PUBP 710 - 021: Organizations and Management: CRN 21045
Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University
Spring 2018

Please note: This syllabus is subject to minor revisions before the start of the spring semester

Class dates: Jan 22 to May 7, Mondays: 7:20 – 10:00 PM,
Room 478 Founders Hall, Arlington, VA

Faculty: Mark Addleson
Room 534, Founders Hall, Arlington Campus.
Email: maddleso@gmu.edu
Phone: 703 993-3804

Office hours
Mondays: 4:00 to 6:30 PM during the semester. Please email me before hand and, as most of my teaching is at night and over weekends, please email me to make an appointment to meet at other times.

Course material online
In January 2018, I will provide all students registered for this course with information to access the Blackboard site and a SharePoint site containing required reading material.

Required texts


2. Case studies and approximately 20 readings from journal articles in electronic format in the Virtual Library, a SharePoint document repository. I will provide a username and password so you can access the material.

Supplementary text (not required)
Addleson, Mark, Beyond Management: Taking Charge at Work (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)
Description of the course

This course will interest graduate students who are curious about management/administration and organizations, whether government, business, or non-profit, who want to know why organizations are what they are, why we manage organizations as we do, how thinking and practices are changing.

The course deals with both the theory of organizations and management and management practices. Having said this, although we look at what managers do and how they manage, this is not the kind of management course you might expect to find in, say, an MBA program. You won’t be learning the tools and techniques of management. Rather, it is a course about management (and organizations). Its aim is to help you understand how organizations work and be able to diagnose the sources of problems in organizations. We will examine, critically, the evolution of both ideas about organizations and practices of, with the object of understanding how these are changing and recognizing emerging trends.

The object is to gain an understanding of

- how writers and scholars see (i.e. make meaning of) organizations and management
- how thinking about management and organizations has changed in roughly a century – where the ideas come from and how they have evolved
- what has contributed to changes in thinking, tying views about organizations and management to wider societal changes
- how management practices emerged and evolved
- where thinking about organizations and management practices stands today and were it might be headed.

My premise is that, today, nothing in the field of management (or policy) is settled and my object is to take a critical look at management and organizations, both theory and practice. Rather than trying to cover management and organizations chronologically (as Witzel does in A History of Management Thought), I’ve identified a broad theme for each class which will enable us to interweave issues and to compare and contrast ideas and practices, looking at ‘older’ versus ‘newer’ thinking, identifying differences in embedded worldviews, discussing the significance of different points of view.

As this class includes both Masters and Doctoral students, I adopt an approach, particularly with regard to assignments, which caters to different interests and requirements. For example, the PhD students can do presentations on readings that are more academic, mostly from scholarly journals, while Masters students can do presentations on practitioner-oriented texts. And, while students in both groups write a term paper, I expect PhDs to do research-oriented papers, while Masters students will probably do ones that are more descriptive, perhaps focusing on their own organizations.
Organizations

Management is about how to run (‘plan, coordinate, and control’) organizations efficiently and the principles and practices of management are closely interwoven with the way people see or think about organizations, so we start with organizations and organizing.

Asking ‘what is an organization’, I want to contrast ideas about organizations rooted in a modernist, positive-empiricist paradigm with post-modern, constructionist views that depict organizations as narratives. In this context, we will also look at metaphors of organization, the notion of organizational culture, and organizational discourse.

Models of organization have evolved over the last 150 years, but most of the models have many common characteristics. We will examine these, showing how they are closely tied to the dominant Western paradigm or worldview, and to ideas about science and society. Questions include: do the evolutions represent significantly different conceptions of organizations or are they variations on the same themes; how do the models differ (what do the differences signify); and what factors are behind the changing views of organization, including how has social change contributed to shifting views of organization.

Management

Starting with the roots of management, we’ll looking at where ideas about management came from and how they have evolved and changed, paying particular attention to the impact of economic theory on management. Again, one of the questions will be what do differences signify. Is the theory of management more less the same as it was 100 years ago? To answer these questions, we will need to examine what constitutes a theory and a model and establish criteria for deciding what constitutes a ‘significant development’ when we are talking about new or evolving theory. In the last few years some books including ones aimed at practitioners – have adopted the view that management (organizing) practices need to rethought in a radical way. We will end the course with views on these arguments and the practices the authors advocate.

Throughout the course I want students to draw on their experience of organizations and management, using this as a mirror for reflecting on both theory and practice (and, depending on the backgrounds of students to compare and contrast theories and practices in different places/countries).

Format of the course and evaluation

Part lecture, part seminar, the emphasis is on discussing readings in class. I anticipate a relatively small class and expect all students to participate in class discussion.
Evaluation: grades for the course are based on a term paper/project, assignments including case studies, and class participation.

Course assignments include presentations and short position papers on readings.

The term paper/project, which constitutes the bulk of the written work, is on a topic of the student’s choosing, to be discussed with me beforehand, covering some theme in the field of organizations and/or management with a focus on theory or practice or both.

