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

Section: 10
Location: 706 Silver
Time: 12:30-3:15

Professor

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. or by appointment

Teaching Colleagues

Clara Janis
Maryam Hariri

Course Goals and Objectives

The goal of Managing Leading Public Service Organizations (MPSO) is to enhance your leadership skills. The course provides students with the tools needed to diagnose and solve organizational problems, to influence the actions of individuals, groups, and organizations, and to lead high-performing, successful public service organizations.

The course is divided into two sections: (1) an examination of organizations from the micro to macro level, and (2) a review of key leadership challenges in organizational life.

Required Books

There are two required books for this course:


You will also be assigned almost all of the chapters from my new book, *A Government Ill Executed*. Page proofs of the book are available on Blackboard, but copies will be
available for purchase in soft cover at the Professional School Bookstore on LaGuardia, but at full list price. Some should already be available on Amazon.com at used prices.

*Hard Facts* (hard cover only) and *Reframing Leadership* (soft cover) will be available at the Professional School Bookstore, again at full list price. A number of copies are currently available on Amazon.com. The first reading from *Hard Facts* is required for the first class.

All other readings are on Blackboard or available online through ProQuest Direct using its advanced search option or by selecting the journal through the alphabetical list of e-journals provided by the library.

There is no course pack!

**Course Format**

After starting out with a discussion of evidence-based management and an exploration of the four frames for understanding organizations, the rest of the course will focus on a particular set of leadership skills. The class goal will be to distinguish between effective and ineffective strategies. The class will do so 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 their skills in problem definition and problem solving. The written assignments, including the team project, ask students to consolidate their insights and to practice their analytic skills.

Many of the principles and issues involved in MPSO are relatively timeless and not limited only to organizations of a public service nature. Consequently, students 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 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 students who have unavoidable conflicts make the professor or teaching colleague aware of the absence in advance, and that you arrive in class on time.
and prepared for discussion. This means making sure all cases are carefully read and outlined.

**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 five elements:

- 40% Team paper
- 40% Individual memos (5 points per 8 graded memos)
- 20% Final exam

For general information about the quality of work related to letter grades, see the section “Final Grading Criteria” at the end of the syllabus.

**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.

**Team Paper**

Each three-person team will write a 5,000 word (or less) paper on a single organizational change that is designed to improve overall performance. There are literally hundreds of recommendations for improving organization performance to choose from, including new
personnel systems, pay-for-performance, reorganization, strategic planning, mission and vision statements, total quality management, benchmarking, teams, and so forth. Each team will pick one discrete intervention, examine the research (including business literatures) that support the idea, assess its real-world relevance to public service organizations, and summarize its actual value (cost/benefit, social return on investment, etc.) for actual implementation. Each team will also ask how the idea can be turned from abstract theory into practical impact, and may illustrate the impact with a case study from an actual organization the team is free to select. Your intervention should be in one of the following areas:

- Mission & Strategy
- Employee Motivation & Incentives
- Organizational Structure
- Performance Management & Measurement
- Employee/Client Diversity
- Power and Strategic Influence
- Organizational Culture

NOTE: Each team will be assigned to a teaching colleague who will act as a coach during the semester. Teams will meet with their teaching colleague at least three times during the semester. You should use this time to discuss progress on the paper and any issues that may concern the group.

Individual Memos

The individual memos should address the question asked regarding each case. The memos should be no longer than 1000 words (two-four pages) and will hopefully be shorter. These memos will be discussed in class.

Final Exam

The final exam will be an in-class exam based on the readings in the course. It will take place at normal class time on the first Thursday in the grading period.

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, all students are all expected to adhere to high standards of intellectual and academic integrity. A useful description of integrity can be found at [http://www.nyu.edu/cas/expository.writing/EWPpolicies.html#anchor762894](http://www.nyu.edu/cas/expository.writing/EWPpolicies.html#anchor762894).
This is a good resource for issues of academic honesty, especially regarding writing. For this particular course, there are some specific behaviors required to meet our standards of academic integrity:

*Team Projects:* Team projects should be completed by teams working together.

*Individual Projects:* Individual written assignments should be the sole work of the individual student, and will be checked for plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity

*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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>An Introduction to Evidence Based Management</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Learn the basics of evidence based management</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Understand the purpose and goals of different organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Read</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Bolman and Deal, <em>Reframing Organizations</em>, Chapters 1-2</td>
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**SECTION I: ORGANIZATIONS FROM MICRO TO MACRO**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 2</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Understand how you see yourself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Think about why you care about public service</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Read</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Light, <em>A Government Ill Executed</em>, Chapters 1 and 5 [BB]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>In Class</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Discuss Myers-Briggs typology with David Schachter leading</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Write a memo to me describing your strengths (NOT GRADED)</td>
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<th>Session 3</th>
<th>Teams</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Understand the sources of team effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Read</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. <em>Reframing Organizations</em>, Chapter 6-8, 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. CASE: Glaspell, “Trifles.” [BB]</td>
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In Class
- Read “Trifles” in groups
- Presentation of the team charter parameters and group assignments by the teaching colleagues.

