

National University of Singapore
NUS Business School
Department of Management and Organisation

MNO3303 Organizational Effectiveness
Semester 2, 2014/2015

Instructor: Dr. Heeyon KIM

Class: Mondays, 14:00-17:00 (D1); Tuesdays, 11:00-14:00 (D2)

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COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course aims to introduce students to the field of organization theory -- which incorporates concepts from various disciplines such as management studies, sociology, psychology, political sciences and economics to study organizations. The course is designed to encourage students to actively and critically use these concepts to make sense, diagnose, manage and respond to the emerging organizational needs and problems. The emphasis of this course is on the practical value of organization theory for students as future managers and as decision-makers of organizations. Developing an understanding of how (should) organizations structure and operate is critical so that students, the future managers, will be able to fulfill their roles effectively.

TEACHING METHODS

Each week we will explore a different topic of organization theory and show how it can be used to anticipate, understand, and resolve different problems that arise from business organizations in today's turbulent environment. We will make the link between organization theory and the realistic world by using textbooks, class exercises, case/video discussions and supplementary readings. Because actively applying organization theory concepts is the goal, case analysis and discussion are integral parts of the course. The cases are designed to test and sharpen students' ability to identify the theoretical concepts in actual organization settings and to apply these concepts in decision-making.

To achieve the course objective, this course is organized as a seminar. Active participation of EVERY student is a MUST. Independent and reflective learning and critical thinking will be emphasized and the roles of instructor are confined to a guide, facilitator and clarifier. While the instructor will introduce the materials and provide a roadmap every week, the lecture/discussion will be conducted in a bilateral, interactive way. Students need to prepare for each session by reading the assigned materials and actively participate in the class. Moreover, students will be asked (in groups) to present the materials and lead the discussion for cases and videos. Special class formats such as debate will also be incorporated.

TEXTS AND READINGS

There is only one text for this course which the schedule and lectures follow. Students are also required to read the supplementary readings (listed below) which provide a guide to go deeper into a specific subject. These are classics in the respective areas and are interesting. Extra credits will be given for incorporating these sources into group projects, case presentation and other in-class activities. On top of the textbook and the supplementary readings, there are also cases and short essays from various sources such as Harvard Business School, Fortune, Business Week, Economist, and Wall Street Journal.

1) Organization Theory and Design by Richard L. Daft, Jonathan Murphy, and Hugh Willmott (second edition) (Co-op).

2) Supplementary readings will be updated (downloadable in the workbin of IVLE)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Your grade will be determined by your performance on the midterm exam, a group project, 2-3 class presentations, attendance & participation, and individual essay. The percentage of your grade accounted for by each of these components is listed below, as is a description of each component.

Midterm Exam:	25%
Group Project:	20% (Final Presentation)
Class Presentation:	30% (Case 15%; Debate 15%)
Att.& Participation:	20%
Individual Essay	5%

After watching the movie “The Company Men”, you need to submit a two-page learning (reflecting) essay. Note that questions will be provided and the maximum length is two pages.

Midterm Exam (25%):

This would be a closed-book exam in the middle of the semester. It usually includes MCQ and short essay questions. The exam questions cover the textbook, the assigned cases, supplementary readings, and the content of our class discussions. The date for the exam is listed in the course schedule. The venue for the exam will be announced later in class. *The format is subject to change.*

Group Project (20%):

You will be required to form groups of 6-7 people to work on your final project. Groups will be required to analyze a problem or situation currently faced by a business organization using concepts discussed in class. The project is due to present on Week 13 (April 13th & April 14th). Detailed directions for this project are listed below.

All group members will receive the same grade for the group project. However, each student is required to evaluate the contributions of his or her group members to the group efforts (group project, case presentation, and debate) by using the 12-question set (10 MNC questions plus 2 overall, qualitative assessment questions) in the IVLE course website. In other words, the peer-evaluation will be conducted *on-line* and *anonymously*. Individual grades may then be adjusted based on peer evaluations. The range of adjustment depends on individual situations (normally plus or minus 20%).

Class Presentation (30%):

The same group for final project will also be asked to present the assigned cases/essays/video once during the semester. Each group should prepare a 40 minutes presentation in PowerPoint format, outlining the background and main issues, identifying potential agenda and discussing the questions. Grading on this presentation will weigh less on the way you dress or the way you create the PowerPoint slides, but more on how you comprehend, organize and incorporate the materials; more importantly, how you link the materials to the theoretical concepts discussed in class.

Secondly, the assessment grade will also depend on how you facilitate the discussion. The more your fellow classmates participate in the discussion, the better your grade is (but please do not bribe your classmates). I will provide discussion questions for each assigned case (see below) but you are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED to add in your own issues. This demonstrates how well you comprehend the materials and your independent/critical thinking about the subject.

Finally, please prepare a printout of your PowerPoint slides for me before your presentation, so that I can take note on it. After the presentation (preferably next day), you also need to submit (upload) your PowerPoint file to the “case presentation” folder in the IVLE course website.

*Specific instructions for the Debate (Week 11) will be provided later.