Assignments

1) Buurtzorg case study:

For Week 2 (January 29) you will prepare a case study about ‘Buurtzorg,’ a Dutch in-home nursing organization for discussion in class. On the course Blackboard site, under preparation for class 2, there is a link to both the case study and a set of questions I have prepared for you to consider when preparing the case. We will discuss the case in class and each student is required to submit his/her notes on each of the questions. This case study is an important piece at the start of course. It is a practical perspective on various issues in the course and provides an example of the kind of (‘radical’) change that is relevant to organizing today’s knowledge workers. We will spend quite a bit of the class on the case study.

2) Challenger disaster case study:

For Week 9 (March 19) you will prepare a video-based case about the circumstances surrounding the explosion of the Challenger Space Shuttle shortly after its launch on January 28, 1986. Links to the video material are on the class Blackboard site and your assignment includes answering questions to discuss in class and writing a short report (1500 words) on the changes NASA should make to avoid the kinds of organizational breakdowns that contributed to the Challenger disaster. The case covers the investigation into the explosion, including the role of the Rogers Commission of Inquiry that was set up to investigate the circumstances of the explosion. This assignment will give you a deeper understanding of the kinds of problems that arise and that people deal with in government organizations in particular.

3) Position/Review papers:

In classes when we are not discussing cases, starting in Class 3 (February 9), a student will give a presentation on a reading for the week (articles/papers) you are assigned. You will write a short review/position paper on the article you are working on.

Each position paper should be no more than four double-spaced typed pages per reading or chapter.
A position paper should cover:
1) A brief statement of the highlights of the chapter: i.e. the main issues or the main learning points in the chapter/article. (30 percent)
2) An assessment of the chapter or article by the student, possibly showing it's connections to other literature/ideas/practices to do with organizations and management (50 percent)
3) A short statement about the relevance of the material to the organizations/practices you are familiar with or to your research interests (20 percent).

4) Presentations.

Presentation (a maximum of 30 minutes) including participation from the class. Here are some guidelines.

Approach the presentation creatively: ‘how can we best convey our learning and engage people in the class?’

Ask and answer good questions.
- What is this chapter/paper about
- How do the authors present the ideas (main issues, .... )
- What were the main takeaways and why are they important.
- What issues/ideas need more discussion and/or clarification.... and so on.

In identifying the salient issues/points/arguments in the paper/chapter, PhD students, especially, should try to connect the issues in the paper/chapter to a wider set of ideas (and practices).

You are encouraged to use the internet and other resources to make connections to, or expand on, ideas in the chapter/paper.

It is important to offer your own views/ideas/thoughts on the material, including questioning issues you aren't clear about, identifying what you thought was particularly 'strong'/useful or controversial, etc.

5) Final (Term) paper of around 3,500 words

The object is to explore ideas, concepts, and/or practices related to management/organizations/work/organizing, for example on informal organizations, networks, systems, organizational culture, change management, government organizations and so on. The topic you choose must be fully researched and your sources must be properly referenced using an accepted style.

(a PhD student) could prepare part of a research paper intended for a conference/journal submission, or part write something that contributes to your field work.
OR

(a Masters student) write about what is happening in an organization making use of appropriate sources and using the concepts/constructs from the course.

Outline of course content

Classes expand on the following themes/topics.
You will find the topics listed class-by-class on the class Blackboard site

Introduction: Organizations, management and change through the lens of two worldviews.

Week 1: (Introduction) Overview of the course


Week 3: (Management). The changes we are seeing and what is behind them. Work and management; paradigms and practices.

Management

Week 4: (Management) Where management comes from.


Week 6: (Management) ‘Management in the public sector.

Organizations

Week 7: (Organizations) Organizations and organizing. What is an organization? What is organizing?

Week 8: No class - spring break

Week 9: (Organizations) Case study: Circumstances surrounding the Challenger disaster

Continued
Change:

Week 10: (Change) Problems and practices (wicked problems, clumsy practices)

Week 11: (Change) Beware of consultants bringing tools

Week 12: (Change) Changing management: structure or practices?

Week 13: (Change) The challenges of change: a framework

Week 14: (Change) The public sector and 'reinventing government'

Week 15: Wrap up: short presentations on term papers (due May 1)

Points for course-related assignments and activities will be allocated as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Instructor's grade based on participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Presentations and position papers</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 'Buurtzorg' and 'Challenger' case submissions</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Term paper</td>
<td>40</td>
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Note that students choosing to take an incomplete may be penalized by at least a grade letter.

Grading

Your written work will be graded according to the following criteria.

A = shows a superior understanding of the relevant material

B = shows a good understanding

C = shows only a basic understanding.

D = shows a poor understanding of the issues.
Schar School Policy on Plagiarism

The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university are built on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the foundation of the university, including the School of Policy, Government and International Affairs. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics.

Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

The faculty of the School of Policy, Government and International Affairs takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F.” This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (eg. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

To help enforce the Schar School’s policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The Schar School’s policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.

http://www.gmu.edu/resources/facstaff/handbook/

Mark Rozell, Dean, Schar School of Policy and Government.

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