MST 522D Spring Syllabus

Influencing Change in Organizations
MS Management in Science and Technology Degree Program
Division of Management, School of Medicine
Oregon Health & Science University

Course Overview Information

Instructor

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Course Description

MST 522D will focus on the critical issues involved with organizational design, systems, and change. The course is based upon the premise that organizations develop structures that they believe will enable them to get their work done in a profitable and effective manner. Structures are developed and maintained through intentional efforts and as a function of other forces (politics, personalities, chance occurrences, market forces, etc.) In (re) building their organization, leaders from all levels of the organization need to consider its culture, competencies, and context. A leader's role is to both contribute to the development of an appropriate design as well as to support the emergence of new strategies.

Course Objectives

After completing the readings, assignments, working with the case study and participating in the discussions you will be able to:

- Understand organizations as living systems
- Assess how communication and learning in organizations are affected by their design
- Effectively prepare for, lead, and support change in organizations
- Increase your skills in effectively organizing people and systems to accomplish the organization's work

Course Dates

This course runs from Monday to Sunday for eight weeks from 04/19/2010-06/13/2010.

Required Textbooks

Required Readings


Course Structure

The course is taught using a hybrid format combining online and face-to-face work. We will meet in a face-to-face residency from 4:00 pm-9:00 pm on Friday, April 23rd and Friday, June 11th in the OHSU library, room 124. There will be no substantive online work during the residency weeks.

The syllabus is structured so you can easily navigate week by week through the course materials and assignments. You will be assigned to a team and each person will have two individual assignments due weeks 2 and 8 and two team projects due weeks 3 and 6.

Assignment titles in blue bold font have expanded information in the Detailed Assignment Information section at the bottom of this document] to the Weekly Discussion Forum.

During class on week 1, I will form small groups to focus discussion in the forums and to complete the team projects due in weeks 3 and 6.

Except for the two face-to-face residencies (first and last weeks of the course) all of the discussions will occur through the Sakai online platform (http://sakai.ohsu.edu). I would like all final assignments uploaded to me using the submissions tool in Sakai. They should be .doc, .docx, or .rtf files so that I can make comments using Track Changes. I would prefer no font smaller than 11 point.

Expectations for Participation

We will be using the OHSU Sakai platform (http://sakai.ohsu.edu) for the online part of the course. Communicating and learning in an on-line environment may be new for some participants; some of you may find it daunting at first. I encourage all participants to dive in to the best of their abilities; the learning is in the experience itself as well as the content to be found there. We will all benefit from the full participation of everyone in the class.
The forums will provide opportunities for all of us to surface our assumptions and unspoken beliefs, test our hypotheses, think through, and possibly “reframe” our understanding of what it means to be a manager. I expect each of us to listen well to others as a matter of respect and as an opportunity to practice that reframing. Without discounting my own expertise, I believe you have as much to learn from one another as you do from me.

The forums will include discussion of the current week’s readings, analysis, and reflection. It will be important for each of us to be fully prepared. We all live busy lives, but we will gain so much more from our time together if we have done our work beforehand. One of the goals for this course is to increase participant’s skills in reframing and learning from your experiences and your peers. Learning is a social and collaborative process; we are all in this class together.

Forums

Small Group Discussion Forums

After you have completed a reading assignment, I ask you to reflect on the issues from the assigned readings for the week. I will provide some guiding questions, but I would also like your reflection to touch on one or more of the following questions:

- What were the most important learnings for you?
- How might these learnings affect your current or future position? Give specific examples.
- Are there areas in your job that—using the understanding from these readings—you could drive or promote change?
- Where do you need clarification?
- What would you like to learn more about?

You will be assigned to a Small Discussion Group, which will have its own Forum. Weeks 2-7 you will be asked to post a one-page summary of your reflection to your small group discussion forum. The details and due dates for doing this are spelled out in the individual weekly assignments. The purpose of the group discussions is to explore the reading assignments more deeply with your fellow students. Most of your discussion will be within this small group, although these groups are visible to one another, in case you want to see what other groups are saying about a topic. Each group will report a summary of the weekly discussion to the class as a whole. These summaries will be posted to the Small Group Discussion Forum in a thread allocated for that purpose. The person who will do this will be designated the rapporteur, and this responsibility will rotate through the small group.

To earn full participation points, a good guideline is that besides your own summary, I expect you to post at least 1 substantive contribution to further an ongoing discussion thread on 3 out of 7 days each week (i.e. 3 substantive posts and active in the —classroom on at least 3 days). A posting that states “I agree” or something similar is not considered a substantive post.

