

MBA 543 WINTER

THE DYNAMICS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Warner Woodworth

Class Meets: Mondays 3:30-6:00 PM

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Office: 786 TNRB

Classroom: 260 TNRB

Student Consultations: T 2:00-3:00 PM

OVERVIEW

This is an intense, demanding course for graduate students. It is a practicum in organizational change and consulting, including diagnosis and the role of the manager/consultant in facilitating the process of change. The class is designed to assist participants in acquiring knowledge, understanding and experience in analyzing change needs, planning change strategies, and using specific interventions.

The assumption behind the class design is that any facilitator of change (outside consultant, internal staff member, line manager) needs skills and knowledge about: organizations as technical, political, and cultural systems, overcoming resistance to change, approaches to conducting diagnoses of organizations, intervention and consulting tools, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation capabilities.

The course will be built upon both intellectual and experiential models of learning. There will be a variety of activities during class, both individually and within groups. MBA 543 is organized around paradigms and theories of change at different levels, as well as the application of conceptual learnings and use of OD/consulting interventions in corporations.

CONCEPTS

Each week, we will discuss several key topics in managing change. Chapter readings will come from Harvey & Brown: *An Experiential Approach to Organization Development* (7th edition, 2005). There will also be a Course Packet available to order from the TNRB Copy Center on the 5th floor.

APPLICATION

Application is the ultimate test of effective consulting and cases are a useful method for applying concepts. We will use several cases and simulations in class to understand the concepts and issues being discussed. These will include traditional written cases, videos, and “real” consulting projects. Each group in the class will do original work with a client organization. Demonstrations of specific organizational development interventions will be applied in class in order to maximize the learning and utilization of tools and methods.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My courses are always designed to offer alternative views, not simply the “party line,” or the established theories that the majority of managers or even academics may hold dear. For some students it is troubling to read, hear, or have to consider multiple answers, or differing perspectives. But my assumption is that universities are to serve as a marketplace of ideas, that conceptual paradigms are to be scrutinized and analyzed, not merely canonized. Also, I teach from my personal experiences, real-world consulting with some of the largest, most powerful corporations. Other professors who lack such experience, have never made a living as a consultant, or who have never managed an organization or served on a corporate board, may prefer the textbook answer, the Harvard case notes, and the hypothetical.

But most would admit that if they had the opportunity, their teaching would be enriched by hands-on consulting, down in the trenches where the real action is. In my classes, students are often bewildered by the smelly, dirty realities of trying to do deep change. Some are repelled by the high likelihood of failed change, the absolute necessity for being tough-minded, being rejected, facing ethical dilemmas, and so on. These individuals prefer instead, the luxury of armchair speculation and simple solutions. For them the ease of a hypothetical solution is much better to swallow than facing the cold, hard difficulties of resistance, conflict, and the politics of achieving substantive organizational transformation.

Hence, MBA 543 is an attempt to expand student minds, not to narrow them; to generate engaged conceptual processes, not passive ones; to foster debate and critical learning, not a confirmation of one’s traditional ideas and/or biases. Our objective is divergent thinking, rather than convergent. My hope is more than simply helping students memorize “*the* answers.” Instead, we need to focus on the nature of the problems, get at their root causes, and then to move beyond the paralysis of analysis that afflicts many OD programs to achieve significant change—system wide shifts in power structures that alter the balance of who gets what in corporate life today. We built these huge bureaucratic systems, and we can humanize them. The results will not only lead to higher profits and greater productivity for the firm, but a better quality of life for workers, managers, and society as a whole.

