



# E-PARCC

## COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE

Syracuse University

Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs

Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration

## **Networks and Public Management**

### **Course Description and Strategy**

#### **I. RATIONALE AND AUDIENCE**

##### **A. Why teach about networks and public management?**

Contemporary public managers must learn to build critical linkages across organizational boundaries while simultaneously managing the internal functions of their agencies. Public policy is often implemented through networks, as structures involving multiple nodes—agencies and organizations—with multiple linkages through which public goods and services are planned, designed, produced, and delivered. These public policy network structures have many dimensions: they can be formal or informal; centralized or decentralized; permanent or temporary; global, inter-sectoral or intergovernmental; and based functionally in a specific policy or policy area. They may require public managers at federal, state, and local levels of government to operate in structures of exchange and production with the profit making and not for profit sectors. At all levels, they require a different and potentially more complex approach to management than the traditional notions of “command and control.”

Although contemporary public management courses usually address some of the considerations related to network management, they have a broader set of objectives and often cannot do justice to its scope and complexity. Moreover, traditional public management or policy classes may overlook the value of pedagogical approaches particularly suited to learning about network management, including problem-based learning and group-based learning.

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These were some of the conclusions made by scholars of collaborative public management at a conference hosted by Syracuse University's Maxwell School in September 2006. In a special session on the educational needs of present and future public managers, conference attendees emphasized the value in offering management courses that included negotiation and consensus-building skills, creative and critical thinking, experiential learning, and comparative analysis.

## **B. Value of the proposed approach**

By emphasizing the 'core competencies' of network management, this course offers students a cohesive, functional approach to understanding and working in networks. Without such an approach, students risk learning the skills of network management – strategic planning, evaluation, negotiating and bargaining – in a piecemeal and vastly less useful way.

Our course plan also has the following advantages:

- ◇ Emphasis on the practical and contextual application of network theories.
- ◇ Opportunities for comparative analysis.
- ◇ Interdisciplinary.
- ◇ Coverage of the U.S. and European literature on networks.
- ◇ Emphasis on application, experimentation and experiential learning (in a format that allows instructors to add a service-learning component if desired).
- ◇ Balance between team-based projects and individual assignments.
- ◇ Emphasis on student participation and contributions, with minimal reliance on the lecture as an instructional strategy.
- ◇ Carefully selected readings that represent the most empirically grounded research on networks.
- ◇ Inclusion of readings from both scholarly and practitioner sources.

## **C. Targeted Students**

The audience for this course is the current or prospective public manager seeking a Master of Public Affairs or Public Policy degree or its equivalent. Doctoral-level work is not included in this syllabus, but could easily be incorporated into the course plan through additional literature reviews or research plans. The syllabus is designed with the assumption that students already have a minimal understanding of the policy process, analytic tools, and theories of leadership and motivational behavior. Ideally, the course should follow one or more introductory-level classes in the public policy process and/or organizational behavior.

## **II. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Course Objectives**

Although networks involve contexts where government is not a major actor or is not an actor at all, this course focuses on public policy networks where government is ultimately held accountable for the satisfactory delivery of public goods and services. The course is designed to ensure that students develop a strong foundation in network management concepts by focusing on the core competencies required to successfully manage network situations. A competency-based approach allows students to:

1. Identify the fundamental changes in public management that have led to greater inter-agency and inter-sectoral collaboration;
2. Understand the differences between managing hierarchies and managing networks;
3. Learn through practice how to apply various techniques and tools for improving the management of network processes;
4. Suggest courses of action for improving performance of public management networks.

### **B. Course readings**

The course relies on selections from three books (Agranoff, Mandell, Goldsmith and Eggers), governmental reports, news articles, and selected journal articles. The reading material draws on both scholarly and practitioner resources, and is designed to offer students exposure to a broad range of scholarly and professional writing on network management.

### **C. Course outline and rationale**

The course is organized into three multi-week units on network management: contextual issues, core skills and competencies, and applications of the competencies. Each unit is grounded in ideas related to managing networks, including an understanding of their rationales, scope, and the determinants of success and failure. These units will be taught with a balanced incorporation of theoretical and empirical research on networks and real-world examples of effective and ineffective networks.

