1020: Managing Public Service Organizations
Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
New York University
Fall 2009

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. or by appointment

Day

Section: 01
Location: Bobst LL138
Time: Monday, 12:30-2:10 p.m.

Teaching Colleagues
Rebecca DiBennardo
email: redibenardo@gmail.com
Section: 02
Location: Bobst LL150
Time: Monday, 2:15-3:15 p.m.

Kristen Ellis
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Section: 03
Location: Bobst LL151
Time: Monday, 2:15-3:15 p.m.

Night

Section: 04
Location: 194 Mercer, Rm# 203
Time: Monday, 6:45-8:25 p.m.

Teaching Colleagues
Rebecca DiBennardo
email: redibenardo@gmail.com
Section: 05
Location: 194 Mercer, Rm# 201
Time: Monday, 8:35-9:35 p.m.

Diana Lugo-Martinez
email: diana.lugo@nyu.edu
Section: 06
Location: 194 Mercer, Rm# 204
Time: Monday, 8:35-9:35 p.m.
Course Goals and Objectives
The goal of Managing Public Service Organizations (MPSO) is to enhance your leadership skills. 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 prosperous public service organizations.

A key leadership task is to assemble the skills, talents, and resources of individuals and groups into those combinations that best solve the organizational problems at hand. You must manage people, information, and processes to accomplish organizational goals; you must make things happen, and often not under conditions or timeframes of your own choosing. The successful execution of these goals requires leaders to be able to understand what they bring to and need from their organizations, formulate a mission and strategy, make effective decisions, influence and motivate diverse individuals, apply their own skills and abilities to their teams, optimize the structure of their organization, diagnose problems, and drive organizational change.

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

Course Format
Each day we will focus on a particular set of leadership skills. Our goal will be to distinguish between effective and ineffective strategies. We will accomplish this by discussing key theoretical concepts, analyzing related cases, engaging in exercises, and completing team projects.

This course reflects a dual focus on practice and conceptual training. The course packet 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, sectors, and fields of interest to Wagner students 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.

The two discussion sections of the course will be led by two accomplished teaching colleagues and will focus specifically on building project management skills, support and overseeing each team, and providing opportunities for further discussion of issues raised in the lecture portion of the course. The teaching colleagues work directly with me as partners in this course. You are free to talk with them about any questions or concerns about the course content or assignments but are also free to talk with me at any time.

Preparing for Class
It is important that you complete the reading for each session in advance. You and your classmates will not benefit as much from the class session if you come unprepared. For weeks with a case, you will not be able to contribute to class discussion of the case if you have not read it in advance.

Many of the principles and issues involved in MPSO 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 in your course packet 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?
- How does this matter for an organization?
- What are the implications for the kinds of challenges I 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 cases provide concrete situations to which you should apply the concepts introduced in articles. They provide an opportunity for you to practice diagnosing the nature and causes of organizational performance and to practice thinking through the potential consequences of action strategies.

A class like this requires careful attention to fairness and mutual respect for one another. 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. If you are familiar with a case or an exercise introduced in class, please do not discuss your prior knowledge with other students until after the class session, as this can ruin the learning experience for them. If you are concerned that your expertise might be an issue, please let me know before class.

**Readings**

**Required**
1. The course packet containing many required readings and all cases is available for purchase at the Unique Copy Center, 252A Greene Street.
2. The remaining required readings are available via links on the course Blackboard website.

**Blackboard**

You must have access to the class Blackboard site at [http://classes.nyu.edu/](http://classes.nyu.edu/)

- Many announcements, class related documents (extra readings, discussion questions, class handouts, etc.), and surveys/exercises will be posted here. If you have not activated your NYU net account or have forgotten your password, you can activate or change your password at [http://start.nyu.edu](http://start.nyu.edu). Your account must be activated to access Blackboard.
- Some class announcements will 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 on NYUHome [https://home.nyu.edu/](https://home.nyu.edu/)
- You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader in order to view and print the materials on Blackboard. If you do not already have this (free) software installed on your computer, go to [http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html) and follow the download instructions.
Grading

Your grade for the course will be based on the following elements:

- 15% Course contribution (class participation and team member evaluations)
- 40% Team project (assignments and paper)
- 20% Individual assignments
- 25% Final exam

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. Please carefully read the readings and cases before class sessions. Most participation will be voluntary; however, to insure that everyone has the opportunity to be involved, individuals will occasionally be called upon at my discretion. 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?

