Organizational Behavior [UGCCMM204]

Barcelona Business School
Marketing and Management
Level 2

Instructor
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Schedule
Wed 12:30 to 15:30
Fri 12:30 to 15:30

Language
English

Course Content

DESCRIPTION
Those of you who have set ambitious goals for yourselves will need to harness organizations. Whether you want to make a million dollars, see your new technology conquer the marketplace, or save the planet from global warming, you will need organizations. Even those with more modest aims, such as accomplishing a project without doing all of the work alone, winning a future promotion, or getting through staff meetings without letting the meeting get on your nerves will find this course useful. If you ask managers to describe their most frequent or troublesome problems, you will tend to get answers that revolve around people problems. As a future manager, you will need to deal with a wide variety of organizational behavior (OB) issues: employees’ lack of motivation, conflicts between team members, employee resistance to company reorganization, etc. Even more importantly: immediately upon entering the workforce within a year or so, you will face a series of conundrums of organizational life, such as your boss’s poor communication skills, or your colleague’s attempt to boss you around. Understanding the dynamics of human behavior in organizations is essential to achieving professional success, as principles of OB will be involved in making you both productive and happy (or not!).

This course is intended to provide you with an in-depth understanding of OB theory and practice, with a special emphasis on:

(1) Understanding yourself and others;
(2) How to influence others – a critical leadership skill, and an instrument of organizational change;
(3) Responsible leadership of individuals, teams and organizations.

OBJECTIVES
You are expected to learn to think critically and prudently about the human element in organizations. This course attempts to foster in you a reflective consideration of how individual dispositions and biases, as well as the fundamental nature of social behavior, affects the well-being of organizations and their members. Ideally, at the end of the course not only will you understand OB better, but also you will have some tools that would allow you to influence it. To summarize, at the end of this course, you will: (1) know something about (influencing) human behavior in organizations, (2) know how to learn more, (3) develop skills in presenting your ideas in written and oral reports.
Methodology
The course consists of 15 sessions of about 3 hours each (with a short break midway). The sessions will include lectures, videos, role-plays and case discussions. Some sessions may also include student presentations and in-class assessment.

Readings
REQUIRED TEXTBOOK
There is no required textbook, but you will be provided with a range of additional materials through the university intranet. You may also be requested to search for particular readings in the library databases.

REQUIRED READING
✓ Required reading of selected cases, articles and book chapters. These materials will be provided electronically to students in advance.

SUGGESTED READING
✓ Recommended reading of the current issue of *Harvard Business Review*

SELECTED COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY
✓ Carroll, J. & Tao, L. 15.301 *Managerial Psychology*, Fall 2006. (Massachusetts Institute of Technology: MIT OpenCourseWare), http://ocw.mit.edu (Accessed 14 Dec, 2011). License: Creative Commons BY-NC-SA
Competences

✓ Critical thinking.
✓ Basic theoretical knowledge of the subject.
✓ Development of written and oral communication skills.
✓ Development of Information management skills.
✓ Problem-solving skills.
✓ Teamwork.
✓ Intrapersonal knowledge and development.
✓ Interpersonal skills.
✓ Cross-cultural skills.
✓ Creativity.
✓ A search for quality excellence.
✓ Self-motivation.
✓ Generative learning.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, you should be able to have achieved the objectives set up for this course and have developed the competencies listed above.

Continuous Assessment

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION
You are expected to come to all classes prepared and on time. Your class participation will be evaluated subjectively, but will rely upon measures of punctuality, attendance, familiarity with the required readings, relevance and insight reflected in classroom questions, and commentary. Since this class is, in effect, an attempt to practice organizational skills, I expect you to treat this course like you would a job. As the manager of this class, I assume that the people I am working with are good, hard-working and intelligent people who are capable of meeting the requirements of this job. In other words, I will enter this class trusting that you will put in at least the required effort, if not go beyond. However, if I see that my trust is being betrayed, I will start using “the carrot and the stick” (e.g., Andreoni, Harbaugh, & Vesterlund, 2003), as much as I would not like to. This means additional work for you, and stricter policies and requirements. In other words, if you fail to meet my expectations, I will stop treating you as grown-ups and equals, but will instead be treating you as students who need to be disciplined. So I have several expectations of the people who are working with me, in particular:

Attend class.
It is imperative that you are here. You are expected to be present for at least 75% of the class sessions. If you absolutely have to miss class, try to notify me in advance. However, I cannot justify absences. This is a decision to be made only by the administration.

