

## **Syllabus: PPOL 5260: Public Management Theories and Practices**

### **HKUST Division of Public Policy**

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#### **Instructor:**

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#### **Office hours:**

Thursday, 4-5pm  
Teaching: Wednesday, 6:30-9:20pm

#### **Teaching Assistants:**

Holvert HUNG

#### **Overview- Why are you taking this course?**

The study, and more importantly, the practice of policy practitioners does not end once decisions are taken. In fact, most of the hard work occurs in the details of how policy gets implemented, day to day, in the messy and conflicting real world. Many a beautiful piece of policy legislation has resulted in a unwieldy, ineffective mess; in other situations, effective public services have muddled along, under circumstances of neglect or outright disfavor at the decision making level. For many MPM's, they will find themselves working in, or with, public organizations that are responsible for implementing policy on a day to day basis.

This course aims to equip you with a rigorous theoretical as well as practical understanding of the kinds of policy decision making and implementation activities that occur in varying institutional contexts at different levels. You will become familiar with the sectors, organizations, and groups who are participants in public management, including those beyond the traditional confines of government. They will also critically examine the concept of 'leadership' in public organizations- where it is located, and how it is related to the task of policy implementation. Building on that, the course will also explore how approaches to public management differ across types of organizations, geographical, and institutional contexts. This course will help prepare you to undertake continuous learning, flexible adaptation, and creative innovations as core components of policy systems and processes under situations of complexity and uncertainty.

#### **Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of key theories in public management;
- Demonstrate a clear and nuanced understanding of the types of management instruments required to implement public policy;
- Identify the institutional, organizational, and structural challenges that public organizations

- face when managing and implementing complex policy portfolios;
- Apply scholarly theories and perspectives to real-world cases and own experiences, to
- enhance problem-solving capacity and improve public management practice;
- Develop and apply public management skills required for senior management roles.

### Reading Material

There is no single book that covers all the topics of this course. Essential material is provided via Canvas. You are expected to be interested in reading material that is not electronically available. You are not expected to read everything on this reading list. Aim to read the core reading for each class meeting. Further reading provides for alternative sources as well as opportunities for more in-depth study for essays and projects.

### Assignments:

The details of the assignments will be announced via Canvas. The overall structure and points assigned to each are as follows:

| Due Date             | Assignment                                  | %          |
|----------------------|---|------------|
|                      | <b>Individual Assignments</b>               |            |
| Feb. 18-<br>March 11 | Essay A (please see Canvas for exact dates) | 10         |
| April 1-<br>April 14 | Essay B (please see Canvas for exact dates) | 10         |
| April 22-<br>May 6   | Essay C (please see Canvas for exact dates) | 10         |
| March 25             | Midterm Paper (Performance Management)      | 20         |
| May 20               | <b>Final Group Project</b>                  | 30         |
|                      | <b>Classwork/Participation</b>              |            |
|                      | Discussion Questions/Posts/Classwork        | 10         |
|                      | Collaborative Annotations                   | 10         |
|                      | <b>Total</b>                                | <b>100</b> |

### Individual Essay

You will choose THREE individual essays to write – one each from ‘Group A’, ‘Group B’, and ‘Group C’. The questions will be posted on Canvas. The essays should be 1200-1500 words, and engage with both theoretical and case material. The general topics and deadlines are listed in the table below. Each essay is worth 10% of the grade. Students will have the option to rewrite their lowest marked essay up to a MAXIMUM grade of 89. No rewrites will be allowed for papers that are not handed in on the original due date.

| <b>Topic</b>                        | <b>Due Date</b> | <b>Essay Group</b> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Public vs Private Organizations     | <i>18-Feb</i>   | A                  |
| Politics and the state              | <i>25-Feb</i>   | A                  |
| Leadership vs. Street Level         | <i>11-Mar</i>   | A                  |
| Administrative burdens              | <i>1-Apr</i>    | B                  |
| Ethics and Accountability           | <i>1-Apr</i>    | B                  |
| Stakeholder Engagement/Transparency | <i>14-Apr</i>   | B                  |
| Collaborative Governance            | <i>22-Apr</i>   | C                  |
| Organizational Change               | <i>29-Apr</i>   | C                  |
| Crisis Management                   | <i>6-May</i>    | C                  |

#### **Case Discussion Posts:**

We will discuss a number of cases during the term. You will be required to submit a short discussion post, based on the case topics, for a number of these (we will give you the prompts when we post the materials). You will also be expected to comment on your classmate's posts, to help continue a robust discussion. Prof Matus will give more detail on the exact prompts and timing for each case.

#### **Other Discussion Posts:**

I may, from time to time, ask for students to post on the discussion boards about particular topics, or to help us recap a discussion, etc... You are also encouraged to start (and participate) in your own discussions. This method of communication is especially important for any periods where we are operating in online/hybrid modes.

