Management of Organizations  
Public Affairs 5011

Class: Tuesday/Thursday 4:00-5:15  
Location: Carlson L-122

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Course Overview & Goals
Organizations pervade human life. They are sites of power, innovation, and social change. They can also be places that discourage initiative and reinforce inequalities found in society. Effective organizational management and leadership are critical to achieving broadly beneficial social, economic, and public value. The task is difficult because of the complexity of human behavior in organizations, constrained resources, competing demands of many stakeholders outside of the organization, and pervasive changes in the world we live in. Most of you will work in some kind of organization when you graduate and many, if not most, of you will be managers and leaders during your careers. This course will help prepare you to be an organizational leader in this realm, focusing on empowering you with the courage to act under uncertainty in order to strengthen the effectiveness of your organization. Furthermore, it aims to provide both “the forest” and “the trees”, and give you practice in thinking back and forth between the different levels so that when you approach a problem at one of these levels, you have an awareness of the complexity of the situation at the alternative level.

To create that foundation, we focus on different ways to analyze organizations and develop sound recommendations for change. The course introduces students to some of the major theoretical approaches to organizational analysis, including concepts from sociology, psychology, management, public administration, and political science. Learning to use multiple perspectives is critical because each contributes an alternative understanding of
how to develop and sustain effective organizations. By gaining insight across different theoretical perspectives, students will develop deeper knowledge of how theories provide distinctive windows into understanding behavior in complex social settings. The course is applicable to a wide range of organizational settings, but pays particular attention to studies of nonprofit and governmental settings.

By the completion of this course, I expect that students will be able to:

- Think critically about organizations, especially regarding ways in which they reflect and create power and privilege, the manner in which individuals’ needs and desires interact with, support, or challenge the needs of the organization, and how all of this is influenced by forces outside the boundary of organizations;
- Given this complex understanding, be able to develop actionable recommendations to improve the effectiveness of organizations working for the public good in the context of multiple (and often contested) public purposes and conflicting stakeholder demands; and
- Demonstrate management skills including memo writing, professional oral presentations, and team development and management.

We will meet these objectives through readings, participation in class discussions, mini-lectures, simulations, case analyses, group projects, and the sharing of students’ own experiences. The teaching method is based on an active learning model. This approach requires that students prepare by reading the substantive course readings and cases and come ready to engage in lively conversation about the materials and their own experiences.

- Students are required to come to class engaged and prepared to participate during class discussions. There will be many full-class discussions throughout the semester and the quality of the discussion is dependent on student engagement.
- Quality participation does not just mean that you are speaking during class discussions, but that you are attentive to your peers’ comments and respectful of dissenting or minority viewpoints.
- While in class, electronic equipment, including laptops, is expected to be put away. If you have a legitimate reason as to why you need a laptop out during class, please talk to Professor Oelberger. Should you need to communicate via phone or text during class, please step outside the classroom so as not to disrupt others. Refer to this article for research about using a laptop to take notes versus handwriting class notes. [http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away](http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away)
- Attendance will be taken every class. If you will miss class, please email the T.A., ideally in advance. In addition, you are responsible for meeting with a peer to cover what you missed in class.
This is an introductory, survey course intended for master's students and advanced undergraduates with an interest in organization studies. The readings are highly selective. We will spend limited time on topics about which a full semester is spent in many doctoral or MBA programs. The goal is to expose you to important ideas, and give you some facility with them so that you can approach situations with greater insight and confidence. The course serves as a gateway into other classes offered in the Leadership and Management area of Humphrey, as well as in other arenas of the university.

This syllabus is a proposal of what we will likely do, but we retain the right to alter the content as the semester develops.

You are responsible for reading all course emails and doing the tasks within, as well as staying up to date with changes in the syllabus.

Communication

I believe that learning occurs most effectively through active reflection and conversation with others. To that end, I encourage you to work with others in the class to reflect together on class readings and concepts. I also welcome you to make use of office hours to more fully explore the course content. The TA and I are here for you as resources and want to assist you in your learning.

