

**Building Effective Teams**  
**NYU Wagner**  
**PADM-GP 4112-002**  
**Summer 2018**

**COURSE INFORMATION**

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*Phone:* 212-998-7458

*Office:* Puck Building, 3059

*Office hours:* By appointment (please email to schedule)

*Class location:* 25 West 4th Street, C-13

*Class meetings:* Fridays, June 1 and June 8; 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

**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 designing and launching teams and, importantly, what to do when things are not going as planned. We will discuss when and when not to use a team, as well as how to promote collaboration. Through readings, exercises, lectures, and reflection, you will also learn how to manage team processes, diversity, leadership, and problem-solving. This course will be of most value to those who have work experience.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Decide 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
- Identify common problems that derail teams and strategies for addressing them
- Use best practices for complex teams (e.g., teams with rotating membership or geographically distributed members)

**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/>): You will find the course syllabus, assignments, exercises, survey, and slides here.
- You will need to purchase a digital course pack: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/319345>. To keep costs down, NYU Classes will have links to readings you can access from the NYU library.

## 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. Please read <http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies>.

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

There are three requirements for the course:

**Class participation (30%):** 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 assignments (30%):** Each student will complete two individual assignments that allow you to explore your understanding and learning about teams. Please see details on these assignments below.

**Group project (40%):** Students will be assigned to work in teams on the first day. You will be asked to craft a proposal for creating more effective teams at an organization you care about. Please see details on this assignment below.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance.** You should arrive to class on time. Since the class only meets on two days, absences will result in an incomplete grade.

**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 1/3 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.

**Pre-work due Wednesday, May 30 at 8:00 pm**

Myers Briggs Assessment <http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp#questionnaire>  
 Leadership Style Exercise PDF *NYU Classes*  
 Assessment: Scoring document PDF *NYU Classes*  
 Survey [https://nyu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_1LmniHqy6qs5Mpf](https://nyu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1LmniHqy6qs5Mpf)  
 ■ Input your Myers Briggs and Leadership Style results

NYU Wagner Building Effective Teams	June 1, 2018 Day 1: Foundations of Teams
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**Module 1 Introduction to the course**  
**Topics** Course goals; factors that make teams effective  
**Readings** Snook, S. & Polzer, J. (2004). Army Crew Team. *Harvard Business School Case*. 9-403-131. ***In course pack.***  
**Discussion questions** 1. Why does the Varsity team lose to the JV team?  
 (be prepared to discuss) 2. At the end of the case, what action should Coach P. take on Tuesday?

**Module 2 Best-practices for building high-performing teams**  
**Topics** When to use and not use teams; conditions for creating effective teams  
**Readings** Leonard, D., & Straus, S. (1997). Putting your company’s whole brain to work. *Harvard Business Review*, 75(4), 110-122. ***NYU Classes link to library:***  
<http://ezproxy.library.nyu.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9706292956&site=eds-live>  
 Phillips, K. W. (2014). How diversity works. *Scientific American*, 311(4), 42-47. Don’t click; copy and paste in browser, then download the pop-up:  
[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Megan\\_Bang/publication/280845360\\_Particular\\_Points\\_of\\_View/links/57485c2808ae18b6dce91abf.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Megan_Bang/publication/280845360_Particular_Points_of_View/links/57485c2808ae18b6dce91abf.pdf)  
**Discussion questions** 1. What strategies have you used (or experienced) when designing teams?  
 2. What are the benefits and challenges in creating diverse teams?

**Module 3 Launching teams for success**  
**Topics** Clarifying purpose; developing norms; agreeing on a leadership approach  
**Readings** Haas, M. & Mortensen. (2016). The Secrets of great team work. *Harvard Business Review*. ***NYU Classes link to library:***  
<http://ezproxy.library.nyu.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=115490493&site=eds-live>  
 Team definition document ***NYU Classes***  
**Discussion question** 1. What topics are critical to cover in your team launches?