#### **1. Introduction to Networked Public Management**

The goal of this three-week course unit is to develop a student's understanding of why networks emerge, why their use is increasing, and how their nature might vary. Students begin with a classroom simulation of a public policy decision in a networked setting. The unit continues with an introduction to network history and context with selections from Agranoff, Goldsmith and Eggers, O'Toole, Podolny and Page, and Powell. The "new shape" of the public sector is described and general differences between managing hierarchies and managing networks are discussed. The impetus toward interagency and

inter-sectoral “collaboration” is also addressed (Fosler), along with the pace and rate of social change, the presence of so-called “wicked problems,” and the use of mandated collaboration within the context of implementing intergovernmental programs (Hall and O’Toole). Alternative types of networks are presented, with emphasis on their various dimensions (scope and degree of interaction, temporary/permanent, cross-national/cross-sectoral, federal/state/local, formal/informal, mandated/voluntary).

## **2. Making Networks Work**

This five-week unit addresses the tools that can be used to design networks, allocate resources, create productive interaction among network actors, evaluate performance, and resolve conflicts. Here, students are introduced to the principles of collaborative public management, including effective network leadership, resource acquisition, political support, and other capacity considerations. Authors represented in this set of readings include Huxham on “collaborative advantage,” Granovetter on “weak ties,” Provan and Milward on modes of governance and network performance evaluation, excerpts from Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan on network actors, O’Toole, Meier, Nicholson-Crotty and Page on accountability considerations, and Gazley, Brudney, Thomson and Perry on collaborative goals in inter-organizational and inter-sectoral settings. Readings from Agranoff and McGuire, Coleman and Deutsch, Elliott and Straus introduce students to consensus-building and conflict resolution tools in networked and non-networked settings.

In this unit, students will also engage in a multi-week simulation of a hypothetical network (see simulation description in the syllabus). Students will assume a role within the network and learn to practice the managerial skills and competencies addressed during this unit.

The general set of core competencies addressed in this unit includes the following:

### **a. Designing the Network**

There are many different design choices for networks. Students will learn the fundamentals of designing and building the network, including recognizing the different governance structures (e.g., self-governed, lead-organization) that can be used. This includes facilitating agreement on leadership and administrative roles; helping to establish an identity and culture for the network, even if temporary or continually changing; and assisting in developing a working structure for the network (i.e., committee involvement, network “assignments”). Students should also be able to identify critical actors to involve in a network. The right persons for the network are those who possess the policy making resources—finances, knowledge, information, expertise, experience, legal authority, labor—on which the achievement of network goals will depend. Students will learn the tools of evaluating the potential contribution of these actors and analyzing the effect of network activities on the actors.

### **b. Creating a Constituency, Stimulating Interaction, and Collaboration**

Students will learn the importance of creating a key constituency for the network’s

operations. Such skills include mobilizing support both within and outside of the networks, measuring network progress, and publicizing network accomplishments, especially the “small wins.” This unit also allows the student to develop an understanding of networks as potential vehicles for democratic governance and other “new governance” concepts. Students will learn tools that can be used to create and enhance the conditions for favorable, productive interaction among network actors. The network manager seeks to achieve cooperation between actors while preventing, minimizing, or removing blockages to the cooperation. This involves changing and/or managing the perceptions of the actors regarding the network in order to facilitate the sharing of information and building consensus. The competencies required to facilitate exchange consist of diplomatic skills involving persuasion and the ability to facilitate and mediate discussion. Also, team building techniques and the basics of human relations approaches will be addressed.

### **c. Goal Development, Accountability, and Performance Evaluation**

Joint goal setting fosters a “program rationale” for the network. Strategic planning by participants in the network is one important way to help develop an overall purpose and framework for the collaborative effort. Students will be exposed to planning techniques for answering the “what” question (Goldsmith and Eggers) regarding the mission and purpose of the network.

