



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

EXEC-GP 4126/ PADM-GP 4126.001
Leading Values-Based Culture in
Non-Profit Organizations
Spring 2022

Instructor Information

- Rachel D. Latimore (she/her/hers); Preferred Name: Rachel D
- Email: racheld.latimore@nyu.edu
- Office Address: TBD
- Office Hours: By appointment.

Course Information

- Class Meeting Times: Saturdays 2:45pm – 4:25pm
- Class Location: 194 Mercer 308

Course Description

Culture -- the system of shared assumptions, values, meanings, and beliefs, which informs the behavior of individuals -- is perhaps the most salient variable mechanism that influences organizational performance (Schein, 2017). Successful leadership of nonprofit organizations largely depends on how closely institutional practices align with professed public values. Strong organizational culture fosters innovation, supports collaboration, and advances impact. Presuming a basic grounding in the structures and roles of nonprofit organizations, this course explores the values that lie behind them, drawing on the instructor's extensive experience in supporting cross-sector global and mission-driven organizations, advancing DEIB strategies, and managing partnership and funder relationships. Expect a course on exploring organizational culture and how it informs and influences the vision, mission, internal systems and structures, budget, employee performance and satisfaction, external brand identity and, ultimately, the organization's success.

Course and Learning Objectives

Through course readings, class discussions, and assignments, students will gain a deeper understanding of the components and complexities of organizational culture with a particular lens on the non-profit sector. Students will discuss how cultures are formed, adopted, and adapted (both internally and externally) and during periods of crisis. Periodically, there will be guest speakers that will offer additional insight on topics such as key considerations that students should utilize to ensure that organizational values are reflective and inclusive of DEIB goals and how they can engage key stakeholders in organizational culture change plans. Finally, the course will conclude with students understanding how to employ strategies for innovation to maintain sustainable values-based cultures.

At the end of the course, students who complete it successfully will be able to:

1. Conduct a cursory organizational culture audit
2. Critically review organizational policies, norms, budget allocations, and internal/external communications strategies against espoused values
3. Facilitate conversations with staff, Leadership, and the Board on organizational values alignment and implications on culture
4. Identify recommendations for improving an organization's culture, supported by evidence based-practices and data

Required Readings

- Teegarden, P. H., Hinden, D. R., & Sturm, P. (2010). [The nonprofit organizational culture guide : Revealing the hidden truths that impact performance](#). John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.
- Schein, P. A., & Schein, E. H. (2016). [Organizational culture and leadership](#). John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.
- Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (2008). [Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice and leadership](#)(4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

Other readings are linked in Brightspace with corresponding discussion week.

Assessment Assignments and Evaluation

Final grades are determined by the following course components.

- Individual class participation, 20%
- Group-led class discussion, 20%
- Mid-term memo, 30%
- Final presentation, 30%

Individual Class Participation (20%) Participation includes presence, promptness, preparation, and engagement. If you have thoroughly prepared, you should have no problem contributing to the discussions. Keep in mind that we will be learning from each other, so your participation is a critical component to our class being a dynamic learning community.

Group-led Class Discussion (20%) On the first day of class, students will sign-up in for a group to summarize the readings/case studies and lead a class discussion for a future class. Students will use their own experience or bring in case studies to illuminate the readings.

Mid-Term Memo (30%) Students will conduct an organizational culture audit on an organization of their choice. Engaging diagnostic tools and other relevant resources shared in the readings for the course, students will outline their methodology, assessment, and findings in a 6–10-page memo and submit via PDF on Brightspace.

Final Paper (30%) At the end of the course, you will develop a set of recommendations (3-5) for improving the culture of the organization that you wrote about in your mid-term memo. Each student will present a PPT presentation that includes, (1) an overview of the organization (2) summary of the organizations' culture (3) recommendations for improvement. Student's must include, at least, 5-6 citations from the assigned course readings and independent readings to support their recommendations. Each student will present on the final day of the course. Presentations are to be submitted via PDF on Brightspace.

Late Submission Policy for Assignments

Assignments are due according to the dates and times indicated on Brightspace. Due to the way the course is structured, extensions will be granted only in case of emergency. Outside of class and group participation, there are only two core assignments. Each assignment is designed to support the other. Missing an assignment may, ultimately, put you at risk for not successfully passing the course.