Attendance & Participation (20%):

Your class participation grade will be determined by your attendance, your preparation and involvement for each class. I will keep track of your attendance and participation throughout the semester. Participation in class discussions is critical to the success of this course. I expect that you will be readily prepared to discuss the material assigned for each week. On some days I may randomly call on your names. More often than not, I will ask you to **EXPLAIN** your answers to questions. In addition to class discussions, we will have some in-class exercises during the semester. You will be expected to participate in these activities.

COURSE POLICIES

Students are accountable for their class attendance behavior. If you know you will be absent from class, I expect you to notify me in advance or, in the case of an emergency, as soon as possible afterward. Medical or other certificates are necessary for a legitimate absence (submitted to the BBA program office). If you miss one whole class without valid reasons, **ONE** point will be deducted from your total final participation grade at the end of the semester. If you miss three or more classes (25% of the semester), you may lose **ALL** your participation grade. Moreover, **HALF** point will be deducted if you are late for an hour or leave an hour earlier. Other policies are abided by the university rules.

GROUND RULES

- 1) Try to be here on time since the class will be finished 25 minutes before the end of the last hour according to university rules.
- 2) Switch off you cell phones, laptops and tablets during the whole session.
- 3) Prepare for the class.
- 4) Please bring with you a cardboard that has you name on it when you come to class.
- 5) Check you NUS email account in the IVLE regularly since this is the channel through which I communicate course-related matters with you.
- 6) Visit the course website in IVLE to download all course materials. You are **VERY** welcome to use the **“Discussion Forum”** to share your thought with other people (we have 2 classes this term). I also encourage you to use the project tools in the IVLE website to coordinate you project works. These tools can be very helpful when group members can not physically present at the group meetings.

SCHEDULE AND CONTENT OF COURSE MEETINGS

WEEK 1

Introduction

Distribute syllabi, overview of the schedule, discuss course requirements, expectations and ground rules, get to know each other, and maybe introduce research tools for group project.

WEEK 2

Topic 1: Organizations, Theory and Design, and History

Texts:

1) Daft, Chapter 1-2

Video/Exercise:

1) Video: Frederick Taylor and scientific management

2) Video: Hawthorne: An introduction to productivity

WEEK 3

Topic 2: Goals, Strategy and Effectiveness

Texts:

1) Daft, Chapter 3, and Chapter 2, pp30-33

Case 1 (for Topic 1)

1) Management by web. Business Week, Aug 28, 2000

2) Serving the World's Poor, Profitably. Harvard Business Review, September, 2002

3) Innovation's Holy Grail. Harvard Business Review, July/Aug, 2010

WEEK 4

Topic 3: Fundamental of Organizational Structure

Text:

1) Daft, Chapter 4

Case 2: Cleveland Clinic: Growth Strategy (for Topic 2)

WEEK 5

Topic 4: Organizational Environment, Part 1 (Basic Concepts)

Text:

1) Daft, Chapter 5

Case 3: Apex Corporation (for Topic 3)

WEEK 6

Topic 5: Organizational Environments, Part 2 (Theoretical Perspectives)

Text:

1) Daft, Chapter 8-9

Case 4: (for Topic 4)

- 1) Sibling Rivalry (WSJ, 7/17/2000)
- 2) Online Retailing (Economists, 12/03/2005)
- 3) Capital Malls Asia (Business Times, 7/31/2014)
- 4) The Big Switch (Fortune, 10/13, 1997)

RECESS Week

No Class

WEEK 7

Topic 6: Organizations and Globalization

Text:

1) Daft, Chapter 7

Case/Essay/Video:

1) The Company Men (Movie)

WEEK 8 (e-learning week)

Topic 7: Organizational Culture and Ethics

Text:

1) Daft, Chapter 11

Project mid-review

WEEK 9

(Midterm Quiz)

Topic 8: Organization and Technology

Text:

1) Daft, Chapter 8-9

Case 5: Booz Allen & Hamilton (for Topic 6)

WEEK 10

Topic 9: Informal Network and Their Management

Text:

1) Daft, Chapter 14

Case 6: (for Topic 8)

1) Variety is free: Manufacturing in the twenty-first century (AME, 9(4): 73-86, 1995)

2) Next! An efficiency Drive (WSJ, 05/18, 2000)

3) Vermont Teddy Bear Co. (video case)

WEEK 11

(Special class activity: Debates)

Topic 10: TBD

WEEK 12

Topic 11: Perspective

In-class exercise: TBD

- 1) Levi's: As ye sew, so shall ye reap (Fortune, 5/12/1997)
- 2) How Levi's Trashed a Great American Brand (Fortune, 4/12/1999)

WEEK 13

Group Project Presentation

GROUP PROJECT

Project Description

You will be organized into groups of 6-7 people to complete a group project. This project will account for 20% of your final grade. Your group will identify a business organization (do not have to be in Singapore) and analyze a significant organizational design incident that the organization has faced in the recent past. The problem should be relevant to the material covered in the course. Examples include, but are not limited to, a significant reorganization (e.g. adoption of a new design such as divisional, hybrid, or matrix structure), restructuring or merger, or a downsizing. Firms that have either recently completed such a change or are contemplating such a change due to changing contextual conditions (e.g., globalization, governmental regulations, technology, or cultural and societal values) make good subjects for a project. You may also choose to examine an organization that is not faced with a change, but is in some way unique or interesting from an organization theory viewpoint. Some of the cases that we will discuss in class provide good examples of the types of situations you might consider. Regardless of which organization you choose, the focus should be on issues of organizational structure and design (not marketing, human resource, accounting/finance, etc.). You may still touch upon strategy, culture, execution or leadership of the firm since all these factors are related to structure but the main part of the paper should be on organizational structure and the main problems confronting the organization must be related to the content of this course.

