

Reforming Public Organizations

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Draft

Public Administration 620

Dick Pratt

pratt@hawaii.edu

Overview

Not that long ago it was difficult, despite a history of criticisms about them, to locate serious efforts to substantially improve public organizations (“Change the bureaucracy! Are you kidding?”). Changes, or efforts at change, typically did not go beyond responding to corruption, or appointing special panels and commissions that attempted to fix specific policies or fuss with the organization charts.

This is no longer the case. There is now a surplus of advice and initiatives. Substantial work on, or at least calls for, reform is occurring locally, nationally and globally. In Hawai'i, it is not uncommon for legislators, mayors, the governor, and hopeful candidates to focus on government reform, and agencies are expected to re-make themselves in response to these calls. Similar patterns are found nationally and globally.

Why is this happening, what does it mean, and what is needed to make it more likely that reforms will take place that make a difference to public service employees and their public missions?

This course addresses these questions by exploring, through discussions, exercises, readings, guests, lectures, and projects, topics directly associated with organizational reform, looking to balance conceptual understandings with the ability to use what we've learned.

Everything done here is based on the premise that public institutions play a critical role in society and that their improvement, or harm, through reform is significant. We are fortunate that enough time has passed since the “era of reform” started that studies are now available that help us understand the impact of reforms on the public nature of “public” organizations.

Finally, our work will include using the class as a mini-laboratory for reflecting on how we react individually and together to innovation and change.

Course Goals

At the end of this course you should:

- 1) Recognize the broad context of public organization reform.
- 2) Understand the problems that reform tries to address and the range of approaches and responses used.
- 3) Have an image of what makes up a successful public organization
- 4) Be able to recognize the elements of reform strategy that is being used, and to design a strategy for a specific organization.

Readings

The following book has been ordered for the class through a discounted bookseller and will be sold in class the first night.

Peters *The Future of Governance*, 2nd edition. Peters' book is a summary of the major patterns of public institution reform internationally, and his interpretation of the opportunities and risks in each. It provides a global framework and background for the course.

In addition, a binder of assigned readings created for the class will be available for purchase.

It consists of excerpts from books, articles and case studies.

Each session will include a list of “Useful Resources,” some of which are annotated. These are provided as optional readings on that week’s topic, and/or future references. They also may be helpful for the reports and the project.

Guests

Depending on decisions we make, guests will be invited to join us during the semester to discuss some aspect of the issues we are addressing. We will talk together about the guest list and a schedule. If you know of an individual or individuals who might be valuable as a resource, please mention her or him to me for inclusion in our discussion.

Requirements

A. Participation.

Participation includes being prepared for class by completing the assigned reading, expressing opinions, listening carefully to what others are saying, asking thoughtful questions, and other activities that signify engagement and contribute to the over-all value of the class.

Subject to any re-negotiation, there are two other requirements. You will receive a list of journals and websites to help with both.

B. Two Short Reports -- Individual; each no more than six pages.

(1) A reform effort in another part of the world (i.e., outside of Hawai’i or outside of where your home is). The idea is to locate an example of a serious effort at reform, successful or otherwise. Your source or sources must provide you with enough reliable information to enable you to understand what is happening or has happened. Your paper should include a summary as well as your interpretation of what you’ve read. Due October 1

(2) Some aspect of reform relevant to this course and/or to your organization (e.g., accountability, leadership, employee participation in change, cultural factors, politics of reform, evaluations of success). For this you should make use of a scholarly source or sources (this can include longer analytic pieces in major newspapers or magazines, such as the *New York Times* or the *Atlantic Monthly*). Due October 29

C. Project -- Group (i.e., two or more). A project in one of these four areas: civil service reform, budgetary reform, procurement reform, and public-private partnerships. The goal of this project is for you and your group to be able to answer these questions about the area you have chosen: What problems is the reform trying to solve? What are some specific goals of reform in this area? What approaches have been used to make the reform? Where does resistance come from? What problems does the reform create?

The projects will be presented to the class at the semester’s end. The presentation should be accompanied by a summary outline (not a paper) provided to class members. Whichever is chosen should be done making use of what has been done during the semester. This assignment will be discussed in class.

