

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Voyage: Spring 2014

Discipline: Commerce

SEMS 3500-101: Organizational Behavior

Division: Upper

Faculty Name: Paul Harvey

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides a comprehensive overview of the theoretical bases and practical implications of the organizational behavior field. We will investigate the human factors involved in organizations from three different perspectives: the individual level, the work team/group level, and the organizational level. Individual factors and motivational theories will be emphasized in this class. We will consider how theory and practice at each of these levels applies differently in the various cultures we will be visiting.

The course utilizes four primary components. First, the class uses a textbook which summarizes fundamental information and knowledge. Second, a novel is used to provide a humorous and insightful context to help you understand the real-life applicability of the course. Third, a self-analysis is used to help you understand how the class topics apply specifically to yourself and how they are relevant to your career development. Finally, classroom discussion and exercises are used to tie it all together and to create a forum in which questions and new ideas can be addressed.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, conscientious students will have achieved the following objectives:

- Development of a basic understanding of organizational behavior
- Ability to articulate the implications of course material for individuals, groups, and organizations
- An awareness of how cultural norms can influence employees' perceptions, behaviors and expectations in the workplace
- Ability to analyze, discuss, and make recommendations about contemporary organizational issues
- Ability to use course information to make informed decisions about their own careers

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

AUTHOR: Tayla Bauer and Berrin Erdogan

TITLE: Organizational Behavior

PUBLISHER: Flatworld Publishing

ISBN #: 978-1-4533-2687-9

DATE/EDITION: Edition 1.1

AUTHOR: Max Barry
TITLE: Company
PUBLISHER: Doubleday
ISBN #: 1-4000-7937-3
DATE/EDITION: 2008

AUTHOR: Michael Beer and Elizabeth Collins
TITLE: Engstrom Auto Mirror Plant: Motivating in Good Times and Bad
PUBLISHER: Harvard Business School
ISBN #: NA
DATE/EDITION: 2008 (available through UVA bookstore or online -
hbsp.harvard.edu/product/cases)

COURSE OUTLINE

A1- January 12: Introduction

- **What is organizational behavior?**
- **How do we change workplace behavior?**
- **What are some problems facing contemporary managers and organizations? How can organizational behavior knowledge help to address these?**

PART I – THE INDIVIDUAL

A2- January 14: Individual Differences and Workplace Behavior

Reading: Textbook chapter 3, Company pp. 1-21

Key questions:

- **What is reinforcing the strange workplace behaviors depicted in the *Company* book?**
- **What is fit and why is it important?**
- **What individual difference factors help determine fit?**
- **What are the personalities of the *Company* characters? How do these personalities help explain their behaviors?**

A3- January 16: Perceptual Biases and Workplace Attitudes

Reading: Textbook chapter 4, Company pp. 21-56

Key questions:

- **What is perception and why is it important?**
- **What causes perceptual inaccuracy and how can this impact a manager's job performance?**
- **How can perceptual biases be reduced?**
- **How do attitudes relate to workplace behavior?**
- **How do cultural differences impact both attitudes and general perceptions?**
- **What job characteristics typically contribute to high levels of job satisfaction?**
- **How can predictors of job satisfaction differ across cultures?**

January 17: Hilo

A4- January 19: Motivation in Theory

Reading: Textbook chapter 5, *Company* pp. 57-101

Key questions:

- Based on McClelland's and Maslow's needs-based perspectives of motivation, why are the *Company* employees not motivated to perform at a high level?
- How do existence, relatedness and growth needs influence motivation levels?
- How can money and other extrinsic rewards ever be demotivating?
- What is equity theory and how can it be used to explain Freddy's (a character in the *Company* book) decision to claim stupidity as a disability?
- What is expectancy theory and how can it be used to explain Holly's (a character in the *Company* book) motivation in the gym vs. at work?
- Many motivational theories have been criticized for reflecting a North American cultural bias, what evidence of that do you see in the theories we have discussed today? How might they apply differently in Japan or other more collective cultures?

A5- January 22: Motivation in Practice

Reading: Textbook chapter 6, *Company* pp. 101-124, Engstrom Auto Mirror Plant

Key questions:

- What makes goals effective motivators?
- What are the characteristics of effective goals?
- What are variable pay programs? What is the difference between piece-rate, merit-based, and profit-sharing plans? According to expectancy theory, how can each increase motivation?
- Under what circumstances can piece-rate plans be demotivational?
- Why are employee recognition programs more effective in some cultures than others?

