**UPADM-GP 103-001 Introduction to Managing Public Service Organizations**

**Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service**

**New York University**

**Fall Semester 2024**

Instructor

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# Time/Room Assignment: Tuesday and Thursday 3:30-4:45 p.m./194 Mercer Street, Room 306B

# Office Hours: Before and after class or by appointment

# Course Goals and Objectives

The goal of Introduction to Managing Public Service Organizations (IMPSO) is to enhance your management and leadership skills in the public and non-profit sectors. The course provides you with the tools you need to diagnose and solve organizational problems, to influence the actions of individuals, groups, and organizations, and to lead impactful public service organizations.

You have taken this class because you want to have a positive impact in the world. Your interest could be affordable housing, bike lanes, arts programs for disadvantaged kids or access to quality pre-natal care. It could be making sure public policies are based on the best possible evidence, or that nonprofits are financially solvent, or that staff are treated fairly and respectfully. Whatever your passion, you can only realize that impact by understanding how organizations are managed. Organizations are the way work gets organized, coordinated, and accomplished. Knowing how organizations work, and how to work within them, are perhaps the most powerful tools you can have for success.

A key leadership task is to assemble the skills, talents, and resources of individuals and groups in order to solve the organizational problems at hand. You must manage people, information, and systems to accomplish organizational goals; you must make things happen, and often under less-than-ideal conditions or time frames; and you must learn from the challenges you experience. The successful execution of these tasks requires leaders to understand what skills and abilities they bring to and need from their teams and organizations, to formulate a mission and strategy, to make effective and ethical decisions, to influence and motivate diverse individuals, to optimize the structure of their organization, to measure and improve performance, and to drive organizational change.

IMPSO prepares you to achieve these objectives by providing you with fundamental frameworks and tools developed from the behavioral and social sciences and tested by leaders in organizations representing all sectors of the economy.

# Course Format

Each class we will focus on a particular set of management skills. Our goal will be to distinguish between effective and ineffective strategies. We will accomplish this by discussing key concepts and analyzing related cases. You will also have an opportunity to complete a team project, where you will design an organization.

This course reflects a dual focus on practice and conceptual thinking. The course readings introduce key concepts and useful ways of thinking about common situations in complex organizations. Case studies and class exercises provide opportunities to apply theories, concepts, and research findings to particular situations and sectors, and to hone your skills in problem definition and problem solving. The written assignments, including the team project, ask you to consolidate your insights and to practice your analytic skills.

A major component of this course is the team project. You will have an opportunity to articulate where your passions are focused regarding some area of public service, such as social justice, international development, or social entrepreneurism. Then you will be matched with three or four other students who share your passion. Together, you will create a public service organization with its own unique mission, structure, culture, products and/or services, logic model, and strategic plan. Periodically you will be asked to provide certain deliverables. Your team will conduct a brief presentation and write a paper on your organization, both of which are due at the end of the semester.

# Preparing for Class

It is critical that you complete the readings for each session in advance. You and your classmates will not benefit as much from the class session if you come unprepared. Take time to analyze and absorb the readings and cases to prepare for class discussion. Many of the principles and issues involved in IMPSO are relatively timeless and not limited only to organizations of a public service nature. Consequently, you should not rely on the copyright dates or specific organizational applications of either the readings or the cases in evaluating their usefulness. “Classic” readings and cases are included because they speak to important issues in useful, interesting, and time-tested ways.

The articles and text provide key ideas and theoretical insights into human behavior and its impact on productivity and performance. To be sure you have grasped the point of each piece, ask yourself:

* What is the author’s main argument?
* What are the key concepts and principles introduced?
* Why do these concepts and principles matter?
* What are the implications for the kinds of challenges I face or might face as a leader, a manager, a policy analyst, an urban planner, or a financial analyst?
* How can I apply this to my organization, my job, and/or my career?

The assigned cases provide concrete situations to which you should apply the concepts introduced in the readings. They provide an opportunity for you to practice diagnosing the nature and causes of organizational performance and thinking through the potential consequences of decisions.

