Topics in Public Administration        The BP Oil Spill and Federalism

  Fully Online: Spring Semester 2012,   Term C (March 1 – May 5)

Professor:
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URL for eLearning log-in page: https://elearning.uwf.edu

Course Description

The Government of the United States is based on Federalism as established by the U.S. Constitution. The federal government and state governments are granted specific exclusive powers and share other powers. This course provides an opportunity for the student to become informed about Federalism and the roles played by federal, state and local government agencies and their administrators in addressing regional and national crises. As a case study, class members will learn about the environmental, economic, and social consequences of the April 20, 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and analyze administrative factors that may have contributed to the disaster. Class members will also consider the role of the United States government and coastal state governments in the prevention of future offshore oil spills.

Students are expected to apply their critical thinking skills to controversial issues in their responses to discussion forum topics and in their answers to weekly Dropbox questions. In addition, students have the opportunity to apply creative problem-solving skills to complex problems associated with intergovernmental responses to environmental and economically damaging events. In developing analyses and arriving at conclusions regarding the topics discussed in the course, students are expected to apply their understanding of the democratic foundation of American Public Administration, as opposed to administrative systems and practices found in other countries.

The general format for the class is online discussion / participation with student analyses of selected articles and case studies taken from the American Public Administration literature and other relevant sources of information. In addition to commenting on Discussion Forum topics, students will respond to Dropbox questions on a weekly basis. There will be one major test during the course (the mid-term examination). A research / analysis paper will be required dealing with the roles of public administrators, government officials and corporate decision-makers in coping with the regional and national consequences of the April 20, 2010 British Petroleum Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and the prevention of future similar disasters.
**Topics to be addressed in the course**

*The history and evolution of Federalism in the United States*

*The contemporary multi-layered structure of the United States government*

*Current intergovernmental relations practices, tools and issues*

*Intergovernmental concerns in dealing with regional and/or national crises*

*Fundamental conflicts between administrative values and democratic political values*

*Fundamental conflicts between private for-profit corporations and governmental organizations*

*Corporate and governmental policies and decision-making issues prior to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico*

*Analysis of administrative policies and practices that may help to prevent another oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico*

*Intergovernmental strategies to limit damages in the event of future offshore oil spills*

**Student Learning Outcomes**

*Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to*

Summarize the history and evolution of federalism in the United States

Describe the current multi-layered structure of the U.S. government

Identify current controversial intergovernmental issues

Define and give examples of intergovernmental tools such as grants and mandates

Analyze corporate decision-making that may have contributed to the 2010 oil spill

Identify governmental oversight policies or practices that may have contributed to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico

List and discuss the essential components for effective intergovernmental responses to regional crises

Explain the basis for the conflict between the goals of for-profit corporations and the mission of governmental organizations
Textbooks

The following textbooks are required for the course:


In addition, the following books are recommended:

Disaster on the Horizon: High Stakes, High Risks and the Story behind the Deepwater Well Blowout (2010) by Bob Cavnor. White River Junction VT, Chelsea Green-Publisher


Supplemental electronic reserve, website references, and online documents will be utilized. (See list included in content page for the course.)

Special Technology Utilized By Students

Required:

Available if Required:
* PowerPoint Viewer:

* Windows Media Player:
  http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/download/
* Quicktime Player:
* Real Player:
  http://www.real.com/realsuperpass.html
  + Select the "Get RealPlayer - Free" option
Grading / Evaluation

Research / analysis paper requirements and grading standards for the major test and dropbox or discussion forum responses will differ for graduate and undergraduate students. Graduate level responses and analyses are expected of graduate students. The length of the research / analysis essays for graduate students is 2400 to 3000 words, with a minimum of 7 references. The length of the research / analysis essays for undergraduate students is 1800 to 2100 words, with a minimum of 5 references.
(Note: Additional information will be provided in Session I.)

Student performance will be evaluated as follows:

Assignments

- Mid-Term Examination (online time-limited, open-book exam)
  100 points
- Research / Analysis Paper (due the final week of the course)
  100 points
- Online Discussion Forum and Dropbox Analyses (i.e., weekly assignments)
  200 points (100 for the Discussion Forum and 100 for Dropbox responses)

Total possible points for course: 400

Note regarding Online Discussion and Dropbox Analyses

- Regular participation in the assigned discussion forums and timely completion of the Dropbox analyses are expected. If, in the judgment of the instructor, there is a failure on the part of a student to participate in the online threaded discussions regularly and to a substantial degree, such behavior will have a detrimental effect upon the student's grade.
- Failure to complete Dropbox analyses in a timely and professional manner will have a negative impact on the student’s grade.
- Students should utilize the weekly assignment grades and the mid-term exam grade as guidance from the instructor with respect to meeting class expectations. (Note: There will be no dropbox questions or discussion forum assignments the week of the mid-term examination)

Letter grade equivalencies are as follows:

Percentage Range  Letter Grade:

* 95 - 100        A
* 90 – 94         A-
* 87 – 89         B+
* 84 – 86         B
* 80 – 83         B-
* 77 – 79         C+
* 74 – 76         C
* 70 – 73         C-
* 67 – 69         D+
* 64 – 66         D
* 60 – 63         D-
* < 60            F
Expectations for Academic Conduct / Plagiarism Policy

* As members of the University of West Florida, we commit ourselves to honesty. As we strive for excellence in performance, integrity—personal and institutional—is our most precious asset.

* Honesty in our academic work is vital, and we will not knowingly act in ways which erode that integrity.

* Accordingly, we pledge not to cheat, nor to tolerate cheating, nor to plagiarize the work of others.

* We pledge to share community resources in ways that are responsible and that comply with established policies of fairness. Cooperation and competition are means to high achievement and are encouraged. Indeed, cooperation is expected unless our directive is to individual performance.

* We will compete constructively and professionally for the purpose of stimulating high performance standards.

* Finally, we accept adherence to this set of expectations for academic conduct as a condition of membership in the UWF academic community.

Students are advised to access the plagiarism tutorial at the following link:

http://library.uwf.edu/research/onlinetutorials/plagiarism

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students can access The Student Code of Conduct at the UWF web site and should familiarize themselves with the University of West Florida student rules, regulations, and expected behavior.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

Students with special needs who require specific examination-related or other course-related accommodations should contact the Student Disability Resource Center. SDRC will provide the student with a letter for the instructor.

The Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) at the University of West Florida supports an inclusive learning environment for all students. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that hinder your full participation, such as time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos and podcasts, please notify the instructor or the SDRC as soon as possible. You may contact the SDRC office by e-mail at sdrc@uwf.edu or by phone at (850) 474-2387. Appropriate academic accommodations will be determined based on the documented needs of the individual.
Emergency Information and Course Continuity

In the case of severe weather or other emergency, the campus might be closed and classes cancelled. Official closures and delays are announced on the UWF website and broadcast on WUWF-FM.

Weather Emergency Information
WUWF-FM (88.1MHz) is the official information source for the University. Any pertinent information regarding closings, cancellations, and the re-opening of campus will be broadcast.

Emergency plans for the University of West Florida related to inclement weather are available on the following UWF web pages:

Information about hurricane preparedness plans is available on the UWF web site: [http://uwfemergency.org/hurricaneprep.cfm](http://uwfemergency.org/hurricaneprep.cfm)

Information about other emergency procedures is available on the UWF web site: [http://uwfemergency.org/](http://uwfemergency.org/)