Evaluation

The course grade will be based on the following criteria:

Participation:	30%
Short Reports:(2)	40%
Project:	30%

Course Schedule and Outline (** = from assigned text)

I. The Context for Reform

Session One - 8/20/07 Introduction to one another, and to the course..

Discussion: Class Goals, Processes

Focus: Learning goals, and why any of this matters.

Session Two - 8/27/07 What are public organizations, and how do they change?

Focus: What are public organizations, why are they important, and why are they so hard to change?

Discussion: Experiences with change

Reading:

Cheung, "The Politics of Administrative Reform in Asia." From *Governance*.

Useful Resources

Pratt and Tsedev, "Public Administration Development and Reform in a Post-Communist Regime: The Case of Mongolia" under review for publication.

Ralph Hummel *The Bureaucratic Experience* (Strong critique of the impact of the bureaucratic form on the people who work in them.)

"Is Bureaucracy the Enemy of the People?" from *Public Administration Debated* (An exchange of views)

Solomon, Editor *The Tools of Government* (An insightful analysis and assessment of the different forms that public institutions take, with an emphasis on the challenges presented by "indirect government -- that is, the increasing use of non-governmental providers of "public" services.)

September 3 - Labor Day No Laboring in Class Today

Session Three - 9/10/07 Changing Images of Public Organizations

Focus: What forces are acting on public organizations, and what are we to make of "Reinventing Government", "New Public Management", and "Good Governance"?

Readings:

**Peters, *The Future of Governance*, chps. 1 to 5.

Pratt, "New Public Management, Globalization, and Public Administration Reform" from Dator, Pratt and Seo, *Fairness, Globalization and Public Institutions*, University of Hawai'i Press, 2006.

Useful Resources:

Kamarck "Globalization and Public Administration Reform" from *Governance in a Globalizing World* (A survey of the types of reform that have been tried globally.

Kettl *The Global Public Management Revolution* Brookings Institution Press, 1999. (A

review and interpretation of the origins of reform and the paths reform has taken in different parts of the world. Kettl argues that the reform of systems of management is tied directly to an international debate about the future of governance.)

Osbourne and Gabler, *Reinventing Government* (The book that set the stage for a national conversation about reform, and a statement of the American reform gospel of government reinvention. It provides broad outlines of how public agencies might take on what they refer to a “steering” rather than “rowing” function.)

Giauque, “New Public Management and Organizational Regulation,” from *International Review of Administrative Sciences*

Session Four - 9/17/07 Challenges to New Images of Public Organizations

Focus: Do we know what success is in reform?

Readings:

**Peters, Chps. 6 and 7

Useful Resources:

Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization* (An acclaimed book, now in its 2nd edition, which provides an intellectual history of the way we have viewed organization and in the process gives the reader different ways of interpreting an organization and diagnosing its problems.)

Manning, “The Legacy of the New Public Management in Developing Countries” from *International Review of Administrative Sciences*

James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy* (Provides a detailed review and interpretation of studies about how people in public organizations operate and the forces which act on them. Often sympathetic to the way normal public agencies function.)

"Is Bureaucracy the Enemy of the People?" from *Public Administration Debated* (An exchange of views)

Ben-nur, “For-profit, state, and non-profit: how to cut the pie among the three sectors,” from *Advancing Public Goods*

Joanne Ciulla, *The Working Life -- The Promise and Betrayal of Modern Work* (An overview of changing orientations to the place of work in our lives, and to how organizations have tried to energize and control employees during the 20th century.)

II. Images of Organizations

Session Five - 9/24/07 Looking for Basic Principles

Focus: What is a healthy public organization, and why does it matter?

Reading:

Salaman, “Bureaucracy and Beyond: Managers and Leaders in the ‘Post-Bureaucratic Organization,” from *The Values of Bureaucracy*.

Ricardo Semler, “Managing Without Managers,” from *Harvard Business Review*

Useful Resources:

Robert Denhardt, "A Revolution in Public Management," from *The Pursuit of Significance* (Images of public organizations as observed in mainstream public administration.)

Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science* (A breakthrough book in which the author argues that the appropriate model for organizations is not Newtonian, but the concepts that are central to quantum physics, chaos theory and evolutionary biology.)

Session Six - 10/1/07 Acting on Principles

Class Exercise: Creating the Elements of a Healthy Organization As a Guide

Note: First paper due.

