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

Professor Amit Nigam
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Office: Puck 3039, Phone: 212-992-8714
Office Hours: Monday, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. or by appointment

Ann Lin (Professor Nigam’s Assistant)
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Day

Section: 007
Location: Silver 701
Time: Tuesday, 12:30-2:10 p.m.

Teaching Colleagues

Cristin Lavelle Goerke
Email: cristin.lavelle@gmail.com
Section: 008
Location: Silver 718
Time: Tuesday, 2:15-3:15 p.m.

Hanan Nassau
Email: hnassau@nyu.edu
Section: 009
Location: Silver 701
Time: Tuesday, 2:15-3:15 p.m.

Night

Section: 016
Location: Silver 706
Time: Tuesday, 6:45-8:25 p.m.

Teaching Colleagues

Esther Sackett
Email: esther.sackett@nyu.edu
Section: 017
Location: Silver 706
Time: Tuesday, 8:35-9:35 p.m.

Micah Goldfus
Email: micahgoldfus@gmail.com
Section: 018
Location: Silver 720
Time: Tuesday, 8:35-9:35 p.m.
Course Goals and Objectives

Focus on Leadership Skills – 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.

Grounding in Research – 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

Weekly Topics – 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.

Theory, Cases & Exercises – 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.

Discussion Sections – 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

Read the Cases! – 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.

Something new, something old – 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.

Read with an eye to linking theory with practice – 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 can I apply this to my organization, my job, and/or my career?

Cases help link theory to practice – 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.

Be professional! – 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 & E-mail
- You must have access to the class Blackboard site at http://classes.nyu.edu/
- You must actively use your NYU e-mail account or have appropriate forwarding set up on NYUhome - https://home.nyu.edu/ - or you may miss key e-mails or announcements regarding the course
Grading
Your grade for the course will be based on the following elements:

15% Course contribution (class participation)

40% Team project

Your team project grade will be based on team performance on all assignments and the final paper, and on feedback on your contribution to the team based on performance metrics that you develop as part of your team charter.

20% Individual assignments

5% Spiral of excellence memo
15% MGOA physician analysis

25% Final exam

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? How well do you convey the conceptual material you are using to a general, intelligent reader?

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. Sources used should be cited appropriately.

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. Late assignments will incur a grade penalty. The teaching colleagues may take a preliminary read on all course assignments and offer comments, but I will assign all final grades.

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. 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. In addition to discussing in class, regular attendance, and timely completion of all reflections is also factored into your course contribution grade.
Class Participation - Optional Learning Journal

Speaking up and sharing your views in public or group formats is an essential management skill. That said, different students have different learning styles. Some students learn better through quiet concentration in class. Students who speak English as their second, third or fourth language may also not feel comfortable speaking out in class. Given these differences, all students have the option to keep a learning journal. The purpose of a learning journal is to give you the opportunity to reflect on what you learned through each week’s readings and class, and to relate the class discussion and readings to your own experiences & career. Keeping a learning journal is also an alternate form of class participation. Your learning journal should be ½ to 1 page for each class session. You should e-mail your learning journal as a word attachment weekly to my assistant Ann Lin at ann.lin@nyu.edu. Your subject heading for the e-mail should be “MPSO learning journal”. Send your weekly learning journal to my assistant by 9:00 AM on the Monday after class. I will have them printed and read them over before class. On occasion, I may ask you to share your insights or the lesson you learned with the class at the beginning of the next class session.

Team Project
You will be assigned to teams of four or three 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
- Employee Motivation & Incentives
- Performance Management & Measurement
- Organizational Culture

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. Create **team charter & draft performance metrics**: 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.
   - Develop performance metrics for each team member, that you will use at the end of the term to rate your team members’ contributions. You will have the opportunity to revise your performance metrics and turn them in with your team project outline.
   - *Additional information on the team charter and performance metrics are on blackboard in the “team projects” folder of the “assignments” section*

3. Write a **project brief** with the name of your organization and one leader you contacted, and a 1 paragraph description of your organization

4. Submit a **team project outline** with **final performance metrics**. Further information on the team project outline is on blackboard

5. Identify a theoretical framework, model, or set of concepts that can be used to analyze the change at the organization you are studying.

6. Submit a revised team project outline if there have been changes in your team project

7. 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).

