

**PUAD 731 and GOVT 719**  
**Homeland/Transportation Security Administration**  
**Course Overview and Framing**

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11/2001, it was a common assumption that 9/11 was “The day the world changed,” (Economist, Sept. 15, 2001) or that “Nothing would ever be the same.” For the thousands of victims of the terrorist attacks and their families, this is surely true. Nothing will ever be the same.

Some thoughtful commentators on 9/11 also seemed to believe “that nothing would ever be the same” in American politics, policy, and administration after 9/11. In support of this view, we can point to some remarkable changes that have taken place since 9/11, including the Aviation Security Act of 2001. This act was pushed along by a bi-partisan commitment to address a national crisis, and it was enacted in only ten weeks. Another milestone, put in place approximately one year later, is The Homeland Security Act of 2002. The 2002 legislation not only established a new cabinet department but also served as the catalyst for the largest reorganization of the executive branch in more than 50 years. Included in the new Department of Homeland Security are 22 agencies and more than 170,000 employees, making Homeland Security one of the largest and most complex cabinet departments—and arguably the cabinet department with the most important mission in the American governmental system. In short, organizing and managing the new department is one of the most urgent, important, and demanding challenges in the history of American public administration.

Yet, while the new elements of American politics, policy, and administration generated by 9/11 are highly visible, one might argue that the fundamentals changed very little. For example, critics of the Bush Administration contend that the Administration betrayed its publicly stated commitment to bipartisanship and used the crisis generated by 9/11 as a tool for aggressively advancing partisan interests in national elections, aggressively pursuing a radical domestic policy agenda that had nothing to do with the terrorist attacks, and aggressively pursuing a radical, expansionist, and militaristic foreign policy.

Whether one agrees or disagrees with the critics of the Bush Administration, these contentions can be viewed as unsurprising when examined through the lens of Realpolitik, or through many existing models of politics, policy, and administration. It is well known, for example, that, within the American political system, crises provide “opportunities” for presidents—and particular interests—to consolidate power and to use that power to pursue their own objectives. Likewise, viewed through the lenses of some of our theories and models, the Bush administration’s efforts to silence its critics by labeling them unpatriotic, or by managing White House press briefings in ways that set strict limits on what questions reporters can ask is also unsurprising—even if these actions offend democratic sensibilities. After all, power and politics are intimately connected, and politics and policy are the vehicles through which winners and losers are determined.

In sum, the fundamental question about the extent to which 9/11 has changed (or has not changed) “everything” in American politics, policy, and administration will serve as a backdrop for our study of Homeland/ Transportation Security. Indeed, we will begin and end the class with a discussion of the ways in which models of American politics, policy, and administration serve as useful tools for describing, explaining, and making predictions in the pre and post-9/11 periods.