### **d. Bargaining, Negotiation and Conflict Management**

Network managers must understand and develop mechanisms for resolving conflict. Conflict is not always detrimental, but the existence of frequent conflict often prohibits the establishment of trust among network members (see the work of Klijn, Milward and Provan). While the notion of simultaneous competition and collaboration within networks will be introduced, this unit will focus on helping students learn the skills of negotiation for “getting to yes” and moving network operations from possible confrontation to cooperation. Issues related to organizational “turf” will be addressed and other competencies such as bargaining and negotiation can be adapted for the resolution of conflict within the network.

## **3. Situations and Examples**

The final unit of this course offers students an opportunity to learn about networks in the context of specific policy arenas. Over six weeks, students will learn about the prevalence of networks in various policy settings with exposure to the scholarship on environmental and natural resource management (Imperial, Bingham et al., Koontz and Thomas, and Ostrom); economic development (Agranoff and McGuire, Gordon and Radin et al.); homeland security and emergency management (Moynihan, Waugh and Streib, Drabek and McEntire, Kettl, Kiefer and Montjoy); human services and health care (Isett, Provan, Milward and Lynn); and knowledge management and information technology (Brown et al.). Networks in a global context are addressed with selected readings from Mandell, Reinicke and Deng. This course unit will be organized to have students conduct reviews of

the literature and present on the scope of networked public management in their particular policy areas of interest.

The course will conclude with a discussion of whether and how networks are really “managed.” Notions of “co-governance” and “steering/rowing” will be used as a framework for understanding the potential for networks to both help and hinder goals of public accountability and responsiveness.

### **III. Teaching Strategy and Methods**

This course uses a competency-based approach with an emphasis on applied and experiential exercises. Students will participate in simulations, role-playing exercises, and case studies, and will also be exposed to actual network managers as invited guest speakers.

#### **A. Simulations and Classroom Exercises**

Students will take part in multi-week simulations of networks whereby each student will assume a role within a hypothetical or simulated network. Managerial skills will be practiced by each student over the several weeks of learning the core competencies. For example, a real world network may be used as a simulation. Actors will assume various positions within the network, representing tribal governments, state government, local governments, business and conservation groups, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Each actor in the network will, by the end of the course, be expected to demonstrate the core competencies.

#### **B. Case Studies**

Four case studies of network management will be used in the course. The case method of teaching furthers the development of behavioral skills, grounds the student in issues and problems, and allows the student to interpret real-world experience. In the context of a class on networks, case studies will allow students to understand how variations in network characteristics shape managerial approaches. Students will be asked to assess a specific case situation, identify the general network management issues raised by the case study, and draw out pertinent issues from the case. A case analysis will not be a decision memo as much as it will be an opportunity to apply the skills of network management to a specific situation. Cases are drawn from four different policy areas. In addition to the use of published case studies, a “front page headline” approach (e.g., ongoing hurricane relief and economic development efforts in the Gulf Coast) will be used to help students understand network behavior in current public affairs.

#### **C. Literature Review, News Briefings, and Final Exam**

While the class is designed to promote group learning, three assignments comprising 60% of the final grade test student knowledge and application on an individual level. A literature review offers each student an opportunity to develop familiarity with network applications

in a specific policy area (e.g., emergency response, economic development). News briefings help to keep students engaged in current affairs, and offer opportunities for students to understand networks in context. An essay-based final exam will help students to synthesize and critically reflect on the course readings, discussions, exercises, and lectures.

#### **D. Guest Speakers**

While not explicit in our course outline, this syllabus is designed to offer instructors flexibility in inviting public and private sector managers to make regular presentations to the class. Potential guest speakers might include project managers, grant managers, non-profit service providers, and directors of agencies such as local economic development, health care, or emergency management departments.

### **COMPLETE LIST OF REQUIRED COURSE READINGS (See syllabus for their placement in the course)**

Agranoff, Robert. 2007. *Managing within Networks: Adding Value to Public Organizations*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Agranoff, Robert, and Michael McGuire. 1998. The Intergovernmental Context of Local Economic Development. *State and Local Government Review* 30(3): 150-164.