**Meeting Expectations**

A class like this requires careful attention to fairness and mutual respect for one another. You should attend all classes. It is especially important that if you do have an unavoidable conflict, you do not disturb your classmates by arriving late, leaving early, or otherwise causing interruptions, such as leaving the room in the middle of class. We will be a technology-free classroom. During class you should not use your computer or phone.

You will earn 15 points when you meet the course expectations. More specifically, they are:

1. Students are expected to attend every class on time.

2. Students are expected to participate in class discussions.

3. Students are expected to accord the same professional respect to their classmates’ contributions as they would to the instructor’s.

4. If an absence is unavoidable, let the instructor know before class.

5. Late assignments will be accepted but points will be deducted.

6. Students should not use a computer or phone during class and avoid leaving the room during class discussion.

7. The use of generative AI tools is strictly prohibited in this course. Doing so in this class is a violation of the Wagner Academic Code.

**Readings**

There is one book for this course that is available at our bookstore:

*Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*, 7th Edition by Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Copyright: 2021

ISBN: 9781119855125 for paperback.

The NYU Bookstore has the book priced at $90.00 through BryteWave. The digital version is $47.00. Online access is also available from the library at no cost.

We also have cases that will be made available via a digital course packet from Harvard Publishing. The cost will be approximately $15.00. The remaining readings will be available through NYU Brightspace or the library.

**NYU Brightspace**

You must have access to the class learning management site, NYU Brightspace.

* Many announcements, class related documents (readings, class handouts, etc.) will be posted there. If you have not activated your NYU net account or have forgotten your password, you can activate or change your password at start.nyu.edu. Your account must be activated to access NYU Brightspace.
* Some class announcements and feedback may also be distributed via e-mail. Thus, it is important that you actively use your NYU e-mail account, or have appropriate forwarding set up.
* You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader in order to view some of the class materials. If you do not already have this (free) software installed on your computer, go to adobe.com/products, and follow the download instructions.

**Class Participation**

All class sessions will involve active discussion based on the readings and cases, with an emphasis both on theoretical questions and practical implications. You should be prepared to share your ideas and to listen to and interpret the issues presented by others in a respectful manner. Keep in mind that your goal should be to contribute high quality, rather than high quantity, discussion comments and questions. High quality comments and questions possess one or more of the following attributes:

Relevance: How is your comment/question related to the current discussion?

Accuracy: Do you use terms and concepts in ways that are consistent with definitions provided in readings and lectures?

Analysis: Can you explain the reasoning behind your comment/question using careful analysis?

Integration: Does your comment/question move the discussion forward by building on previous contributions with new insights?

Individuality: Does your comment/question contribute a new perspective to the discussion, or does it simply repeat what others have already said?

Application: Does your comment/question apply the theory and concepts to real-world situations?

**Assignments/Grading**

In order to facilitate application of the class concepts, you will be asked to complete some individual and team assignments. The specific assignments are listed below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assignments** | **Date Due** |
| Team Charter | 9/24 |
| Organizational Mission Statement | 10/3 |
| Case Analysis 1 (15%) | 10/4 |
| Logic Model | 10/10 |
| Strategic Plan | 10/22 |
| Case Analysis 2 (15%) | 10/29 |
| Theory of Change | 10/31 |
| Culture Statement | 11/12 |
| Reflection Paper on Your Career(15%) | 11/21 |
| Team Presentations (10%) | 12/10 and 12/12 |
| Final Team Paper (15%) | 12/18 |
| Peer Evaluation | 12/19 |
| Final Assignment (20%) | 12/20 |
| Meeting Expectations (10%) |  |
| Total: 100% |  |

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter**  **Grade** | **Percentage**  **Score** | **Grade**  **Point** | **Performance** |
| A | 93.0 – 100.0% | 4.0 | Excellent work |
| A- | 90.0 – 92.99% | 3.7 | nearly excellent work |
| B+ | 87.0 – 89.99% | 3.3 | very good work |
| B | 83.0 – 86.99% | 3.0 | good work |
| B- | 80.0 – 82.99% | 2.7 | mostly good work |
| C+ | 77.0 – 79.99% | 2.3 | above average work |
| C | 73.0 – 76.99% | 2.0 | average work |
| C- | 70.0 – 72.99% | 1.7 | mostly average work |
| D+ | 67.0 – 69.99% | 1.3 | below average work |
| D | 60.0 – 66.99% | 1.0 | poor work |
| F | Less than 60% | .00 | failing work |

Individual written work will be evaluated using the following criteria:

Theory: How well can you apply the conceptual material offered in readings and lectures?

