

WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY

Atkinson Graduate School of Management

GSM 634 ORGANIZATION DESIGN

Fall 2007

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:30 –2:50 pm

Room 301

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Office Hours:

- Tuesdays: 12:30 – 1:30 pm

- Thursdays: 3:00 – 4:30 pm

- Or by appointment

1. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Organizations are ubiquitous to us. Hardly any of our daily human activities in modern life take place outside of a formal organization. We are born in a formal organization and we spend our lives as members of numerous others. This course examines the behaviors of large formal organizations – whether public, private, or not-for-profit—in terms of their functioning, performance and affect on their various stakeholders. The broad goal of the course is to sharpen your *critical* thinking regarding the intertwining relationships between: 1) organizations and society at large, and 2) between organizations and our personal biographies. Developing a keen appreciation of these connections and deepening your understanding of how organizations work and change will inevitably improve your effectiveness both as an organizational member and a manager. To succeed in the world ruled and governed by formal organizations, one must learn a diversity of skills including how to set up structures and design organizations that facilitate work; and how to deal with and accommodate change; and how to work *for* other people, *with* other people, and *through* other people.

More specifically, managers exercise options. Aside from solving particular, here-and-now problems, the exercise of their options will, almost inevitably, create changes in one or more features of the organization itself. As such, they are in effect making organization-design choices – choices that do affect people’s lives (professional as well as personal). Consequently, the primary purpose of this course is to examine how people can design organizations to make them more, rather than less, effective.

A second purpose is to provide a framework to help recognize the ways in which organizations can be designed and the constraints associated with them. Specifically, the course analyzes the contextual and structural characteristics of organizations. The substantive material emphasizes the systematic – and systemic – relationships among these organizational characteristics and their implications for management.

We will maintain a dual focus on **theory** and **practice**. My basic assumption is that theory and practice are mutually enhancing. I seek to achieve this goal by introducing you to frameworks that come from different social science disciplines -- economics, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and social history -- and applying those to specific cases and real life situations. Accordingly, I will encourage you to relate your experiences to the activities in this class.

**I AM VERY MUCH LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU:
LET’S START!**

2. COURSE FORMAT:

Each class will consist of some combination of short lectures, case studies, small group discussions, class discussions, and/or films and documentaries. Depending on availability, I may invite guest speakers to give a talk on the respective topic of the day followed by an opportunity to ask them questions.

I expect you to come to class regularly having completed all of the readings for that day and having begun to think critically about the content. The success of this class, and your own, hinges on the regular and meaningful exchange of ideas; thus, your participation in the discussions is of utmost importance. Please keep in mind that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers when we discuss a topic; most of the time, the issues we will be grappling with do not have simple and immediate solutions. What is important is to think and reason about them.

3. READINGS:

3.1 The required text for this course is Richard L. Daft’s *Organization Theory and Design* (9th edition). Thomson: South-Western College Publishing, 2007.

3.2 Additionally, I have listed a number of required readings on the syllabus under each topic. You can find those in an electronic form at the Willamette University library.

3.3 In-class exercises.¹ If preparation is needed prior to class, I will send you an e-mail.

4. COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS:

#	Assignment	Description	%
1	Introductory memo	Due by 10:00 pm on 8/29/07 on ClassTools.	Required, BUT not graded
2	Individual contribution to class learning and discussion	An ongoing contribution to class learning and discussion is expected for every class.	Required, not graded, BUT taken into an account
3	Midterm exam	In-class examination (10/04/07)	25%
4	OD in the press	Three postings (per semester) on the ClassTools of an article/link which is pertinent to the topic of the week.	Required, BUT not graded.
5	Term paper	This is a team effort (look below for a detailed explanation of the project). There are three key deliverables to this assignment: a) a 1-page proposal of your project (required, BUT not graded. Due date: 09/20/07) b) a progress report (required, BUT not graded. Due date: 10/02/07) c) the team’s final paper. Due date: 11/20/07.	35% ²
6	Final exam	In-class final examination (12/06/07)	40%

¹ Exercises will be either distributed in class, posted on ClassTools, or found in Daft’s book.

² As in the case of any team activity, your individual grade for this assignment is subject to peer evaluation. In case of poor ratings from your teammates, your grade could be reduced by up to 30%.