8. Evaluate the contributions of your team members to your team project based on the performance metrics you developed as part of your team charter, and finalized when handing in your initial project outline. *These will be factored into your final grade.*
## Assignment Due Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Where/When</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday September 23</td>
<td>IN CLASS</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Spiral of Sustainable Excellence Memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday October 2</td>
<td>By email to Prof Nigam, Ann Lin &amp; TC @ 5PM</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Team Charter (1 page) + Draft Performance Metrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday October 9</td>
<td>By e-mail to Prof Nigam, Ann Lin &amp; TC @ 5PM</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Team Project Brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday October 16</td>
<td>By e-mail to Prof Nigam, Ann Lin &amp; TC @ 5PM</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Team Project Outline + Final Performance Metrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday October 16</td>
<td>By e-mail to Prof Nigam, Ann Lin &amp; TC @ 5PM</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Team Role Reflection (1 page double spaced)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday October 21</td>
<td>IN CLASS</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>MGOA Physician Analysis (3 pages double spaced)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday November 2</td>
<td>Before class – Complete on Blackboard</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Implicit Association Exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday November 2</td>
<td>Before class by e-mail to Prof Nigam &amp; Ann Lin</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Implicit Association Reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday November 9</td>
<td>Before class - Complete on Blackboard</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Decision Making Exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday November 13</td>
<td>By e-mail to Prof Nigam, Ann Lin &amp; TC @ 5PM</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Revised team project outline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday December 2</td>
<td>IN CLASS</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Kegan &amp; Lahey Transformation Grid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday December 11</td>
<td>In Prof Nigam’s Mailbox @ 5PM</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Team Project Due!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday December 14</td>
<td>By e-mail to Prof Nigam, Ann Lin &amp; TC @ 5PM</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Team Member Evaluation</td>
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### Assignment Notes:
- All assignments sent by e-mail should be sent both to me (Prof. Nigam) and my assistant, Ann Lin. She will print hard copies of all assignments and give them to me. Her e-mail address is ann.lin@nyu.edu
- All assignments related to your team project should also be e-mailed to your TC.
- Include your Wagner Box # on all assignments.
- Include your Team Name on all assignments related to your team projects.
- For all e-mailed assignments, include the course acronym “MPSO” at the beginning of the subject heading.
Final Exam: The final exam will be held on **December 23** 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 – typed or hand written. 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](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/](http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies/). 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.
Session 1: September 9  Developing A Public Service Mission

Objectives
• 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?
Session 2: September 16  
Team Formation, Process, and Decision-Making

Objectives
- Understand the effects of team process and communication on decision-making
- Understand the effects of team composition on decision-making
- Learn strategies for promoting more information sharing & better decision-making in groups

Read (before class)

In Class
- EXERCISE: Murder Mystery
Session 3: September 23  

Strategic Analysis

Objectives

- Learn the 3 key features of an organizational strategy
- Learn how to perform a strategic environment analysis for 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 Nigam (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) (b) gaps or shortcomings that explain why it falls short of the next stage & (c) your recommendations to guide the organization towards reaching the next stage.
- A reminder, your memos will be evaluated based on the criteria highlighted at the beginning of this syllabus: theory, data, analysis, organization, writing & formatting.
- Memo writing guidelines can be found at the following URL: [http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/services/files/WritingMemos.pdf](http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/services/files/WritingMemos.pdf)
### Session 4: September 30  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 (Friday, October 2 at 5 p.m.)
- One-page project team charter + draft performance measures (single spaced; email to Prof. Nigam, Ann Lin & TC)
Session 5: October 7  
Designing Organizational Structure

Objectives
- Learn to identify different types of organizational structures
- Understand how structure can solve or exacerbate coordination problems
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of different types of organizational structures

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?

Due (Friday, October 9 at 5 p.m.)
- 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)
Session 6: October 14  
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 (Friday, October 16 at 5 p.m.)
- One-page team project outline (single spaced) + final performance measures for assessing individual contributions (email to Professor Nigam and TC)
- Team Role Reflection [BB/Assignments for instructions] (email to TC)

EXPECTANCY THEORY

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

Nadler & Lawler, 1977
Session 7: October 21  Communicating Effectively

Objectives

• Provide strategies for communicating feedback up and down the hierarchy

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]

Note

• During discussion section, team meetings with Professor Nigam to discuss project outline
Session 8: October 28  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 Nigam to discuss project outline
Session 9: November 4  
Managing Diversity

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

Read (before class)
5. Real World Case: Henry Louis Gates! – Articles to follow on BlackBoard.

In Class
- Implicit Association Exercise discussion

Due Before Class (Monday, November 2 at 5p.m.)
- Complete one Implicit Association Exercise [BB/Assignments for link].
- Implicit Association and Stereotyping reflection [BB/Assignments for instructions] (email to Professor Nigam, Ann Lin and TC)
Session 10: November 11  
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.

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 Before Class (Monday, November 9 at 5 p.m.)

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

Due After Class (Friday, November 13 at 5 p.m.)

- Revised one-page team project outline
Objectives

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

Read (before class)


In Class

- EXERCISE: Acme Pinnacle Negotiation
Session 12: See Below  
**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)**

Because this is the Wednesday before Thanksgiving – I have turned this into an out of class exercise that you will complete with an assigned partner from class

- Complete the Kegan & Lahey Transformation Grid for yourself as you do the reading. Afterward, meet with your assigned partner to discuss what you have learned about yourselves. Your partner will be assigned to you in class on November 4. Turn in your grid in class on December 2.

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**Session 13: December 2  
*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 9  Leading Change

Objectives
• Understand sources of resistance to change
• Identify distinct phases over the course of an organizational change initiative
• Provide strategies for championing and leading change

Read (before class)

In Class
• CASE: Oxfam America in 2002 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. Did Oxfam America’s shift to advocacy make sense?
  5. What challenges remain for Offenheiser?
• Wrap-up

Due
• Team Project – Final Paper - Friday December 11 @ 5PM
• Team Member Evaluations - Monday December 14 @ 5PM

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT FRAMEWORK

Nadler & Tushman, 1992