Data: How well do you utilize descriptive data to support your argument?

Analysis: How well do you integrate theory and data to create a coherent and logical argument?

Organization: How clear and well-organized is your work? Are all questions answered?

Writing: How well do you reflect professional quality in grammar and writing style?

Formatting: Assignments, including the team paper, should be written in a 12-point font, left justified, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, numbered pages, and no longer than the page limit specified for the assignment. Please submit as a Word Document.

One general guideline to consider is to favor depth over breadth. That is, papers covering fewer topics tend to also display more thorough analysis than assignments trying to cover more topics. Finally, please note that there is no extra credit work opportunity provided.

**Writing Resources**

The Wagner School provides a writing consultant to students upon request.

**Statement of Academic Integrity**

As members of the NYU Wagner community, we are all expected to adhere to high standards of intellectual and academic integrity. See the Wagner website for the Statement on Academic Integrity. For this particular course, team projects should be completed by team members working together. Individual written assignments should be the sole work of the individual student and not AI generated. Violations of these standards will automatically result in all participating students failing the course and being reprimanded to the discipline committee for further action.

**Schedule of Classes**

**Session 1: Overview of Course and Introductions (9/3)**

**Complete:** Survey from Textbook found on NYU Brightspace. Upload results to Brightspace by September 7.

**Session 2: Making Sense of Organizations (9/5)**

Objective: To understand the different ways we can make sense of our organizations

**Read:** Chapters 1 and 2 in text

**Session 3: Team Formation (9/10)**

Objective: To understand how to build a team for success

**Read:** Chapter 5 in text

**Session 4: Managing Your Team for Success (9/12)**

Objective: To review strategies for effective team management and review team

project

**Project Teams:** We will form project teams by the end of this week.

**Session 5: Managing Conflict (9/17)**

Objective: To understand the collaborative approach to conflict management

**Read:** Whetten, David and Cameron, Kim. (2016). Managing Conflict.

*Developing Management Skills*, Chapter 8 (pp. 306-320), Pearson Education.

[NYU Brightspace]

**Read:** Harvard Case Study: Negotiating from the Margins: The Santa Clara Pueblo

Seeks Ancestral Lands

**Session 6: The Strategic Planning Process (9/19)**

Objective: To learn the key features of strategic planning

**Read:** Bryson, J. M. (1988). A Strategic Planning Process for Public and

Nonprofit Organizations. Long Range Planning,21, pp. 73-81. [NYU Brightspace]

**Session 7:** **Decision Making (9/24)**

Objective: To review the sources of systematic decision-making biases and

to understand how to solve problems, including those with ethical dilemmas

**Read:** Binder, J. & Watkins, M. (2024). To Solve a Tough Problem, Reframe It.

Harvard Business Review, January-February, pp. 80-89. [Go to library]

Submit: Team Charter

**Session 8: Ethical Decision-Making (9/26)**

Objective: To understand different ways to think about decisions with ethical consequences

**Read:** Making Choices: A Framework for Making Ethical Decisions. Taken from Brown University Website. [NYU Brightspace]

**Session 9: Ethical Decision-Making II (10/1)**

Objective: To practice making decisions with ethical consequences

**Read:** Pope, S. and Bromley, P. (2023). From Doing Good To Being

Good. Stanford Social Innovation Review, Summer, pp. 49-54. [NYU Brightspace]

