**Course content**

This course will introduce you to major theoretical perspectives on the building blocks, the day-to-day operations, and change processes in public organizations. Where is the borderline between politics and administration? How do bureaucrats prioritize decisions? How does organizational structure and culture affect policy outcomes? How do public organizations change, and why are they difficult to reform? How similar or different are public organizations across countries when it comes to politics-administration relations and administrative reforms? These are some of the fundamental questions addressed in this course.

The course consists of three main parts, each addressing key concepts, major theoretical contributions, and comparative perspectives:

(1) The building blocks of public organizations: individuals, organizations, institutions.

(2) The relationship between politics and administration

(3) Public sector reforms.

The course uses a combination of classic texts, textbook chapters, and empirical applications of major public administration theories. The aim of this course is not only to make you familiar with theoretical perspectives, but also to enable you to use theoretical reasoning in your own empirical analyses.

**Learning outcome**

**Knowledge**

Having completed this course, you will

* have learned about seminal theories about actors and structures in public organizations.
* have learned about different ways of understanding the relation between politics and administration.
* have learned about seminal theories about reform and change in public organizations.
* have learned about the challenges of applying theory in empirical settings.
* have learned about differences between administrations in various contexts.

**Skills**

Having completed this course, you will

* be able to utilize existing theories to analyse actors and structures in public organizations, and how they affect public policies.
* be able to utilize existing theories to analyse how public organizations change over time.
* be able to formulate clear research questions, and to find relevant academic texts.
* be able to write academic texts drawing on relevant literature.
* be able to orally communicate your academic knowledge and provide constructive criticism to other students.

**Competence**

Having completed this course, you will

* have a better understanding of the functioning of public organizations
* have developed the ability to put differences between theories into words
* have developed academic writing skills