Due
Write an individual memo on whether a crime was committed (GRADED)

Session 4  
**Coalitions**

Objectives
- Assess the political frame and your role as an organizational politician
- Understand the sources of interpersonal conflict

Read
1. *Reframing Organizations*, Chapter 9-11
3. CASE: Hartland Memorial Hospital

In Class
- Team exercise
- Discuss the Hartland priorities
- 6 teams will meet with teaching colleagues by appointment.

Due
- Write a memo telling Parsons exactly who to call first (GRADED)

Session 5  
**Cultures**

Objectives
- Understand the culture of organizations and its contributors

Read
- *Reframing Organizations*, Chapter 13-15
- CASE: Spofford Juvenile Detention

In Class
- Discuss Rose Washington

Due
- Write a memo on what Rose Washington should do to remove her deputy from her office (GRADED)
- 6 teams will meet with teaching colleagues by appointment.
Session 6  Structures

Objectives
- Understand the basic structure of contemporary public service organizations
- Understand the sources of structure

Read
- *Reframing Organizations*, Chapters 3-5
- CASE: Mercy Corps

In Class
- Discuss Mercy Corps

Due
- You are being recruited, not applying, for a job as a country director for Mercy Corps. (Pick a country of your choice, but note the impact of the size of the country and its political, social, and economic condition on your job. Also assume that you will be reporting to Steve Zimmerman through a RPD.) Write a memo to Zimmerman asking any question(s) you wish on how the new organizational structure will affect your job and explain the reason for each question. (GRADED)

SECTION II: SKILLS

Session 7  Leading

Objectives
- Understand key types of leadership and its use

Read
1. *Reframing Organizations*, Chapter 17
3. *The Search for Social Entrepreneurship*, Chapter 4, section on entrepreneurs only [BB]
5. CASE: Ellen Schall and the Department of Juvenile Justice. [BB]

In Class
- Discuss Ellen Schall
- 6 teams will meet with teaching colleagues by appointment.

Due
- You are chief of staff to Ellen Schall and have just received an emergency call from Rose Washington saying she is going to resign. She has just arrived at Spofford and wants to know who Dave Carter is and why he is sitting behind her desk. Write a memo to Washington persuading her to stay. (GRADED)
Session 8

Persuading

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

Read
4. *Hard Facts*, Chapter 8
5. CASE: Little Rock [BB]

In Class
- Discuss Little Rock
- 6 teams will meet with teaching colleagues by appointment.

Due
- You are a Wagner School graduate at the LRSD and have been asked to write a memo describing the key tasks facing the new superintendent. The memo will be used to draft a job description. The memo will be read by the board of the LRSD. You need to be honest, but your job is on the line. Be very careful about framing this one. (GRADED)

Session 9

Motivating

Objectives
- Understand the basics of performance measurement
- Understand how to set goals and incentives to induce productive behavior

Read
4. CASE: Express Maintenance [BB]

In Class
- Express Maintenance discussion
- 6 teams will meet with teaching colleagues by appointment.

Due
- You are the management analyst who designed the pay for performance system at Express Transit. You have just talked with Martin Jiles about the Sunday newspaper story. He wants to know exactly what went wrong and what he should say about fixing the system to the press on Monday morning. Tell him whether to defend, change, or junk your baby. (GRADED)
## Session 10  Deciding

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

**Read**
2. Institute of Medicine, *To Err is Human*, National Academies of Science [BB]
3. Bazerman, M. H. (2008), *Judgment in Managerial Decision Making*, Chapter 2 [BB] (do ALL exercises on separate paper—be prepared to hand them in, also be prepared to discuss in small groups)
4. CASE: Hurricane Katrina [BB]

**In Class**
- Case discussion
- 6 teams will meet with teaching colleagues by appointment.

**Due**
- You are the Homeland Security Czar in the Obama White House. As czar, you are responsible for disaster preparedness. President Obama has called asking for a one-pager on whether FEMA should be separated from the Department of Homeland Security with a direct reporting relationship to the president. Tell him whether your position should be abolished along the way. (GRADED)

## Session 11  Imagining

**Objectives**
- Learn the key features of exploratory analysis

**Read**
- CASE: Flu Vaccine Crisis [BB]

**In Class**
- Discuss the key variables affecting the vaccine program’s future
- 6 teams will meet with teaching colleagues by appointment

## Session 12  Planning

**Objectives**
- Learn the key features of an organizational strategy
- Understand the impact of the institutional environment on organizations

**Read**
1. *The Search for Social Entrepreneurship*, Chapter 3 [BB]

**In Class**
- Discuss the load bearing assumptions of your career
- 6 teams will meet with teaching colleagues by appointment.

**Session 13**

**Measuring**

**Objectives**
- Understand how to design effective measures of performance
- Learn the risks of measurement

**Read**
1. Urban Institute, *Analyzing Outcomes Information: Getting the Most from Data* [BB]

**In Class**
- 6 teams will meet with teaching colleagues by appointment.

**Due**
- Write a memo describing three outcomes that you think should measure Wagner’s success (NOT GRADED—TO BE SHARED WITH DEAN SCHALL; YOU MAY SUBMIT THE MEMO AS ANONYMOUS)

**Session 14 (ON A TUESDAY)**

**Creating Change**

**Objectives**
- Discuss different definitions of social entrepreneurship

**Read**

**In Class**
- Course summary, review, and wrap up