Regular participation in discussions and class exercises is expected. If you must miss a class, it is essential that you notify me and your TC at least 24 hours in advance so I can make arrangements for any in-class exercises.

Team Project: You will be assigned to teams of three or four students. Each team will focus on a specific effort to improve organizational performance in one of the following areas covered by the course:

- Mission & Strategy
- Organizational Structure
- Employee/Client Diversity
- Organization Culture
- Employee Motivation & Incentives
- Performance Management & Measurement

Your team will select an organization in New York City in which to study a single improvement effort. The organization you select can be in any sector that provides public service (government, nonprofit, or private) and can be one you previously worked for, one you would like to work for, or simply one that interests you. Your team will make contact with the organization, approach a senior manager to learn about its recent improvement efforts, select a specific improvement effort to examine, and interview two senior managers regarding their experiences with the identified improvement effort using a questionnaire template developed by the MPSO professors.
Your final deliverable is a theoretical and applied analytical paper that discusses the improvement effort in the following ways:

- **Theory/Evidence**: What does the management/organizations literature say about the improvement effort in conceptual/theoretical terms and what are the findings about its effectiveness?
- **Expectations**: What do advocates within the organization expect the improvement effort will accomplish?
- **Implementation**: How was the improvement effort implemented in the organization?
- **Impact**: What are the outcomes of the improvement effort in terms of managerial or organizational impact?
- **Recommendations**: What would your team recommend to increase the effectiveness of the improvement effort?

The goals of the team project are: (1) to practice using team concepts on a weekly basis, (2) to connect theory to practice by utilizing a conceptual framework to analyze an actual organization and (3) to develop your professional network with leaders of organizations that are engaged with topics that interest you.

Your team will be working on this project throughout the semester and periodically will be asked to provide information about your progress. The project includes the following steps:

1. As a team, find a government, nonprofit, or private organization to serve as the case study for the team’s theme.
2. Discuss the initial individual and team tasks to be done in preparation for completing the steps outlined below. Divide and coordinate tasks among team members. Discuss members' expectations regarding teamwork, team decision making and leadership. Develop agreement regarding team roles, ground rules, and protocols in the form of a team charter.
3. Submit a team project outline.
4. Identify a theoretical framework, model, or set of concepts that can be used to analyze the change at the organization you are studying.
5. Submit a revised team project outline.
6. Prepare a final paper according to the formatting guidelines for all written assignments (above) and the following:
   - The paper should be no more than 10 pages double spaced, excluding references and an optional appendix.
   - Your paper should include a list of references at the end. An appendix may follow with a figure or table.
   - Use the Example Final Paper Table of Contents (Blackboard/Assignments/Team Project Materials) as a guideline for how you might structure your paper. Use the format for the readings in this syllabus as a guide for how to format the References section. To cite a work in the body of the text, list the author(s) and year of publication in parentheses as follows: (Phillips, 2004).
   - **Due December 14 in class.**
7. Evaluate the contributions of your team members to your team project. These will be factored into your course contribution grade. You will complete these during your final discussion section meeting.
Assignments and Outside-of-Class Exercises: In order to facilitate application of the class concepts and your project team development, you will be asked to complete some individual and team exercises, reflections, and assignments, outside of class in addition to the team paper. Most of these are very brief; the exception is the MGOA Physicians Analysis. The exercises, reflections, and assignments and their due dates are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exercises</th>
<th>Reflections</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiral of Sustainable Excellence Memo, Sep 28 (1 page single spaced)</td>
<td>Implicit Association Exercise, Nov 6 (Blackboard)</td>
<td>Team Role, Oct 20 (1 page double spaced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Charter, Sep 29 (1 page single spaced)</td>
<td>Implicit Association and Stereotyping, Nov 6 (1 page double spaced)</td>
<td>MGOA Physicians Analysis, Oct 26 (3 pages double spaced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Project Brief, Oct 6</td>
<td>Revised Team Project Outline, Nov 17 (1 page single spaced)</td>
<td>Team Project Outline, Oct 27 (1 page single spaced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All written work will be evaluated using the following criteria (in order of importance):

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 presentation?
Writing: How well do you reflect professional quality in grammar and writing style? (see section “Writing Resources” for writing assistance)
Formatting: Written assignments, including the team paper, should be submitted in 12-point font, left justified, with 1-inch margins, numbered pages, and no longer than the page limit specified for the assignment.

