Networks Course Syllabus

Course Syllabus

Challenges regionally, nationally and internationally increasingly call for fast, flexible and targeted responses that can be best delivered by networks. A challenge for managers is that the language of networks has not caught up with the practice of networks. In the absence of the clarity provided by language, networks struggle to develop in emergency response situations and other situations where delay can be extremely costly.

This course develops in-depth understanding of the language and practice of networks from the politics of designing, and, evaluating networks.

The research on networks has shifted from making the case that networks are replacing hierarchies to explaining the dynamics, features, and factors that make for effective network design, management, and evaluation. In a variety of professional fields ranging from health care to planning to policy analysis to public administration, a shared characteristic is engagement in networks across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

The proposed course offers the following five features:

1) Experiential learning through:
   a. simulations,
   b. negotiation exercises,
   c. case studies,
   d. small group exercises,
   e. team building processes,
   f. presentation practice, and
   g. seminar discussion.

2) Building on the increasing research on how networks successfully respond to complex challenges

3) Teaching the vertical (intergovernmental) dimension of network dynamic, as well as the horizontal (across the public, nonprofit, and private sector) character of networks.

4) A multi-disciplinary approach to the readings drawing on public management, public policy, political science, sociology, health policy, planning, management, leadership studies, and additional disciplines and professional fields.

5) Building skills of the students at five levels: individual, team, organizational, community, and institutional

This course builds your skills and knowledge to design, negotiate, manage, navigate, and evaluate programs, policies, initiatives, and projects involving networks.

The course offers opportunities for shared experiences among students from different professions, different levels of government, and the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

This course focuses on network governance as forms of interactions across public, nonprofit, and for-profit sectors, with analyses and applications. An important focus is recognition that the effective dialogue on various complex social problems and opportunities requires the combined strengths of the public, for profit, philanthropic, and nonprofit sectors. Of particular interest are the varied mechanisms in play across sectors and place-based approaches, not only in the United States, but also globally. The case discussions throughout are place-based examples.

Initially, the readings and class exercises develop the case for networks and demonstrate why networks are needed. A simulation exercise called Meta-4 develops a shared experience in the seminar for why networks are difficult to build. Throughout the seminar, the experiential learning models the similar experience of professionals who develop network arrangements: the movement from ambiguity to shared understandings and then to agreement.
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Learning Objectives
1) An increased ability to design, manage, and evaluate networks.
2) An understanding of governance trends and constraints in the public, for-profit, and nonprofit sectors.
3) Connecting different mechanisms for networks with varied outcomes.
4) Develop skills for consensus building, conflict resolution, and leadership in building networks.
5) Improved analytical and presentation skills.
6) An increased capacity to work through ambiguity and complex problem solving challenges.

Course Requirements
1) One short writing assignment (not to exceed three pages, double-spaced) analyzing a research article on an actual network. Please answer the questions in Appendix 1 for this memo.
2) Written two-hour examination at the start of session seven.
3) The quality of class discussion, with succinct and to the point discussion.
4) Team project: Each team project is an analysis of a real network arrangement. Each team of four to six persons will submit a written analysis of 8 to 12 pages, double-spaced and make a presentation of 20 minutes to the class. Please respond to the requirements of Appendix 1 for this assignment.
5) Individual reflection paper of at least four pages due at the course completion.

Required Readings
1) Articles as listed and available in class reader
6) Readings downloaded or ordered from the IBM Center for the Business of Government or PwC
7) Materials that will be distributed during class.

Topics and Assigned Reading

Session 1

Government to Governance: Why Networks
Mechanisms: markets, states, and organizations
Issues: institutions, urban governance, international perspectives, complex problems

Self Introductions
SMALL GROUP EXERCISE: Discussion and report out of expectations for course.