**Module 4 Leading teams and day 1 wrap**  
**Topics** Leadership style; group emotional intelligence; inheriting teams

**Individual Reflection due by noon on Thursday, June 7**

<b>NYU Wagner</b> <b>Building Effective Teams</b>	<b>June 8, 2018</b> <b>Day 2: Advanced Topics in Teams</b>
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<b>Module 5</b>	<b>Teaming</b>
<b>Topics</b>	Using team concepts to collaborate effectively
<b>Reading</b>	Edmondson, A.C., Rashid, F., & Leonard, H. (2014). The 2010 Chilean Mining Rescue (A). <i>Harvard Business School Case</i> . 9-612-046. <b>In course pack.</b>
<b>Discussion questions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What allowed the miners to survive, physically and psychologically, until they were found?</li> <li>2. How did the engineers, geologists, and politicians address the challenges they faced?</li> </ol>
<b>Module 6</b>	<b>Adaptable team processes</b>
<b>Topics</b>	New forms of team; conflict; psychological safety; learning from failure
<b>Readings</b>	Edmondson, A. C. (2012) Teamwork on the Fly. <i>Harvard Business Review</i> 90, no. 4. <b>NYU Classes link to library:</b> <a href="http://proxy.library.nyu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=bth&amp;bquery=(SO+(Harvard+Business+Review))AND(DT+2012)AND(TI+%26quot%3bteamwork+on+the+fly%26quot%3b)&amp;type=1&amp;site=ehost-live">http://proxy.library.nyu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=bth&amp;bquery=(SO+(Harvard+Business+Review))AND(DT+2012)AND(TI+%26quot%3bteamwork+on+the+fly%26quot%3b)&amp;type=1&amp;site=ehost-live</a> Eisenhardt, K. M., Kahwajy, J. L., & Bourgeois, L. J. (1997). How management teams can have a good fight. <i>Harvard Business Review</i> , 75(4), 77-85. <b>NYU Classes link to library:</b> <a href="http://ezproxy.library.nyu.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=bth&amp;AN=9706292947&amp;site=eds-live">http://ezproxy.library.nyu.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&amp;db=bth&amp;AN=9706292947&amp;site=eds-live</a>
<b>Discussion question</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What approaches do you use to collaborate effectively when groups are geographically distributed, rotate membership, or only work together for short periods of time?</li> </ol>
<b>Module 7</b>	<b>Creativity</b>
<b>Topics</b>	Creativity; innovation; divergent and convergent approaches; decision making, prototyping; human-centered design
<b>Reading</b>	Creativity and Creative Groups: Two Keys to Innovation. (2003). Chapter 6 in <i>Managing Creativity and Innovation</i> . Boston, MA: <i>Harvard Business School Press</i> . <b>In course pack.</b>
<b>Module 8</b>	<b>Closing: From Knowledge to Practice</b>
<b>Topics</b>	Review individual and team learning; prepare plan for continued development as a team leader and member; review team assignment

**Individual Assignment due by noon on Thursday, June 13**

## Assignments

### **Individual Assignment (each worth 15% of final grade, total of 30% of your final grade)**

1. Please write a 1-page reflection (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 your future teams effective based on this learning; and (3) describes how you will overcome barriers to engaging in these behaviors. Please upload to NYU Classes under Assignments, “Individual Assignment 1,” by noon on Thursday, June 7.

2. Please write a 1-page analytical memo (single-spaced, Times New Roman, font 12) that: (1) very briefly summarizes a problem or opportunity gap you have personally faced on a group or team; (2) briefly analyzes what caused this problem or opportunity, and (3) describes your specific recommendation for addressing this problem or opportunity. Please upload to NYU Classes under Assignments, “Individual Assignment 2,” by noon on Thursday, June 13.

### **Team Project (worth 40% of final grade)**

In your team project, please apply what you learned in class to one of your organizations. In five pages or less (single-spaced, 1-inch margins, and 12-point Times New Roman font), please provide a proposal to a senior member of the selected organization (e.g., CEO, manager, Dean, etc.) for how to improve team effectiveness in this organization. The proposal can be organized like a memo.

This proposal should include:

- A brief summary paragraph of the problem (e.g., teams that did not meet their targets) or opportunity (e.g., use teams for a new project) related to teams that exist in your organization. You can discuss a past or present organization. Please specify your level of analysis: all teams in the organization, teams in one division, or a particular team.
- Using the frameworks, readings, and discussions from class, please identify the root causes of the problem or explain why you think there’s an opportunity to use teams in a new way. You can use an approach similar to those we covered in class. For example, what was going on at the individual, team, and organizational levels? Were people under a performance/proving mindset instead of a learning mindset? Why? Were teams launched? If not, why not? Were personality, cognitive, leadership style, and/or demographic differences raised and productively used? Was the team creative? Why not?
- Apply any of the concepts you learned in class to suggest how you might address these problems or craft teams to effectively address a new opportunity. What are your specific recommendations? Reasoning? Alternatives? How should your recommendations be implemented? What are the priorities? For example, how and when should a poorly performing team be relaunched? How can your teams in your organization better use diversity? How can you foster creativity?

Please use paragraph headings where appropriate. Explain your reasoning clearly, succinctly, and convincingly. When you present your recommendations, make sure they are realistic and take the individuals, context, and timing into account (e.g., short-term versus long-term actions). You can include exercises, pictures, or figures as an appendix that will not count towards your page count. Please upload to NYU Classes under Assignments, “Team Project,” by noon on Friday, June 29.