Strategic Management of Public Service Organizations  
PADM-GP 2110(001)

**COURSE INFORMATION:**

Wednesdays 6:45 – 8:25 PM  
Silver Building, 25 W. 4th Street, Room 509

**INSTRUCTOR:**

Daniel Shacknai  
Phone: (347) 865-1590  
[ds196@nyu.edu](mailto:ds196@nyu.edu)

Office Hours: By phone, Tuesdays 9:00-10:00 PM, or by appointment

**COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES:**

How can a nonprofit or public sector organization achieve its goals and fulfill its mission? How should management structure an organization to enhance its effectiveness? How can an organization motivate staff and improve its development of leadership? How do organizations successfully navigate changes in the political, economic or media climate?

In order to deal effectively with these challenges, managers need to acquire knowledge and skills in strategic management. These include conceptual and leadership skills such as the ability to accurately read changes in the external environment, define and redefine organizational purpose, handle the complex trade-offs between demand for services and resource constraints, manage ongoing relationships and partnerships with other groups, maintain the commitment and productivity of employees, and guide the organization toward continuous improvement of services and delivery systems to meet client needs.

Strategic Management aims to prepare current and future managers of public service organizations for leadership roles by focusing on the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to manage public service organizations strategically. This course is required for all students in the Public and Nonprofit Program's management specialization.

Students completing this course will have: (1) a deeper understanding of the manager’s role as leader, strategist, planner, designer of structure, and creative problem-solver; (2) the ability to identify and analyze critical short term and long term issues confronting an organization and make recommendations for strategic solutions; (3) the ability to tailor strategy to promote its implementation; and (4) a good understanding of the role of leadership in achieving strategic change in public service organizations.
Readings

There is one required text, which is available at the Bookstore or library reserve:


We also will read a series of cases. A reading packet with the following cases has been assembled:

- Linda Gibbs and the Department of Homeless Services: Overhauling New York City’s Approach to Shelter (Harvard Kennedy School, C16-07-1873.8)
- Upwardly Global: Building a Model for Assisting Immigrant Professionals (Harvard Kennedy School, C16-05-1803.0)
- Habitat for Humanity International (Harvard Business School, 9-694-038)
- The Nature Conservancy (Harvard Business School, 9-303-007)
- Oxfam America in 2002 (Harvard Business School, 9-302-124)
- Finding Black Parents: One Church, One Child (Harvard Kennedy School, C16-88-856.0)
- Jumpstart: A Culture of Performance Measurement and Management (Harvard Business School, 9-301-037)
- Mayor Anthony Williams and Performance Management in Washington, DC (Harvard Kennedy School, C16-02-1647.0)
- Meeting For a Need: Jerry Abramson and CityWork in Louisville, KY (Harvard Kennedy School, C16-92-1155.0)

Additional readings will be posted on BlackBoard. Please notify me immediately if you have any trouble downloading any of these readings.

Please do not read ahead. Readings may be changed or adjusted as the course proceeds.

Assignments & Grades

Your grade in this course is based on three components. More details will be provided in class.

1. **Group Project** (50%) -- Your group project will describe an organization or initiative, its environment, and the dynamics of strategic management questions facing the organization. The project will also require developing recommendations on strategic priorities. There will be three parts to this assignment over the course of the term. Only the final “deliverables” – an in-class presentation and supporting 15-20 page report, will be graded. Individual grades may be adjusted up or down based on required self and peer assessments.

   Each group will be “hired” as a consultant team by the executives responsible for the organization or initiative. Your team must report back with a strategic assessment and set of priority actions for the organization.
Your final reports should generally follow this structure:

I. Background & Brief History of the Organization/Initiative
II. Brief Description of Current Organizational Context
III. Industry Analysis
   a. Analyze the most important strategic trends in the industry within which the organization operates, including economic and competitive characteristics of the industry.
IV. SWOT Analysis
   a. Based on the findings from your industry analysis, identify the organization’s/initiative’s most important strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Focus your analysis on the parts of the organization that you believe are most essential to its success in the industry in which it is situated.
   b. Identification of strategic priorities: Utilize all publicly available information and gather additional information directly from the organization.
V. Strategy Development
   a. Based on the strategic priorities identified through the SWOT, develop a set of recommended strategies that addresses the organization’s weaknesses, builds on its strengths, and allows it to respond strategically to opportunities and threats in the external environment.
VI. Implementation Steps and Concerns
   a. Recommend a set of next steps to implement the strategies proposed. Identify potential roadblocks to implementation and outline a set of metrics to determine if your strategy solutions are working.
VII. Brief Description of Alternative Strategies
   a. Develop a brief “Plan B” in the event your proposed strategies are rejected by your client or fail when implemented.

