Course Goals and Objectives

The goal of Managing Public Service Organizations (MPSO) is to enhance your management and leadership skills 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.

You’ve come to Wagner because you want to have a positive impact in the world. Your interest could be affordable housing, bike lanes, arts programs for disadvantaged kids or access to quality pre-natal care. It could be making sure public policies are based on the best possible evidence, or that nonprofits are financially solvent, or that staff are treated fairly and respectfully. Whatever your passion, you can only realize that impact by mastering organizational processes. Organizations are the way work gets organized, coordinated, and accomplished. Knowing how organizations work – how to work within them – are perhaps the most powerful tools you can have.

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 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.
MPSO prepares you to achieve these objectives by providing you with fundamental frameworks and tools developed from the behavioral and social sciences and tested by leaders in organizations representing all sectors of the economy.

**Course Format**

Each class 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 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.

The discussion section of the course will be led by two teaching assistants and will focus specifically on supporting and overseeing the project teams. The teaching assistants 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 readings for each session in advance. Take care to analyze and absorb cases to prepare for class discussion. Working with a colleague to prepare can be helpful.

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 articles in our 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 piece, 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 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 NYUC website.

Optional
The syllabus indicates a number of optional readings provided on NYUC for students who would like to read more about a particular topic. For students who want to read a thorough, academic treatment of many of the topics we will cover in class, reviewing the literature in organizational theory and organizational behavior, I would recommend the following:


NYU CLASSES
You must have access to the NYU Classes class site at http://classes.nyu.edu/

- Many class related documents (extra readings, discussion questions, class handouts, etc.) and surveys/exercises will be posted here. If you have not activated your NYU 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 NYU Classes.
- 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, presentations and paper; team member evaluations)
30% Two Written assignments (each worth 15%)
20% Final exam

Class Participation
All class sessions will involve active discussion based on the readings and cases, with an emphasis on applying theory to practice. You should be prepared to share your ideas and to 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. 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. Participation includes presence, promptness, preparation, and engagement. Students are expected to attend all classes (with no more than one excused absence during the semester). Please email your professor and your TC before class if you will be absent.
Use of devices for purposes other than taking notes is not appropriate and can limit one’s learning.

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 contributions should focus on quality rather than quantity. Comments are encouraged that: are relevant to the current discussion; move the discussion forward; contribute new insights; offer different perspectives; and 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 to five students. Each team will focus on one of the following areas covered by the course:

• Mission & Strategy       • Employee Motivation & Incentives
• Organizational Structure • Performance Management & Measurement
• 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. To ensure the presence of conventional managerial challenges, the organization must have at least 40 employees. 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. Each team has two final deliverables: 1) a presentation of recommendations and analysis, delivered in class as if to the board of the organization you select; and 2) a theoretically grounded and applied analytical paper that discusses the topic as applied to the organization in the following ways:

• Literature Review: What does management or organizational literature say about the topic in conceptual / theoretical terms? In addition to the model covered in class readings, teams must analyze 2-3 additional models found in your research. A separate document on the literature review will be posted on NYU Classes with Team documents.
• 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? What constraints do they face?
• 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 seem 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 with 40 or more employees, 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 presentation** of the recommendations and analysis from your project. Deliver the presentation as if you were hired as consultants to present to the board of directors of the organization you examined. While you should succinctly weave in the theoretical part of your analysis, the tone of the presentation should be professional rather than academic. The presentation should complement and draw on your paper, but it does not have to comprehensively address every single aspect of the paper. Focus on those elements that would be most compelling to the board.
   a) The final paper is due after the presentation, so that where possible, you have a chance to incorporate feedback from your classmates and the teaching team into your written product where appropriate. We will discuss presentation skills during discussion section.
   b) The presentation should be no more than 8 minutes long, with an additional 4 minutes allotted for questions and answers.
   c) This is a formal presentation, so you should prepare visual aids to complement your verbal delivery.
   d) All team members must speak at some point during the presentation. It is fine if 1 or 2 team members focus solely on the Q & A portion, if you so choose.
   e) Although you will present to the whole class, teams will be paired up several weeks before the presentations. When Team A is presenting, the members of their partner Team B will role-play the role of board members in the audience, and be responsible for asking thoughtful, detailed questions that respond to the presentation. That said all students should participate in asking questions.
6. 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 Example Final Paper Table of Contents (NYUC/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).

PROJECT TIMELINE
While each team’s exact timeline may differ due to the responsiveness and availability of the organizations you choose, you should follow the general guidelines for the overall project flow printed below. We highly recommend that you develop a more detailed work plan / timeline for your team. Sample work plans area available on NYUC.

Sessions 2-5
• Form teams.
• Develop team charter to specify agreements on how to operate.
• Discuss the initial individual and team tasks to be done in preparation for completing the steps below.
• Divide and coordinate tasks among team members using a work plan.
• Choose an organization to serve as the case study and develop two senior leadership contacts.
• Begin researching conceptual frameworks that will frame your overall inquiry.

