I. Introduction
Bureaucracies are inescapably embedded in the American political environment, and political conflicts within administrative agencies are ubiquitous. In this course, we will examine the major questions political scientists ask about public bureaucracies: How have they evolved to their current form? Why do bureaucrats engage in behavior that many of us consider pathological or arbitrary? How can unelected government officials be made more accountable to their elected counterparts and to citizens? In addressing these questions and others, we will draw on cases of “government in action” in several areas of public policy, including homeland security, education, the environment, law enforcement, and social welfare.

II. Contact and Meeting Information
Professor
Sanford Clark Gordon
726 Broadway, rm. 714
Phone: (212) 998-3708
E-mail: sanford.gordon@nyu.edu
Office Hours: Monday 2-4pm, or by appointment

Class meetings
MW 9:30-10:45am, Silver Center 706

III. Required Readings
The following books are available for purchase at the University bookstore:


A COURSE PACKET with other required material will be available for purchase at New University Copy and Graphics (11 Waverly Place).
IV. Student Responsibilities and Course Grading

Formal Course Requirements

Classroom Participation and Presentation: 20%
(10% for general participation,
10% for group presentation)

The most significant difference between this class and others like it is its heavy reliance on case studies. On eleven occasions, roughly a quarter of our class time (roughly half of the Wednesday session) will revolve around a topical example drawn from the world of bureaucratic politics and performance. We will discuss significant and/or illustrative events in the history of American governance, “impossible jobs,” success stories, and fiascos.

As an introduction to each of the ten case studies, a group of four students will briefly present the case material and its relationship to the other course materials. Then, we will open the floor to a broader discussion, to be moderated by the presenting students.

During our discussions, all students will be expected to demonstrate 1) successful mastery of the facts and 2) the ability to draw broader lessons from the case.

Midterm Examination: 30%
The midterm examination will be held on MONDAY, MARCH 8. A combination of short answers and essays, the exam will cover the preceding lectures and readings.

Final Examination: 50%
According to the Registrar’s most recent schedule, the final examination will be held on Wednesday, May 5 from 10-11:50am. Roughly 2/3 of the exam will cover material not covered on the midterm.

Policy on missed exams
Exceptions in emergency situations are inevitable, but in general, students missing an exam will receive a grade of zero. If you must miss an exam, please contact me before the scheduled test time, and if the excuse is justified (such as in cases of illness or family/personal emergencies), we will schedule a make-up.

V. Academic Integrity

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper attribution) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy. For more information on university policy, see http://www.nyu.edu/cas/Academic/Bulletin/Policies.html#f.

VI. Weekly Schedule

Part A. Bureaucracy from the Inside Out

Week 1. Introduction
Wednesday, January 21
What is Public Bureaucracy and Why Should We Study It?
Week 2.  Bureaucracy in the United States: Some Preliminaries  
Monday, January 26

Governance, Hierarchy and Organizations: Analytical Approaches
- Max Weber (published posthumously in 1947), “The Types of Legitimate Domination,” in Economy and Society, 212-241, in course packet. Note: We will examine two of Weber’s three types
- Douglas North (1990), chs.1 and 2 of Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance, in course packet
- Chester Barnard (1938), ch. 7 of The Functions of the Executive, in course packet. Regarded by many as the most boring book ever written. Boring ... but brilliant

Wednesday, January 28

The Federal Bureaucracy, Past and Present: A Whirlwind Tour
- James Q. Wilson, Bureaucracy, chs. 1 and 2

Week 3.  Microfoundations for a Theory of Public Organizations
Monday, February 2

Rationalist Accounts, Old and New

Wednesday, February 4

Some Limits on the Rationality of Agents
- Wilson, Bureaucracy, chs. 3, 4
- Case Study: Waco

Week 4.  Motivation, Monitoring, and Compensation
Monday, February 9

Principals and Agents
- Wilson, Bureaucracy, chs. 7, 9

Wednesday, February 11

Patronage vs. Civil Service
- Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*, 40-76
- Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, “The Personnel System” (the first substantive section of chapter 8)
- Case Study: John Bartlow Martin (1948), “The Blast in Centralia No. 5: A Mine Disaster No One Stopped,” in course packet

### Week 5. Rules vs. Discretion

**Monday, February 16**
**PRESIDENT'S DAY: NO CLASS**

**Wednesday, February 18**
**Sed Quis Custodient Ipsos Custodes?**
- Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, chs. 17, 18
- Case Study: Foster Care in New York (All readings in course packet)