#### **Collaborative Annotations and Discussion Questions**

To help improve engagement with the readings, we are going to make use of collaborative annotation software. **To support this, please ensure that you have access to PERUSALL (more info for sign up to follow).**

For each topic/class, a sub group will be assigned to be annotators. Please pay close attention to the schedule posted on Canvas and also in Perusall.

Annotators will be assigned to comment, jointly, in-line, on a specific text or texts from the readings in ENGLISH. They will also be responsible (individually) for posting discussion questions before the start of class. During the session, they will be expected to be ready to comment/discuss. HOWEVER – that does not mean that others should not do the reading. Consider them 'seeds' in the classroom.

### Midterm Project:

The details of the midterm project will be posted on Canvas. It will be a memo of approximately 2000 words giving recommendations for effective performance metrics and management for a given sector (i.e. school, university, police, etc....). More information and materials will be posted on Canvas. This is an individual assignment.

### Final Group Project: Train the Managers

The Country of Amnesia is in the process of reassessing and reforming how it manages and delivers public services to its citizens. In order to aid them in decision making and educating those involved, the government has hired the HKUST MPM & Co. Consulting Firm to provide a series of web-based training modules on key topics, and relate them to key aspects of figuring out how to simultaneously manage to continue to provide government services, while also responding to a long-lasting global crisis (including, but not limited to the public health, economic, and social impacts of the disease and global policy responses). The training will then be delivered to key public managers throughout Amnesia. Topics will be assigned in Week 4 of the semester by random draw.

As per the contract with Amnesia, the web-based module must include:

1. A basic 'reader' and quiz (35%)
2. A case study (35%)
3. A short training video (20%)
4. Discussion Questions (10%)

1. **A basic 'reader' for practitioners (35%)** – around 5-7 pages – that provides a summary of the broader literature, and a set of references for further reading. This should give the major points and perspectives, and link it to practical examples. It should be designed to help public managers faced with being 'in the thick' of the kind of 21st Century public management challenge that we discussed at the start of the semester. The leadership in Amnesia would prefer that the reader include examples from *at least two countries*. **(40%)**

The reader should also have a **short quiz** (around 10 questions), with answer key, to test the understanding of the policy makers.

2. **A practical case study (35%)**, based on a real-world example, for participants to read and discuss. The case should give about 3-5 text pages of background (it can also include video, newspaper, or other media clips in addition if that helps), plus the outline of a lesson plan that could be used to deliver the case. You may find it helpful to identify a useful 'real world' example of your topic, either in the literature, or in the news (verifiable sources, please), and then write up a few pages of summary that would help someone who is not familiar with the example understand the background, and use it to apply the information on your topic.

Make sure to include a lesson plan with:

- Learning objectives
- 4-5 background slides

3. **A short training video (20%)**: This video presentation should be 7-10 minutes long, and should cover the key concepts from the reader. Make sure to also include concrete examples, and link to 'real world' public management challenges and activities. If practical, you can link this to your case study, but this is not required.
4. **Discussion questions (10%)**: A set of discussion questions that can be posted to the course discussion board for participants to answer to check understanding of key concepts, and share their own experiences as public managers. (10%)

You are free to refer to readings and cases from class, but lectures, slides, cases, etc... should all be original materials. Your reading list can include elements from the syllabus, but for full marks, must include additional materials (hint: some of the texts we frequently use in class have articles and chapters with extensive citations, and are good places to look for important readings).

Remember, the audience for this module is a group of practitioners – not academics. So one of your main tasks throughout the project is to translate the theory that we discuss in our class sessions into information that is understandable and exciting for a practitioner in a quickly changing management context. These practitioners are intelligent, experienced, and enthusiastic – but are eager to be briefed on the key things that will be useful in their day to day jobs.