4.1 Introductory Memo

This is your first assignment. It is due by **10:00 pm on 8/29/07** on ClassTools. You are to write an one-page memo introducing yourself and describing briefly:

- a) your previous educational and work experiences
- b) your current organization, position and career goals
- c) your expectations from this class and the topics you are most interested in.

This memo will help me understand the variety of experiences and interests in the class and tailor discussions accordingly. Once again, it is required but will not be graded.

4.2 Individual Contribution to Class Learning and Discussion

Meaningful class discussion has time after time shown itself to be an invaluable means to facilitate learning in this field, particularly at the graduate level. For discussion to be useful, however, each of us must enter into it in a prepared, informed, and questioning manner. To aid this goal, each case and/or an assigned reading will have one or more individuals responsible for informally illustrating it in the class. Each informal presentation should be no longer than 10-15 minutes.

“Preparation” generally means and asks you to ponder over these three things while reading:

- *Recapitulation.* What does each reading and/or case say; what is the central issue/theme/point that is conveyed?
- *For you.* What have you learned; what has it added to your knowledge/understanding of the subject; for what would you recommend it to a colleague?
- *Integration.* Tie this reading and/or case into the larger set of materials on the subject. Please refer to the Appendix 1 to this syllabus, "*Analyzing Cases*," for specific suggestions in that regard.

HOWEVER! This activity should not be seen as an excuse for those individuals not presenting a specific case or reading not to be prepared on such material.

I will not take attendance in this class. That said, it is key to the success of the course that we all make substantial contribution to class discussion. Accordingly, I will keep rough track of who's here and who's not, who's engaged and who's not, in case a “fudge factor” is needed when considering what grade to assign when someone is on the borderline.

4.3 Midterm Exam

An in-class examination on **10/04/07**, in essay-format, which will test your knowledge of the concepts, theories, and ideas we had covered up to this point of the semester and your ability to apply them to achieve a more insightful understanding of an organizational situation. Look at it as a preparation for your team paper. I will give you a choice of three essay topics of which you need to chose two and write well-developed arguments on them.

4.4 OD in the Press

To aid learning of the concepts we discuss in class, it is important that you get used to recognize them as well as their applicability in the business world you frequent on a daily basis. While the assigned readings help this goal, I would also like you to go past your personal experience and make the connection between these topics and the press, including business, which you ordinarily read (or, at least should read). Hence, during the semester, I want you to post **three** messages on ClassTools. Such messages should be posted the day before our class meeting on either Tuesday or Thursday and should contain a link to an article from the press which is pertinent to the day's topic, together with **a very brief** comment explaining why you think the article is relevant to the upcoming class. These three posting are required and, while they do not count for a specific portion of the grade, I will reward quality and insight (in both article and the comment) with "fudge factor" points. Trust me! It does make a difference at the end of the semester! **Due by 10:00 pm the night before our next relevant class meeting.**

4.5 Term Paper

The term paper is a team effort, and is aimed at clarifying and focusing your thinking about organization design. You can satisfy the term-project requirement by choosing to accomplish any one of the following three "track" venues:

Track I: Preparation of a case study of an on-going organization. The study will be intensive, focusing on some identifiable problem, consistent with this course, that the organization has experienced or is currently experiencing. The study will be extensive, tying the problem to the larger conceptual frameworks examined in this course.

You will need to gain access to the organization, conduct a preliminary analysis of problem areas, secure necessary information, and submit the case study for evaluation. In most cases, an analysis of the case problem also will be submitted to the subject organization.

Track II: Preparation of an analysis, based on an extensive literature examination, of some cutting-edge organization-design topic that has clear managerial implications. This analysis will focus on the conceptual and empirical underpinnings of the topic, as well as its managerial implications. It must include examples and analysis of differences of both organizations that have embraced this design successfully and organizations that have failed.

Track III: Other. Please feel free to suggest any other possible venue that is relevant to this course and is of interest to you.

A list of selected journals that you could explore to this end is included at the back of this syllabus (Appendix 3). The cost of materials and supplies will be your responsibility.