### Week 6. Executive Leadership

**Monday, February 23**
**Constraints and Innovation**
- Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, chs. 10-12

**Wednesday, February 25**
**Executive Leadership and the Creation of Autonomous Bureaus**
- Case Study: The USDA and the Interior Department at the turn of the century
  - Carpenter, *Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*, chs. 8, 10

### Week 7. The Human Face of Public Bureaucracies: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

**Monday, March 1**
**Organizational Culture**
- Carpenter, *Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy*, 76-88; 212-223
- Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, Ch. 6
Wednesday, March 3

Professionalism and Human Relations

- Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, “Bureaucratization versus Professionalization” (second half of ch. 8)

Week 8. Slack, Review, and Exam

Monday, March 8
Catching up; review for the midterm exam

Wednesday, March 10
MIDTERM EXAMINATION

March 15 and 17: SPRING BREAK -- NO CLASS

Part B. Bureaucratic Politics from the Outside In

Week 9. Congress and the Bureaucracy

Monday, March 22
The Design of Bureaucratic Agencies: Interests and Incentives

- R. Douglas Arnold (1979), ch. 6 of *Congress and the Bureaucracy*, in course packet

Wednesday, March 24
Agency Oversight

- Mathew D. McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz, “Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols vs. Fire Alarms”
- Case Study: The 1998 IRS Reforms: Origins and Consequences (All readings in course packet)
  - Senator William V. Roth, Jr., and William H. Nixon (1999), chs. 1 and 9 of *The Power to Destroy*
  - Amy Hamilton, “No Misconduct Found in 95 percent of Alleged IRS Harrassment Cases”

Week 10. The Courts, The President, and the Bureaucracy

Monday, March 29
Quasi-Judicialism and Judicial Oversight

- Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, ch. 15

**Wednesday, March 31**

*Presidential Power and the Bureaucracy*

• Wilson, Ch. 14
• Hugh Heclo (1977), ch. 3 of *A Government of Strangers*, in packet

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<th>Case Study: Reagan and the EPA</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Joel Mintz (1995), chs. 4 and 5 of <em>Enforcement at the EPA</em>, in course packet</td>
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**Week 11. Clients and Interest Groups**

**Monday, April 5**

*Interest Groups and the Bureaucracy*

• Wilson, ch. 5

**NOTE:** This is a technical paper. Skip the mathematical formalization and focus on getting the intuition of the predictions and the empirical analysis.

**Wednesday, April 7**

*Client Groups*

• Hargrove and Glidewell, *Impossible Jobs in Public Management*, chs. 1, 3

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<tr>
<th>Case Studies: Dealing with “Problem” Clients -- Examples from <em>Impossible Jobs</em></th>
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<tr>
<td>- John J. DiIulio, “Managing a Barbed-Wire Bureaucracy ,” pp. 49-71</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Gary E. Miller and Ira Iscoe, “A State Mental Health Commissioner and the Politics of Mental Illness,” pp. 103-132</td>
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**Part C. Implementation Politics and Bureaucratic Change**

**Week 12. Federalism**

**Monday, April 12**

*Conflicts and Constraints in American Federalism*

• Paul Posner (1998), selection from *The Politics of Unfunded Mandates*, in course packet
Wednesday, April 14

The Growth and Reform of the American Welfare System

- Case Study: Welfare Reform (All readings in course packet)
  - Gary Bryner (1998), ch. 5 of *Politics and Public Morality*

Week 13. The Management of Internal Security

Monday, April 19

Homeland Security I: Historical Precedent and Current Challenges

- Amy Zegart (1999), *Flawed by Design*, Introduction and chs. 1 and 4, in course packet

Wednesday, April 21

Homeland Security II: Limits

- Michael E. O’Hanlon et. al. (2003), ch. 7 of *Protecting the American Homeland: One Year On*

Week 14. Privatization and Reform

Monday, April 26

Making Bureaucracy “Run More Like A Business”

- Wilson, *Bureaucracy*, ch. 19
- Paul C. Light, “Which Customer is Right?” *Government Executive*, February 1, 2000, in course packet
Wednesday, April 28
Reforming the Bureaucracy, Past and Present

- Case Study: Bureaucracy and Education (All readings in course packet)
  - Case Study: Deborah Meier, “The Power of Their Ideas,” chs. 2 and 3
  - John Chubb and Terry M. Moe, Politics, Markets, and America’s Schools, ch. 2
  - Jeffrey R. Henig, Rethinking School Choice, ch. 8

Week 15. Wrapping Up

Monday, May 3
Conclusion: What We Should Expect from Public Servants