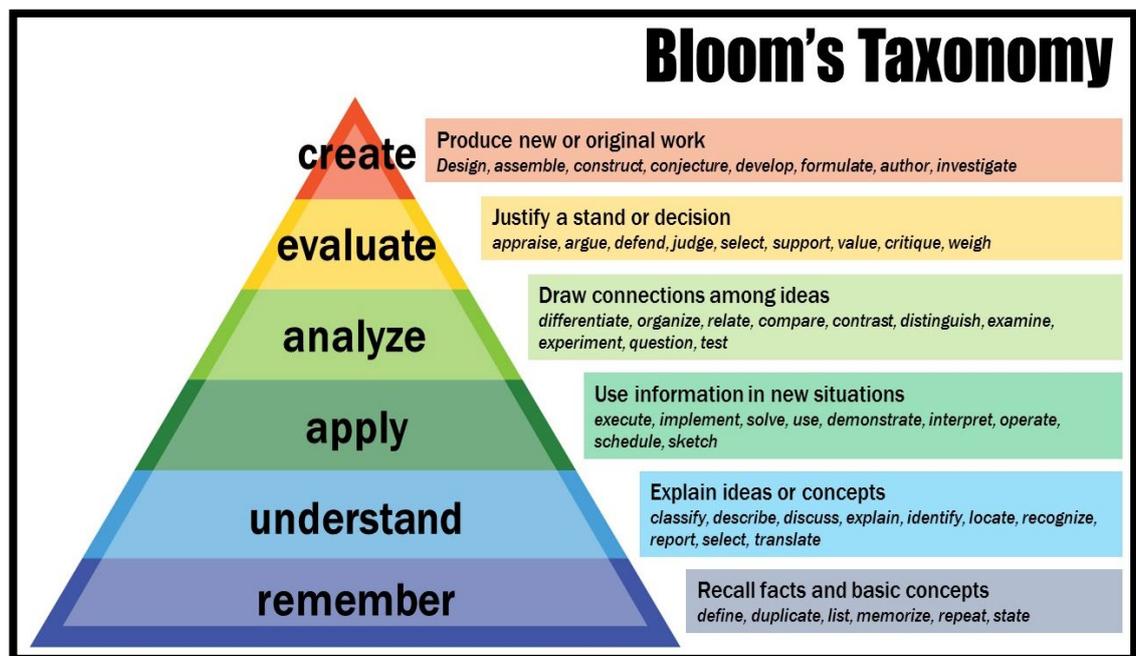
## Course Topics

All readings, discussion prompts, and materials will be posted on Canvas. Each week will be its own 'module' with readings, notes, slides, etc....

| <b>Week</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Topic</b>   |
|-------------|-------------|--|
| 1           | 8-Feb       | Introduction to Public Management: Public vs Private Sectors |
| 2           | 15-Feb      | The State, Strategy, and the Public Sector                   |
| 3           | 22-Feb      | Street-Level Motivations and Discretion                      |
| 4           | 1-Mar       | Leadership   |
| 5           | 8-Mar       | Performance Measurement and Management                       |
| 6           | 15-Mar      | Administrative Burdens and the Politics of Access            |
| 7           | 22-Mar      | Ethics and Accountability                                    |
| 8           | 29-Mar      | Stakeholder Engagement and Transparency                      |
| 9           | 5-Apr       | No Class   |
| 9           | 12-Apr      | Collaborative Governance/PPPs                                |
| 10          | 19-Apr      | Organizational Change  |
| 11          | 26-Apr      | Crisis Management  |
| 12          | 3-May       | Wrap-up  |

## Grading:

For each assignment, we will provide the outline and general marking rubrics. But for all assignments, it will be helpful to keep Bloom's Taxonomy in mind. Please note: fulfilling the basic requirements of an assignment is not enough, in and of itself, to warrant an 'A' grade. Very good work, that fulfils the assignment, often gets a grade of a B+ or even a B. To get into the A range, we expect to see original thought, nuance, drawing on a range of sources of information (course readings, cases, empirical data, etc..), that is well organized and thoughtful.



In general, the different levels relate to grades as follows (but keep in mind, different assignments may have particular requirements that need to be met which may change this a bit):

**Create: A+**

**Evaluate: A**

**Analyze: A-**

**Apply: B+/B**

**Understand: B-**

**Remember: C+/C/C-**

**None of the above: D/ E**

*Note: Late assignments will incur a penalty for each day they are late, except in cases where extensions have been granted by the instructor. Except for emergencies, extensions are much more likely to be granted when they are requested well in advance, with strong justification. If you are struggling to complete your coursework, please come discuss with us sooner rather than later, as it is always easier to adjust things before there is a crisis.*

## A note on academic integrity

One of the worst parts of my job is dealing with issues of academic dishonesty and plagiarism. They are unpleasant for students and faculty alike. Academic dishonesty hurts you, your peers, and your teachers. If you are ever unclear about what is allowed (i.e. working in groups vs. own work, etc..), ask me or the TA's. If you are ever unclear about whether (and how) to cite something, once again,

you can talk to me or the TA's, or check in with the library resources or our (soon to be hired) language tutor. I excerpt the HKUST policy, below.

*“The University’s approach to cases of academic misconduct is fundamentally educational. The process for dealing with these cases is designed to enable students to better understand the nature of academic misconduct and the high standards of academic integrity that are expected. The sanctions available in confirmed cases of misconduct are intended to signal the importance that the University places on maintaining these high standards and to communicate this to students.*

**2. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:**

**Cheating:** conduct designed to mislead those responsible for making a judgment on a student’s academic performance or standing, including:

- Unauthorized conveyance or receipt of examination or test questions
- The giving, receiving or utilizing of unauthorized information or assistance in completing an assignment, test or examination
- Breaches of the regulations for examinations set out in the Annex
- Impersonating another student or allowing oneself to be impersonated by another student in participating in a test or examination
- Submission of academic work containing purported statements of fact or references to sources that have been fabricated
- Presenting for credit work that has already been accepted for credit in another course

**Plagiarism:** the presentation of work which originates from other sources, including the work of other students, as the student’s own work, without appropriate attribution to the source.” THIS INCLUDES THE USE OF AI content creation.

<http://acadreg.ust.hk/generalreg.html>

