

**Public Affairs 8620
Organizational Analysis and Change**

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Course Description

PA 8620, *Organizational Analysis and Change (OAC)*, is an advanced graduate course in the psychodynamics of organizational transition. It investigates the social, ethical, and psychological dimensions of intervention theory and method for organizational change. In PA 8620, students study organizational life from the viewpoint of experienced organizational researchers and consultants. Readings and discussions in class refer to case examples (fictional and non-fictional) to ground theory in practice.

OAC does not present organizations as merely rational, socio-technical systems. Rather, it explores the human and structural complexities of organizational dynamics along with the common occurrences of irrational and seemingly inexplicable participant actions. From this exploration, we will come to see that leadership, structure, and strategy are often not based in reason or conscious intention. Students will learn that the dynamics of power, politics, and personality often shape decision-making in organizations to the detriment of effectiveness, competitiveness, long-term institutional viability, and the public good.

In this course, we also acknowledge that change is a constant in contemporary organizational climates, and that public, non-profit, and private enterprises must learn to cope effectively with change and to assume social responsibility if they are to survive and prosper. Individual organizational members, therefore, will have to become more reflective and open to new ways of thinking, feeling, and relating to each other and will need to find better ways of handling their mutual tasks. Roles are becoming more complex and the establishment of linkages between diverse organizational cultures and people are imminent. Managing and leading more collaborative and integrative systems requires sufficient trust, social capital, and mutual respect among organizational members and their constituencies for which the sharing of information is crucial.

At the conclusion of this course, students will have a deeper and more analytical understanding of organizational dynamics and the processes of change. They will also have a greater appreciation for the role of consultants to change, whether they are internal or external change agents.

Required Readings & Assignments

Week 1: Introduction and course administration/assignment of permanent work groups

Weeks 2-3: Harrison, M.I. (1994) *Diagnosing Organizations*. 2nd Edition. Sage Publications.

Weeks 4-6: Argyris, C. (1996). *Organizational Learning II: Theory, Method, and Practice*. Addison-Wesley, Publishers.

Weeks 7-9: Kets de Vries, M.F.R. (2001) *The Leadership Mystique*. Financial Times: Prentice Hall.

Take home mid-term essay questions due back in precisely one week (covering the above material and classroom presentations and discussions). Typed and double-spaced, proof read, no extensive quoting.

Weeks 10-12: Stapley, L. (1996) *The Personality of the Organization*. London: Free Association Books.

Weeks 13-15: Stacey, R. (1996) *Complexity and Creativity*. Berrett Kohler.

Week 15 (final class): Work group presentations due and presented in class.

Final take-home essay questions will be handed out and are due in precisely one week (comprehensive coverage). Please type papers, double-space, proofread, and no extensive quoting.

If you have any special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act and need any test or course materials provided in an alternative format, notify your instructor immediately. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your special needs.

Course Requirements

Mid-term and Final Essays = 70% (35% each)

Essays will be 10-12 pages in length, double-spaced and typed. Students will respond to all of the essay questions in detail and must avoid excessive quotes from the text. All written work must be carefully proof read before submission to the professor.

Work Group Project = 20%

The classroom is a microcosm of formal organization. Therefore, the class will be divided into work groups on the first evening of the session. Work groups will be assigned projects that attempt to ground theory in practice by taking advantage of the knowledge and experience of students. In addition, each work group will construct a role-play or psychodrama of an organizational event, fiction or non-fiction that best exemplifies what they have learned about organization change from the course readings, discussions, and assignments. Work groups will begin work on these projects shortly after the mid-term. Work groups will present on the final class session. It will be at this time that each of the work groups will be asked to present their organizational role-plays/psychodramas. Each of the work groups will have an opportunity to analyze and comment on the other groups' role-plays. This will be the format for the final exercise and is worth 20% of the students overall grade for the course and therefore students will be graded as a group.

Class Participation = 10%

Student participation is critical to the success of any course, this one in particular. Coming to class prepared--having completed weekly reading assignments--is essential. Learning is a shared responsibility between professor and student. Active participation does not imply speaking for the sake of speaking; listening is crucial. Participation can only be evaluated on the basis of substantive contributions. Thus, share your concrete experiences and observations that help to make the theories come alive and that ultimately transform the terms and concepts into useable knowledge.

Recommended Readings

- Allcorn, S. and M.A. Diamond, *Managing People During Stressful Times: The Psychologically Defensive Workplace*, Quorum Books, Greenwood Publishing, 1997.
- Argyris, C., *Intervention Theory and Method*, Addison-Wesley, 1973.
- Baum, H.S., *Organizational Membership*, State University of New York Press, 1990.
- Baum, H.S., *The Invisible Bureaucracy*, Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Diamond, M.A., *The Unconscious Life of Organizations*, Quorum Books, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1993.
- Gillette, J., and M. McCollom, (ed.), *Groups in Context*, Addison-Wesley, 1990.
- Hirschhorn. L., *The Workplace Within*. MIT Press, 1988.
- Jaques, E., *Requisite Organization*, Cason Hall and Company, 1989.
- Kets de Vries, M.F.R. and Danny Miller, *The Neurotic Organization*. Jossey-Bass, 1984.
- Kets de Vries, M.F.R. and Associates, *Organizations on the Couch*, Jossey-Bass, 1991.
- Levinson, H., *Organizational Diagnosis*, Harvard University Press, 1972.
- Levinson, H., *Organizational Assessment*, APA Press, 2002.
- Pauchant, T., and I. Mitroff, *Transforming The Crisis-Prone Organization*, Jossey-Bass, 1992.
- Shapiro, E. and W. Carr, *Lost in Familiar Places*, Yale University Press, 1991.
- Stein, H.F., *Nothing Personal, Just Business*, Greenwood Publishing, 2001.
- Trist, E., and H. Murray, *The Social Engagement of Social Science*, The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990.
- Zaleznik, A., and M.F.R. Kets de Vries, *Power and the Corporate Mind*, Bonus Books, 1985.
- Zaleznik, A., *The Managerial Mystique*, Harper & Row, 1989.