**Session 10: Organization Structure (10/3)**

Objective: To learn what to consider when designing an organization’s structure

**Read:** Chapters 3 and 4 in text

**Submit:** Team Mission Statement

**Submit:** First Case Analysis by October 4

**Session 11: Organizational Culture (10/8)**

Objective: To discuss how to form an organization’s culture

**Read:** Chapter 12 in text

**Session 12: Organizational Culture II (10/10)**

Objective: To continue discussion of forming an organization’s culture

**Read:** Chapter 13 in text

**Submit:** Team Logic Model

**Note: We have no class on October 14. NYU classes meet on a Monday schedule on**

**October 15.**

**Session 13: People and Personnel (10/17)**

Objective: To review how to manage people strategically

**Read:** Chapter 7 in text

**Session 14: People and Personnel (10/22)**

Objective: To understand how to set goals and incentives to support productive

behavior

**Read:** Chapter 6 in text

Kerr, S. (1995). On the folly of rewarding A, while hoping for B. Academy of

Management Executive, February, pp. 7-14. [NYU Brightspace]

**Submit:** Team Strategic Plan

**Session 15: Nonprofit and Public Sector HR (10/24)**

Objective: To understand differences in managing people in the various

sectors-nonprofit, for-profit, and public

**Read:** Pynes, J. (2013). Strategic Human Resources Management and

Planning. *Human Resources Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*,

Chapter 2 (pp. 37-61). John Wiley and Sons, [NYU Brightspace]

**Session 16: Managing for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (10/29)**

Objective: To discuss how to manage a diverse workforce

**Read:** Ely, R. and Thomas, D. (2020) Getting Serious About Diversity.

Harvard Business Review, November-December, pp. 115-122. [Go to library]

White, J. D. (2022) How to Build an Anti-Racist Company. Harvard Business Review,

May-June, pp. 96-103. [Go to library]

**Submit:** Second Case Analysis on Harvard Case, San Rafael: How Uncommon

Stakeholder Alliances Reduced Chronic Homelessness

**Session 17: Case Discussion (10/31)**

Objective: To better appreciate the challenges in creating a diverse organization

**Read:** CASE: Fostering Success? An Equity Initiative Goes Sideways. From Course Hero.

[NYU Brightspace]

**Submit:** Team Theory of Change

**Session 18: Power and Influence (11/5)**

Objective: To develop skills of the constructive politician

**Read:** Chapter 9 in text

**Session 19: Power and Influence (11/7)**

Objective: To learn how to identify important political players and their sources of

power

**Read:** Chapter 10 in text

**Session 20: Leadership (11/12)**

Objective: To understand the history of leading

**Read:** Chapter 17 in text

Su, Amy Jen. (2017). How New Managers Can Send the Right Leadership Signals.

Harvard Business Review, July/August*,* pp. 2-5. [Go to Internet]

**Submit:** Team Culture Statement

**Session 21: Leading Change (11/14)**

Objective: To review models on the strategic management of change

**Read:** Chapter 19 in text

**Session 22: Sustaining Change (11/19)**

Objective: To understand the basic elements of program evaluation

**Case:** Establishing Metrics: What Comes Out of a Backpack in Chapter 4

Cases in Nonprofit Management, A Hands-On Approach (NYU Brightspace)

**Session 23: Leadership and the Four Frames (11/21)**

Objective: To understand the history of leading and to look at it through the four frames

**Read:** Chapter 18 in text

**Submit:** Reflection Paper on your career

**Session 24: Leading Change (11/26)**

Read: Harvard Case Study: Ricardo Semler: A Revolutionary Model of Leadership.

**There are no classes scheduled November 28 and 29.**

**Session 25: Reframing Ethics and Spirit (12/3)**

Objective: To use the frames to understand the ethical responsibilities of organizations

and the moral authority of leaders.

**Read:** Chapter 20

**Session 26: Bringing It All Together (12/5)**

Objective: To summarize the four frames discussed this semester.

**Read:** Chapter 21

**Session 27 and 28: Team Presentations (12/10 and 12/12)**

In our last two classes we will have team presentations and we will summarize

the important information to take away from this course.

Submit **Team Paper** by December 18 and **Peer Evaluation** by December 19.

The **final assignment** will be a case analysis and should be submitted by December 20.