Be punctual.
Come to class on time. Late arrivals disrupt the flow of the class and, moreover, at your future job, tardiness will most likely not be tolerated. If you are more than 15 minutes late for a class, you will not be allowed to enter and should stay outside until the following break. This will count as class absence.

Participate.
Although the class is taught in lecture mode, I will rely heavily upon interactive discussion within the class. Questions and comments are strongly encouraged. Disagreeing with the professor is okay, as long as we remain respectful of each other. Asking what appear to be “dumb questions” about what is being covered is also okay: very often half of the class will have the same questions in mind and be relieved to have them asked.

Be prepared for every class.
I expect students to be familiar with the readings, even though they might not understand all of the material in advance. For example, you are expected to have read an assigned article, book chapter or case study, or to have completed an exercise or other assignment, and to be able to ask and address relevant questions. I will rarely assign written homework assignments, but consider the assigned readings and questions mandatory.
homework.

**Meet deadlines.**
Meet due dates. This is the policy for all assignments, exercises, presentations, and activities.

**Demonstrate academic integrity in all of your work.**
If you are caught cheating in any form on exams, plagiarizing or rehashing on exercises, activities, assignments, and presentations or handing in work you did not do, be prepared to receive a failing final grade for the course.

Make sure your work is your own. You are responsible for citing all sources on which you rely, using quotation marks when language is taken directly from others’ work, and knowing how to use your own language to paraphrase a source (hint: changing a few words is not sufficient). If you cite a direct quote, you must provide a reference with a page number for the citation.

**Maintain a professional atmosphere in class.**
You are expected to maintain a professional atmosphere in class. This means no computer or cell-phone use in class unless specifically required, and refraining from distracting activities during class (side conversations or games). If you are used to taking notes on the computer, please talk to me during the first class. If you choose to take notes on your computer, I will ask that you show or email me these notes at the end of class. Cold calls may be directed at a student who walks in late or seems to be inattentive in class. A short-answer quiz might be given at any time, to ensure that you are present, physically and mentally 😊

Attendance and participation in class will correspond to 10% of your final grade. I ask that you use a name card for the first few weeks until I learn your names.

**ASSIGNMENTS**
You will be required to deliver two projects (an individual project and a group project) and several other assignments, for a total of at least four.

**Individual project (report + presentation) on influence**
Understanding and applying concepts of influence is a critical leadership skill greatly valued in organizations. The project requires you to write and present about a particular problem of influence and a recommended solution.

The learning objectives of the project are:
1. allow you to gain profound understanding of the social psychological principles that underlie the processes of interpersonal influence
2. provide you with an awareness of the tactics used to influence behavior
3. prompt you to think about – and try out! – how these tactics can be applied to a real-world situation to bring about desired results
4. improve your written communication skills

A significant component of the grade (15%) will be formed by the project that includes a report and an in-class presentation as follows:
1. a 10-minute presentation (5% of the final grade) to be delivered in class on February 29th
2. a paper (minimum 5 pages) to be handed in at least 24 hours before the presentation (10% of the final grade)

More detailed requirements will be given to you in class. However, the basic idea is to:
✓ Identify a situation or problem that you are having where someone (usually another individual, but possibly a group) is not doing what you want them to do.
✓ Draw on a current situation in which you would like to be able to influence outcomes. Do not use a past situation or write retrospectively.
✓ Use one or more concepts from Cialdini’s book Influence to identify a way for you to exercise influence and change the situation.
Cialdini’s book is organized by chapter, with one concept per chapter (not including the introductory Chapter 1 or the concluding Chapter 8, so there are six to choose from).

Skim through all the chapters to find the ones that you can apply to your problem.

Then, use your chosen concepts to imagine something practical and immediate that you can do to exercise influence.

Next, either try it and report results, or role play your actions with a friend and discuss the results of the role play.

Finally, analyze the Cialdini’s concepts you used, drawing on thinking stimulated by the exercise you designed and carried out.

During the first two weeks of classes, try to identify the situation in which you would like to exercise influence. Choose a concept from Cialdini’s book, which could help you. On January 25th, you will be required to submit a proposal of maximum one page that indicates:

- Situation
  - What, Who, How (When, Where)
  - Estimated risk: how likely is it to work?
- Concept
  - Which influence tactic(s) will I try out?

Group project (report + presentation) on organizational leadership

The trajectories and fortunes of companies are often traceable to the actions (or inactions) of their leaders. Think of all the business founders who have built companies in their likeness, as direct reflections of their distinctive philosophies and aspirations. Think of the executives who have brought new life and direction to mature companies, or of those whose missteps have brought lofty companies to their knees. Consider the executives whose misdeeds have devastated companies... The project requires each team (of about 3 students) to research and present a real-life example of company leadership (e.g., company CEO or top management team) that made a substantial (positive or negative) impact on company strategy and performance, and/or on society more generally. Relevant concepts of the course must be applied in the analysis of the situation. Students should also critically evaluate whether, in their opinion, the choices and actions of the selected leader(s) were ethical and responsible.