One general guideline to consider is to favor depth over breadth. That is, papers and memos covering fewer topics tend to also display more thorough analysis than assignments trying to cover more topics. Please do not seek extensions or exceptions to deadlines except in cases of emergency: we know that all of you have complicated schedules, but it is not fair for us to accommodate some complications but not others. Late assignments will be deducted by 10% for every 24-hour period past the deadline. The teaching colleagues may take a preliminary read on all course assignments, but I will assign all final grades.

Final Exam: The final exam will be held on December 21 during normal lecture hours in our normal lecture room. It will contain a series of short answer and essay questions. You may bring
to the exam one 8.5” x 11” sheet of paper with notes on the front and back. I cannot give advice that guarantees success on the exam, but I have three tips that are designed to provide you with the level and kind of knowledge I would want heading into my own exam.

1. Distribute your study time according to the following rule: the exam will emphasize material covered in class over material that was not covered in class, but anything from the syllabus or class is fair game (all slides, readings, cases, videos, and DVDs).
2. Think about the connections between slides, readings, cases, and videos.
3. Think about how one framework might apply to something we analyzed from a different framework in class.

Writing Resources
The school provides a writing consultant (free) and a writing workshop (not free) for assistance with written work. More information is available at the URL below:

http://www.nyu.edu/wagner/current/services/writing.php

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. You can view our Academic Code at the following URL: http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies/. This is a good resource for issues of academic integrity, especially regarding writing. For this particular course, there are some specific behaviors required to meet our standards of academic integrity:

Team Project & Individual Assignments: Team projects should be completed by teams working together. Individual written assignments should be the sole work of the individual student.

Exams: All exams must be the sole work of the individual student.

Violations of these standards will automatically result in all participating students failing the course and being remanded to the discipline committee for further action.
COURSE OUTLINE AND SESSION SCHEDULE

[CP] = Coursepack    [BB] = Blackboard

Session 1: September 14  Developing A Public Service Mission

Objectives
• Learn how the definition of public service is changing
• Understand the logic behind mission and the purposes and goals of different organizations

Read (before class)

In Class
• CASE: Ellen Schall and DJJ discussion
  1. If you were Ellen Schall and were asked to take this job, how would you feel about it? What would worry you? What would attract you?
  2. What policies and mandates (formally and informally) exist for DJJ? Are these the same as a mission for a government agency/department?
  3. What would be a desirable mission for DJJ that would also be considered legitimate by the various stakeholders?
• Review syllabus

SPOFFORD JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER  ELLEN SCHALL
Session 2: September 21  
Team Formation, Process, and Decision-Making

Objectives
- Understand the process involved in team performance
- Understand the effects of team process and communication on decision-making

Read (before class)

In Class
- EXERCISE: Murder Mystery
- Review expectations for written work in MPSO

MODEL OF TEAM PERFORMANCE

McGrath, 1984
Session 3: September 28  

Strategic Analysis

Objectives

- Learn the key features of an organizational strategy
- Learn how to perform a strategic analysis of an organization

Read (before class)


In Class

- Spiral of Sustainable Excellence discussion (based on your memos)
- CASE: Rubicon DVD

Due (in class)

- One-page single-spaced Spiral of Sustainable Excellence Memo explaining to Professor Magee (a) the current stage of development (from Light, 2004) for an organization that you are familiar with (e.g., one that you have worked for, one that you would be interested in studying for your team project) and (b) the conditions under which you believe the organization will be prepared for the next stage. Memo writing guidelines can be found at the following URL: http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/services/files/WritingMemos.pdf