One of the values of a virtual environment is that it often fosters a greater level of collaborative learning. Your online presence and participation is crucial to the success of the class and an important component of your own learning from this course. You will learn as much from your peers as you will from the other elements of this class. Students will be assessed for participating actively and openly, applying the course material in the forums, making valuable contributions to the forums, and interacting with other students. The latter is particularly important in order to create an enriching learning environment for all of us. In an online environment, the quality of the “conversation” is as important as the assignments you are turning in. This is dependent on the quality of your engagement with one another. As a result, participation in the Weekly Small Group Discussion Forum you are assigned to counts for 30% of your grade.
**Community Forum**

Look here for general information about the class. My Virtual office can be found here.

**Other Academic Information**

**Office Hours**

If you have a question or want to schedule a telephone conference with me, email me and we will find a mutually agreeable time. During the week, I will normally reply to your emails within 24 hours (*please be sure to put MST 522 in the subject line so that I can rescue them from my Junk Mail folder*), and to offer feedback on your written assignments within one week. I will not be online as regularly on the weekend, so if you have a question for me, please feel free to use my mobile phone number. Notice my —virtual office in the community forum. This is a great place to ask questions that are relevant to the whole class, reserving personal questions (e.g. about lateness, etc.) for email or phone.

**Grading**

Grades will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Change Assignment</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Organizational Design paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Change Plan paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applied Learnings paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
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Your written assignments will be graded based on how well you have done in addressing the assignment, applying the course material, and expressing yourself clearly and insightfully. It is possible on a case-by-case basis to negotiate an extension of a due date if circumstances are such that you need more time to complete an assignment. Please contact me in advance to arrange this. Assignments turned in late without this arrangement may receive a lower grade or be rejected.

**Expectations about Academic Integrity**

I expect you to be the sole author of the written assignments you hand in unless it is part of an explicit team project. In both individual and team projects, be careful to cite any material that you use from other people’s work that you might find on the Internet or from other sources such as organizational literature. Prior to the start of class, please review OGI’s academic integrity policy, which can be found at: http://www.ohsu.edu/ohsuedu/academic/som/graduate/upload/Student-handbook-2008-updated-9-08.pdf

**About the Instructor**

I have over 25 years of corporate experience, ten of which were as a manager within the GE Power Systems Information Systems Group. Most recently I am a partner in Cumulus Resources, LLC, a Portland-based consulting company that focuses on strategic planning and implementation.


I have an MBA, and an MA and Ph.D. in Human and Organizational Systems. These degrees were all earned as a working student, so I understand very well the pressures of trying to balance work, family, and studies. My dissertation and current research focus is on the impact of technological change on human systems.
Syllabus Information

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Understand the roots and purposes of structure and hierarchy as well as the relevant advantages and disadvantages
- Understand two different concepts of open systems design for organizational change
- Synthesize foundational concepts and strategies in terms of assessing and building effective organizations
- Understand many current challenges that face organizations dealing with change
- Understand the basics of organizational learning and communication
- Discern the connections between systems theories and organizational communication/learning theories to effectively and successfully lead organizational change
- Be able to assess the need for organizational change, plan for that change, and understand the challenges of implementing that change
- Understand the basics of organizational change strategies and be able to apply them to assess change initiatives at work

Week 1 (Residency 04/23/2010)

Assigned Readings:
Hanna, David P. Designing Organizations for High Performance. Chapters 1-3.

Assignments:
Be prepared to discuss these readings in class.

Week 2 (04/26/2010 - 05/02/2010)

Assigned Readings:
Hanna, David P. Designing Organizations for High Performance. Chapters 4-7.

Assignments:
By Wednesday – Participate in Small Group Discussion Forum to discuss the readings.
Due: Sunday – Submit your Organizational Change Assignment to me in the drop box on Sakai.

Week 3 (05/03/2010 - 05/09/2010)

Assigned Readings:
Assignments:
By Wednesday – Participate in Small Group Discussion Forum to discuss the readings.
Due: Sunday – Submit the first part of the Team Project: The Preliminary Organizational Design paper to my drop box on Sakai.

**Week 4 (05/10/2010 - 05/16/2010)**

Assigned Readings:

Assignments:
By Wednesday – Participate in Small Group Discussion Forum to discuss the readings.

**Week 5 (05/17/2010 - 05/23/2010)**

Assigned Readings:

Assignments:
By Wednesday – Participate in Small Group Discussion Forum to discuss the reading.

