1020: Managing Public Service Organizations
Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
New York University
Spring 2010

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Time: Tuesday, 6:45-8:25 p.m.

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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

Weekly Topics – Each week 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 and Practice – 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 defining and solving problems. 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. Teaching colleagues will support and oversee each team, and provide 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, and 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 and you will not be able to contribute to class discussion of the case if you have not read the readings in advance.

Read with an eye toward 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?

Apply theory to practice – The cases provide concrete situations to which you should apply the concepts introduced in articles. As you read the cases practice diagnosing the nature and causes of organizational performance and to thinking through the potential consequences of different action strategies.

Be professional! – 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. This class 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.

Readings

Required
1. The course packet that contains 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 and E-mail
• You must have access to the Blackboard site at http://classes.nyu.edu/. Your NYU account must be activated to access Blackboard. If you have not activated your NYU net account or have forgotten your password, you can activate it or change your password at http://start.nyu.edu.
• 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/
• You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader 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 and follow the download instructions.
Grading

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

15% Class participation
40% Team project (assignments and paper)
20% Individual assignments
    5% Spiral of excellence memo
    15% MGOA physician analysis
25% Final exam

Class Participation - All class sessions will involve active discussion based on the readings and cases, with an emphasis on both 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. Your class participation grade will be based on your contribution to class discussion, attendance and timely completion of all “reflection” assignments (described below).

Team Project - Your team project grade will be based on team member evaluations (grounded in criteria you develop collectively in your team charter) and on the final paper. The final paper will be graded based on the criteria outlined below under “Written Work.”

Written Work – All written work – including individual assignments and the team project final paper – 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 with more thorough analysis are preferable to assignments that cover more topics with less depth.

Extensions or exceptions to deadlines will only be considered in cases of emergency. In all other cases, 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.
Assignments

**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
- 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/organization literature say about the improvement effort in conceptual/theoretical terms and what does it say about 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 a team charter. 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. 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**.

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**.

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).
   - **Due April 27 in class.**

8. Evaluate the contributions of your team members to your team project. These evaluations will be factored into your course contribution grade. You will complete these during your final discussion section meeting.

**Other assignments** – To facilitate application of the class concepts and your project team development, you will be asked to complete individual and team exercises, reflections, and assignments in addition to the team paper. Most of these are very brief; the exception is the MGOA Physicians Analysis. Instructions for these assignments will be provided prior to or during class as needed.

**Final Exam** – The final exam will be held on **May 11** 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. The following three tips provide some guidance for preparing for the final 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.
**Assignment due dates** – The exercises, reflections, and assignments and their due dates are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Where/When</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 19</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>Reflection: Ellen Schall and DJJ Case (1/2 - 1 page single spaced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>Spiral of Sustainable Excellence Memo (1 page single spaced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>E-mail to TC @ 8pm</td>
<td>Team Charter (1 page single spaced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>Reflection: Harlem Children’s Zone (1 page single space)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>E-mail to TC @ 8pm</td>
<td>Team Project Brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>Reflection: Mercy Corps Case (1 page single space)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>E-mail to TC @ 8pm</td>
<td>Reflection: Team Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>MGOA Physicians Analysis (3 pages double spaced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 3</td>
<td>E-mail to Prof Dodge and TC @ 8pm</td>
<td>Team Project Outline (1 page single spaced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 22</td>
<td>Complete exercise on own time</td>
<td>Implicit Association Exercise (Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 22</td>
<td>E-mail to Prof Dodge and TC @ 8pm</td>
<td>Implicit Association and Stereotyping Reflection (1 page double spaced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 26</td>
<td>Complete exercise on own time</td>
<td>Decision Making Exercise, (Blackboard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 31</td>
<td>E-mail to Prof Dodge and TC @ 8pm</td>
<td>Revised Team Project Outline (1 page single spaced)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 20</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>Reflection: Job Corps Case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 27</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>Final paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>In class</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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: January 19**  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

**Due (in class)**
- In preparation for class discussion, sketch your answers to the above questions in a ½ to 1 page, single-space reflection. Your reflections will be collected in class.

**SPOFFORD JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER**

ELLEN SCHALL
Session 2: January 26  

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: February 2  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 Dodge (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](http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/services/files/WritingMemos.pdf)

Due (Wednesday, February 3 at 8pm)

- Project team charter (1 page single spaced; email to TC)
Session 4: February 9

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 (in class)

• In preparation for class discussion, sketch your answers to the above questions in a ½ to 1 page, single-space reflection. Your reflections will be collected in class.

Due (Wednesday, February 10 at 8pm)

• 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, our innovative parents series on infant development, was designed by Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, a foremost expert on early child development. The Baby College provides parenting workshops, child development classes, and access to community resources for parents with children ages 0-3. In FY 2007, the Baby College offered four 9-week workshops in which 279 parents with 460 children participated.

- 83% of parents improved the frequency of reading to their children
- 96% 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: February 16  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?

Due (in class)
• In preparation for class discussion, sketch your answers to the above questions in a ½ to 1 page, single-space reflection. Your reflections will be collected in class.
Session 6: February 23  
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 (Wednesday, February 24 at 8pm)
• Team Role Reflection [BB/Assignments for instructions] (email to TC)

EXPECTANCY THEORY

Incentive level to follow management directives = Effort × Performance × Rewards

Nadler & Lawler, 1977
Session 7: March 2  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 (Wednesday, March 3 at 8pm)
- Team project outline (1 page single spaced; email to Professor Dodge and TC)
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 Dodge to discuss project outline
Session 9: March 23  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 (Monday, March 22 at 8pm)

- Complete one Implicit Association Exercise [BB/Assignments for link].
- Implicit Association and Stereotyping reflection [BB/Assignments for instructions] (email to Professor Dodge 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 Dodge to discuss project outline
Session 10: March 30  
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, March 26 at 8pm)

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 (Wednesday, March 31 at 8pm)

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

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The graph shows the relationship between Expertise and Confidence. Confidence is represented on the y-axis, while Expertise is on the x-axis. There are two lines: one representing Preferred and the other Actuality. The Preferred line is above the Actuality line, indicating a mismatch between what is perceived and what is actually the case.
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: April 13**  
*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
Session 13: April 20  

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?

Due (in class)

- In preparation for class discussion, sketch your answers to the above questions in a ½ to 1 page, single-space reflection.
Session 14: April 27  
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

Nadler & Tushman, 1992