

Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences



POLS1223 Theory of Organisations and Public Action

[60h] 6 credits

Teacher(s): Christian de Visscher, Françoise Piérard
Language: French
Level: First cycle

Aims

This practical examination of the State expands on the Political Science (I) course and analyses the role of the Government, the Civil Service and other bodies charged with public service missions in terms of what they do and do not do. The topics covered in the course include the operation of government organisations in general and the public sector administration in particular, issues of management in the public sector, and public policies developed and applied across a range of fields. These different topic areas all contribute to a global understanding of state action.

The course has two main objectives:

- " In global terms: to equip students with an ability to analyse government activity and a capacity for personal reflection, supported by a theoretical apparatus
- " To give students a better understanding of socio-political issues, in particular current changes in the public sector (e.g. the Copernicus public service reform) and the management of specific issues in government (e.g. the question of night flights).

Main themes

1. Public sector organisations
 - " related definitions and concepts
 - " traditional approaches to organisational analysis
 - " sociological approaches to organisational analysis
 - " the theory of the international organisations
 - " case studies
2. public sector administration: development of the public administration in modern society
 - " The internal organisation of the public authorities: from centralisation to fragmentation
 - " The relationship between political power and the public administration (politicisation, "technocracy" #)
 - " The relations between the public administration and the citizens: from distance to participation
3. Public sector management
 - " Legitimacy of public sector organisations and performance management
 - " Outline of managerial practices within public sector organisations (HRM, budget, etc.)
4. Public policies
 - " The cycle of a public policy
 - " Getting issues on the agenda
 - " Programming and political decision
 - " administrative implementation
 - " Impact evaluation

Content and teaching methods

The course is given in the form of lectures. The theoretical concepts are richly illustrated with examples from current affairs in Belgium and abroad. The sessions are intended to have an interactive element (debates, contributions from students in sub-groups) and outside experts may also be invited to participate (testimonies from politicians, civil servants etc).

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

Course entry requirements: Students should have taken the Political Science 1 course.

Evaluation: Written examination at the end of the year. The examination consists of a number of closed, open and semi-open questions (max.10 points), and a short essay requiring students to show a broad understanding of the four subject areas covered in the course (10 points).

Course materials: A course handout and portfolio of reading matter are provided

Other credits in programs

SPOL12BA	Deuxième année de bachelier en sciences politiques	(6 credits)	Mandatory
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