Sections I-III – Draft due in class – Session 5
Sections IV-V – Draft due in class – Session 9
Final Projects – To be presented during last two class sessions. Written report due at final class session.

2. Case Reports – 35% - Three case reports, approximately two pages in length, will be due at the start of certain classes. For each response, consider the readings assigned for the week, prior readings and the topic of the week. State the problem presented by the case (if multiple problems are presented, choose one), and briefly identify the context in which key decisions must be made. Next, describe proposed solutions to the problem, briefly state pros and cons, and determine what you believe is the best course of action. Then identify the likely next steps if your proposed solution is adopted. In addition, briefly outline a “Plan B” in the event your proposed solution fails.

In each response try to incorporate how the readings informed your understanding of the case and what influence a reading may have had on your decision-making process. You needn’t attempt to address everything in the case. Most important is your analysis of the problem and the ability to develop viable possible solutions.
3. **Class Participation and Pop Quizzes** – 15% - Because lively case discussions are essential to this class, your active participation is critical. You are allowed one excused absence over the course of the term – with prior notice. Any additional absence without a medical or other serious emergency will result in a loss of one-quarter of your participation grade per class missed. Besides attendance, I will be looking for you to have read and thought about the readings, contribute questions and comments, and actively participate in case discussions.

**IMPORTANT, PLEASE READ/REVIEW THE FOLLOWING POLICIES:**
- NYU/Wagner Academic Integrity Policy: [http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies/](http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies/)

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**COURSE SESSION CALENDAR**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Introduction & Leadership I 9/7
2. What is Strategy? 9/14
3. Developing Strategy and the Strategic Planning Process 9/21

**NOTE: NO CLASS ON SEPTEMBER 28!**

**DEVELOPING AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY**

4. Strategic Assessment of the Environment 10/5
5. Strategic Assessment of the Organization 10/12
6. Developing Growth Strategies 10/19
7. Developing Cooperative Strategies 10/26
8. In-Class Workshop 11/2

**IMPLEMENTING STRATEGY**

10. Engaging Your Workforce in Strategic Change 11/16

**NOTE: NO CLASS ON NOVEMBER 23!**

**STRATEGY AND LEADERSHIP**

11. Strategy and Leadership II 11/30
12. Project Presentations & Discussion 12/7
13. Project Presentations & Wrap-Up 12/14
Weekly Topics, Readings, Cases & Assignments:

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<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Introduction and Leadership I</th>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<td>• ACS Sample Performance Measures (BB)</td>
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<th>Session 2</th>
<th>“What is Strategy?”</th>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Kearns, 3-31</td>
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<td><strong>Case:</strong> Linda Gibbs and the Department of Homeless Services</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment:</strong> Bring in sample mission statements</td>
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<th>Session 3</th>
<th>Developing Strategy and the Strategic Planning Process</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Kearns, 32-49</td>
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<td>• Smergut, Peter. Strategic Planning on a Budget, Nonprofit World: July/Aug 2005, 14-16. (BB)</td>
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<td>• <strong>Case:</strong> Upwardly Global: Building a Model for Assisting Immigrant Professionals</td>
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<td><strong>Assignment:</strong> 2-page response to “UpGlo” case</td>
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<th>Assessing Your Environment</th>
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<td>• Kearns, 50-107</td>
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<td><strong>Case:</strong> Habitat for Humanity</td>
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Session 5  Assessing Your Organization

Readings:
- Kearns, 108-134

Case: The Nature Conservancy

Assignment: Group Project Sections I-III

Session 6  Developing Growth Strategies

Readings:
- Kearns, 135-161 (skim 162-240)

Case: Oxfam America

Assignment: 2-page response to Oxfam case

Session 7  Developing Cooperative Strategies

Readings:
- Kearns, 241-270

Case: One Church, One Child

Session 8  In-Class Workshop

Session 9  Implementing Change – Organizational Structure

Readings:
- Kearns, 271-316

Case: Jumpstart
Assignment: Group Project Sections IV-V

Session 10  Engaging Your Workforce in Strategic Change

Readings:

Case: Mayor Anthony Williams and Performance Management in Washington, DC (Harvard Kennedy School)

Assignment: 2-page response to Williams case

Session 11  Strategy & Leadership II

Readings:

Case: Jerry Abramson and Louisville, KY

Session 12  Group Presentations & Discussion

Session 13  Group Presentations & Wrap-Up

Readings:
- Kearns, 317-326