ORGANIZATION THEORY AND BEHAVIOR

Pols 6320 01

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Course Description: The theme of this class is that organizational failure takes work. Major organizational crises are preceded by numerous warning signs that something is amiss. For example, the Big Branch mine disaster was preceded by years of safety violations; the BP oil spill was preceded by warning signals that the equipment was under stress; the financial crisis was predicted by some to be inevitable and therefore these prescient individuals bet against the investments being made and reaped considerable profits. Equifax was alerted to a data breach by Homeland Security in March of 2017. Equifax disabled the compromised Web application on July 30th after 145.5 million people's records were hacked.

Since organizational disasters are predictable, and indeed such failures are produced because time and money are devoted to them, why do they continue to occur? By studying various models of organizational dynamics, it will be possible to understand why organizations sometimes fail and sometimes succeed. Moreover, the study of organizational theory can provide insights into how failures can be avoided or at least managed.

Three elements of organizations will be explored as we focus on the reasons for organizational success and failure: people, structures, and culture. Of course, while these elements are analytically distinct, they interact with each other in ways that make the study of organizations fascinating and frustrating at the same time. Since most of us will spend our working lives in organizations, we need to be aware of the various influences that shape our behavior and how we in turn can exercise agency to change the things within our organized lives that need changing.

Course Objectives: At the end of this seminar, the student will be able to:

1. Diagnose the reasons for both organizational success and failure.
2. Diagnose personal leadership, management and work traits.
3. Analyze and act upon the ethical implications of organizational life and decision making
4. Critique the major theoretical approaches to understanding organizations and name the dominant proponents of each approach.
5. Integrate and apply the various organizational theories to problems facing public sector and not for profit managers and policy makers.
6. Articulate specific management and motivational techniques and demonstrate how they would or would not be applicable in the public sector or not for profit sectors.

Texts:

O'Leary, Rosemary, The Ethics of Dissent – Managing Guerrilla Government, 3rd edition

Fry, Brian R. and Raadschelders, Jos C.N., Mastering Public Administration: from Max Weber to Dwight Waldo, 3rd edition, (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2013).

Fox, Charles J. and Miller, Hugh, T. Postmodern Public Administration; toward discourse, revised edition.

Assignments:

Three pedagogical principles guide this course. First, while the instructor has the responsibility for framing and organizing the course, its success depends upon the participation of all members of the class. Second, students learn and retain information if they are responsible for presenting material to colleagues. This requires that individuals wrestle with the ideas and concepts presented and translate these into language that is accessible and understandable to a broad audience. Finally, new knowledge should change the view one has of both the self and the world. The assignments reflect these pedagogical principles.

Since there are only three people in this course (I'm counting myself), I propose we run this more like a tutorial. Power point lecture material and reading assisgnments will be reviewed and completed before we meet. Our time together can then be devoted to discussion and in-depth analysis of the material. To guide the discussion, the power point slides provide a series of reflective questions that will help orient you to the material and will contruct the framework for each of our meetings. When we meet, we will focus on your answers to these questions and on questions you have formulated that have been raised by the readings and lecture material.

To further facilitate the discussion, you are required to keep a reflective journal – in this you should record your answers to the issues posed by the reflective pauses in the power point and pose any questions, comments or radom thoughts you have concerning the material that we can further discuss in class. This would also be the place where you take class notes, recording any insights or facts that develop during our discussion. The refelcetive journal will also help guide your final class assignment. I will review these at the end of the semester as part of grading your class participation.

At this point in the syllabus, I would ordinarily stress the importance of coming to class prepared. But since there are only two of you, I'm assuming that won't be necessary since the chances of not being called upon during class time are zero!

The final assignment will be a written ten to twelve page essay responding to the following three questions:

1. What have I learned about organizations that will influence how I function as subordinate, a colleague, a boss?
2. What have I learned about myself that will allow me to exercise agency no matter what my position is?
3. When my organization is not functioning in a way that I think it should, how will I attempt to bring about organizational change? In grappling with this question, be sure to deal with the issue of "Who died and left you in charge," i.e. how do you know your view of how an organization should function is the correct one?

This assignment will involve integrating the readings and discussion and any outside material you care to use into a cogent assessment of what you've learned as a result of this class.

Class Schedule

Date	Activity	Assignment
January 13	Course Orientation	Show up
January 20	MLK	
January 27	Tutorial meeting	Discussion and analysis of lectures 1 and 2 – "Organizations, Mental Health, and Ethics" and " Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Disneyland and Pope Francis!"
February 10	Tutorial meeting	Discussion and analysis of Ethics of Dissent
February 24	Tutorial meeting	Discussion and analysis of lecture 3 –

		"The Development of the Culture of Management" and the Introduction and first three chapters from Mastering Public Administration (Weber, Taylor, and Gulick)
March 9	Spring Break	
March 16	Tutorial meeting	Discussion and analysis of lectures 4 and 5 – "The Revolution Begins" and "From Machine to Team - Organizational Culture" and chapters 4, 5 and 6 in Mastering…
March 30	Tutorial Meeting	Discussion and analysis of lecture 6 – "Moving to Complexity and Chapters 7 to the end in Mastering…
April 13	Easter Break	
April 20	Tutorial meeting	Discussion and analysis of Fox and Miller, Postmodern Public Administration and lectures 7 and 8 – "Organizations as Systems of Conflict" and "The post modern organizational landscape"
May 4	Lessons Learned	Discussion and analysis of essays
May 7	Final Essays Due by 12:00 P.M.	

Grading Rubrics

Class participation = 55% of grade

Final essay = 45% of grade

Academic Honesty Policy

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination or quiz without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, sharing or receiving the questions from an on-line quiz with another student, taking an on-line quiz with the help of another student, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

All clear violations of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. In this course, academic dishonesty on an assignment will result in *an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment* and a report of academic dishonesty sent to the Academic Honesty Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the case of Class B violations, the Academic Honesty Committee may impose a larger sanction including, but not limited to, assigning a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

Students should refer to the following SLU website for more information about Class A and B violations and the procedures following a report of academic dishonesty: http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml

Student learning, disability statement:

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.