There are three key deliverables for this assignment:

1. **A one-page report on your: a) team, b) track #, and c) topic** is due at the beginning of class on **9/20/07**. After submitting it, you will have to meet with me as a team to go over it, both to make sure that there is enough substance to base a semester project on it and that you are taking the right direction in terms of how to tackle the problem, structure the project, etc.

2. **A progress report** -- detailing your project's topic, plan of attack, and timetable will be submitted at the beginning of class on **10/02/07**.
3. **'The' term papers** -- due on **11/20/07**.

Your analysis and solutions should be grounded in the topics/theories/material that we cover in this class. One more important piece of information: I will ask each team member to review his/her peers at the end of the class and evaluate them on their contribution to the project. As an individual, you could see your grade reduced if the peer evaluation is not good (the maximum reduction for team mates agreeing that 'The person did almost nothing to benefit the group' is 30%. This mechanism represents your insurance against social loafers.

Please note:

- Each paper is to be no more than 20 pages in length, and is to include a Title page, Executive Summary, Table of Contents, References, and any appropriate exhibits (typed, Times New Roman 12-point font), double-spaced, one-inch margins all around, and with page numbers. The header should contain your names (or team name) and the date. For further details see Appendix 2, "*More on submission, format, and standards for written work,*" at the end of this syllabus.
- Each team will also distribute to each class member its paper's Executive Summary (include title and team members' names) and present its paper to the class on the day of submission. What "presents" means will be discussed as we get closer to that date.

4.6 Final Exam

The exam will take place during our last day of classes, 12/06/07. This is an opportunity for you to demonstrate the degree of understanding of the material covered in this course. Again, I will give you a choice of three essay topics, and ask you to choose two and to write well-developed and supported arguments on them.

5. GRADING:

I will calculate your final grade for the course as follows:

#	<i>Deliverables:</i>	<i>Date:</i>	<i>% of final grade:</i>
1	Midterm exam	10/04/07	25%
2	Term paper	11/20/07	35%
3	Final exam	12/06/07	40%
			Total =100%

Letter grade	Percentage range
A	93 +
A-	90 - 92
B+	86 - 89
B	83 - 85
B-	80 - 82
C	77 - 79
F	76 <

6. OTHER:

1) Laptop computers provide a useful note-taking vehicle. Wireless connection to the Internet also affords us a useful way to check on the current status of various organizations that we consider such as in reading, discussion, or in case analyses. I encourage both uses. However, I will not tolerate the in-class use of laptops in activities unrelated to the course.

2) Our e-mail address issued by Willamette University (xxx@willamette.edu) will be the one used with regard to this course. Each of us is responsible for information sent from and to that address.

3) In this course we subscribe to the Expectation of Conduct, found on the Atkinson IntraWeb. Please familiarize yourself with its precepts; I take your participation in this course as evidence of your commitment to them. Let me just reiterate that all work for the course must represent your own effort. Plagiarism is taken very seriously by Willamette University, the Atkinson Graduate School of Management, and by me. **Plagiarism includes coping materials from on-line sources and passing them off as your own.**

4) Students requesting accommodations for a disability must be registered and certified through the Willamette University Disability Services Office. Students seeking accommodations must contact the Disabilities Services Office at (503) 370-6471 or via <http://www.willamette.edu/dept/disability>, Bishop Health Center. Atkinson students already approved for testing accommodations must notify Janet Jobes, Atkinson Recorder, at least two weeks prior to all scheduled tests for which they need accommodation.

7. COURSE SCHEDULE:

DATE	TOPIC/ASSIGNMENT:
<i>AUGUST:</i>	
PART I	ORGANIZATIONS AND ORGANIZATION THEORY
8/28	<i>Introduction and Course Overview</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preface & Ch. 1 • Argyris, C. 1991. Teaching smart people how to learn. <i>HBR</i>, May/June, Vol. 69: 3: 99-109.
8/30	<i>Organizations and Organization Theory (I): A Historical Perspective</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 1 (cont.) • Ch. 1 Workbook, p. 38 <i>Film: Modern Times</i>
<i>SEPTEMBER:</i>	
9/4	<i>Organizations and Organization Theory (II): The 'New' Organization and the New Challenges</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hindle, T. 2006. 'The new organization' In "A survey of the company," <i>The Economist</i>, January 21, Vol. 378 (8461): 3-5. • Kerr, S. 1995. On the folly of rewarding A, while hoping for B. <i>AME</i>, Vol. 9: 1:7-14 • Kerr, S. 1995. More on the folly. <i>AME</i>, Feb., Vol. 9: 1:15-16. <i>Film: An excerpt from "Green Architecture."</i>

