



Department of Political Science  
and Criminal Justice

*Master of Public Administration Program*

POLS 7660, Section A  
Information and Operations  
Management  
Fall Semester 2008  
TTh 5:30-6:55 p.m.

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Office Hours: MW 2:30-4:30 p.m.,  
TTh 2:15-3:45 p.m.

Purpose

Public administrators are frequently called on by elected officials and politically appointed department heads to establish facilities and offices from which the public will be served or to reorganize existing facilities and offices. The spectacular growth in the availability of government services--which arose to satisfy a robust growth in the demand for government services--was necessarily related directly to the expansion of the government's infrastructure of central offices and regional/local branch offices throughout the last half century. While citizens have grown dependent on government services, they have also grown restless with mounting tax bills and the national government's frightful accumulation of debt.

Confronted with the choice of reducing the availability of popular government services and streamlining operations to reduce the cost of government services, elected officials and public administrators will rationally opt for the latter wherever possible. Furthermore, public officials and nonprofit managers are expected by the public to offer high-quality services, both in terms of effective care and in terms of speedy attention. Failure to provide such quality will cause a public official or nonprofit manager to "hear about it" from the news media, voters, and so forth. Administrators who do not want their careers to suffer owe it to themselves to understand and apply the principles of operations management.

Learning Objectives

- Be able to apply mathematical models pertaining to inventory control, queuing theory, site location, and other issues of operations management.
- Understand the special challenges of delivering services, as opposed to products.
- Understand the focus on quality that dominates

contemporary thinking in service delivery in the public and nonprofit sectors.

- Be able to apply end-user computing (such as Microsoft Office software--Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint--and SPSS) to assignments to demonstrate understanding of computing in the context of public-administration production and problem solving.

### Information literacy

*Concerning NGCSU's Information Literacy Learning Outcomes* (based on NGCSU's Quality Enhancement Plan): These are the five outcomes.

1. The information-literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed. *Know* (The homework assignments and the research paper are designed to contribute to the fulfillment of this outcome.)
2. The information-literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently. *Access* (The research paper and the presentation of Microsoft Excel and Access are designed to contribute to the fulfillment of this outcome.)
3. The information-literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system. *Evaluate* (The research paper is designed to contribute to the fulfillment of this outcome.)
4. The information-literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose. *Use* (The homework assignments, the research paper, and the exercises in Microsoft Excel and Access and SPSS are designed to contribute to the fulfillment of this outcome.)
5. The information-literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally. *Ethical/legal*<sup>1</sup> (The research paper and the discussions about service and quality are designed to contribute to the fulfillment of this outcome.)

### Course Requirements

#### 1. TEXTBOOKS

The required textbook, which is available at the bookstore, is:

Metters, Richard; King-Metters, Kathryn; Pullman, Madeleine; and Walton, Steve. *Successful Service Operations Management*. 2d ed. Mason, Ohio: Thomson South-Western, 2006.

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<sup>1</sup> Learning Outcomes adapted from the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) standards.

Study the assigned readings on a timely basis in accordance with the attached schedule. To "study" does not mean to scan; rather, to "study" involves careful reading and note-taking (or underlining) to facilitate retention of facts and to facilitate review for the examination.

## 2. PROFICIENT USE OF SOFTWARE IN PREPARING ASSIGNMENTS

All members of the class will use computer software during class sessions, parallel to our discussions and exercises. If a student is sufficiently concerned about lack of proficiency with computer software, he or she should consider the possibility of taking an undergraduate computer course before undertaking POLS 7660.

As all of us develop proficiency with computer software, we will be expected to utilize this software in preparing assignments and in taking the midterm and final examinations. The examinations will require use of computer software: Word, Access, Excel, PowerPoint, and SPSS.

If you don't have a jump drive, please obtain one. Bring your jump drive to each class.

## 3. HOMEWORK

Eleven homework problems are assigned. Each problem accounts for 2 percent of the course grade. Late homework will not be accepted.

## 4. EXAMINATIONS

There will be a midterm examination on Monday, September 29. It will account for 20 percent of the course grade. There will be a final examination on Wednesday, December 3. It will account for 25 percent of the course grade.

If, when an examination is in progress, you have in your possession an electronic device that emits a signal, I will collect your examination and you will be ejected from the classroom. Any refusal to acquiesce may result in a grade of zero and submission of a disciplinary complaint.

