

DRAFT

Professor C.L. McNeely

Office Hours: Tuesdays/Fairfax, 3-4 p.m.; Thursdays/Arlington, 3-4 p.m.

Fall 2003

PUBP 503-003

Culture, Organization, and Technology

Thursdays, 4:30-7:10 p.m.

Effective policy analysis, program design, implementation, and management often depend on understanding the culture(s) of the organizations and individuals involved. Whether we are talking about issues related to professional cultures, bureaucratic, technological, or business systems, or processes of organizational and societal change, cultural knowledge can be a crucial determinant of success or failure. This course focuses on the dynamic role of culture in societal, political, and economic processes as they affect organizations, with special attention to technological change and influence at various levels of analysis. Thus, with the aim of providing both practical and intellectual skills, the objectives of the course include learning to

- observe and describe culture at the organizational and societal levels;
- observe and describe important cultural and organizational features of target groups and populations;
- identify cultural enablers and barriers in policy development, program design, and implementation; and
- observe and describe the interaction between technologies and cultural and organizational systems, and their relative effects.

Moreover, the course introduces students to a variety of analytical techniques (e.g., ethnographic case methods, structured and unstructured interviews, participant-observation, survey research, etc.) for addressing relevant issues in culture, organization, and technology.

Requirements

All students are expected to come to class prepared, having completed the required readings for each week, and to participate in class discussions. In addition, students are each required to make one panel presentation, for which they will also facilitate discussion, and to prepare four brief essays addressing selected topics that will draw on assigned readings and serve as talking points in class. Other requirements include completion of two observational exercises and an examination. Grades are determined as follows:

- class participation: 20%
- presentation and essays: 30%
- observational exercise #1: 10%
- observational exercise #2: 20%
- examination: 20%

Reading

In addition to a wide variety of selected articles and book chapters, required reading for the course includes the following books:

Agar, M.H. 1996. *The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography*. New York: Academic Press.

Mann, Jim. 1997. *Beijing Jeep: A Case Study of Western Business in China*. Boulder: Westview Press.

McLaughlin, J., P. Rosen, and D. Skinner, and A. Webster. 1999. *Valuing Technology: Organizations, Culture, and Change*. London: Routledge.

Wilson, James Q. 1989. *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*. New York: Basic Books.