A6- January 25: Exam 1

PART II – THE GROUP

A7- January 27: Foundations of Group Behavior

Reading: Textbook chapter 9, *Company* pp. 125-164

Key questions:

- How do group dynamics differ between collective countries (e.g., China, Japan) and individualistic countries (e.g., the U.S.)?
- How do groups form? Why is this information important for managing groups?
- What are the potential benefits of group-based organizational structures?
- What are the potential downsides of group work?

January 29-February 3: Yokohama, Transit, Kobe

A8- February 4: Managing Groups and Teams

Key questions:

- What is the difference between a team and a group?
- How can effective team structures avoid the problems of groups?
- How can we take individualistic Americans and turn them into team players (and should we?)

February 6-11: Shanghai, Transit, Hong Kong

A9- February 12: Managing Groups and Teams

Reading: Textbook chapter 12, Company pp. 164-182

Key questions:

- Which personality traits are associated with effective leadership?
- Which leadership styles are best suited to which situations?

Video: 12 Angry Men (part 1)

Discussion: Deindividuation in groups: The Khmer Rouge

February 14-19: Ho Chi Minh City

Independent field assignment #1

A10- February 20: Leadership, Power and Politics

Video: 12 Angry Men (part 2), followed by discussion

February 22-23: Singapore

A11- February 24: Leadership, Power and Politics

Reading: Textbook chapter 13, Company pp. 183-218

Key questions:

- What is power and where does it come from?
- Why do people engage in political behavior at work?
- What are some examples of political behaviors that are generally acceptable in most Asian cultures that are frowned upon in the US, and vice-versa?
- What types of power tactics did we see in 12 Angry Men?
- In *Company*, how did the training sales employees use political behavior to gain power?

February 27-March 4: Rangoon

A12- March 5: Emotions in Teams and Groups

Reading: Textbook chapter 7 (pp. 149-156), collection of articles handed out in class

Key questions:

- In *Company*, how did Blake avoid chaos by managing employees' emotions?
- Why are emotions a necessary component of rational decision-making?
- How can emotions affect a manager's ability to evaluate employees?
- How can emotions influence ethical behavior?

A13- March 7: Exam 2

March 9-14: Cochin

PART 3 – THE ORGANIZATION

A14- March 15: Organizational Change and Stress

Reading: Textbook chapter 7 (pp. 135-149), chapter 14, *Company* pp. 219-258

Key questions:

- Why is change management important for organizational success?
- What large-scale changes have we seen in the cultures we've visited and how have their governmental and commercial organizations adapted to them?
- Why are employees often resistant to change?
- How can managers help employees overcome this resistance?

A15- March 18: Organizational Change and Stress

Key questions:

- What is stress? When is it good and when is it bad?
- What causes stress?
- How does stress affect performance levels?
- What can be done to manage stress levels?

A16- March 20: Organizational Culture

Reading: Textbook chapter 15, *Company* pp. 259-295

Video: Organizational influences in the Springfield Nuclear Power plant

Key questions:

- What is organizational culture? How does it relate/differ from national culture?
- How has the culture of organizations you have visited in various parts (e.g., restaurants, stores) differed between countries?
- From the video: What are some aspects of the power plant's culture that allow undesirable employees to be a better fit than productive employees?
- What has the plant's leadership done to perpetuate this culture?
- Why does the culture cause some employees to "snap" while others cope more effectively?

March 21: Port Louis

A17- March 23: Organizational Culture

Key questions:

- What are the three levels of organizational culture?
- How can person-culture fit be evaluated?
- In *Company*, how do Zephyr's subcultures differ from its dominant culture?
- How does culture influence individual behavior? How does the strength of this influence differ across cultures?
- When can a strong culture be counterproductive?

A18- March 26: Human Resource Management Practices

Reading: Company pp. 295-end

Key questions:

- What are the primary goals of the employee selection process?
- What are the three stages of the selection process and what can go wrong during each?
- What are the pros and cons of the most common selection techniques?
- What type of training is best in which situation?
- What basic steps are involved in most training processes?
 - Training exercise (part 1): Students are asked to identify a somewhat unique ability they have that they can teach to another student (e.g., juggling, card trick, speak several words in another language) and to outline the steps involved in training this ability. They will be asked to carry out the training in the next class. Any needed props can be purchased in Cape Town.

March 28-April 2: Cape Town

A19- April 3: Human Resource Management Practices

Key questions

- Why do we evaluate performance?
- What can be done to decrease bias in the evaluation process?
- How do evaluation processes differ across cultures?
 - Training exercise (part 2)

A20- April 5: Cultural Differences in Organizational Behavior

Reading: Cultural Constraints in Management Theories

Key questions:

- How does the concept of management differ across cultures according to today's reading and based on your observations on this voyage?
- What are some things you've read in the textbook that might not be universally true outside of North America?
- What does Hofstede offer as evidence that there are benefits to non-American management styles in Asia and Africa?