To this end, both the TA and I have set aside office hours every week for the students in this class. In the first three weeks of the semester, Dr. O. will be setting aside additional time, outside of regular office hours, to meet with students. Although it is not required, we strongly encourage you to schedule office hours with Dr O. in the first three weeks of the semester. We also encourage you to make use of office hours because we feel that learning takes place most effectively through direct conversation. All of your professors are available through office hours to be resources to you and to support your learning, development, and graduate school experience. We encourage you to take advantage of this time not only in this class, but in all of your classes. If office hour times conflict with your schedule, please let us know and we can schedule an alternative time. We require at least a week's notice to schedule an appointment at an alternative time.

Any student who finds it difficult for any reason to engage in full class participation should schedule a time to meet with me as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure participation and optimum learning. In addition, if you have an accommodation letter, please share it with me as soon as possible.

I discourage the use of email for substantive conversation or questions about assignments/grading.
Wellbeing

This course attempts to build knowledge on good management practices through modeling the behaviors you will need to be a good manager. All employees are people, with lives outside of work. This obviously holds for everyone in this class: you are not only students, but friends and daughters and sons and wives and husbands and boyfriends and girlfriends and sisters and brothers and aunts and uncles. In addition, sometimes we need help beyond what a manager, family member, friend, or spiritual leader can offer.

If you or someone you know has difficulties related to anxiety, depression, drug/alcohol dependency, family, eating disorders, finances, or other struggles, I encourage you to use the University of Minnesota’s free, professional counselors who maintain confidentiality. No appointment is needed to speak with a counselor for an urgent need, Monday-Friday, 8:00-4:30.¹ You may also schedule long-term counseling sessions.

If it is after hours or if things feel urgent, 24/7, your options include:

- The Crisis Connection is a nonprofit which provides free and confidential 24-hour telephone crisis counseling to the Twin Cities/Metropolitan area. They can be reached at (612) 301-4673 or (866) 379-6363 toll-free. There is also a men-specific line at (612) 379-6367 or (866) 379-6367. (On all lines there is a brief pre-recorded message, but you will then be connected with someone you can talk with.)
  - If you would prefer to text, you can text "UMN" to 61222 and a counselor will text back with suggestions or resources.
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433). After you call, you will hear a message saying you have reached the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. You will hear hold music while your call is being routed. You will be helped by a skilled, trained crisis worker who will listen to you and can share information about mental health services in your area.
- For more extensive mental health resources available on campus, visit the Provost Committee on Student Mental Health.
- The Sexual Assault Hotline is 800-879-1999 or you can chat online at: https://ohl.rainn.org/online/. In addition, the Aurora Center (612-626 9111) provides free and confidential support for victim/survivors and concerned persons affected by sexual violence, domestic violence, or stalking. An advocate is also available through the help line 24 hours a day to join anyone in the emergency room that has experienced sexual assault.

¹ Please visit http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu/crisis/index.html for more information on locations and numbers, should you wish to call ahead and schedule an appointment. Note that Booynton Health Services will submit a claim to your insurance, while student counseling services (Suite 117 in Appleby Hall, 128 Pleasant Street SE, on the U of M East Bank) are free of charge.
Please consider putting these numbers in your phone, if not for yourself, then to have available to share with friends in need.
Course Requirements & Grading

To succeed in the world of public affairs, you need to have strong skills, both individually and as part of a team. For this reason, this course will provide opportunities to build your skill set in each of these areas with both individual and group assignments on both analytical and hard skills.

All written course assignments will be tracked through Moodle and graded anonymously. Therefore, take care to never put identifying information on your written work. In addition, please keep all graded work until final grades are posted. If you may want a recommendation in the future, please continue to keep graded work, as we are using blind grading and it would be necessary for me to have specific details of your work.

