Building Effective Teams
NYU Wagner
PADM-GP 4112-001
Fall 2017

COURSE INFORMATION
Instructor: Thomas D'Aunno, Ph.D., Professor of Management
Email: tdaunno@nyu.edu
Location: Silver Center for Arts and Science, 100 Washington Square East, Room 409
Dates/times: Friday, October 27, 9 am to 5 pm and Friday, November 3, 9 am to 5 pm
Office: Puck Building, 295 Lafayette St., room 3026; office hours: On request (by email)

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Teamwork has become the solution to just about every organizational problem: So, why do so many of us hate working in teams? This course aims to develop your ability to lead high-performing teams and to be an effective team member. We will focus on best-practices for leading teams, and, importantly, what to do when things are not going as planned. We will discuss when to use and when not to use a team, and effective practices for launching teams. Through readings, exercises, lectures, and reflection, you will also learn how to manage team processes, diversity, leadership, and problem-solving. We will also examine how to lead virtual teams, where members are not co-located.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Know when (and when not) to use a team at work
- Launch a team project effectively, including selecting team members and managing roles and responsibilities
- Facilitate key team processes, including brainstorming; decision-making; conflict management, and inclusion of diverse team members
- Know common problems that derail teams and strategies for addressing them
- Use best-practices for leading virtual team (with non-co-located members)
- Assess team performance and effectively provide feedback to teams and team members
- Techniques for managing meetings

COURSE MATERIAL
You are expected to be prepared for class discussions and participate fully. You are encouraged to share your experiences relevant to the topics and cases we are exploring.

- NYU Classes [http://newclasses.nyu.edu/](http://newclasses.nyu.edu/): You will find the course syllabus, assignments, exercises, surveys, and slides here.
ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

There are three requirements for the course:

Class participation (40%): Your active participation is critical. Productive discussion depends on students reading and analyzing the materials beforehand and coming to class ready to present a diagnosis of the problems presented and possible solutions. You are expected to attend both day-long classes, have thoroughly prepared the assigned cases and readings, participate fully in small group and class discussions, and act as group spokesperson for case presentations.

Specific expectations are that you:
* make valuable contributions about topics under discussion
* accurately exhibit knowledge of assignment content
* demonstrate excellent listening -- respond appropriately to comments others make
* bring up questions that need further exploration
* clarify points that others may not understand
* draw on personal experience or opinion when clearly relevant to class discussion
* offer relevant, succinct insights and challenges to others
* demonstrate ability to apply, analyze, and synthesize course material

Individual memos (30%): each student will complete three individual reflection memos that allow you to explore your understanding and learning about teams. Please see details on these memos below.

Group project (30%): students will be assigned to work in teams to analyze a case study of a team and provide recommendations to improve its performance. Please see details on this assignment below.

All assignments must be submitted on the stated due dates unless I grant an extension prior to the due date.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance. You should arrive to class on time. Any absence must be explained and justified beforehand.

Late assignments. Extensions will be granted only in case of an emergency, out of respect for those who abide by deadlines despite hectic schedules. Late submissions without prior permission will be penalized by ½ a letter grade per day (e.g., B+ to B).

Students with disabilities. Any students requiring accommodation should contact me to make proper arrangements. Please be prepared to share your documentation from the NYU disabilities office.

NYU/Wagner grading policy: http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies/grading.php

NYU/Wagner academic integrity policy: http://wagner.nyu.edu/current/policies/
Day 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Module 1</th>
<th>Introduction to the course and effective teams</th>
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<tr>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Course goals; factors that make teams effective</td>
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<tr>
<th>Module 2</th>
<th>Launching teams effectively</th>
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<tr>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>When to use and not use teams; conditions for creating effective teams; effective team launch/charter (best practices); exercise: launching your team</td>
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| Readings | D. Coutu interview with Richard Hackman.  

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<tr>
<th>Module 3</th>
<th>Best-practices for building high-performing teams</th>
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<tr>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Brainstorming; innovation; decision-making; composition and diversity; leadership; team structure and context</td>
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<th>Module 4</th>
<th>Assessing team performance: feedback for teams and individuals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Key dimensions of team performance; how to give and receive feedback effectively; major pitfalls and how to avoid them</td>
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Day 2

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<tr>
<th>Module 4 (cont’d)</th>
<th>Developing skills for effective feedback</th>
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<tr>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Developing skills in giving and receiving feedback: role-plays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>How to give difficult feedback. D’Aunno. Forbesonline.</td>
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<th>Module 5</th>
<th>Promoting team learning</th>
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<td>Topics</td>
<td>Performance focus vs. learning focus; when and why learning focus matters</td>
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**Module 6**

**Best-practices for effective virtual teams**

**Topics**
Key challenges in building effective virtual teams; principles and practices for effective virtual teams

**Readings**
InterSoft of Argentina, A and B cases. Palestrant, Suesse & Hill, 1996.

**Module 7**

**Closing: From Knowledge to Practice**

**Topics**
Review individual and team learning; prepare plan for continued development as a team leader and member

**Assignments**

**Reflection memos (each worth 10% of final grade)**

1. Please write 1 page (single-spaced, Times New Roman, font 12) on your experience creating new teams and/or your experience with a new team. What factors, if any, made the team launch successful? What factors, if any, hindered the launch? What is/are the root causes of these factors? How can you overcome factors that hinder effective team launches?

   Please upload to NYU Classes under Assignments, “Team Experience,” by 9 pm on Thursday October 26.

2. Please write a 1 page memo (single-spaced, Times New Roman, font 12) that: (1) briefly summarizes your key learning from Day 1 of the course; (2) identifies specific behaviors you will use to make future teams effective; and (3) how you will overcome barriers to engaging in these behaviors. Please upload to NYU Classes under Assignments, “Reflection on Day 1” by 9 pm on Thursday November 2.

3. Please write a 1 page (single-spaced, Times New Roman, font 12) memo that address the same issues as memo 2, focusing on your experience on Day 2 of the course: (1) briefly summarize your key learning from Day 2 of the course; (2) identify specific behaviors you will use to make future teams effective; and (3) how you will overcome barriers to engaging in these behaviors. Please upload to NYU Classes under Assignments, “Reflection on Day 1” by 9 pm on Thursday November 9.
Final Team Project (worth 30% of final grade)

You will complete an analysis of a case study that provides an opportunity to develop your skills in assessing a situation that involves challenges for a team and providing support for particular course of recommended action. This assignment will be in the form of a memo addressed to the team leader in the case, not to exceed 2 single spaced pages. The memo must identify the problem as you see it, recommend solutions, and provide support for your perspective.

State major problems in the case and briefly explain the context in which key decisions must be made. Next, describe and assess proposed solutions to the problem, which you believe is the best course of action, and your reasons. Identify the next steps if your proposed solution is adopted and outline a “Plan B” in the event that your proposed solution fails. Do not attempt to address every issue in the case, focus on your analysis of the problem and propose a potentially viable solution. Here is the outline I would like you to use:

Memo outline:

- Open with a brief one-paragraph summary (labeled Executive Summary)
  - What is the context, key issue(s), and your recommendation?
- Background
  - Why are we facing these issues? Identify root causes.
- Recommendations
  - What are your specific recommendations? Rationale? Alternatives?
- Next steps
  - How should your recommendations be implemented? What are the priorities?

Requirements
Page and format requirements: 2 pages, single spaced including all graphics. Use Times New Roman font with reasonable margins (looks count) and a 12 pt font size.

Mechanics
Format, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and citation accuracy all count.