PART II	ORGANIZATIONAL PURPOSE AND STRUCTURAL DESIGN
9/6	<i>Strategy, Organization Design, and Effectiveness (I)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 2
9/11	<i>Strategy, Organization Design, and Effectiveness (II)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CASE: “The University Art Museum” IN-CLASS VIDEO CASE: “The Vermont Teddy Bear Co.”
9/13	<i>Organizational Structure and Effectiveness: The Fundamentals (I)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 3 Friesen, B., & D. Quinn. 1989. Note on how organizations can be structured (<i>HBS</i> #9-490-040) IN-CLASS VIDEO: “Organization Design: A Study of JIAN”
9/18	<i>Organizational Structure and Effectiveness: The Fundamentals (II)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CASE: “Aquarius Advertising Agency” Goold, M. & A. Campbell. 2002. Do you have a well-designed organization? <i>HBR</i>, March, Vol. 80: 3:117-124 Semler, R. 1989. Managing without managers. <i>HBR</i>, Sept/Oct., Vol. 67: 5:76-84.
PART III	OPEN SYSTEM DESIGN ELEMENTS
9/20	<i>The External Environment (I)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 4 Donaldson, T. & L. Preston. 1995. The stakeholder theory of the corporation: Concepts, evidence, implications. <i>AMR</i>, Jan., 1:71-83.
9/25	<i>The External Environment (II)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> INTEGRATIVE CASE: “The Audubon Zoo,” pp. 552-565.
9/27	<i>Inter-organizational Relationships</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 5 Provan, K.G. and H. B. Milward. 1995. A preliminary theory of interorganizational network effectiveness: A comparative of four community mental health systems, <i>ASQ</i>, 40:1: 1-33. Dyer, J. and N.W. Hatch. 2004. Using supplier networks to learn faster. <i>SMR</i>, Spring, pp. 57-63.
OCTOBER:	
10/2	<i>Manufacturing and Service Technologies</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 7 IN-CLASS VIDEO CASE: “The Vermont Teddy Bear Co.”
10/4	MIDTERM EXAM
PART IV	INTERNAL DESIGN ELEMENTS
10/9	<i>Information technology, control, and knowledge management</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch. 8 IN-CLASS VIDEO: “Park-Nicolette”

10/11	<p><i>Organizational Size, Life Cycle and Decline (I)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 9 • Cascio, W. F. 2002. Strategies for responsible restructuring. <i>AME</i>, August, Vol. 16: 3: 80-91.
10/16	<p><i>Organizational Size, Life Cycle and Decline (II)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CASE: “Sunflower Incorporated.”
PART V	MANAGING DYNAMIC PROCESSES
10/18	<p><i>Organizational Culture and Ethical Values (I)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 10 • CASE: “Does This Milkshake Taste Funny?”
10/23	<p><i>Organizational Culture and Ethical Values (II)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mason, R. O. 2004. Lessons in organizational ethics from the Columbia disaster: Can a culture be lethal? <i>Organizational Dynamics</i>, Vol. 33: 2: 128-142 • INTEGRATIVE CASE: "XEL communications, Inc. (C): Forming a Strategic Partnership," pp. 543-548.
10/25	<p><i>Designing for the Future: Corporate Social Responsibility and (Sustainable) Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friedman, M. 1970. The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits, <i>New York Times Magazine</i>, Sept. 13, pp. 122-126. • “Corporate Social Responsibility in a Global Economy” 2001. In <i>Corporate Social Responsibility: Partners for Progress: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</i>, pp. 45-55. <p><i>Film:</i> An excerpt from “Green Architecture.”</p>
10/30	<p><i>Decision-making processes: Individuals, Groups and Organizations (I)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 12 • Hammond, J., Keeney, R., & H. Raiffa. 1998. The hidden traps in decision-making. <i>HBR</i>, Sept/Oct., Vol. 76: 5:47-58. • Levy, P. F. 2001. The Nut Island effect (when good teams go wrong). <i>HBR</i>, March, Vol. 79: 3:51-59.
NOVEMBER:	
11/1	<p><i>Decision-making Processes: Individuals, Groups and Organizations (II)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 12 (cont.) • An in-class exercise in decision-making. • Katzenbach, J. & D. Smith. 1993. The discipline of teams, <i>HBR</i>, March-April, Vol. 71: 2:111-120. <p><i>Film:</i> An excerpt from “Other People’s Money”</p>
11/6	<p><i>Decision-making Processes: Individuals, Groups and Organizations (III)</i></p> <p>IN-CLASS VIDEO CASE: “Columbia’s Final Mission,” (Multimedia case, HBS 9-305-032).</p>