Course grades will be based on your performance on all of the assignments and weighted as described below. I expect you to do all that is necessary to complete assignments and course requirements. Course incompletes will rarely be given unless we have negotiated the terms in writing. Various course requirements will be weighted in the following way to calculate final course grades. The conversion format from numerical to letter grades can be accessed here: http://cs.smith.edu/~orourke/Grading.html.
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Assignment Overviews

Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due by class time (4pm) and should be submitted both via Moodle and in hard copy brought to class. Each item below includes three pieces of information: 1) whether the assignment should be completed individually or in a group, 2) what the due date is, and 3) what percent of your final grade the assignment is worth. *Fully detailed descriptions of all course assignments and grading rubrics are posted on Moodle.*

Management Memos (42%)

One of the learning objectives of this course is to become capable of writing incisive, effective management memos. The goal of case memos is to develop your skills at argument and analysis. The case memo is designed to practice your skills at writing a concise, clear and effective memorandum. The logic memo is designed to give you space to discuss how you came about your analysis and recommendations based on course concepts or course discussions. In total they will count towards 42% of your final grade, with each successive assignment worth more points as you hone your skills with this form of analysis and presentation.

- Case Analysis Memo on Casa Amiga (Individual, Tuesday Week 5, 8%)
- Environmental Analysis Memo on Group Organization (Group, Tuesday Week 7, 10%)
- Organizational Analysis Memo on Group Organization, First Draft (Group, Tuesday Week 11, 8%)
- Peer Memo Feedback (Individual, Tuesday Week 13, 2%)
- Organizational Analysis Memo on Group Organization, Final Draft (Group, Tuesday Week 15, 14%)

In-Class Case Analysis (10%)

- Search and Rescue (Group, Thursday Week 5, 3.3%)
- SVP (Group, Thursday Week 9, 3.3%)
- Hiring a Sustainable Development Specialist (Group, Thursday Week 11, 3.3%)
Reading Analysis Memos (15%)

The reading memos are a place to analytically dig deeper and actively engage with concepts in order to build a stronger understanding of the course material. You will write two reading analysis memos over the course of the semester.

The first, which can be completed any week between weeks 4-13, must analyze and respond to the readings for that week, but can also include reflections on material from other parts of the course and/or other courses. For the week that you choose, you must also select at least one of the resource readings to include in your reflection.

The second RAM, which is to be completed by Tuesday of Week 15, should integrate reflections from across readings over the course. In addition, you should re-read the public affairs reflection essay you wrote in week 2, reflect upon how (if it at all) your thoughts have changed or in what ways you have strengthened your vocabulary to discuss organizational management, and integrate these reflections into your RAM.

More detail is available on Moodle.

- Weeks 4-13 (Individual, Tuesday of the Week you are turning it in, 7.5%)
- Week 15: Course Synopsis (Individual, Tuesday Week 15, 7.5%)

This Washington Post article on James Comey’s memo about his interactions with Trump regarding the Michael Flynn investigation may provide both historic context and motivation for the memo-writing assignments.


Oral Presentations (20%)

The oral presentations are designed to build your skills in effectively and efficiently synthesizing the analysis of a broad issue. The first assignment will be an extremely brief format – an elevator pitch – where you synthesize your group’s analysis and recommendations from the environmental analysis memo in week 7 to an individually-delivered 1” briefing. The second assignment will be modeled after presentations to clients in management consulting firms. Your group will select one or two people to present your
analysis and findings, with any props or slides if desired, in 10”. In total they will count towards 20% of your final grade

- Elevator Pitch (Individual, Week 8, 7%)
- Organizational Analysis (Group, Finals Week, 13%)

**Participation (13%)**

- Participation (Individual, ongoing, 10%)
- Public Affairs Reflection Essay (Individual, Tuesday Week 2, 3%)

**Things you need to do but that don’t (directly) count towards your grade:**

- *Read the Syllabus*
- *Group Norms and Guidelines*

**Reading Tips:**

I post “reading guides” for each week. They are intended to scaffold and assist you in developing efficient and effective reading habits. In general, however, the following are useful points. Please meet with me or the T.A. if you need more help with reading the assigned texts.

