippets; Team 7 discusses CM 7 (Inglehart); Continue review of CD tutorials on polling and questionnaire development; Assignment 2 (of 4) paper is due

October 28 Week 9: Read CM essay 22 (Harrison), 15 (Patterson); read OCL Chapter 15
Lecture Topics: Cultural issues among American minorities; disaggregating culture; cyberteam approaches; contagiousness, big effects and gradual change (from TP); leadership and cultural change
Cultural focus: Business culture
Other: Class discussion of assigned readings, Team 8 discusses topic to be selected; Class discussion of assigned readings and snippets

November 4 Week 10: Read CM 20 (Fairbanks) and CM 12 (Scweder); Watch streaming lecture at http://www.gmutv.gmu.edu/ruthlectures.asp “Overview of Knowledge Management”; read OCL Chapter 16
Lecture Topics: GGS review.; mavens, connectors and salesmen (from TP); managed cultural change; knowledge management as a cultural change agent
Cultural focus: Education
Skills: Risk assessment and scenario planning in a cultural context
Other: Class discussion of assigned readings, Team 9 discusses TP; Team 10 discusses topic to be selected; final examination (take home) distributed; written assignment 3 (of 4) due

Lecture Topics: Cultural statistics in context, knowledge cultures; mavens, connectors and salesmen (from TP); managed cultural change
Cultural focus: Organizational development and knowledge management—the connection
Skills: Changing culture in high performance organizations
Other: Class discussion of assigned readings, Team 11 discusses CM 20 (Fairbanks) or CM 12 (Schweder) or topic to be selected

**November 18 Week 12; Watch** one of the following streaming CD lectures at http://www.gmutv.gmu.edu/ruthlectures.asp “Researching Complicated Topics---A Cultural Perspective” (2008), or “Teams, Cyberteams and Productivity---Does Culture Matter?” (2008)

November 25—Week 13: University Holiday—No assignments

December 2 Week 14: read CM essay 11 (Weisner); read OCL Chapter 18
Lecture Topics: Failed states and culture; social networks; OC case studies; leveraging KM and virtual teams; teamwork in public policy negotiation; internalizing high-level goals;
Skills: Doing an on-site OC intervention
Other: Class discussion of assigned readings and snippets; written assignment 4 (of 4) due; Team 12 discusses topic to be selected

December 9 Week 15 (last class meeting): read OCL Chapters 19-20
Lecture Topics: Teamwork models—Drexler-Sibbet, etc; learning cultures and learning leaders; course review and synthesis
Other: Class discussion of assigned readings and snippets

December 18 Final examination (take home) due

** Indicates no class session. Several on-line streaming video lectures and other autodidact materials are assigned. See discussion below on autodidact approaches

Grading: The grade of A or A minus is reserved for a very high level of achievement in analysis and writing; B and B plus grades indicate good mastery of the material and excellent mastery of assigned writing. Grades of B minus and below indicate incomplete achievement of an assignment’s requirements. On a 100% scale, A is equal to 95%, B 85%, C 75%

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Autodidact Approaches in this Course--Exchanging some class time for technology and other interventions This course takes advantage of well-documented findings about university teaching, particularly the technique called “blended learning”. Many students, especially those who have full-time jobs, appear to be quite willing to exchange a portion of on-campus class hours for assignments that can be completed in other locations, like home or office. Studies indicate that it is possible for a student to learn as much or more in many courses if the traditional 45-48 hours per semester of "face time" in class with an instructor (contact hours) are partially replaced with specially designed assignments that do not require face-to-face meeting. This work can be more independent, discovery-oriented and difficult, but, if planned properly, can replace some contact hours. By experimenting with this concept in close to a dozen courses, we have found that many students enthusiastically support the approach--as long as close contact with the instructor and class colleagues is maintained throughout and the content is challenging and in the mainstream of the subject involved. In this course there will be two normal class meetings that will use this autodidact intervention. They are designated by double asterisks on the schedule above.

Ethical Conduct--GMU Honor Code GMU shares in the tradition of an honor system that has existed in Virginia colleges since 1842. The Honor Code is an integral part of university life. Students are responsible for understanding the provisions of the code. In the spirit of the code, a student's word is a declaration of good faith acceptable as truth in all academic matters. Therefore, attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing of academic work and related work constitute Honor Code violations. All work must be your own. Inappropriate use of the work of others without attribution is plagiarism and a George Mason University Honor Code violation punishable by expulsion from the University. All students should familiarize themselves with this honor code provision (http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html). To guard against plagiarism and to treat students equitably, written work may be checked against existing published materials or digital data bases available through various plagiarism detection services. Accordingly materials submitted to all courses must be available in electronic format.

SPP Policy on Plagiarism--The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the School of Public Policy. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable. Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.
The faculty of the School of Public Policy takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F.” This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (e.g., F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the SPP policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The SPP policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it. (http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html). See also the university’s academic policy web site at http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/.  

Disability Accommodation If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see instructor and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

"New Voices in Public Policy:" Instructor will consider nominating the very best papers in this course for publication in New Voices in Public Policy. New Voices is a student- and faculty-reviewed journal that shares SPP's finest student work with the rest of the world

Importance of Good Writing Skills. Students in this course will be expected to do several short writing assignments, a normal requirement in graduate courses in public policy. From the outset, the highest standard of writing will be expected. Here are some of the criteria that will be used to measure submitted written work:

- Quality of Content: analytical clarity/persuasiveness; objectivity; quality of source material; use of evidence/methodology.

- Tone, Structure and Organization: focused introduction, thesis, conclusion; use of transitions, headings and other cohering strategies; logical paragraphing in support of main points.

- Mechanics: Correct citation and documentation; required elements like title page, works cited, page numbering; grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. All work should be submitted in MS Word Times New Roman 12 or 14 pt. format single or double spaced, depending on the style guide selected.
• Structure: The normal breaks between paragraphs will be observed, using any style guide you choose. The *Chicago Manual of Style* is available online at [http://furbo.gmu.edu/dbwiz/ref](http://furbo.gmu.edu/dbwiz/ref). Another popular choice is Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Manual of Style*, (New York, St. Martin’s Press, latest edition). Work should be neatly arranged with clear demarcation of sub-units. (The four criteria above were developed by Dr. Jonathan Gifford.)

• Grammar: Impeccable word usage and grammar will be expected in all submitted work. Students may wish to show early work to someone else—a friend or colleague—for a review of style, grammar and other details. Papers with more than a very small number of errors in grammar and word usage will be returned.

• Method of submission: All papers will be submitted to the instructor by email as MS Word attachments using a clear description in the subject line of the message. For example: Julia Jones, Assignment 3.

**Student Journal: New Voices in Public Policy**

The instructor will consider nominating the very best papers in this course for publication in *New Voices in Public Policy*. *New Voices* is a student- and faculty-reviewed journal that shares SPP's finest student work with the rest of the world.