III. Images of Change

Session Seven - 10/7/07 Focusing on Organizational Change

Focus: What do we expect change to be like?

Reading:

Nutt, "Strategically Repositioning and Transforming Public Organizations," from *Research in Organizational Change and Development*

Useful Resource:

Stewart and Kringas, "Change Management -- Strategy and Values in Six Agencies from the Australian Public Service"

Kinningham and Sawai, "Is Change Possible: Learning From Hawai'i's Public Employees," Public Administration Program, UHM. (Interviews with individuals in public service organizations in Hawai'i about their orientations to change and what it would take for them to become advocates in a reform process.)

Session Eight - 10/15/07 Focusing on Organizational Change

Focus: Are there differences in types of change? How do we get started?

Reading:

Rainey, "Reform Trends at the Federal Level," from *Civil Service Reform in the United States*

Useful Resources:

Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (An influential book that popularized the application of systems thinking to organizational improvement.)

Hammer, *Reengineering the Corporation* (Business process reengineering concepts Developed by one of the founders of the strategy.)

Davenport, "The Fad That Forgot People," from *Fast Company* (A critical review of how re-engineering evolved and its negative impacts by one of its creators.)

Osbourne and Plastrik, *Banishing Bureaucracy* (A follow-up to *Reinventing Government* that attempts to address what is involved in moving government toward more flexibility and entrepreneurialism. The authors name several core issues that need to be addressed in order to have any chance of converting rigid, unresponsive bureaucracies into flexible and adaptive organizations.)

Session Nine - 10/22/07 The Process of Change

Focus: What images can we have of the change process?

Reading:

Fox and Lavigna, "Wisconsin State Government..." from *Civil Service Reform in the United States*

Kriegel and Brandt, Chps. Introduction, 1, 5, 8, 10, 11, 15

Useful Resources:

Osbourne and Plastrik, *The Reinventor's Fieldbook* (Produced by the founder of the reinventing government movement in the U.S. as a detailed set of tools that can be used to "transform your government.")

Cohen and Eimicke, *Tools for Innovators* (Description and interpretation of six major tools that have been used in the public sector -- strategic planning, reengineering, TQM, benchmarking, teams and privatization -- along with a few illustrative case studies.)

Session Ten - 10/29/07 The Process of Change

Focus: What images are there of change process?

Reading:

Caver and King, "Human Resources Reform in Arizona – A Mixed Picture, from *Civil Service Reform in the United States*

Useful Resources:

Dawson, *Understanding Organizational Change*, chps. 2 and 3 (Argues that too much of organizational change has been presented as a formula and that instead what is needed is an approach that is shaped by the specifics of an organization.)

Linden, *Seamless Government* (The application of the principles of business process re-engineering to the reform of government organizations.)

Pinochet and Pinochet, *The End of Bureaucracy and the Rise of the Intelligent Organization* (Advocates the idea Intrapreneurship, which emphasizes using market forces inside organizations, but coupling them with norms of fairness and democratic process.)

Pratt, "Looking In: Notes from a Visiting Scholar" from *Journal of General Education*. (Observations of a change process at a large U.S. university to which the author was a consultant.)

Note: Second paper due.

Session Eleven - 11/5/07 The Process of Change

Focus: What Role Do, or can, Unions Play?

Reading:

Kearney, "Labor Perspectives on Civil Service Reform," from *Civil Service Reform in the United States*

November 12 Veterans Day No Class

Session Twelve - 11/19/07 The Psycho-Dynamics of Change

Focus: Why do people react the way they do?

Reading:

excerpt from Bridges, *Managing Transitions*

Richard Hallstein *Memoirs of a Recovering Autocrat*

Useful Resource:

Quinn, *Deep Change* (Argues that people in organizations are often faced with a choice between promoting, or accepting, change, and "slow death.")

Session Thirteen - 11/26/07 Politics and Organizational Reform

Focus: Does this have to be a political process? How is it political?

Reading:

Goldfinch, "Rituals of Reform," from *Governance*

O'Brien, "Participation as the Key to Successful Change -- A Public Sector Case Study" from *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*

Useful Resource:

Dawson *Understanding Organizational Change*, chps. 5 and 7.

IV. Sharing What You've Learned

Final Sessions (14 and 15): Class Presentations in last two sessions. Dates to be discussed.