**Week 6 (05/24/2010 - 05/30/2010)**

Assigned Readings:
Kotter, John P and Dan S. Cohen. The Heart of Change. Introduction, Steps 5-8, Conclusion.

Assignments:
By Wednesday – Participate in Small Group Discussion Forum to discuss the reading.
Due: Sunday- Submit the second part of the Team Project: the Final Change Plan paper to my drop box in Sakai.

**Week 7 (05/31/2010 - 06/06/2010)**

Assigned Readings:

Assignments:
By Wednesday – Participate in Small Group Discussion Forum to discuss these two articles.
**Week 8 (Residency 06/11/2010)**

**Assigned Readings:**


**Assignments:**

Due: Friday – Bring your individual **Applied Learnings paper** to class.

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**Detailed Assignment Information**

**Organizational Change Assignment (due Sunday of Week 2)**

Identify one organizational change that you would like to see implemented at your organization. In 1-2 pages, describe this change by addressing the following questions:

- How does this change correspond to your learning goals for this course?
- What are the context (including resources and challenges) and the motivation for this change?
- What is the purpose for the change?
- Why do you think the chosen change will provide the outcome you seek?
- How will this change make your organization’s design more effective?
- What are your initial ideas/plans for achieving this change?

**Preliminary Organizational Design Team Paper (due Sunday of Week 3)**

Based upon the organizational change case that I will supply, and the course materials to date, prepare a document, no more than 12 pages, double-spaced, and written in the first person, that develops and describes a basic framework that can be used to evaluate an organization’s design and effectiveness. Then, use this framework to evaluate the case. I am not interested in a laundry list of all the theories or ideas from the course; I am looking for your synthesis, analysis, and integration with your own thinking.

The purpose of this paper is to document the starting point in your thinking and understanding of organizational design and to situate you in the dynamics of the case organization’s effectiveness. The result should be a more thorough framework through which to understand, navigate, and shape this hypothetical organization’s design and effectiveness. You will build on this beginning in the second part of the team project. The list below should help you **think** about this paper, and it might be useful to go through them as a team (however, do not feel that you need to include these questions in the actual writing of the paper). Submit this paper to my drop box in Sakai.

- Include material on organizational communication, learning, and change as well as anything else you have learned since then.
- What changes in the larger system would also need to occur at a lower level for the changes to be effective?
- If you had a magic wand, how would you redesign this organization? Which aspects of your "vision" are possible and which are not? Why?
- What would you hope to accomplish by making these changes and how would the actions you have chosen lead to the desired results?
- What coaching and implementation strategies would be important for the people involved?
- Choose one specific area of interest to your team about these changes and write a section of the paper in greater depth.
Final Change Plan Team Paper (due Sunday of Week 6)

Using materials from this course and the work you did in your first team assignment, design a final change plan, including a detailed plan for the intervention for this organizational change case. The paper should be no more than 20 pages, double-spaced, and written in the first person (charts, graphs and illustrations need not count towards the 20 pages and I encourage their inclusion). **It should integrate the work you did on the first paper.** Several articles, as well as some models we worked with earlier in the course, will provide you with some insights about what to include in your plan.

Change initiatives often fail because leaders do not take a systemic approach. One of the ways I frame change efforts with my clients is in terms of People, Process and Performance. “People” includes needs such as employee development, culture, roles and responsibilities, and transition support. “Process” includes production and service delivery, alignment of systems and structures, and methodologies for implementation of changes. “Performance” includes needs such as reward systems, outcome measures, reviews, appraisals, and links between actions and results. I use a matrix to guide the process that includes each category and matches it with the action (and by whom) to be taken to address this need.

I think of each of these categories in terms of the present state and the desired future state. It will also be very important for your team to check its assumptions along the way—What are you trying to accomplish with your intervention strategy? Why do you think your plan will achieve those results? What are the potential downsides of taking these actions, or not taking these actions?

Once your team has developed its final draft of the intervention plan, Submit this paper to my drop box in Sakai.

Applied Learnings Paper (due Friday of Week 8)

For this final 1-2 page individual paper, please apply your learnings from the class to the organizational change issue you identified during week 1.

- How would you approach this issue now and why would you do it that way.
- Have your ideas changed based upon specific learnings, and if so in what ways?
- If you had to identify your most significant insight about change that you might not have thought about prior to this class, what would it be?

*It is the policy of OHSU that no otherwise qualified student with a disability shall be denied access to or participation in any program offered by the institution. If you have a disability or think you may have a disability (including but not limited to physical, hearing, vision, psychological and learning disabilities), which may need a reasonable accommodation, the Director for the Office for Student Access at 503-494-0082.*