Skim all readings first, getting a sense of “the forest”, and then return and dive into “the trees” once you have a sense of the main ideas. Though Wikipedia and the world.wide.web are not reputable scholarly sources, they can help to provide an overview of the conversations at hand. Feel free to use them as you dive into new material.

- Research articles are generally organized according to the following format: abstract (200 word overview of the article), introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion. For research articles, read abstract, intro, discussion, and conclusion, then skim the literature review, methods, and findings.
- For HBR/SSIR/popular press articles, read them as you would a novel, front to back. If they are longer, skim the sub-headings first to get a sense of where you are going and to guide what you can skim.
For cases, skim all materials first, reading sub-headings and looking through the appended materials. Then as you go back and read ask yourself: What were the original problems here? What lead to them? What has been done to try to solve these issues? Why have these efforts not been totally successful?
Topics and Readings, by Week

Week 1: September 5th & 7th
Using an Organizational Lens

Readings
1. Syllabus

Case: Veteran’s Administration (Materials on Moodle)

Resources

Assignments:

Read the syllabus
Week 2: September 12th & 14th
Public Organizations across Sectors

Public affairs work is undertaken by a wide variety of organizations across the state, the market, and the third sector/civil society. This week we will analyze the unique contributions of organizations existing within each of these sectors, as well as discussing the increasing blurring between sectors and the rise of hybrid organizations. We will use this framework as we study the complex nature of policy fields in Week 4, looking at the multiple organizations that are involved in a single issue area, as well as in our analysis of coalitions and networks in Week 6, as we study the way in which these diverse and varied organizations work together formally.

Readings

Case: Price of Commercial Success: MPR

Resources

Assignments
● Public Affairs Reflection Essay (Due: 4pm on Tuesday 9/12)
Week 3: September 19th and 21st
Teams and Decision Making

A core element of organizational analysis is understanding why well intentioned and intelligent people make bad decisions. The week’s readings provide some background on decision making processes. As you reflect upon the evidence, think about how these findings apply to the groups that you are working in this semester, how you will allocate and/or rotate roles and leadership positions, and what norms you will want to follow, in order to produce the best work and have the most enjoyable and effective process.

Readings

Case: Carver State Simulation

Resources:


**Week 4: September 26th & 28th**

**Power, Organizational Stakeholders, and Policy Field Mapping**

There is a lot outside the control of the organization, which we call “the external environment”. That which interacts directly with the organization is the policy field and is comprised of various stakeholders (broad definition). The management literature focuses here and we will too – this week. In week 7, we talk more about agency and creating spaces for change with guidance from the social movements literature.

**Readings**


5. Article and story from This American Life: https://www.thisamericanlife.org/diana-hunter-of-bus-drivers/


**Case:** Chávez, Marissa, “Casa Amiga: Addressing Violence Against Women on the U.S.-Mexico Border,” Case Study from Electronic Hallway website. Plus two additional resources you should take a look at:

- Short video of slam poet, Amalia Ortiz: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74XhXKyRSUg
- Article and story from This American Life: https://www.thisamericanlife.org/diana-hunter-of-bus-drivers/
*Note: you will write your first management memo on this case, due next week.

Resources
6. Brene Brown's Facebook Live video: reaction to Charlottesville. (Listen to the first 15 minutes.)

Assignments:
- Group Norms and Guidelines, & Organizational Options: Mapping Across Sectors and Two Overviews (Due: 4pm on Tuesday 9/27)
- Optional: Reading Analysis Memo (Due: Must select one between weeks 4 and 13, due by 4pm on Tuesday)

**Week 5: October 3rd & 5th**
**Culture, Meaning, Identity, and Organizational Change**

Culture is a mushy difficult concept that is extraordinarily powerful in motivating organizational outcomes. In essence, it is about meaning, creating meaning, contesting meaning, and providing meaning. Furthermore, culture is much, much deeper than what we can see, as captured through the cultural “iceberg” model that Hall developed in the mid-seventies. This week we'll explore the concept and levels of culture, the impact of organizational culture, and how culture influences efforts at organizational change.