The purpose of the team assignment is three-fold:

1. allow you to gain profound understanding of leadership concepts discussed in class by applying them in the analysis of a real-world situation
2. prompt you to consider the ethical dimensions of leadership; how do people at the top of firms affect their employees and society?
3. improve your oral communication and teamwork skills

The team project will comprise 15% of the final grade. The project consists of a 20-minute team presentation to be given on March 14th, (10%) AND a 3-page team written report (5%) to be handed in at least 24 hours prior to the presentation.

The written report on the case may focus on one or more of the following questions (but is not limited to these):

1. What is interesting about this case?
2. Is our example of leadership an example of ethical/responsible leadership? Why?
3. What did we learn working on this project?

On February 24th, students will be asked to submit a proposal to the professor that includes the names and e-mail addresses of team members, as well as the name of the company and the leader that this team will research.

Other assignments

Apart from your continuous preparation for class, you will be asked to deliver a couple of shorter (minimum two) individual assignments or presentations. These assignments will jointly correspond to 10% of the final grade. More details about these will be given during the course of the semester.
Midterm Exam
Students will be required to take a mid-term exam consisting of 20% of their final grade.

Final Exam
Students will be required to take a final exam consisting of 30% of their final grade.

Final Grade
In sum, the final grade is composed of the following components:

- **Participation:** 10%
  - Attendance and punctuality: 5%
  - Quality of participation: 5%
- **Assignments:** 40%
  - Individual project: 15%
  - Group project: 15%
  - Other assignments: 10%
- **Mid-term exam:** 20%
- **Final exam:** 30%
Course Schedule & Content

The tentative course outline is presented below. Note that the course outline might be altered upon student interest and/or professor’s discretion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SESSION</th>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
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| Jan 11 Wed | Introduction | Session 1: Course overview & getting to know each other  
Session 2: What is OB? The history of OB |
| Jan 13 Fri | Individuals in Organizations | Individual outcomes  
Session 1: Job performance  
Session 2: Organizational commitment |
| Jan 18 Wed | Individual mechanisms: Attitudes and stress | Session 1: Attitudes and job satisfaction  
Session 2: Stress and well-being |
| Jan 20 Fri | Individual mechanisms: Motivation | Session 1: Basic motivational concepts  
Session 2: From concepts to applications |
| Jan 25 Wed | **DUE: Individual proposals – Individual projects on influence**  
Individual mechanisms: Cognition, learning and decision-making | Session 1: Social perception and social cognition  
Session 2: Learning, Decision-making |
| Jan 27 Fri | Individual differences | Session 1: Personality and values  
Session 2: Ability |
| Feb 1 Wed | Groups in Organizations | Interpersonal, social and group processes: Introduction  
Session 1: Classic experiments in social psychology and OB  
Session 2: Basic group concepts |
| Feb 3 Fri | Interpersonal, social and group processes: Teams and teamwork | Session 1: Groups vs teams. Team dynamics and teamwork  
Session 2: New frontiers – diverse, self-managed and virtual teams |
| TBA | Midterm Exam | |
| Feb 22 Wed | Interpersonal, social and group processes: Networks and power | Session 1: Social networks  
Session 2: Power and politics |
| Feb 24 Fri | **DUE: Group proposals – Group project on organizational leadership**  
Interpersonal, social and group processes: Leadership | Session 1: What is leadership? Managing and leading  
Session 2: Theories of leadership |
| Feb 29 Wed | **DUE: Individual projects on influence**  
Interpersonal, social and group processes: Communication & conflict | Session 1: Communication in organizations. Conflict and negotiation  
Session 2: Individual Presentations on Influence |
| Mar 2 Fri | The Organization System | Organizational mechanisms: Organizational structure  
Session 1: Organizational structure  
Session 2: Work design |
| Mar 7 Wed | Organizational mechanisms: Organizational culture | Session 1: What is culture?  
Session 2: Institutionalization and socialization |
| Mar 9 Fri | Organizational mechanisms: Organizational change | Session 1: Forces to change. Resistance to change  
Session 2: Unaddressed issues |
| Mar 14 Wed | Wrap-up | **DUE: Group projects on organizational leadership**  
Session 1: Group presentations on organizational leadership  
Session 2: Course review and exam preparation |
| TBA | Final Exam | |