Why Network Building Is Difficult
CLASS EXERCISE SIMULATION: Meta-4
Session 2

Networks As Addressing Coordination Challenges

**Mechanisms:** Interagency-collaboration, politics and design, governance, and coordination  
**Issues:** homeland security, emergency response, and outcomes


Session 3

Rationales for Cross-sectoral Governance: Alternatives to Hierarchy

**Mechanisms:** Interagency-collaboration, contracting-out, and networks  
**Issues:** forms of cooperation, formation of networks, community health, and jurisdiction


Session 4

Networks and Contracts: Transaction Cost Analysis

**Mechanisms:** Contracts, public-private partnerships, service production, service delivery, networks  
**Issues:** principal-agent, efficiency, end-users, social services, urban parks


Getting to the Networks: “Tipping Point” and the Micro-Dynamics of Building Networks

PROJECT TEAM DISCUSSION: membership, research topic and roles for high performance teams

Session 5 and 6

Managing the Dynamics of Networks and Contracts

**Mechanisms:** contracts, privatization, management, monitoring  
**Issues:** public service delivery, public engagement, public value


CLASS EXERCISE: “Government/Nonprofit Contracting Exercise” (Instruction distributed in class)

PRESENTATIONS: Discussion of Presentations Expectations- hand-outs
- Edward Tufte- 17 suggestions for effective presentations
- Edward Tufte- why effective presentations make a difference: The Challenger shuttle

Session 7 and 8

Negotiation, Collaboration, and Conflict Resolution Needed to Build Networks

Mechanisms: negotiations collaborations, and decision-making processes
Issue arenas: community development

Fischer, Ury & Patton, Getting to Yes

CLASS EXERCISE: “Government/Nonprofit Contracting Exercise”- debriefing with Getting to Yes
Mid-Term- two hour written exam

Session 9

Authentic Community Engagement and Participation: Building Networks with the Community

Mechanisms: participation, collaboration, and transparency
Issue arenas: civic engagement, accountability, and community health

Session 10

Networks through Community-Based Governance

Mechanisms: local adaptation, autonomy, partnerships, and joint-power authorities
Issue arenas: globalization, common-pool resources, health, and infrastructure


Session 11

Evaluating Network Performance


Session 12

Network Accountability

Mechanisms: public-private partnerships, decision-making, oversight
Issues: organizational culture, accountability, financing, community development


TEAM PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Session 13

Leadership Practices and Networks


CLASS EXERCISE: Leadership questions: Experience, Model and Legacy

CLASS EXERCISE: Leadership Strategy Model applied: Outcomes → Assets → Behaviors → Outcomes

TEAM PROJECT PRESENTATIONS
Session 14

Networks: Where do we go from here?


IBM (2006). Global Innovation Outlook

http://healthcare.pwc.com/hc2020.html#, pp. 2-8 (Executive Summary only).

www.businessofgovernment.org.

TEAM PROJECT PRESENTATIONS
CLASS EXERCISE: Surprises, Unlearning, and Learning
Appendix One
Network Team Project

The team project for this course is an analysis of a real public sector or non-profit sector network. Students will clear the selection with faculty for this course. Students will join teams. Each group will:

1. **Select** an actual network involving public sector or non-profit sector organizations.

2. Find an actual arrangement to study. This search may take some time, so you should begin looking early. *Each team will present a network selection and research topic in class session 5.*

3. Read material about the network selected.

4. Interview participants in the networks- try for a cross section.

5. **Analyze** the network challenges, draw on class readings and discussions. Please answer:
   - **Context:** What is background and setting for the network?
   - **Motivation:** Why was this network formed?
   - **Expectations:** What were the group members expectations going into the interview?
   - **Surprises:** What surprised you most about this network?
   - **Focus:** What type of network is this- please explain drawing on the typology of Milward and Provan.
   - **Assessment:** To what extent has this network succeeded in moving forward on the challenge? Is your assessment shared by the participants? Why or why not?
     → **Note your ability to assess success is likely to be limited, do the best you can.**
   - **Lessons:** What have you learned that enhances your understanding of networks?

6. **Present** the analysis to the class using a Power Point or Apple Keynote presentation format. The presentation should last between 18 to 20 minutes, with an additional 10 minutes allocated to address questions from the class.

7. **Provide** a written report of the analysis to faculty (8 to 12 pages double space). The report is due two weeks after the presentation.

   Both the oral presentation and the written report will be included in the project grade.