Readings
Organizational Culture
1. Schein, E. (2004). The concept of organizational culture: Why bother? (Ch.1) & The levels of culture (Ch.2). In *Organizational culture and leadership* (pp. 3-38). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
2. Pick one of these articles by Kathleen Enright


Organizational Change

Case: Search and Rescue

Resources
4. 1” clip of Meg Whitman discussing culture at IBM: bit.ly/22NCxsU
Assignments:
- Case Management Memo on Casa Amiga (Due: 4pm on Tuesday 10/4)
- Optional: Reading Analysis Memo (Due: Must select one between weeks 4 and 13, due by 4pm on Tuesday)

Week 6: October 10th & 12th
Inter-Organizational Relationships: Collaboration and Contracting

This week we will synthesize all that we have learned about the external environment to investigate what happens when organizations work together. Increasingly, work is happening across multiple organizations to advance the complexity of social problems and policy solutions. There are a variety of forms of power sharing and integration that can characterize these inter-organizational relationships. Within that spectrum of coordination, we find that government is doing less in-house, and contracting more out to private organizations. This contracting process is influenced by differential power within and between the organizations in the contracting relationship and creates a variety of interdependencies.

Readings
2. Najam, A. (2000). The four c’s of third sector-government relations: Cooperation, confrontation, complementarity, and co-optation. Nonprofit Management and Leadership. 10 (4), 375-396. (Skim this article for the framework it presents)

Plus, choose one of the following on government-nonprofit contracting:

Case: La Alianza

Resources

Assignments
• Optional: Reading Analysis Memo (Due: Must select one between weeks 4 and 13, due by 4pm on Tuesday)

Week 7: October 17th & 19th
Social Movements, Social Media, and Non-Organizational Forms

All organizations must change, either because of a shift in mission or threats from the external environment. What are factors that lead to failed change processes in some organizations? And what are lessons we can learn from organizations that have been able to successfully engineer new cultures or missions?

Readings

Social Movements


Case: Black Lives Matter (see content for resources and reading guide on Moodle)

Resources


Assignments:
- Environmental Analysis and Logic Memo (Due: 4pm on Tuesday 10/18)
- Reflect on your experience of your Group Process before class on Tuesday. Jot down some note that you will share with your group in a facilitated exercise on Tuesday.
- Optional: Reading Analysis Memo (Due: Must select one between weeks 4 and 13, due by 4pm on Tuesday)

Week 8: October 24th & 26th
Oral Briefings
No class.
Your elevator pitch will be scheduled for either class time or you can choose to record it.

Assignments: Oral Elevator Pitch

Week 9: October 31st & 1st
Organizational Structure, Hierarchy, and Middle Management

This week we will be discussing organizational structure. As you move through the readings, connect what is happening inside the organization with influences from the external environment that we have focused upon so far. In particular, pay attention to where formal authority is likely to lie in different organizational structures, and yet how informal power and influence can create a different network map of connections. The structural perspective or “lens” on viewing organizations treats organizations as rational machines designed to achieve strategic goals. This harkens back to the root of the word organization, the Greek term for “tool”.

Readings


**Case:** Social Ventures Partner (SVP)

**Resources:**


**Assignments**

- Optional: Reading Analysis Memo (Due: Must select one between weeks 4 and 13, due by 4pm on Tuesday)

**Week 10: November 7th & 9th**

**Organizational Technology and Street-Level Bureaucracy**

Reflect on how the technology of an organization influences its structure (ie. form follows function), but also to what extent the structure of an organization influences what kind of work it does (ie. function follows form). As we think about the “technology” of many public affairs organizations, a great deal of public service work is enacted at the “street level”, where there is a high degree of discretion in interpreting and implementing public policies.