A21- April 8: Review and Preparation for Team Presentations

April 11-14: Tema

A22- April 15: Team Presentations

A23- April 17: Team Presentations

A24- April 20: Team Presentations

April 23-27: Casablanca

A25- April 28: A Day Finals

FIELD WORK

FIELD LAB – February 3

In this field lab we will visit a brewery to observe the traditional methods of manufacturing Sake. This visit occurs at the point in the course where we will begin discussing group dynamics and the collaborative sake manufacturing process provides a useful illustration of this aspect of the course. It also provides an opportunity to observe differences in group dynamics found in relatively collective cultures like Japan as opposed to those often observed in more individualistic cultures like the US.

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

Primary Field Assignment. In the classes leading up to the field lab, students will be split into groups and each group will be assigned one key course topic (e.g., conflict resolution, motivation, leadership). They will be asked to prepare approximately 5-7 questions relevant to these topics, to be approved by me before the lab. Their goal will be to learn the answers to these questions by the end of the field lab experience (through interviews, observation, etc.)

In addition to discussing the lab experience collectively in follow-up classes, each team will prepare a presentation for the rest of the class in which they will introduce the course-related questions they went into the lab with and their answers to these questions. Evaluation will be based on the completeness of the information they present and their ability to relate their observations to course material.

In addition to the presentation, a short (2-3 page) written summary of their findings will be required. Although the content and clarity of this written portion will factor into the students' field lab grade, it also serves a dual purpose of causing students to create a written log of their experience that they can refer to in later years to help remember the experience and the information they learned.

Independent Field Assignments. Students will be required to complete two interactive field assignments on their own during their stops in ports:

- **Assignment 1** – Hong Kong and Ho Chi Minh City: Vietnamese commerce has undergone numerous changes as the country has transitioned from a centrally-planned economy to a more market-based economy. Although less drastically, Hong Kong has adjusted to Chinese control during this time and has seen some attempts to introduce communist philosophy into the culture (e.g., recently mandated classes for school children).
 - Identify an English-speaking local working in Ho Chi Minh City and ask how

their particular working experience has changed since reforms began in the mid-1980s. Given that the English speakers you meet might be too young to have been working during that time, it is also acceptable to ask how their parents' or others' work experiences have changed.

- Do the same in Hong Kong, trying to get a feel for how the workplace has changed since China resumed control in 1997, being careful not to frame your questions in ways that may be interpreted as critical of Chinese policies.
- Prepare a written summary of two or three significant workplace changes you learned about in each country. Due in class on Feb 24.
- **Assignment 2** – Cape Town: Employment practices in South Africa shifted dramatically after the end of the apartheid-era, although it is generally acknowledged that racial factors still influence employment decisions in many workplaces. This is a sensitive subject and this assignment is **not** meant to encourage you to brazenly ask strangers about it. While touring Cape Town, however, make your own observations about managerial interactions with employees and patterns in staffing. Do you notice evidence of post-apartheid bias? If so, what did you see? If not, identify one of the organizations you observed and note signs of post-apartheid equality in staffing (e.g., black managers, collaboration between whites and blacks).

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

Exams: 40%

Group Field Lab Presentation: 20%

Fit Assessment: 10%

Company (book) analysis: 10%

Independent Field Assignments: 5%

In-Class Exercises: 5%

Exams - Three exams will be given during the semester. The exams will include material from assigned readings and class discussions and will consist primarily of short-answer and essay questions.

Group Field Lab Presentation: (see above)

Fit Assessment – Each student is required to complete a fit assessment project. The goal of the project is to for students to analyze themselves using measurement scales administered in class throughout the semester and determine which types of careers might fit them best. Grades will be based on the rigor of analysis as well as the quality of the written report. Although the assignment is due near the end of the semester, students will be asked to complete and turn in the self-assessment portions of the assignment as they occur throughout the semester.

“Company” Analysis – A written analysis of the fictional organization portrayed in the “Company” novel is required. Students will be asked to relate various topics from the course to the situations depicted in the novel. Specific details will be provided in class.

Independent Field Assignments: See above

In-Class Exercises – A goal of this class is to help students learn about themselves and what motivates them. As such, active participation in the learning process is essential. Participation in in-class exercises is an important part of this active learning process. There will be a written in-class exercise in most of our classes and, due to their somewhat dynamic nature, there is usually no practical way to make these up if a class is missed.

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

AUTHOR: Geert Hofstede

ARTICLE/CHAPTER TITLE: Cultural Constraints in Management Theories

JOURNAL/BOOK TITLE: Academy of Management Executive (academic journal)

VOLUME: 7

DATE: 1993

PAGES: 81- 94

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."