Sessions 6-8
• Select a primary conceptual framework from assigned class readings to inform your interview questions. Also select 2 to 3 other frameworks that you will use to compile the literature review for your paper.
• Complete interview guide.
• Interview senior leaders.
• Submit your Team Project Status Memo.

Sessions 9-14
• Complete your interviews.
• Collect any archival and other readily available information.
• Assign team roles for writing and editing the paper and making the presentation.
• Draft the paper / presentation and finalize.
• Conduct presentations.
• Submit final paper.
• Submit Self / Peer Evaluations.

Assignments and Outside-of-Class Exercises
To facilitate application of the class concepts and your project team development, you will be asked to complete some individual and team exercises, reflections, and written assignments, outside of class in addition to the team paper. Most of these are brief; the exceptions are the two writing assignments, the MGOA analysis and the organizational analysis. The instructions for all assignments can be found on NYUC / Assignments. The exercises, reflections, and assignments and their due dates are listed below:

• Team Charter / due February 20 / 1 page single spaced
• Team Project Brief / due February 27 / 1 page single spaced
• Team Project Status Report / due March 10 / maximum 2 pages single spaced
• MGOA Physician Analysis / due March 14 / 3-5 pages double spaced
• Implicit Association Exercise and Stereotyping Reflection / due March 23
  1 page double spaced
• Decision Making / Ethical Dilemma Exercise / completed by April 8
• Organizational Analysis / due April 18 / 3-5 pages double spaced
• Team Presentations / April 30 & May 7
• Team Final Paper AND Self & Team Member Evaluations / due May 7
• Final Exam posted April 30 / due May 14

All written work will be evaluated using the following criteria:

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 is a take-home assignment (a memo) that will be posted on April 30 and is due May 14.

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

Memo writing guidelines can be found at the URL below:
http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/services/files/WritingMemos.pdf

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.
**Session 1: January 29 Developing A Public Service Mission**

Objectives: Introduction to Class
- Reading, analyzing and discussing cases effectively
- Understand the logic behind mission

Readings


In Class
- CASE: Blast in Centralia No. 5 discussion
  1. What does this case study tell us about the central problems and issues facing public administrators in their work? Why is governmental administration such a complex and difficult task, according to this study?
  2. What does the case say about any special public obligations of public administrators compared to the obligations of those engaged in private administration?
  3. If you had actually been one of the leading administrative officials in the case—Driscoll O. Scanlan, Dwight Green, or Robert Medill—what would have been your view of public administration, and how might such a perspective on administration have helped shape the outcome of the story?
- Review syllabus

Discussion Section
- Mission lecture will extend into Section as Introductions will delay lecture
- Student Bio form will be distributed and completed by each student
Session 2: February 5  
*Team Formation and Team Process*

**Objectives**
- Explore the concepts of division of labor and coordination in teamwork

**Readings**


**In Class**
- EXERCISE: Legoperson

**In Section**

Vision of Value Memo: One-page memo addressed to the instructor articulating your vision of public or social value. Moore and Phills both highlight the importance of managing to maximize public or social value, and Moore offers a framework for thinking about public value. I want you to concisely state what public or social value means to you. What social or public impact do you want to have through your work? Why is it of value to a broader public? You can define public or social value in the context of your own career interests (e.g., health, union organizing, international development issues in a specific country or region)—as specific or general as they are.

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**MODEL OF TEAM PERFORMANCE**

**INPUT**
- Personal Characteristics
  - Attitudes
  - Ability
  - Performance
  - Background
- Situational Characteristics
  - Space
  - Task type
  - Group size
  - Rewards

**DYNAMICS**
- Group Structure
  - Roles, Division of Labor
  - Equality vs. Hierarchy
  - Homogeneity vs. Heterogeneity
- Group Process
  - Communication
  - Norms
  - Influence
  - Patterns

**OUTPUT**
- Effects on Individuals
  - Attitudes (job satisfaction)
  - Knowledge
- Effects on Group
  - Cohesion
  - Productivity
  - Quality
  - Creativity
  - Efficiency
- Effects on Organization
  - Sustainability
  - Growth

McGrath,
Session 3: February 12  

Strategic Analysis

Objectives
- Learn the key features of an organizational strategy
- Learn how to perform a strategic analysis of an organization

Readings

In Section
- Introduction to team members for team project
- Review Objective for discussion section
- Review directions for group project and team charter assignment
- Discuss group roles and responsibilities
Session 4: February 19  Managing and Measuring Organizational Performance

Objectives

• Develop an understanding of the reasons for measuring performance
• Learn how performance measurement translates into effective resource allocation

Readings


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?

In Section

• Provide guidance on group roles, choosing an organization, writing team brief
• Team Project working session
• Team Charter due February 20 (1 page single spaced; email to TC and Professor)

HARLEM CHILDREN’S ZONE
THE BABY COLLEGE

The Baby College, our innovative parent program on infant development, was designed by Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, a foremost expert in early child development. The Baby College provides parenting, child development classes, and access to community resources for parents with children aged 0-3. In FY 2007, The Baby College offered four free workshops in which 500 parents with 400 children participated.

