

Government 1521 – Bureaucratic Politics

Professor Daniel Carpenter

Final Paper Question

A letter writer to the *New York Times* (who sends her letter to the *Crimson*) sounds off on the problems of higher education.

“The Big Three in American higher education (Harvard, Princeton and Yale) are broken, bureaucratic organizations, just like the Big Three in Detroit (Chrysler, Ford, and G.M.). They’re no different, really. Both are big, bureaucratic organizations with dim, short-sighted management and tenured, unaccountable workers. By being bureaucratic, both serve only the wishes of their top management and their unions. For G.M., the top management are the dim executives, with their layers upon layers of white-collar brethren who couldn’t change the oil on their SUVs to save their lives; for Harvard, they are the Presidents, Deans, assistant Deans and assistant-to-the-assistant-to-the-assistant Deans. For the automotive big Three, the unions are the U.A.W; for the three Ivies, they are the tenured faculty. Neither of these institutions generates service for its critical customers (drivers, students), and neither generates benefit for American society. Away with them all.”

Our writer may have a point, but using the theories introduced in this class, and using the Keller and Keller *Making Harvard Modern* book, point out (a) two problems with her comparison of automakers to Ivy League universities and, as your counterargument, (b) two potentially plausible dimensions of her comparison. Remember, there are many ways in which the automotive Big Three differ from the Ivy Big three, *but your differences (and similarities) have to be founded in theories of formal organization.*

Please complete your response to the writer in no more than 4 pages of double-spaced text. Your counterargument will be embedded in your discussion of the two plausible dimensions of the letter writer’s comparison. Your paper is due **Friday, May 22, 2009, at 8PM**. Note that because of the rules governing the grading of final exams, I cannot offer the usual one-third-grade “deduction per day late” policy; any paper received 8:31:00 or after will be graded **a full grade** downwards. Obviously, it is in your best interest to get this paper in exactly on time, and best not to chance the deadline.