

MGT 680
Organizational Behavior & Theory
Class Syllabus

Instructor: Zvi Aronson
Phone: (201) 216-5032
Email: zaronson@stevens-tech.edu

Text

Greenberg, J.R. & Baron, R.A. (2000). *Behavior in Organizations*, Seventh Edition. Prentice Hall: New Jersey.

Additional material: Recommended journal articles

Course Objectives

Organization scientists generally think of organizations as being comprised of three levels of analysis -- the individual, the group or department, and the organization itself. This course focuses on the problems and challenges managers face in dealing with the individual and the small group in the organization.

Within the framework of the course we will try to accomplish the following:

- 1) Expose you to ideas and literature that will enrich your understanding of organizational behavior topics.
- 2) Consider ways in which these concepts apply to you and your organizations.
- 3) Develop your ability to analyze various aspects of behavior in organizational settings and to use this information to improve personal and group outcomes.
- (4) Provide a forum for exploring these ideas/issues with other students.

Course Requirements

Participation	15%
Midterm exam	30%
Final exam	30%
Group Project	25%

Group Project

Working in groups of 3-5 you will prepare a comparative analysis of your respective organizations (or sub-units if you are members of the same organization) in relation to a specific topic or concept. Your deliverable will consist of a written report, as well as supporting materials (e.g. questionnaires or interview protocols used, summaries of any quantitative analyses, etc.) In conducting your analysis and preparing your presentation you will want to cover the following.

1) Agree on a topic area to focus on. Examples include

- Motivation
- Personality and job performance
- Training / cross cultural training/ training expatriates
- Culture – organization vs group/ team culture
- Creativity and innovation – the impact of culture
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Leadership development and / or effectiveness
- Sources of power and influence strategies
- Pro-social behavior – the impact of organizational commitment
- Job satisfaction and / or other work-related attitudes
- Managerial decision-making
- Conflict management and resolution
- Diversity

2) Establish a project plan for getting your work done.

- An indication of who will be doing what
- General plans for coordinating meeting and communicating
- Any preliminary deadlines

3) Develop a framework and methodology for doing the analysis and making comparisons. This typically includes:

- Developing an operational definition of the construct(s) (e.g. specific behaviors you will look for, outcomes you will consider, relevant policies and practices, etc)
- Specifying the unit of analysis (e.g. individuals, teams/groups, projects)
- Developing a methodology for collecting data and information (e.g. surveys, interviews, review of archival data, other sources)

4) Collect data and information

- Identify similarities
- Identify distinctions

5) Analyze then discuss your results and prepare conclusions

- Use theories and principles to explain your findings. This includes considering ways in which your findings support or refute theories and principles
- Specify the factors that you think account for similarities and / or differences from one setting to the next (e.g. culture, nature of work, environmental factors, technology, individual differences)
- Consider what one organization might learn from the other
- Develop recommendations for change and improvement

6) Prepare and submit your paper

Participation

Given the interactive and experiential nature of this course, regular on-line participation is a critical course requirement. You will be required to participate in all group discussions, keep up with reading assignments and participate in assigned class activities. You will also be required to participate, both as an individual and as part of a discussion group / team, in activities designed to provide you and your classmates with additional theoretical knowledge on organizational behavioral topics. These activities will include, reading and critiquing journal articles, surveys and cases analyses.

Reading assignments. Weekly topics and their associated readings are listed in the schedule. The only week for which there is not a required reading is week 1. As a web-based course there is more flexibility than is typically the case with a traditional classroom course. However, we want to stress that it is important for you to keep up with reading assignments on a weekly basis. This will help you to participate in your discussion groups.

Weekly lecture slides will be posted to the course website, which you should also review. In addition, to elaborating on your reading assignments, these weekly lectures will typically include discussion assignments for you to complete with others (see the section on discussion groups below).

A weekly note will also be posted. In these notes, there will be an update on logistical issues (such as when assignments are due, or when the midterm will be posted). Typically an introductory paragraph or two on the topic for a given week will also be included. You will find these notes on the homepage for the course and it is important that you review them.

Discussion groups – Each of you will be assigned to a discussion group/team with whom you will work throughout the semester. Leadership responsibilities for your discussion group will be rotated amongst you on a more or less weekly basis. As an individual team member, your responsibilities include serving as a team leader (on a rotating basis) and also regularly posting your weekly responses to discussion questions or other assignments. You are expected to post your individual responses within four days from the time a weekly lecture is posted. For instance, if a lecture and associated assignment are posted on a Friday, you should complete and post your response by the following Tuesday. The reason for this time requirement is that in most cases your team will also need to submit a collaborative response, which we will expect to receive before the end of the week (the following Friday).

When serving as a team leader your responsibilities will include promoting participation from everyone and overseeing your team's effort for that week to ensure that a group response is completed and submitted to us. In some cases, you may find it helpful to divide up portions of an assignment amongst your team members and the leader is typically the one who coordinates such efforts.

Your weekly assignment will not be graded per say, but expect to receive feedback from us in response to your team's submissions each week. In addition, we will be checking in on your discussion team each week in order to gauge individuals' participation and to get a sense on how people are doing with course material.

Interactions with faculty - You should feel free to contact me anytime with questions or comments about course content or requirements. You may do so via email, phone and or in person if you are on or near campus at some time during the semester. In addition, your regular feedback on how the course is going for you is appreciated.

Have a good semester!