The term “street level bureaucrats” was coined by Michael Lipsky 30 years ago. Some of the most often studied examples of street level bureaucracy are from counselors, teachers, and police.

**Readings**


Case: No Case. Sheriff Stuart will be visiting on Tuesday 11/8. Please read the Maynard-Moody in preparation and think about how the Sheriff represents the institution of law enforcement, his local police organization, and himself as an individual and a cop. Prepare one question to ask him and submit via Moodle by noon on Monday 11/7.

Resources

Assignments:
• Prepare one question to ask Sheriff Stuart and submit via Moodle (Due: Noon on Monday 11/7)
• Complete the values survey distributed by Prof. O. (Due: 4pm on Thursday 11/10)
• Optional: Reading Analysis Memo (Due: Must select one between weeks 4 and 13, due by 4pm on Tuesday)

Week 11: November 14th & 16th
Human Resources
You are the primary resources of public affairs organizations. This week we explore the role of human resources in public affairs, focusing on the structure of modern employment and the use of volunteers and interns from the perspective of an organization. We then turn to the perspectives of employees themselves, investigating motivation, values, and burnout, and the importance of organizational consideration of work-life integration issues for employees. (Note: Prof. O at ARNOVA on 17th. TA to lead graded in-class case analysis.)

Readings
Human Resource Management & The Structure of Modern Employment in Public Affairs


Motivation, Values, and Burnout


Workers with Lives Outside Work: Work-Family Interface


**Case:** Hiring a Sustainable Development Specialist

**Resources**


Assignments:
- Organizational Management and Logic Memo, First Draft (Due: 4pm on Tuesday 11/15)
- Reflect on your experience of your Group Process before class on Tuesday. Jot down some note that you will share with your group in a facilitated exercise on Tuesday.
- Optional: Reading Analysis Memo (Due: Must select one between weeks 4 and 13, due by 4pm on Tuesday)

Week 12: November 21st & 23rd
Thanksgiving Week: No Class
Given our readings last week on the Work-Family interface, we will not hold class on Tuesday. Please do something you find meaningful and/or that makes you happy.

Week 13: November 28th and November 30th
Effectiveness and Evaluation
Within the world of public affairs, we want a policy field to be effective and to advance a public good. However, most analysis of performance is on an organizational level. In analyzing organizational performance, we often use quantitative metrics and benchmarks from the for-profit world – these can both enable us to get a sense of how effective we are at meeting our goals, but can also have unintended consequences of focusing attention on things that undermine the actual policy goal. This week we will explore the nuances in reaching towards effective organizational effectiveness.

Readings


5. Revisit VA Case

**Case**: *Focusing on Results at the NYC Department of Education* [HBS case purchase]

1. What is the theory of change underlying this strategy? Does it make sense to all stakeholders?
2. Look closely at Exhibit 7 – would these indicators add up to improved student performance?
3. What are the biggest risks to implementing this new system and what would you advise Liebman and Klein?

**Resources**


3. Logic Model: [http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html)

**Assignments:**

- Optional: Reading Analysis Memo (Due: Must select one between weeks 4 and 13, due by 4pm on Tuesday)
Week 14: December 5th & 7th
Presentations

Assignments:
- Group Oral Presentation of Organizational Analysis. (Schedule TBD)
- Organizational management memo (12/5)

Week 15: December 12th
Building Effective Public Affairs Organizations

Final Wrap-Up Lecture/Celebration

Assignments:
- Reading Analysis Memo. The final RAM should synthesize one to three important lessons you have learned over the course, drawing upon particularly salient readings over the past 15 weeks, but can also include insights from class discussion, speakers, simulations, exercises, group work, and reflections on relevant course concepts that have arisen over the semester. (Due: 4pm on Tuesday 12/12.)