## 5. OPERATIONS-MANAGEMENT APPLICATION PAPER

You are required to write an operations-management application paper about a practical problem in a public or nonprofit setting that can be addressed with the rationale and methods presented in this course. Your paper must present an analytical approach to addressing the practical problem. If you are pursuing an M.P.A. degree with a concentration in

Criminal Justice Administration, be sure that your paper focuses on a problem in a criminal-justice setting (operating a police station, scheduling criminal trials, or something similar). If you are pursuing an M.P.A. degree with a concentration in Health Care Management, be sure that your paper focuses on a problem in a health-care setting (operating a medical practice, handling hospital admissions, or something similar). The research paper must be based on and must make specific reference to literature of political science (i.e., your textbooks, lecture notes, monographs, articles in public-administration and/or nonprofit-management journals, etc.). Reference to your textbook is *essential*.

Students are required in all M.P.A. courses to use full-blown APA style on *all* papers (including research papers, term papers, written case-study assignments, etc.). You may wish to obtain a copy of the style manual. It is available, for example, at this Web site:

<http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>

A really helpful resource is the accompanying software to the APA style manual. The software is available by direct download or by purchase of an actual CD-ROM. *I strongly advise the purchase of the CD-ROM rather than the direct download.* The software is available, for example, at this Web site:

<http://www.apastyle.org/stylehelper/>

I would appreciate it if you would use the *modifications* to APA style that appear at this Web page:

<http://www.NGCSU.edu/bdf/MPAprog/APAmd.htm>

The operations-management application paper is due on Monday, November 24. Please submit *two* hardcopies. Do not use report covers; just staple. The paper will account for 30 percent of your grade. Lateness will involve a 10-percentage-point penalty per week or part thereof; the instructor will not be obligated to accept any term paper submitted after the final examination is concluded.

## 6. ATTENDANCE

Attendance is compulsory. You are considered responsible for being attentive to lectures and class discussions, for taking notes, and for being aware of the content of all class announcements. Please take note of the university's policy on "Class Attendance" (2008-2010 *Undergraduate Bulletin*, pp. 79-80) which is incorporated herein by reference. A student who accumulates more than four unexcused absences on this two-class-per-week schedule can expect to receive a "W" or "WF", or to sustain a reduction in the course grade by one or more letter-grade levels.

## 7. PARTICIPATION

Class participation and proper conduct are both expected, and will determine 5 percent of the course grade. As stated in the "Regulations of the M.P.A. Program," the participation requirement is based on this policy:

In most classes, it is improper for a student to be a passive spectator in class sessions. M.P.A. students are expected to be active participants in the proceedings of their classes. Contributions to class discussions are vital to the experience of graduate study in public administration and enhance the value of the program for all students enrolled in it.

Accordingly, the score for participation and conduct will involve these considerations: (1) ability to cite and interpret readings assigned for homework, (2) contribution to collective problem-solving processes, (3) demonstration of adaptability in coping with new situations, and (4) ability to support and enhance the value of the work of peers.

The conduct requirement includes the expectation that you will not allow any cellphones or other electronic devices to emit signals that will disturb the class. Turn them off or don't bring them to class.

## 8. OTHER REQUIREMENTS AND NOTICES

*a. Other controlling documents.* All of the rules, regulations, and standards published in the undergraduate and graduate bulletins of North Georgia College & State University and the "Regulations of the M.P.A. Program" are incorporated by reference in this document.

*b. Academic integrity; plagiarism and cheating.* NGCSU's integrity code--"On my honor, I will not lie, cheat, steal, plagiarize, evade the truth, or tolerate those who do"--reflects the university's commitment to academic integrity. The "Academic Integrity Policy" (2008-2010 *Undergraduate Bulletin*, p. 90; see also the *Student Handbook*) is incorporated herein by reference. Please note that in this course, as in all others at NGCSU, plagiarism and other forms of cheating are expressly prohibited. Any student who commits plagiarism or cheating may receive a reduced grade, which may involve a failing grade, and his or her matriculation in the M.P.A. Program may be terminated by the M.P.A. Advisory Committee. A report of the incident will be provided to the university's Academic Integrity Council. The council and the vice president for academic affairs may take additional action, which may include a formal reprimand, probation, suspension, or expulsion.

By registering for this course, students agree to the following: All required papers may be subject to submission for textual-similarity review to Turnitin.com or a search using a search engine such as Google for the detection of plagiarism. In the case of Turnitin.com, all submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com site.

c. Disabilities. North Georgia College & State University is committed to equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, reasonable *prior* notice needs to be given to the instructor and the Office of Student Disability Resources. In this case, contact Elizabeth McIntosh, coordinator of student disability resources, at Barnes Hall, Room 122 (706-867-2782).

d. On-line students' evaluation of course. Course evaluations at NGCSU are now conducted on-line through BANNER. Evaluation of the class is considered a component of the course and students will not be permitted to access their course grade until the evaluation has been completed. The evaluations will be accessible beginning one week prior to the final-exam week.

e. Course grades. Course grades are available on BANNER Web 2000 within about two days of the end of final examinations. Except in emergency situations, please do not request grades by telephone, E-mail, or similar method.

#### SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic and Readings</u>	
W	Aug. 20	Delivery of Services	Ch. 1
M	Aug. 25	Delivery of Services Microsoft Word	
W	Aug. 27	No Class - Annual Meeting of the National Executive	
M	Sep. 1	Council of the Pi Sigma Alpha Political-Science Honor Society, Boston, and Labor Day	
W	Sep. 3	Strategy	Ch. 2

M	Sep. 8	Strategy Microsoft Excel	
W	Sep. 10	Selling over the Internet	Ch. 3
M	Sep. 15	Selling over the Internet	
W	Sep. 17	Service-Level Options	Ch. 5
M	Sep. 22	Customers' "Experience"	Ch. 6
W	Sep. 24	Back-Office Operations	Ch. 7
M	Sep. 29	<b>MIDTERM EXAMINATION</b> This examination will need to be accomplished on the computer during the exam period. Thus, you will need to know Windows, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel.	
W	Oct. 1	No Class - Rosh Hashanah (however, POLS 7220 will meet as usual beginning at 7:05 p.m.)	
M	Oct. 6	ADVISEMENT FOR SPRING SEMESTER DISCUSSION OF OPERATIONS-RESEARCH PAPER Offshoring and Outsourcing	Ch. 8
W	Oct. 8	Analyzing the Delivery System	Ch. 9
M	Oct. 13	Analyzing the Delivery System Problems 9.1, 9.2	
W	Oct. 15	Service Quality Microsoft Access	Ch. 10
M	Oct. 20	The Six Sigma Approach	Ch. 11
W	Oct. 22	Optimizing Usage of Capacity	Ch. 12
M	Oct. 27	Optimizing Usage of Capacity Problems 12.1, 12.4	
W	Oct. 29	Inventory Management SPSS	Ch. 13
M	Nov. 3	PREREGISTRATION FOR SPRING SEMESTER Inventory Management Problem 13.5	
W	Nov. 5	Queuing Theory	Ch. 14
M	Nov. 10	Queuing Theory Problems 14.1, 14.2	

W	Nov. 12	Scheduling Microsoft PowerPoint	Ch. 15
M	Nov. 17	Scheduling Problems 15.1(a,c,d), 15.2(a,c,d)	
W	Nov. 19	Locating Service Centers	Ch. 16
M	Nov. 24	OPERATIONS-MANAGEMENT APPLICATION PAPER DUE Locating Service Centers Problems 16.1, 16.6	
W	Nov. 26	No Class - Thanksgiving Eve	
M	Dec. 1	Review	

W Dec. 3 **FINAL EXAMINATION** (5:30-7:30 p.m.)

This examination will need to be accomplished on the computer during the exam period. Thus, you will need to know Windows, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Access, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, and SPSS.

#### **QUESTIONS THAT MAY APPEAR ON THE M.P.A. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION**

1. Name at least *four* distinct variables that a would-be entrepreneur or founder would take into account in order to develop a potentially useful strategy for creating a new enterprise.
2. What kind of people gravitate toward interactive Web sites that process transactions (such as sales)? What features of a Web site gratify such individuals? What features might alienate such individuals?
3. An agency or organization provides a core product or service, but what *other* features of a transaction determine the level of service that a customer receives and his perceived "experience"?
4. Identify *four* distinct advantages that might motivate management to separate the front office and the back office.
5. What motivates the management of some organizations to outsource some of their functions? What are possible disadvantages of outsourcing?
6. What behaviors of a government agency determine the level of quality of its service to the public? What

*attitude* of management and front-line employees would be most likely to produce high-quality service to the public?

7. Why do transportation companies, hospitality establishments, and some other service providers overbook? How do they determine how much overbooking to do? What happens to those who are "bumped"?
8. The basic EOQ model allows an operations manager to calculate  $q^*$ . What is  $q^*$ ? What is the effect of ordering  $q^*$  units?
9. Why do waiting lines develop in service facilities? What might management do to constructively manage the waiting line (e.g., to reduce the annoyance felt by people in the queue or to reduce the length of a customer's waiting time)?
10. In using scheduling processes such as PERT, how do operations managers calculate the estimate of how much time is necessary to complete a project?
11. Explain the purpose, logic, and method of the "gravity model of demand."

#### Vocabulary

Coincidence and  
diversity of demand  
Simulation  
Load factor  
Responsiveness

Accessibility  
Microsoft Access  
Capacity  
SPSS