Management of Organizations
Public Affairs 5011

Class: Tuesday/Thursday 9:45-11:00
Location: Blegen 415

Professor: Carrie R. Oelberger
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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00am-12:00pm, and by appointment. Schedule online at: oelberger.com/officehours
Office Location: Room 249, Humphrey School of Public Affairs
Office Phone: 612-625-5947 (I do not check messages regularly on this number so please only use this if we have scheduled a meeting by phone or you know I am in my office.)
Skype Handle: carrie.oelberger (Again, for office hours if you are off campus.)

Teaching Assistant: Eric Armacanqui
Email: armac002@umn.edu
Office Hours and Location: To Be Announced

Course Overview
Organizations pervade human life. They are sites of power, innovation and social change but 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 are working and 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 – leaders and managers must understand organizational complexity in order to act. The course introduces students to some of the major theoretical approaches to organizational analysis, including concepts from public administration, sociology, political science, organizational psychology, and management. Learning to use multiple perspectives is critical because all perspectives contribute to understanding how to develop and sustain effective organizations and, ultimately, to how well individuals can help create public value. By gaining insight across different theoretical perspectives, students will develop an understanding of how theories provide distinctive windows into understanding behavior in complex social settings. Throughout, you will come to see that organizations provide opportunities and constraints as well as power and privilege within particular contexts.

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.

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.

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

**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. Eric and I are here for you as resources and want to assist you in your learning. To this end, both Eric and I have set aside office hours every week for the students in this class. As part of your Class Participation grade, I require that you schedule a visit with me at least once during the semester. More generally, I encourage you to make use of these office hours because I feel that learning takes place most effectively through direct conversation. If office hour times conflict with your schedule, please let us know and we can schedule 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.
Course Requirements
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. More detailed descriptions of course assignments as well as the grading rubric used for that assignment will be available as the semester progresses.

All written course assignments will be tracked through Moodle and graded anonymously. Therefore, take care to never put identifying information on your written work.

Note: If you feel that you communicate more effectively in a non-written medium, video presentations, cartoons, or other creative multi-media montages will be accepted in lieu of written assignments. Please contact me for the specific details and requirements for these alternatives. These alternatives can be utilized for some, or all, of the written assignments including reading analysis memos and organizational case analyses.

Reading Analysis Memos (30%)
To attain a full understanding of the concepts, you need to actively engage with the material. Thoughtful classroom participation entails advancing a discussion and sustaining a conversation. This requires advanced preparation through both a) reading the required materials, and b) reflecting on it before class. To assist in this preparation, for five different weeks in the semester, you are required to submit a two-page, single spaced reading analysis memo (1,000 – 1,250 words), by 9am on Monday through the Moodle site. Memos submitted after 9am will not be accepted, due to our need to read through them and integrate your reflections into preparation for the class.

Use the analysis memo to choose one or two points you found particularly useful, interesting, debatable, or confusing as a lens through which you can view organizations. You can choose to use the memo as a means to reflect on and dig deeper into the theoretical readings, or you can use the memo to apply the theoretical readings to your organizational case or a prior personal experience. Whichever you do, please recognize that the task of the memo is to show your analytical skills. We do not want to read off-the-cuff opinions, anecdotes about previous work experiences, or a book-report summary of the readings and cases. We have posted multiple examples of what these can look like on Moodle. If you have any questions, please meet with us. We expect that at least three of the five memos you write will include an application of the course concepts from that week to the organization or policy field that you are studying.