Due (Tuesday, September 29 at midnight)

- Project team charter (1 page single spaced; email to TC)
Session 4: October 5  Managing and Measuring Organizational Performance

Objectives

- Develop an understanding of the reasons for measuring performance
- Learn how performance measurement translates into effective resource allocation

Read (before class)


In Class

- CASE: Harlem Children’s Zone discussion
  1. What are the crucial success factors for Rheedlin before the strategic planning process?
  2. What are HCZ’s goals? Are there any conflicting goals?
  3. What is HCZ’s theory of the problem? Does the focus on neighborhood and concentration make sense?
  4. What outcomes does HCZ emphasize? Is there more emphasis on process or impact?
  5. What do you think of HCZ’s evaluation strategy?
  6. What impact has the business plan and the focus on measurement had on the staff?

Due (Tuesday, October 6 at midnight)

- Team Project Brief: a) name of organization, b) name of one leader who you have contacted, and c) one-paragraph description of the organization (1 page single spaced; email to TC)

HARLEM CHILDREN’S ZONE

The Baby College

The Baby College, an innovative parents series on infant development, was designed by Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, a foremost expert in early child development. The Baby College provides parenting workshops, child development classes, and access to community resources for parents with children ages 0-1. In FY 2007, The Baby College offered four 9-week workshops in which 350 parents with 400 children participated.

- 83% of parents improved the frequency of reading to their children
- 95% of parents had health insurance for their children upon graduation
- 97.2% of parents had up-to-date or scheduled immunizations for their children upon graduation.
Session 5: October 12  
**Designing Organizational Structure**

Objectives

- Understand how structure can solve coordination problems
- Discuss the impact of structure on other aspects of the organization

Read (before class)

2. Light, P. C. *Fact Sheet on the Continued Thickening of Government*. [BB]

In Class

- CASE: *Mercy Corps* discussion
  1. What are the strengths and concerns of a highly entrepreneurial organization?
  2. How much of a challenge is it for Mercy Corps to achieve consistent quality across all of its sites? What are they doing well in this pursuit and what concerns you?
  3. How does Mercy Corps’ headquarters provide the needed support for each of its operating units? What are the variables they need to consider in designing and implementing this support?
  4. How should Mercy Corps decide which functions should be performed at the operating unit and which functions should be the responsibility of headquarters?
  5. How important is the regional program director for success? If you were a country director, what is the one thing you would want from your regional program director?
**Session 6: October 19  
Motivating Performance**

**Objectives**
- Understand how to motivate people
- Understand how to set goals and incentives to induce productive behavior

**Read (before class)**

**In Class**
- *Performance Pay for MGOA Physicians* case overview

**Due (Tuesday, October 20 at midnight)**
- Team Role Reflection [BB/Assignments for instructions] (email to TC)

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**EXPECTANCY THEORY**

\[
\text{Incentive level to follow management directives} = \text{Effort} \times \text{Performance} \times \text{Rewards}
\]

Nadler & Lawler, 1977
Session 7: October 26  Communicating Effectively

Objectives
• Provide strategies for communicating feedback up and down the hierarchy
• Learn how to structure meetings effectively

Read
(before class)

(after class)

In Class
• EXERCISE: Performance Appraisal

Due (in class)
• Three-page double spaced analysis of Performance Pay for MGOA Physicians
  [BB/Assignments for instructions]

Due (Tuesday, October 27 at midnight)
• Team project outline (1 page single spaced; email to Professor Magee and TC)

“The complaints against you are as follows: You don’t return calls, you don’t encourage your staff, and you’re nobody’s best friend.”
Session 8: November 2

Organizational Culture

Objectives

• Develop strategies for creating an effective culture
• Understand how culture provides an advantage for employee selection and retention

Read (before class)


In Class

• Review *Performance Pay for MGOA Physicians*
• CASE: *The Royal Treatment* (SAS) video
• Bring to class a symbol or story from an organization that represents its culture. Think about its purpose and why it is/was effective or ineffective. Be prepared to discuss with the class.