11/8	<p><i>Conflict, Power and Politics (I)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 13 • Shapiro, B. 1977. Can marketing and manufacturing coexist? <i>HBR</i>, Sept./Oct., Vol. 55: 104-114. • Crittenden, V., L. Gardiner, & A. Stam. 1993. Reducing conflict between marketing and manufacturing. <i>Industrial Marketing Management</i>, 22: 299-02. • Tjosvold, D., V. Dann, & C. Wong. 1992. Managing conflict between departments to serve customers. <i>Human Relations</i>, 45: 10: 1035-1054. • Langley, M. 1997. Columbia tells doctors at hospital to end their outside practice. <i>The Wall Street Journal</i>, May 2, A1, A6.
11/13	<p><i>Contemporary Trends in Organization Design (I)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weick, K. 1996. Prepare your organization to fight fires. <i>HBR</i> May/June, Vol. 74: 3:143-148. • Coutu, D. L. 2003. Psychologist Karl E. Weick: Sense and Reliability. <i>HBR</i>, April, pp. 84-90. • Ancona, D. 2002. The comparative advantage of X-teams. <i>SMR</i>, Vol. 43:3: 33-39.
11/15	<p><i>Contemporary Trends in Organization Design (II)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rizova, P. 2006. Are you networked for successful innovation? <i>SMR</i>, Spring, Vol. 47: 3: 49-55. <p>IN CLASS VIDEO CASE: "The Portland String Quartet"</p>
11/20	TERM PAPERS DUE AND DISCUSSED.
11/22	NO CLASS!!! THANKSGIVING RECESS
11/27	<p><i>Informal Sources of Power and Authority: Social Networks and Organizational Performance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krackhardt, D. & J. Hansen. 1993. Informal networks: The company behind the chart. <i>HBR</i>, Jul/Aug., Vol. 71: 4:104-111. • Uzzi, B. & S. Dunlap. 2005. How to build your network. <i>HBR</i>, Dec., Vol. 83: 12:53-60. • Prusak, L. & D. Cohen. 2001. How to invest in social capital. <i>HBR</i>, June, Vol. 79: 6:86-93 • Gabarro, J. J. & J. P. Kotter. 2005. Managing your boss. <i>HBR</i>, Jan., Vol. 83: 1:92-99.
11/29	<p><i>Conclusion: Organizational Effectiveness (I)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connor, P. 1994. Edifices and Ego: An investor's view of managerial (In)effectiveness. <i>Journal of Management Inquiry</i>, June, Vol. 3: 2: 207-212. • McGregor, J. 2005. Gospels of failure. <i>Fast Company</i>, February, Issue 91: 62-67. • Ulrich, D. & N. Smallwood. 2004. Capitalizing on capabilities. <i>HBR</i>, June, pp. 119-127.

DECEMBER:	
12/4	<p>Conclusion: Organizational Effectiveness (II)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kim W. Chan & R. Mauborgne. 2003. Tipping point leadership. <i>HBR</i>, April, pp. 60-69. • Joyce, W. 2005. What really works: Building the 4 + 2 organization. <i>Organizational Dynamics</i>, Vol. 34: 2: 118-129 • Kirby, J. 2005. Toward a theory of high performance. <i>HBR</i>, July-August, pp. 30-39.
12/6	FINAL EXAM

Abbreviations of Journals:

- AME*, The Academy of Management Executive
AMR, The Academy of Management Review
ASQ Administrative Science Quarterly
HBR, Harvard Business Review
HBS, Harvard Business School
SMR, Sloan Management Review

Appendix 1

Analyzing Cases

(Adapted from Professor Patrick Connor)

Listed below are some suggested points to remember in analyzing the sorts of cases we encounter in the management and organizational-analysis courses. These points are not intended to be all-inclusive; nor are they intended to limit your own analytical abilities. Rather, they are suggestions. They work for me; I recommend them to you.