There are 9 weeks that are eligible for reading analysis memos -- with dates highlighted in turquoise throughout the syllabus. You are responsible for 5, and we encourage you to do at least one from each of the three main parts of the course. Alternatively, you can choose to do as many as you would like and drop the lowest grades. The choice is yours. Each memo will be worth 6% of the final grade and will be graded according to the following rubric:

- **A+:** Exceptional work; includes both depth of analysis AND breadth of understanding across more than one reading with astute reflections and innovative connections. This grade represents truly exceptional work.
- **A:** Strong work; includes either astute depth of analysis and reflection within one reading OR breadth of innovative connection across two or more readings.
- **B:** Good work; includes clear understanding of the concepts, with analysis, though it falls short in generally one of three ways: a) it isn’t particularly insightful, b) it contains a strong insight that isn’t fully developed (ie. needs a few more drafts), or c) it tries to do too much and lacks focus.
- **C:** Weak work; student did the reading, but either provided a summary without analysis, or attempted to advance an analysis that was unclear due to poor writing skills.
• D: Poor work; understanding of the concepts is not demonstrated, often due to surface-level reading or skimming, or memo is basically personal anecdotes thinly connected to the readings.
• F: Assignment was not submitted by 9am on Monday.

On the four weeks you chose not to write, you are responsible for reading and evaluating one of your colleagues’ memos before the start of class. For these weeks, we will email you a colleague’s memo by noon on Monday. You are responsible for checking your email, reading through the memo, and writing a 250 word response, identifying a striking point in the memo and responding to it and/or critiquing any flaws you find in the argument. These are ungraded, but completion counts towards your participation grade.

**Participation (10%)**

Class discussion is an essential part of the learning process. I will facilitate discussion and help integrate the prevailing views of class members with core theoretical ideas. In this way, the direction and quality of the discussion is the collective responsibility of the group. This includes preparing for class sessions by reading and responding to your classmates’ reading analysis memos, attending class, and actively participating in the discussion. All readings for each week are to be prepared in advance of the week’s first class session, on Tuesday. In order to participate in class discussion, it should go without saying that you need to be physically present. You are adults who are responsible for managing your own learning and, as a result, I do not have an absence policy. However, it is unlikely that you will be able to participate well in class if you are not there. Participation is not gauged by the volume or frequency of your voice, but by your attention to the conversation.

**Technology.** When some students are using technology, it detracts from others’ learning. If you need to communicate with someone, please leave the classroom to do so. Please turn off your cell phone and other electronic devices during class. (If you are a parent or have another personal need to be reachable, please let me know individually so we can make accommodations that serve you but do not distract the class.) For all of the above reasons, I generally do not allow computer use in class, but please see me if you would like to request an exemption.

As part of your class participation grade, I require one visit to office hours during the semester. Please identify a topic or question from the course that has peaked your interest and meet with me to discuss more fully. The meeting need only last 20 minutes.

**Organizational Case Analysis (60%)**

This course provides an opportunity for you to better understand the management challenges in a particular organization in a particular policy field. By “policy fields” we mean networks of organizations and institutions carrying out programs in a substantive policy area, such as health care or public education. Policy fields attract multiple organizational players across government, nonprofit, and corporate sectors. They influence and are influenced by federal, state, and/or local policy decisions in the US context and by various international governing bodies and institutions in the global context.

Examples of policy fields include:

• Public education in US (K-12)
• Community and economic development (local or international)
• Water and Sanitation Hygiene (WASH)
• Child welfare
• International peace and security
In the second week of class, Eric and I will place students in teams of 5, based on student preferences for policy fields. These teams will choose a nonprofit, for-profit, or public organization within that field to examine throughout the semester. There are several parts to this requirement involving both individual and group assignments. I will hand out in advance a more detailed assignment and grading sheet for each.

As described above, through your reading analysis memos, you will be asked to apply course concepts to particular elements of your organization, for example, its particular structure, culture, process for developing or delivering programs or products, its overall capacity, and the environment in which it operates. In addition, you will write two in-depth management memos with an analysis of challenges facing the organization and recommendations for what the organization could do to constructively respond to the problem. Finally, at the end of the semester, you will meet with your teammates as a management consulting team to collectively identify a particular issue that the organization is struggling with, in which you prepare an analysis and recommendations in the form of a fifteen minute oral presentation to the organization.