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

--- Mahatma Gandhi

REQUIREMENTS

	<u>Points</u>
<p>1. CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION (ongoing)</p> <p>Students will be evaluated with respect to quality and quantity of verbal contributions. About midway they will receive feedback so that, if desired, adjustments can be made for the second half of the semester.</p>	25 pts
<p>2. Consultant Bio. & OD Methods (Due March 19)</p> <p>Students will each draft a 15 page paper on a current leading consultant & one's model of change/consulting. What's their theory of action research? Books? Cases? Other publications? Assumptions? Values? Practice? Reputation? Clients? Impacts?</p>	75 pts.
<p>3. TEAM CONSULTING PROJECT (Due April 16)</p> <p>Each team will work with a client as an OD consulting service-learning project. Your task is to diagnose organizational problems and recommend actions/interventions to improve the situation. Interviews or other sources of data and recommendations will be used in preparing a written consulting report and meeting with the client.</p>	75 pts
<p>4. IN-CLASS QUIZZES (on-going)</p> <p>There will be an occasional in-class quiz on the day's assigned reading to ensure that everyone has read the assignment, to encourage students to keep up on key concepts and methods, and thereby enjoy better class discussions.</p>	25 pts.
<p>5. FINAL EXAM (Tuesday, April 24, 7:00-9:00 PM)</p> <p>The final comprehensive exam will include objective questions from the text, short essay questions, and brief case analyses. It will test one's ability to integrate consulting information covered throughout the course and apply OD concepts and methodology to various organization problems.</p>	100 pts.
	TOTAL POSSIBLE
	300 points

EXPECTATIONS

MBA 543 demands significant commitment from students because it will challenge participants in ways in which they may not be accustomed. Core expectations include the following:

- a) Integrity – Careful adherence to the Honor Code in your personal and academic life. Each member of the BYU community ought to reference the Honor Code in determining what constitutes moral/ethic behavior. There is an assumption on my part that students will honor the commitment they have made to live an ethical life. The Code defines the standards of personal honesty and integrity in one’s role as a student or faculty member at BYU. I would suggest that you reread the Code carefully and analyze your degree of adherence to its principles. For this class I want to emphasize several specifics: 1) that there is no deception in your representation of who you are and what you do; 2) that other students are treated appropriately regardless of race, gender, nationality or religion; 3) that our interaction will operate from a foundation of honesty, regardless of whether people agree with another’s point of view or not.
- b) Citizenship – Not engaging in unnecessary conversation or other distractions which disrupt the class. Please be courteous and supportive of the rights of the others to learn in a constructive educational environment.
- c) Participation – Attending all class sessions and being accountable for readings, presentations and the acquisitions of practical skills. Hopefully we can create an atmosphere for the free exchange of ideas, not just lectures. Do not be reluctant to speak out. If students push themselves to be mentally engaged, the experience will be more rewarding for all. This does not preclude disagreement or argument with the ideas or opinions of others. Indeed, a healthy intellectual environment necessitates debate and differing views. Multiple voices are needed and we should each work hard to enhance the participation of others, even as we take issue with their position. All of us at BYU need to better learn to discuss and confront in fun and healthy exchanges rather than simply conform.
- d) Purposes – BYU’s mission is “to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life” in a “setting where a commitment to excellence is expected and the full realization of human potential is pursued.” In doing this effectively we will strengthen our “influence in a world we wish to improve.” By learning new skills, integrating gospel principles with the best theories of social science, we will expand our capacities for lifelong service to others.

BYU Policies

Preventing Sexual Harassment:

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU's policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the University but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24 hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

Students with Disabilities:

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability that may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You may contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.

Cheating:

Students should collaborate and help one another. But all work completed should be your own or that of your team. Do not use papers, tests, etc, from prior classes to help you prepare for this course's exams, projects, or papers. Do not share test or quiz questions and answers with students who have not taken the test or quiz.

Cell Phones:

Beginning in 2006 students are not to use cell phones in classes of the Marriott School. Please turn them off as you enter the classroom and keep them stored out of sight in your backpack or pocket. Not only can phones be a disruption to class, but with built-in cameras, students have been known to take pictures of grade rolls containing sensitive information, examinations and even fellow classmates. Each of these represents an invasion of privacy that we need to avoid. Some students have also used their phones to send text messages during class sessions, sometimes to other students in the same classroom. Such activities are a distraction, and disrupt the thinking and learning environment. On rare occasions text messages have contained confidential information that is not appropriate to share during a class session. For these reasons, the Marriott School has chosen to establish a policy that all cell phones should be turned off and kept stored out of sight during all class sessions.

“There is nothing as practical as a good theory.”

---Kurt Lewin