Project Objectives and Content

The main point of the project is to show that you can apply the concepts and principles we discuss in this class to make sense of real organizations with real problems. Projects can take one of two forms:

- 1) You could analyze the organization's situation or context and make recommendations about what the organization should do, or should have done, based on the principles you learn in the class.
- 2) You could report on an organization that has undertaken, or is undertaking, a significant organizational design event and analyze the effect of that event on the organization given its situation or context.

You must also provide adequate background on the situation or organization itself, but you will not produce a successful project through simple reporting. Thoughtful, critical analysis is the key to a successful project. A secondary goal of the project is to allow students the opportunity to work together productively and to learn from each other. Get to know your team mates and start coordinate the project early in the semester. In conducting your analysis, you may wish to follow the general format we use for cases discussion in class. Some questions which most (not all) projects should probably address include:

- 1) What is the nature of the firm's structure or design?
- 2) What is the nature of the firm's *contingent context* and how does this *fit* with its *structure*?

- 3) What are the negative aspects of its structure, in addition to its positive ones? (All structures have upsides and downsides).
- 4) What sorts of problems will the organization face in implementing structural changes (e.g. resistance to change etc.)?

Please note that I only list these issues as examples. Papers that mechanically address these issues will probably not be successful. You need to focus in detail on the issues that are most important at the company you are studying.

Research Guidelines

Good projects use a variety of sources such as books, business journals and newspapers, (for example, The Strait Times, The Business Times, Business Week, The Asian Wall Street Journal, The Wall Street Journal, Economist, and Fortune), as well as specialized industry publications. Interviewing key persons involved in the incident will be a big plus. In NUS, many students have also made great use of the World Wide Web in researching their projects. While I agree with this strategy, I issue three cautions. First, material from the Web must be clearly referenced (including the WWW address from which the information came). Second, you must not rely too heavily on information obtained from a company's own web site. This information is often not objective. Third, just because it was on the web doesn't mean it is true. Don't rely on information from non-credible sources and do not attempt to completely substitute web based research for the more conventional type. You should do the basic works by searching the reference database such as Proquest (ABI), SSCI for academic sources and LexisNexis and Factiva for newspapers and magazines. Please consult our librarians in the HSS library for how to use these critical tools.

Guidelines for the Presentation

Groups will present their research output in the last week of the semester. The point of your presentation is to share your experiences with your classmates. You will have about 20 minutes to tell them something interesting, useful, and memorable about the organization you have studied. Get the basic facts quickly and then spend substantial time on the moral of the story. What is the central lesson to be learned from the case? How does it relate to other companies and issues we have discussed throughout the semester? What did you learn that you did not already know? You will have another 5 minutes to take questions.

The grading principles for this presentation are identical with those for case presentation. I am not concerned with how fancy your PowerPoint slides are. Instead, I encourage you to be critical and creative in your presentation. You can work out the specifics in your group. Given the short timeframe, it is NOT essential that all group members participate in the presentation. It is often more effective if two or three group members do the presentation and the remaining group members can lead the discussion and/or answer questions.

Other Important Suggestions for a Successful Project

1. *Start early.* Discuss with your group members early and begin looking at the business press now. Over the first 5 or 6 weeks, you will read about many companies that could

make appropriate subjects for your project. You will not have to make an abrupt and ill-informed decision if you begin early. Once you have the topic, I will post the title in the course website.

2. *Ask questions.* I encourage you to approach me with project ideas – even ones that are very preliminary and which you are not sure about. You can talk to me after class or during office hours. Your chances of producing a really good proposal go up greatly if you test your ideas beforehand.
3. *Study an interesting topic.* Many students wait until the last minute to choose a subject for their projects and then end up choosing a relatively obvious company. The quality of your project will increase if you choose a company, an industry, or an organization design issue that interests you.
4. *Coordinate with your group.* Projects that are disjointed, poorly integrated, and redundant are likely to receive lower grades. Groups of students who work independently and then pool their work together at the last minute are often destined to do poorly.
5. *Analyze.* The purpose of the project is not to recount a company's history or to summarize what the business press has to say about it, but to use ideas from class to ANALYZE and PROVIDE POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS to a company's problems. It is more important to show that you have learned the lessons throughout the semester and that you see how those lessons apply to the case you have chosen. As a rule, the better papers tend to incorporate ideas creatively and critically.
6. *Be skeptical.* Students sometimes read what the press or a company itself has to say and take it as truth. There are multiple sides to any issue or choice. There rarely is only one right answer. Your job is to look at each of these sides, identify pros and cons and provide your own answers and reasoning.