Agranoff, Robert, and Michael McGuire. 2004. Another Look at Bargaining and Negotiation in Intergovernmental Management. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 14(4): 495-512.

Bingham, Lisa B., David Fairman, Daniel J. Fiorino, and Rosemary O'Leary. 2003. Fulfilling the Promise of Environmental Conflict Resolution. In *The Promise and Performance of Environmental Conflict Resolution*, edited by Rosemary O'Leary and Lisa B. Bingham, 329-351. Washington, DC: Resources for the Future.

Brown, Mary Maureen, Laurence J. O'Toole, Jr., and Jeffrey L. Brudney. 1998. Implementing Information Technology in Government: An Empirical Assessment of the Role of Local Partnerships. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 8(4): 499-525.

Coleman, Peter T., and Morton Deutsch. 2000. Some Guidelines for Developing a Creative Approach to Conflict. In *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, edited by Morton Deutsch and Peter T. Coleman, 355-65. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Drabek, Thomas E., and David A. McEntire. 2002. Emergent Phenomena and Multiorganizational Coordination in Disasters: Lessons from the Research Literature. *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 20(2): 197-224.

Elliott, Michael. 1999. The Use of Facilitators, Mediators, and Other Professional Neutrals. In *The Consensus Building Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Reaching Agreement*, edited

- by Lawrence Susskind, Sarah McKearnan, and Jennifer Thomas-Larmer. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fosler, R. Scott. 2002. *Working Better Together: How Government, Business, and Nonprofit Organizations Can Achieve Public Purposes through Cross-sector Collaboration, Alliances, and Partnerships* (Executive Summary). Washington, DC: Independent Sector.
- Gazley, Beth. 2007. Beyond the Contract: The Scope and Nature of Informal Government-Nonprofit Partnerships. *Public Administration Review* (forthcoming).
- Gazley, Beth, and Jeffrey L. Brudney. 2007. The Purpose (and Perils) of Government-Nonprofit Partnerships. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 36(3): 389-415.
- Goldsmith, Stephen and William D. Eggers. 2004. *Governing by Network: The New Shape of the Public Sector*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.
- Gordon, Victoria. 2007. Partners or Competitors? Perceptions of Regional Economic Development Cooperation in Illinois. *Economic Development Quarterly* 21(1): 60-78.
- Granovetter, Mark. 1973. The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6): 1360-1380.
- Hall, Thad E., and Laurence J. O'Toole. 2004. Shaping Formal Networks through the Regulatory Process. *Administration and Society* 36(2): 186-207.
- Huxham, Chris. 2003. Theorizing Collaboration Practice. *Public Management Review* 5(3): 401-423.
- Imperial, Mark T. 2005. Using Collaboration as a Governance Strategy: Lessons from Six Watershed Management Programs. *Administration and Society* 37(3): 281-320.
- Isett, Kimberly Roussin, and Keith G. Provan. 2005. The Evolution of Dyadic Interorganizational Relationships in a Network of Publicly Funded Nonprofit Agencies. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 15(1): 149-165.
- Kettl, Donald. 2003. Contingent Coordination: Practical and Theoretical Problems for Homeland Security. *American Review of Public Administration* 33(3): 253-77.
- Kettl, Donald F. 2006. Managing Boundaries in American Administration: The Collaboration Imperative. *Public Administration Review* 66(s1): 10-19.
- Kiefer, John J., and Robert S. Montjoy. 2006. Incrementalism before the Storm: Network Performance for the Evacuation of New Orleans. *Public Administration Review* 66(s1): 122-130.

Koontz, Tomas, and Craig W. Thomas. 2006. What Do We Know and Need to Know about the Environmental Outcomes of Collaborative Management? *Public Administration Review* 66 (s1): 111-121.

Lynn Jr., Laurence E. 1996. Assume a Network: Reforming Mental Health Services in Illinois. *Journal of Public Administration Research & Theory* 6(2): 297-314.

Mandell, Myrna P. (ed.). 2001. *Getting Results through Collaboration: Networks and Network Structures for Public Policy and Management*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books.

