**STV4422 – The Politics of Bureaucracy**

**Course content**

The study of bureaucracy is the study of politics. Political decisions affect
bureaucracies, and decisions inside bureaucracies affect politics. Politicians depend
on different types of bureaucracies – ministries, agencies, local authorities – to
prepare and implement public policies. Sometimes politicians deliberately seek to
influence bureaucratic organizations, their personnel, and their decisions to their
favour. They influence bureaucratic decisions through selecting personnel or
structural reorganization, or they design bureaucracies in way that makes it difficult
to pin down responsibility when something goes wrong. They may also seek to
delegitimize and deconstruct bureaucracies. Yet political decisions may also have
inadvertent consequences for how bureaucracies work, such as when bureaucracies
need to implement ever more policies.

A different sort of politics takes place inside bureaucratic organizations. They are not
simply following political directions, but they pursue distinct institutional interests.
Like any other organization, bureaucracies strive for the continuous pursuit of their
goals (“organizational survival”). This is much easier for organizations with a
favourable reputation among relevant stakeholders such as politicians and interest
groups. Policy bureaucracies such as ministries also influence political decisions
more directly. They bring distinct professional perspectives into the policymaking
process. Moreover, coordination inside policy bureaucracies is characterized by
conflict and compromise and has a crucial role in shaping policy proposals developed
by policy bureaucracies.

This course introduces students to multiple middle-range theories about the
interrelation between politics and administration. It covers theoretical approaches
and empirical applications. The course features guest lectures from researchers at
universities cooperating with the University of Oslo in the Circle U. university
alliance.

**Learning outcome**

**Knowledge**

After completing this course, you will:

* Have a solid understanding of the complex interrelations of politics and bureaucracy
* Know about different theoretical explanations for bureaucratic behaviour
* Be familiar with different empirical approaches to study the politics of bureaucracy

**Skills**

After completing this course, you will:

* Have improved your academic writing skills
* Be able to identify and distinguish different types of political and bureaucratic behaviour
* Have improved their ability to critically evaluate academic texts

**Competences**

After completing this course, you will know how to:

* Synthesize and compare theoretical arguments
* Critically evaluate different types of empirical evidence
* Provide empirical examples of theoretical arguments

**Teaching**

**Lectures and seminar**

Compulsory activities

Response papers

* are to be handed in twice
* should be 800-1000 words of length
* should be a reflection of the readings of one lecture
* should apply theoretical insights to an empirical example

Students have to pass all the response papers to sit for the exam. All response papers have to be submitted in the same semester.

All students must orally present an abstract of their term paper and provide comments in a seminar session.

**Examination**

**Term paper**

* is due one week after the last lecture
* has a self-chosen topic that is approved by the lecturer
* should be 3500-4500 words of length
* can include literature not discussed in the course
* can include original empirical analysis
* must meet the formal requirements for submission of written assignments

**Submit assignments in Inspera**

You submit your assignment in the digital examination system Inspera. [Read about how to submit your assignment.](https://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/submissions/)

**Use of sources and citation**

You should familiarize yourself with the rules that apply to [the use of sources and citations](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/sources-citations/). If you violate the rules, you may be suspected of [cheating/attempted cheating](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/cheating/).

**Language of examination**

The examination text is given in English, and you submit your response in English.

**Grading scale**

Grades are awarded on a scale from A to F, where A is the best grade and F is a fail. Read more about [the grading system](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/grading-system/).

**Explanations and appeals**

* [Explanation of grades and appeals](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/explanation-appeal/)

**Resit an examination**

* [Illness at exams / postponed exams](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/illness-postponed/)
* [Resitting an examination](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/new-exam/)

**Special examination arrangements**

Application form, deadline and requirements for [special examination arrangements](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/special-arrangements/).