• 95% of parents improved the frequency of reading to their children
• 95.6% of parents had health insurance for their children upon graduation
• 85% of parents had up-to-date or scheduled immunizations for their children upon graduation.
Objectives
• Understand how structure can solve coordination problems
• Discuss the impact of structure on other aspects of the organization

Readings

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?

In Section
• Team Project Brief: a) name of organization, b) name of at least one leader who you have contacted, and c) description of the organization and why it was chosen. Due February 28, (1 page single spaced); email to TC and Professor
• Group project working session
Session 6: March 5  
Motivating Performance

Objectives
• Understand how to motivate people
• Understand how to set goals and incentives to induce productive behavior

Readings

In Class
• Lecture on concepts that are essential for your Performance Pay for MGOA Physicians case analysis

In Section
• Group project working session

Due Tuesday, March 10
• Team project status report memos (1 page single spaced; email to TC and Professor)
• In addition to Team Status Report every team member must submit an individual report indicating any concerns they have about the team, the process or their participation.

Due (Friday, March 14)
• Three-Five page double spaced analysis of Performance Pay for MGOA Physicians
  [NYUC/Assignments for detailed instructions and submit the paper on NYUC/Assignments]

EXPECTANCY THEORY

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

Nadler & Lawler, 1977
Objectives

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

Readings


In Class

- EXERCISE: Performance Appraisal

In Section

- Professor Kurs meets with teams to discuss project status reports
- Mid-semester evaluations
- Group project working session

Due Friday, March 14

- Three-Five page double spaced analysis of *Performance Pay for MGOA Physicians*
  [NYUC/Assignments for detailed instructions and submit the paper on NYUC/Assignments]

Due Sunday, March 23, 6 p.m.

- Complete one Implicit Association Exercise [NYUC/Assignments for link]. Note: You may have to take the assessment several times as it occasionally times out, leave yourself ample time to complete the exercise.
- Implicit Association and Stereotyping Reflection [NYUC/Assignments for instructions]
  (post Reflection on NYUC). This assignment will enlighten our discussion of diversity in our next class.
Session 8: March 26  
Managing Diversity

Objectives

- Understand stereotyping and diversity-related issues
- Develop strategies to address issues of diversity in organizations
- Provide mid-semester feedback

Readings


In Class

- Implicit Association Exercise & Reflections discussion
- CASE: Seattle Community Association discussion
  1. What do you like about what SCA is trying to do? What are the problems with, and unintended effects of, the anti-racism initiative?
  2. What is the SCA leadership trying to achieve in the short-term? In the long-term? Which diversity paradigm (from Thomas & Ely’s article) is motivating the anti-racism initiative?
  3. Do you feel that there is a problem with diversity at SCA? How could you collect and use evidence to determine whether SCA’s hiring process could be called institutionally racist?
  4. What does the leadership’s thinking reveal about which constituents they feel most accountable to?
  5. Why did the anti-racism initiative and the new hiring policy adopted in 2003 meet so much resistance?

In Discussion Section

- Follow up on class discussion
- Discuss presentation guidelines and group pairings
- Group project working session
Session 9: April 2  

Organizational Culture

Objectives

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

Readings


In Discussion Section

• Teams sign up for final presentations
• Team pairs are established
• Group project working session

Due (Tuesday, April 8)

• Complete Decision Making/ Ethical Dilemma Exercises [Find the link at NYUC/Assignments/Decision Making/Ethical Dilemma Exercise).
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.**

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?

In Discussion Section

- Teams work in pairs
Session 11: April 16  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

In Class
• Kidney Allocation Exercise

In Section
• Kidney allocation exercise debrief
• Group project working session

Procedures

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<tr>
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<td>Displeasure</td>
<td>Moral outrage</td>
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Session 12: April 23  

Negotiation & Conflict Resolution

Objectives

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

Readings


In Section

- Teams ask questions regarding final presentation and paper
- Group project working session

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Model of the Negotiation

Bargaining Zone

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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Seller’s Target Price</strong> (e.g., $30K)</td>
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Session 13: April 30  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

In Section
• Team Presentations

The final exam assignment will be posted on NYUC / Assignments today and is due to be submitted May 14.
Session 14: May 7  

Leading Change

Objectives

• Understand sources of resistance to change
• Provide strategies for championing and leading change

Readings


In Class

• CASE: Utah Symphony and Opera Merger discussion
  1. Would you vote for the merger?
  2. What should Anne Ewers (CEO), Keith Lockhart (conductor), and the artists be concerned with?
  3. What would you do with the artists? Make them all full time employees?
  4. How would you minimize culture clash?
  5. How would you advise Ewers and Lockhart in dealing with each other?

In Discussion Section

• Team Presentations

Due May 7

• Team Final Paper
• Team Member and Self Evaluations

Final Exam due May 14

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT FRAMEWORK

Nadler & Tushman, 1992