**Oral Briefing (5%)**
Individually, you will prepare a 60-second oral briefing that summarizes what you see as the main players, opportunities, and challenges within the policy field you are studying. The hypothetical audience for this presentation will be the chief executive of the organization who has asked you for this analysis in order to help her/him make the organization more effective. You will schedule a time slot to present to Eric or I during class time in Week 5. This will be worth 5% of your grade. A grading rubric will be handed out a few weeks prior to the deadline.

**Management Memos (35%)**
Expectations: The case analyses are intended to develop your skills at argument and analysis. Effective case analyses should evince not only rich understanding but make connections among different ideas and show the ability to make critical appraisals of core ideas. Memos should be well-organized and have a logical structure. These analyses are designed to help you master the communication of complex information within space constraints. It is much more difficult to write effective, crisp, and rich short papers than it is to write longer papers, but it is a valuable skill to develop. Therefore, each analysis should consist of 1 single-spaced page (1” margins, 12-point Times New Roman font) and a 1-2 page analytical description, summarizing your logic and tying it directly to course concepts.

Evaluation: I will hand out explicit directions for each assignment and a grading rubric for how the case analyses will be evaluated in advance of their due dates. Assignments will be penalized one grade letter for each 24-hour period that it is late. These will each be worth 15% of your final grade, with equal weight on each component (7.5% on the memo and 7.5% on the analysis). In addition, you will have the opportunity to do a “practice” case analysis memo to become familiar with the format, worth 5% of your final grade. In addition, for the first memo you will review one peer memo and provide evaluation and feedback, intended to assist your classmate in strengthening their analysis.

- “Practice” Case Analysis Memo: You can choose to either analyze the VA (due week 2) or Little Rock (due week 5).
- First Organizational Case Analysis Memo: Identify an “issue” that the org is facing. Use the concepts and skills developed in the first ten weeks to analyze an organizational situation presented in written case materials and provide recommendations for action.
- Final Organizational Case Analysis Memo: Utilize additional analytical frames from the final five weeks of class to re-analyze the issue your organization is facing, potentially proposing updated solutions. A large part of the grading for the second memo will be a) the ability to integrate rhetorical and substantive feedback from the first memo, and b) the development of the analysis from the first to final memo.
Organizational Management Consultants Group Presentation (20%)

- During the second half of the course, you will begin working with other students studying the same organization. You will utilize the first case analysis memo from each group member and work together to ascertain the main ideas (no more than two or three) you want to focus on in giving feedback to the organization, resulting in a ten to fifteen-minute oral presentation. This presentation should be an analysis of the key issues that you think are jeopardizing your organization’s future, hopefully highlighting the intersections between the external environment, the policy field, and internal organizational operations. You will make a presentation as if you were consultants hired to advise the organization how to move forward.

- Please email the PowerPoint for these presentations to Eric by 9:00am the day of your presentation, so we can ensure smooth transitions between presentations. I will hand out a grading rubric for how these different components will be evaluated. Finally, you will each complete a confidential peer-to-peer assessment of your teammates’ performance.

Final Grade
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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Reading Analysis Memos</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Practice” Org Analysis Memo (Week 2 on VA Case or Week 5 on Little Rock)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Field Funder Elevator Pitch (Week 5)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Organizational Analysis Memo (Week 11)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Management Consultants Group Presentation (Week 14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Organizational Analysis Memo (December 21 in)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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Part I: Introduction to Management Challenges in Public Organizations and Institutions

Week 1: September 8th and 10th
What’s Management got to do with it?

Readings

Case: Veteran’s Administration (Materials on Moodle)
1. What were the original problems here? What lead to them?
2. What has been done to try to solve these issues?
3. Why have these efforts not been totally successful?

