

“[Robert Knisely] has consistently been called upon for high-pressure, short-deadline special efforts in a wide variety of federal programs. President Ford’s Clemency Board, the energy crisis, and Vice President Gore’s National Performance Review represent only a partial summary of his ubiquitous presence when a new issue is being faced and a volunteer executive to manage it is needed.”

Reflections on Mobility: Case Studies of Six Federal Executives (May 2000)
The IBM Center for the Business of Government

CHAUTAQUA 2017

2703 • DESIGNING GOVERNMENT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Robert Knisely

Today’s developed societies face increasingly complex, critical, and urgent challenges. Meanwhile, the tools used by governments (grants, contracts, taxes, etc.) have not kept pace. The new discipline of design and the system sciences can offer insights into better interventions. We will discuss how governments can achieve desired goals, both efficiently and effectively, with fewer unintended consequences.

Maximum enrollment: 40 / Ages 16+

Week 1, June 26-28 / M-W / 1:00 p.m.–2:30 p.m.

Turner Conference Room

Fees: 1 week (3 sessions) • \$67

1 session (at door only) • \$27

The goal of this Special Studies course is to explore how governments everywhere can become more efficient and effective by:

- (a) Understanding the problems they face in far greater depth, including both unintended consequences and counterintuitive consequences;
- (b) Using the techniques of the 21st century design sciences to seek out and explore a broader range of possible alternative solutions; and
- (c) Discussing how the systems approach and the design sciences can be brought together and applied to society’s issues through improved legislative techniques and more effective governmental organizations.

We will learn about the 20th Century disciplines of cybernetics, systems theory, and computer modeling of large systems, with the able assistance of SUNY Albany’s Professor Emeritus George P. Richardson, Ph.D. George’s materials are at <http://www.albany.edu/~gpr/>

We will learn about the design sciences by practicing “brainstorming” present day problems, and discussing “crowdsourcing,” both its historical roots and its present-day applications.

We will then discuss in some detail many concerns with American governance today, WITHOUT getting into today’s politics!

See my website, www.government-reform.info, for more about me and about designing government. I started writing about it in 1977. Or see my 2015 seminar presentation at George Washington University, at: <https://youtu.be/COZX9TXWnqY>