Overview of the Semester

- Week 1
 - Date: January 29
 - Topic: Culture and Why It Matters
 - **Deliverable: Weekly readings; Introductory slide, due at 12pm January 28th**
- Week 2
 - Date: February 12
 - Topic: Values and Organizational Alignment

- Guest Speaker: *Brandon Slaughter – Director of 9-16 Partnerships, Here to Here; Former Chief of Staff / Senior Director of Organizational Effectiveness – NYCDOE Office of the First Deputy*
- **Deliverable: Weekly readings**
- Week 3
 - Date: February 26
 - Topic: Shifting Culture: Internal Vs. External
 - Guest Speaker: *Tiffany Thompson, MPA – Senior Director, Global Partnerships & Equity, Echoing Green*
 - **Deliverable: Weekly readings**
- Week 4
 - Date: March 12
 - Topic: Values and Crisis Management
 - **Deliverable: Watch Videos posted on Brightspace and post on discussion board, Mid-term Memo**
- Week 5
 - Date: April 12
 - Topic: Leadership, Staff, and Boards
 - Guest Speaker: *Joanna Helou – Chief of Staff, Echoing Green*
 - **Deliverable: Weekly readings**
- Week 6
 - Date: April 16
 - Topic: Non-profit Values-Based Culture through Innovation, Strategy, and Sustainability
 - *Guest Speaker: TBC*
 - **Deliverable: Weekly readings**
- Week 7
 - Date: April 30
 - Topic: Final Presentations
 - **Deliverable: In-class final presentation, PPT deck due by April 29th at 10pm**

Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Points
A	4.0 points
A-	3.7 points
B+	3.3 points

B	3.0 points
B-	2.7 points
C+	2.3 points
C	2.0 points
C-	1.7 points
F	0.0 points

Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- (A) Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.
- (A-) Very good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.
- (B+) Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.
- (B) Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.
- (B-) Borderline: Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”

- (C/-/+) Deficient: Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.
- (F) Fail: Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.

Detailed Course Overview

WEEK 1: CULTURE AND WHY IT MATTERS

Readings:

- Schein, P. A., & Schein, E. H. (2016). Organizational culture and leadership. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.
 - Chapters 1-2
- Teegarden, P. H., Hinden, D. R., & Sturm, P. (2010). The nonprofit organizational culture guide : Revealing the hidden truths that impact performance. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.
 - Chapters 1-2

WEEK 2: VALUES AND ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT

- Schein, P. A., & Schein, E. H. (2016). Organizational culture and leadership. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.
 - Chapters 3-5 (Case Studies)
- https://atctools.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/What_is_Transformation_2.0_LowRes.pdf
- <https://www.bridgespan.org/bridgespan/Images/articles/increasing-nonprofit-executive-team-effectiveness/increasing-nonprofit-executive-team-effectiveness.pdf>
- Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (2008). Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice and leadership(4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.
 - Chapters 12 & 13

WEEK 3: SHIFTING CULTURE: INTERNAL VS. EXTERNAL

- <https://www.bridgespan.org/bridgespan/Images/articles/great-valley-center-a-case-study/Great-Valley-Case-Study-pdf.pdf>

- Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (2008). Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice and leadership(4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.
 - Chapters 6-8

WEEK 4: VALUES AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Series of videos will be posted on Brightspace

WEEK 5: LEADERSHIP, STAFF, AND BOARDS

Readings:

- <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/how-be-better-nonprofit-board-member>
- Moyo, D. (2021). Changing Boards for a Changing World. Stanford Social Innovation Review. <https://doi.org/10.48558/G9RN-TV05>
- Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (2008). Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice and leadership(4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.
 - Chapters 17 & 20

WEEK 6: NON-PROFIT VALUES-BASED CULTURE THROUGH INNOVATION, STRATEGY, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Additional readings will be assigned

WEEK 7: FINAL PRESENTATIONS

No readings this week. Please come prepared to present.

Brightspace

All announcements, resources, and assignments will be delivered through the Brightspace site. I may modify assignments, due dates, and other aspects of the course as we go through the term with advance notice provided as soon as possible through the course website.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by [Wagner's Academic Code](#). All Wagner students have already read and signed the [Wagner Academic Oath](#). Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated and students in this class are expected to report violations to me. If any student in this class is

unsure about what is expected of you and how to abide by the academic code, you should consult with me.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Student Accessibility

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities \(CSD\) website](#) and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email CSD (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays

[NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#) states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.

NYU’s Wellness Exchange

[NYU’s Wellness Exchange](#) has extensive student health and mental health resources. A private hotline (212-443-9999) is available 24/7 that connects students with a professional who can help them address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.

Class Policies

This course is designed to be interactive, engaging, and conversational. In order to create a culture of learning, everyone should come to class prepared. This is an intensive course and missing even one day could compromise your success in the class. If you anticipate significant conflicts within your schedule, you should reconsider taking another course.

You can expect to receive an email response from me within 48 hours, unless otherwise stated. Please follow Wagner’s standard procedures outlined in the [incomplete policy](#) and [course withdrawal policy](#) should you need to request an incomplete or withdraw from the course.