Resources
1. Bolman & Deal Ch 1 & 2

Week 2: September 15th and 17th
Public Organizations across Sectors

Readings

Part II: Institutions, Fields, and External Environment

Week 3: September 22nd and 24th
Analyzing The Context of Organizations: The External Environment, Policy Fields, and Field Building/Social Movements

Readings
1. Watch video posted on Moodle about Policy Fields
3. Gamson (1987) Introduction to Social Movements in an Organizational Society (pp.1-7)
4. Goodwin and Jasper (2009) Social Movements Reader (pp. 3-7; 189-192)

Case: “The Right To Be Human: The Dilemmas Of Rights-Based Programming At Care-Bangladesh” (A)
1. What was the overarching social and political context in which SHAKTI operated?
2. Who were the major stakeholders in the case? How did Enamul and CARE-Bangladesh’s views differ in regard to each stakeholder?

3. What options were available to Enamul at the end of the case? What is your assessment of these? Which should he pursue?

Resources:

Week 4: September 29th and October 1st

Sources and Uses of Power and Authority

Readings

Case: Little Rock School District

1. What exactly did Superintendent Brooks do? How do School Board members perceive these actions?
2. What should School Board President Mitchell do now?

Resources
4. Equity and Equality handout

Week 5: October 6th and 8th

Policy Field Oral Briefings

Part III: Organizations and Workers

Week 6: October 13th and 15th

Groups and Teams

Readings
1. Schwartz “Effective Group Work”
2. NPR podcast
5. Shore et al “Inclusion and Diversity”

**Week 7: October 20th and 22nd**

**Organizational Technology/Operations/Production and Structure/Systems**

These features are all highly influenced by organizational environment. Where is power likely to lie in different organizational structures?

Readings


Case: “Who Brought Bernadine Healy Down?”

1. What aspects of the Red Cross, as an organization, contribute to Healy’s downfall?
2. Did Healy herself contribute to this situation? How?
3. What changes do you recommend that the Red Cross board and executive leadership make right now? In the longer term?

**Week 8: October 27th and 29th**

**Operations and Workers: Why do employees matter?**

Readings

1. Watch video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZX1IivgPspA

**Case: Making Work Pay (A)**

1. Map out the process of the Jobs Plus program. What are its assumptions?
2. What does this process look like if you are a resident of RV? Where are mismatches?
3. What programs changes would you recommend to Alice?

Resources


**Week 9: November 3rd and 5th**

**Employee Motivation, Emotions, and Burnout**

**Readings**

1. Bolman and Deal, Chapter 6 & 7
3. Lavigna (2014) Why Government Workers are Harder to Motivate. HBR
6. Case : NYC School Reform from HBS

**Resources**


**Week 10: November 10th and 12th**

**Meaning and Culture**

**Readings**


**Resources**

1. Hall (1976) Cultural Iceberg Model
Week 11: November 17th and 19th
Organizational Effectiveness, & Performance Measurement

Readings
3. 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
2. Logic Model: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html

Assignment: First Organizational Analysis Memo Due by class on Tuesday.

Part IV: Intersection of Orgs and Environments

Week 12: November 24th (*No class on 26th because Thanksgiving this week)
Government Contracting with Private Organizations (FP and NP)

Readings
4. NP Starvation cycle

Case: Kujichagulia (A)
1. Do an initial stakeholder analysis. What does this tell you about range of issues and challenges present in this case, especially as they relate to power differences and politics?
2. More generally, what is and is not working in this arrangement, from the perspective of each organization, the desired program outcomes, the staff, and the target service population
3. What should Brady sustain and change in her management approach and the organizational arrangements? What “political” considerations confront her?

Week 13: December 1st and 3rd
Collaborations & Networks

Readings
1. Watch Video on Collaboration: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN_A7keXiVg
2. Kania and Kramer Collective Impact SSIR piece
5. Goldsmith and Eggers: Ties that Bind

Case: A Partnership in Troubled Waters
1. What is your assessment of this “partnership?” Partnership among whom?
2. Where are major tensions? Dilemmas? What is causing them? Think about the broader context facing ASF.
3. What options does Simbulan have? Which should she pursue?

Week 14: December 8th and 10th
Management Consultants Group Presentations

Week 15: December 15th
Final Class
No readings