Note

• During discussion section, team meetings with Professor Magee to discuss project outline
Session 9: November 9  Managing Diversity

Objectives

• Understand stereotyping and diversity-related issues
• Develop strategies to address issues of diversity in organizations

Read (before class)

4. CASE: Pathmark in East Harlem

Due (Friday, November 6, 12 p.m.)

• Complete one Implicit Association Exercise [BB/Assignments for link].
• Implicit Association and Stereotyping reflection [BB/Assignments for instructions] (email to Professor Magee and TC)

In Class

• Implicit Association Exercise discussion
• CASE: *Pathmark in East Harlem* discussion
  1. Considering Thomas and Ely’s “Paradigms for Managing Diversity,” what else could Pathmark have done to increase support for the development in East Harlem?
  2. Was race a legitimate issue in the development debate? Was it used to mask other reasons for objecting to the development? If so, what were those other reasons?
  3. Were the features of this inter-group conflict specific to racial conflict or typical of other types of inter-group conflict?

Note

• During discussion section, team meetings with Professor Magee to discuss project outline
Session 10: November 16  

**Decision Making and Ethics**

**Objectives**

- Demonstrate the sources of systematic decision-making biases
- Understand the sources of and solutions for ethical dilemmas in organizations

**Read (before class)**

   **Required: Introduction, Biases 1, 2, 3, 9, 11. Recommended: entire chapter.**

**Due (Friday, November 13, 12 p.m.)**

1. Complete Decision Making Exercise [BB/Assignments].

**In Class**

- CASE: *Why Should My Conscience Bother Me?* discussion
  1. Who is to blame for the unethical behavior?
  2. What factors increased B.F. Goodrich’s commitment to the flawed brake design?
  3. What could Lawson have done differently to prevent the production of a flawed brake?
  4. How would you go about blowing the whistle on unethical behavior in this situation?
  5. What would you do to improve the organization if you were hired at Goodrich immediately after these incidents occurred?

**Due (Tuesday, November 17 at midnight)**

- Revised team project outline (1 page single spaced; email to Professor Magee and TC)

![Graph](image-url)
**Session 11: November 23  Understanding Your Own Barriers to Learning and Change**

**Objectives**
- Think about what you think and do that prevents personal and professional growth

**Read (before class)**

**In Class**
- EXERCISE: Kegan & Lahey Transformation Grid

|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
Session 12: November 30  Strategic Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

Objectives
- Assess your skills at negotiating
- Comprehend the core principles of negotiation

Read (before class)

In Class
- EXERCISE: Acme Pinnacle Negotiation

Model of the Negotiation
Bargaining Zone

Buyer’s Target Price (e.g., $5k)  Buyer’s Reservation Price (e.g., $20K)

↓  ↓

Seller’s Reservation Price (e.g., $10K)  Seller’s Target Price (e.g., $30K)
Session 13: December 7  

*Power and Strategic Influence*

**Objectives**
- Learn how to identify important political players and their sources of power
- Develop strategies for influencing up and down the hierarchy

**Read (before class)**

**In Class**
- CASE: *Job Corps* discussion
  1. Who do you think is most powerful in the case?
  2. Which of Kelly’s influence tactics do you like? Which could he have developed better?
  3. How does Kelly use reciprocity and consistency?
  4. What strategies are most appropriate for Kelly to use to save Job Corps going forward?
Session 14: December 14  Leading Change

Objectives
- Understand sources of resistance to change
- Provide strategies for championing and leading change

Read (before class)

In Class
- CASE: *Oxfam in America* discussion
  1. Is there a clear vision for change at Oxfam? If so, what is it?
  2. Is the change consistent with Oxfam’s mission?
  3. Is Oxfam’s shift to coordinated global advocacy consistent with the historic support for and empowerment of local people and local organizations?
  4. Does Oxfam’s shift to advocacy make strategic sense?
  5. What challenges or barriers remain for Offenheiser?
- Wrap-up

Due (in class)
- Team paper

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT FRAMEWORK

- **Inputs**
  - Environment
  - Resources
  - History
  - Mission

- **Informal Organization**

- **Structure**

- **Tasks**

- **People**

- **Outputs**
  - Organization
  - Group
  - Individual

Nadler & Tushman, 1992