The steps are listed in the rough order that I would expect you to take them.

- (1) Describe the managerial/organizational situation. This description should be in succinct, professional terms.
- (2) What is the central, irreducible, problem? Note that problems are not always the same as symptoms. Therefore, this step might require you to identify the symptoms first.
- (3) From where do the problems come - what are the sources?
- (4) What do you want a "solution" to accomplish? Just making the problem go away is usually insufficient. Managerial action will doubtless affect more than the problem(s).
- (5) What are the constraints on potential solutions? Does management see what the constraints are/aren't? Note that in this instance the term "constraint" can be used in a positive or negative sense; material resources, information, personnel skills can all constrain a solution. In short, there can be opportunities as well as obstacles that affect a solution's feasibility.
- (6) What alternative actions could management (or whomever) take?
- (7) What are the various advantages and disadvantages of these various actions?
- (8) How do these advantages and disadvantages compare with your answer to point (4), above?
- (9) What managerial action do you recommend? Who should do what?

Appendix 2

More on submission, format, and standards for written work

All the assignments are due at the beginning of class on the stated deadline. No late assignments will be accepted unless warranted by extraordinary circumstances. All written work must be typed in Times New Roman 12 pt font, double-spaced, one-inch margins all around. The header should contain your last and first names (or team name) and the date. For assignments that are longer than one-page, please include page numbers in the footer. All written work must follow standard stylistic guidelines and be free of spelling, grammatical, and typographic errors. See <http://www.bartleby.com/141/> for an example of such guidelines. It should also be clearly and logically organized with meaningful headings, sub-headings, and overall structure. Sloppy, un-proofed, poorly organized work will be as unacceptable in class as it would be at work (and of course will result in a lower grade).

More specifically, I will evaluate written work in terms of:

A. Analysis (quality of the analysis/diagnosis):

- Analysis is insightful and thorough
- Analysis is systematic
- Builds on relevant course concepts/frameworks

B. Recommendations/Alternative Courses of Action (as applicable to the assignment):

Quality of action planning and implementation:

- Specific action alternatives are generated
- Recommendations derive from/are linked to the analysis
- Recommendations are appropriate and innovative
- Are justified in terms of course concepts and frameworks

C. Application of Course Material and Learning: Appropriate/Effective use of the course material

- Course concepts/frameworks are explicitly referenced and appropriately used
- Leveraged to gain greater insight in analysis
- Recommendations apply specific concepts /frameworks to the specific situation

D. Style: quality of argument

- Ideas are clearly expressed and well supported
- Ideas flow logically; the structure of your paper and/or presentation is carefully constructed and organized
- Generalities and jargon are avoided
- Examples are used in an appropriate manner
- Written work is thoroughly edited and proofread

Appendix 3

A List of Relevant Journals

Below you will find a list of journals that are useful to anyone interested in organization theory and behavior. Some of them are primarily for researchers, and some for MBA students and practitioners.

MANAGEMENT JOURNALS

Academy of Management Executive
Academy of Management Journal
Academy of Management Review
Business Horizons
California Management Review
Harvard Business Review
Human Resource Management
Journal of Management
Journal of Management Inquiry
Journal of Organizational Change Management
Organizational Dynamics
Public Administration Review
Sloan Management Review

ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIOLOGY

American Journal of Sociology
American Sociological Review

OTHER JOURNALS

Administrative Science Quarterly
Human Organization
IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management
Journal of Business Strategy
Journal of International Business Studies
Management Science
Organization Science

Atkinson Graduate School of Management
GSM 634 Organization Design

In this class, or any seminar setting, our skill objectives are to learn or refine the following skills:

- To be good listeners
- To assume joint responsibility to accomplish a common task
- To share one's mental models with others (make sense to ourselves and others about what we know and what we think)
- To encourage others to share their mental models
- To be open to questions from others about one's mental models
- To accept criticism
- To question assumptions
- To support one's judgments with evidence
- To spot potential problems in the ideas of others and find ways to explore and evaluate those ideas
- To appreciate diverse points of view
- To be open to discovering new ways of thinking about and framing problems
- To revise one's ideas to incorporate the ideas of others
- To actively construct new knowledge through interaction with others
- To give constructive feedback and criticism
- To be comfortable with disagreement and not avoid, smooth over, or suppress conflict
- To use the criticism of others to make one's ideas better
- To respect differences of opinion
- To take initiative by looking for opportunities to help move the common task along
- To share leadership in order to accomplish a common task
- To accomplish common tasks under time constraints
- To gain confidence in the ability to express oneself
- To be accountable for one's contributions to a group activity
- To build trust among participants
- To build group norms that support the seminar's productivity
- To discipline participants who violate the group's productivity norms
- To recognize and draw upon the diverse skills of participants

Critical Thinking: Probing Assumptions

What is critical thinking?

The process of critical thinking is the process by which we detect and analyze the assumptions that underlay actions, decisions and judgments.

There are three stages in this process:

- (1) becoming aware that assumptions exist,
- (2) making assumptions explicit, that is, naming what is implicit, and
- (3) assessing the accuracy and validity of assumptions by saying to ourselves, "Do these assumptions make sense?" "Do they fit reality as we have come to understand and live it?" "Under what conditions do they seem to hold true?" "Under what conditions might they be false?"

What is an assumption?

Assumptions are difficult ideas to grasp. The best way to think about an assumption is that it is a rule of thumb which governs our actions, decisions or judgments. It usually involves some kind of cause and effect link. We say to ourselves, if I do this then that will happen. An assumption often has a justification for the action attached to it. That is, we say it is important to do *this* because *that* will follow. Assumptions are the common sense beliefs we have or meanings we give to things. When someone says "Why do you do this?", we say, "Well, it's obvious, we do this because..." The because... is referring to an assumption.

Why is critical thinking important?

On a general level the actions, decisions and judgments we make in our lives spring from the assumptions we make about how the world works. If our assumptions are unchecked they are likely to lead to bad actions, poor decisions, and wrong judgments. What happens in the critical thinking process is that our decisions, actions and judgments are informed. They have been tested by careful scrutiny. People may say to us, "Why do you do things this way?" In response, we can give carefully considered reasons. Our actions, decisions and judgments are informed, not habitual.

Critical thinking is NOT negative.

There is the tendency to think of critical thinking as negative thinking. Some say it is the kind of thinking in which people tear everything down and don't put anything in its place. This isn't the case at all. Critical thinking is a process that involves both positive and negative appraisal. It is the way in which we become aware of assumptions that underlie our actions, decisions, and judgments and then consider the ways in which they do and do not make sense.

How can we tell that a person is thinking critically?³

1. Critical thinkers display contextual sensitivity. Critical thinkers are aware of how context distorts the assumptions that we have. You can see contextual sensitivity in people's appreciation that common sense ideas and conventional wisdom are the products of a particular time, place and group of people. Contextual sensitivity is the recognition that ideas that we think are universally true and have held for all time are actually very context- and culture-specific.
2. Critical thinkers engage in perspective taking. Perspective taking involves us getting inside another person's head to see the world as they see it. One way to do this is by active listening. This is crucial in any negotiation situation.
3. Critical thinkers have tolerance for ambiguity. By a tolerance for ambiguity I mean that critical thinkers can make multiple interpretations – they can reframe problems and situations from different points of view. Critical thinkers are skeptical of people who say there is one cause (solution) to a complex problem. Critical thinkers are skeptical of standardized solutions to complex problems. Most problems do not have any one solution; what they have are a range of possible solutions. Some solutions make sense at some times and some at other times.
4. Critical thinkers seek and explore alternative ways of thinking and acting. They are constantly looking for new ways of looking at things, and acting.
5. Critical thinkers are people who challenge “group think.” Group think is the tendency that you notice in a lot of groups when certain ideas become uncritically accepted. They become revered or habitual. But critical thinkers will challenge these group conventions.

³Adapted from "Becoming Critical Thinkers," a cassette tape program by Stephen D. Brookfield, produced by Jossey-Bass Publishers.