Course Goals and Objectives

The goal of Managing Public Service Organizations (MPSO) is to enhance your management and leadership acumen in the public and non-profit sector. 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 impactful 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; and you must learn from the challenges you experience. The successful execution of these tasks requires managers and leaders to understand what skills and abilities they bring to and need from their teams and organizations, to formulate a mission and strategy, to make effective and ethical decisions, to influence and motivate diverse individuals, to optimize the structure of their organization, to measure and improve performance, and to drive organizational change.

We will organize the key variables in an organization that must be considered and managed including power relationships, culture, communications, leadership and ethics.
**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 concepts, analyzing related cases, engaging in role-play exercises, and completing team projects.

This course reflects a dual focus on practice and conceptual training. The 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 analytical skills.

The two discussion sections of the course will be led by two accomplished teaching colleagues and will focus specifically on supporting and overseeing the project teams. 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 critical that you complete the reading for each class in advance. In addition, it is highly recommended that students identify a study partner to prepare for class.

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 readings 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 reading, 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 the assigned articles. They provide an opportunity for you to practice diagnosing the nature and causes of organizational performance and thinking through the potential consequences of decisions.
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 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/

☐ Many class related documents (assigned readings, optional readings, class assignments, 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. 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/

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

- 20% Class participation (see guidelines below)
- 30% Team project (intermediate assignments and paper; team presentations; team member evaluations)
- 20% Individual assignments (Vision of Value Memo – September 11th and Written Assignment – November 20th)
- 25% Final exam

Class Participation
All Class sessions will involve active discussion based on readings and cases, with an emphasis both on theoretical questions and practical limitations. You should be prepared to share your ideas in class and listen to and interpret the issues presented by classmates. One of the challenges and interesting aspects of management in the public sector is that often there is more than one right answer, amidst a complex set of facts and unknowns, addressing multiple audiences with different agendas. Diverse employees, subcontractors, politicians, lobbyists and media all require attention. So share freely, adopt an open-minded stance, entertain new ideas from classmates and consider how your recommendations might change in light of new insights.

Your class participation is crucial to understanding the complexity of decision-making and the success of the class session. Most participation will be voluntary; however, to ensure everyone has the opportunity to be involved, individuals will occasionally be called upon at my discretion. Keep in mind that contributions should focus on quality or inquiry rather than quantity. Comments are encouraged that: are relevant to the current discussion; move the discussion forward; contribute new insights; offer different perspectives; bring in related real world experiences of your own or in the news.
Team Project
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.

You will be assigned to teams of three or four students. Each team will focus on one of the following areas covered by the course:

- Mission & Strategy
- Organizational Structure
- Organizational Culture
- Employee Motivation & Incentives
- Employee/Client Diversity
- Organizational Culture

Your team will select an organization in New York City in which to study one of these topics. The organization you select can be in any sector that provides public service (government, nonprofit, or for-profit) 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 and approach and interview two senior managers to learn about the topic you have selected in the context of that organization. Your final deliverable is a theoretically grounded and applied analytical paper that discusses the topic as applied to the organization in the following ways:

- Literature Review: What does the management/organizational literature say about the topic in conceptual/theoretical terms, and what is the evidence regarding organizational performance?
- Data/Evidence: What do the senior managers say about how the topic you are studying affects the day-to-day work in the organization and the organization’s performance? What is the history behind why things work as they do? What is working well? What could be improved? What would they change? Are there any constraints that prevent feasibly improving the organization with respect to your topic?
- Analysis: Based on the theory/prior evidence, explain what has happened/is happening at the organization. Can you illuminate what the leaders have told you? Can you reconcile anything that the managers told you that seems inconsistent with theory/prior evidence?
- Recommendations: What would your team recommend, with respect to your topic, to increase organizational performance?

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 (although the tasks in bold are required in the order presented, the remainder is only a recommended order in which to proceed):

1. 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.
2. As a team, find a government, nonprofit, or for-profit organization to serve as the case study for the team's theme. Identify two senior managers who are willing and available to be interviewed. Submit a team project brief.
3. 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.
4. Develop interview questions and conduct your first interview. Identify a theoretical framework, model, or set of concepts with which you can analyze your chosen topic at the organization you are studying. Submit a **team project status report memo**. Conduct your second interview.
5. Prepare a **final paper** according to the criteria for all written assignments (below) 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 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).

**Assignments**
Due dates for planned assignments are as follows:

- Vision of Value Memo, due September 11th (1 page double spaced)
- Team Project Charter, due September 18th
- Team Project Brief, due October 9th
- Implicit Association and Stereotyping Reflection, due October 26th (1 page double spaced)
- Team Project Status Report Memo, due November 6th
- Written Assignment, due November 20th
- Team Presentations (December 4th and 11th)
- Team Final Paper, due December 11th (10 page maximum double spaced)
- Final Examination, due December 18th

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 spelling, 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.

**Final Exam**: The final exam will be distributed on December 11\(^{th}\) and due December 18\(^{th}\).

**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:

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**COURSE OUTLINE AND SESSION SCHEDULE**
Assigned readings are in Coursepack (CP) or on Blackboard (BB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session 1: September 4th</th>
<th>Developing A Public Service Mission</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong>: Introduction to Class</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Reading, analyzing and discussing cases effectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Explore the meaning of social and public value</td>
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<td>☐ Understand the logic behind mission</td>
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**Readings**

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<tr>
<th>Session 2: September 11th</th>
<th>Mission Part 2/Team Formation and Team Process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Explore the concepts of division of labor and coordination in teamwork</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Introduction to your team members for the team project</td>
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Readings

*Vision of Value Memo Due (Bring two copies to class; one for the Professor and one to share with your newly assigned (Project Team Member)*

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<th>Session 3: September 18th</th>
<th>Strategic Analysis</th>
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Objectives
- Learn the key features of an organizational strategy
- Learn how to perform a strategic analysis of an organization

Readings

*Project Team Charter Due (1 page single spaced; email to teaching colleague)*

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<th>Session 4: September 25th</th>
<th>Managing and Measuring Organizational Performance</th>
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Objectives
- Develop an understanding of the reasons for measuring performance
- Learn how performance measurement translates into effective resource allocation

Readings

### Session 5: October 2nd
Designing Organizational Structure

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

**Readings**

### Session 6: October 9th
Motivating Performance

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

**Readings**

* Team Project Brief Due

### October 16th
Fall Recess
Session 7: October 23rd

Communicating Effectively

Objectives

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

Readings


*Implicit Association and Stereotyping Reflection – Due October 26th*

Session 8: October 30th

Managing Diversity

Objectives

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

Readings


Session 9: November 6th

Organizational Culture

Objectives

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

*Team Project Status Report Due

**Session 10: November 13th**  
*Decision Making and Ethics*

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

Readings
   Required: Introduction, Biases 1, 2, 3, 9, 11. Recommended: entire chapter.
5. Case: White Jr., Richard D., George Tenet and The Last Great Days of the CIA. pp 482-494

*Written Assignment Distributed

**Session 11: November 20th**  
*Values and Justice in the Allocation of Resources*

Objectives
- [ ] Explore decision making in resource-constrained environments
- [ ] Understand the role of values in ethical dilemmas in organizations
Readings

*Written Assignment Due

**Session 12: November 27th**  
**Negotiation and Conflict Resolution**

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

**Readings**

**Session 13: December 4th**  
**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

**Readings**

*Team Presentations*
Session 14: December 11th  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

Readings


*Team Presentations
*Team Final Paper Due
*Final Examination Distributed

Session 15: December 18th  Final Examination Due