Mandell, Myrna P., and Toddi A. Steelman. 2003. Understanding What Can Be Accomplished Through Interorganizational Innovations: The Importance of Typologies, Context and Management Strategies. *Public Management Review* 5(2): 197-224.

McEntire, David A. 2002. Coordinating Multi-Organisational Responses to Disaster: Lessons from the March 28, 2000, Fort Worth Tornado. *Disaster Prevention and Management* 11(5): 369-379.

McGuire, Michael. 2006. Collaborative Public Management: Assessing What We Know and How We Know It. *Public Administration Review* 66(s1): 33-43.

Meier, Kenneth J., and Laurence J. O'Toole. 2003. Public Management and Educational Performance: The Impact of Managerial Networking. *Public Administration Review* 63(6): 689-699.

Milward, H. Brinton, and Keith G. Provan. 2006. *A Manager's Guide to Choosing and Using Collaborative Networks*. IBM Center for The Business of Government.

Moynihan, Donald P. 2005. *Leveraging Collaborative Networks in Infrequent Emergency Situations*. IBM Center for The Business of Government.

Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1-2.

O'Toole, Laurence J. 1997. Treating Networks Seriously: Practical and Research-Based Agendas in Public Administration. *Public Administration Review* 57(1): 45-52.

O'Toole, Laurence J., Kenneth J. Meier, and Sean Nicholson-Crotty. 2005. Managing Upward, Downward, and Outward: Networks, Hierarchical Relationships, and Performance. *Public Management Review* 7(1): 45-68.

Page, Stephen. 2004. Measuring Accountability for Results in Interagency Collaboratives. *Public Administration Review* 64(5): 591-606.

- Podolny, Joel M., and Karen L. Page. 1998. Network Forms of Organization. *Annual Review of Sociology* 24(1): 57-76.
- Powell, Walter W. 1990. Neither Market nor Hierarchy: Network Forms of Organization. *Research in Organizational Behavior* 12: 295-336.
- Provan, Keith G., and Patrick Kenis. 2005. Modes of Network Governance and Implications for Network Management and Effectiveness. Presented at the Eighth National Public Management Research Conference, Los Angeles, CA, September 29 - October 1.
- Provan, Keith G., and H. Brinton Milward. 1995. A Preliminary Theory of Interorganizational Effectiveness: A Comparative Study of Four Community Mental Health Systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 40(1): 1-33.
- Provan, Keith G., and H. Brinton Milward. 2001. Do Networks Really Work? A Framework for Evaluating Public Sector Organizational Networks. *Public Administration Review* 61(4): 414-423.
- Radin, Beryl A., Robert Agranoff, Ann O'M. Bowman, Gregory C. Buntz, Steven J. Ott, Barbara S. Romzek, and Robert H. Wilson. 1996. *New Governance for Rural America: Creating Intergovernmental Partnerships*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas. Chapters 4, 6-7.
- Reinicke, Wolfgang H., Francis M. Deng, et al. 2000. *Critical Choices: The United Nations, Networks, and the Future of Global Governance*. Global Public Policy Institute.
- Straus, David A. 1999. Designing a Consensus Building Process Using a Graphic Road Map. In *The Consensus Building Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Reaching Agreement*, edited by Lawrence Susskind, Sarah McKernan, and Jennifer Thomas-Larmer, 137-168. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Termeer, C.J.A.M., and Joop F.M. Koppenjan. 1997. Managing Perceptions in Networks. In *Managing Complex Networks*, edited by Walter J.M. Kickert, Erik-Hans Klijn, and Joop F.M. Koppenjan, 79-97. London: Sage Publications.
- Thomson, Ann Marie, and James L. Perry. 2006. Collaboration Processes: Inside the Black Box. *Public Administration Review* 66 (s1): 20-32.
- Vangen, Siv, and Chris Huxham. 2003. Nurturing Collaborative Relations: Building Trust in Interorganizational Collaboration. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 39(1): 5-31.
- Waugh Jr., William L., and Gregory Streib. 2006. Collaboration and Leadership for Effective Emergency Management. *Public Administration Review* 66(s1): 131-140.