

MB 021.02 – Introduction to Organizational Behavior
Semester/Year

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1. Overview

Organizations are a fact of every day life. From classrooms to corporations, charitable societies to country clubs, and car pools to choirs, we are constantly immersed in both formal and informal organizations. This course is designed to help make sense of your own and others' actions in these settings by introducing the fundamental concepts of organizational behavior. Through readings from your text, lectures, experiential exercises, group projects, and both real world and silver screen examples, by the end of the course you will be conversant with a range of OB topics, including cognition, emotion, motivation, diversity, conflict resolution, leadership, group dynamics, socialization, culture, communication, structure, and organizational change. In the process you will have the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the world of business, each other, and even themselves. And, hopefully, even have some fun in the process.

2. Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify the basic concepts, theories, and terms associated with organizational behavior.
- Link these concepts to the three levels of organizational analysis: individuals, teams and groups, and within and between organizations.
- Demonstrate how these concepts are manifest in the everyday activities of various real world organizations and appraise how they impact the effectiveness and performance of those organizations.
- Continue to develop analytical and critical thinking skills helpful in accurately observing and interpreting activities, diagnosing and resolving problems, and contributing to your own and others' development within organizational settings.
- Reflectively apply these concepts to your own activities to improve your personal effectiveness when working in teams and organization.

3. Course Structure

The course is structured according to three common lenses, or levels, of organizational behavior: The individual, groups & teams, and the organization as a whole. We start with the individual and work up through group and team concepts, and finish with issues which impact the organization as a whole. In reality, however, activities and concepts from each level impact the other levels constantly and this separation is artificially imposed to help organization the course.

4. Course Materials

Required Texts:

Organizational Behavior: Foundations, Realities, & Challenges. 5th Edition. 2006. Nelson, D. & Quick, J. Thomson: Southwest. ISBN 0-324-31647-X.

Difficult Conversations. 2000. Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S. New York: Penguin. ISBN: 0-14-028852-X.

Getting to Yes. 2nd Edition. 1991. Fisher, R. & Ury, W. New York: Penguin. ISBN: 0-14-015735-2.

Other Materials:

WebCT site: All students registered for this class have access to the WebCT site for this class. This syllabus and any additional materials will be posted to the web site. Additionally, news or changes to the schedule will be posted on the WebCT site.

5. Academic Integrity

Students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity in all aspects of the course. Failure to comply with standards of academic integrity will be treated with appropriate diligence and will have serious consequences in your academic performance in this class and potentially your academic career at Boston College. Please familiarize yourself with the academic integrity policies of the University and if uncertain, please bring any questions or concerns to me **before** handing in an assignment or participating in other activities (such as in-class exams and activities). Two general rules of thumb: When in doubt about using material, make sure you cite it. When in doubt about collaborating, sharing, etc., don't do it without checking with me.

6. Grading

Grading of the course deliberately includes many different deliverables and incorporates both individual and group activities. It is designed to not depend too heavily on any one activity or assessment technique. The breakdown is:

- 20% **Class Participation** (you may move 5% to any other *individual* category)
- 15% **Individual Papers (2) & Reflection Papers (3)**
- 15% **Individual Project**
- 20% **Group Work (Presentation)**
- 15% **Midterm**
- 15% **Final Exam**

6.1 Class Participation

Participation is an important part of your activity in class. The ability to interact with your colleagues effectively, to contribute to a group discussion, and to advocate an informed position is, perhaps, the most relevant *skill set* you can develop in preparing for the transition into a professional career. Your participation grade is based on your preparedness for class (including

preparing specific deliverables), a firm grasp of material covered, a willingness to seek clarification as appropriate, and the ability to integrate concepts and multiple perspectives. Recognizing the potential for attribution errors (a concept we will discuss in the second week) I will grade your participation every class according to the following criteria:

Active Participation: (4 points)

- Participates regularly and voluntarily in class discussions (First third)
- Content of participation is useful and relevant to topics at hand (Second third)
- Demonstrates ability to apply and analyze course material (Final third)

Passive Participation: (2 points)

- Comes to class, but does not actively participate in class-wide discussions.

No Participation: (0 points)

- Absent from class
- Not completing un-graded assignments assigned for class

The quality of participation required for the Active Participation category will gradually increase over the course of the semester, as indicated above. This is purposely designed to help you find your voice both in class, and in other organizational settings. Though these are the typical grades, other participation grades are possible in specific circumstances, but are rare.

One optional extra credit participation assignment will be available each week. This assignment is available to upgrade one passive participation grade to active participation. Unexcused absences (those without documentation from an appropriate University department) cannot be “upgraded” with optional extra credit participation assignments.

Every week, I will rate overall participation by adding the three daily scores, with a max of ten. In the case of excused absences, the grade for that week will be prorated accordingly. In addition, I will drop one absence (or one passive participation grade in the event of perfect attendance) for each of the three sections of class (individual, group, and organizational). You will receive feedback on your participation grade based in response to your participation reflection papers.

6.2 Individual Papers

There are two individual papers. First, based on your group, I will assign you to take the concepts from a section of class (individual or organizational) and find examples of them in other situations (movies, books, or other activities) and write a paper about them. These are deliberately complex, multifaceted papers that draw on and integrate several concepts from our class. These are evaluated on three criteria: a) your ability to bring in the topics, providing an appropriate definition and a complete and accurate representation of the concept as it applies to the specific situation, b) your analysis of the situation in light of the information and your ability to integrate the concepts from the class into a synthesized, holistic view of the interaction of multiple factors, and c) your ability to leverage that integrated view to make educated propositions about different approaches to resolve whatever issues present themselves.

Second, you will write a paper reflecting on your group experience. The paper is described under the group project but counts towards this portion of the grade.

In addition, twice during the year I ask you to reflect on your participation in class with some specific questions, and once I ask for another reflection paper. They will be assessed based on the thoughtfulness of your reflection, the self-awareness they demonstrate, and by how well they integrate appropriate concepts from class.

Each of the two individual papers is worth 5%, and the three reflection papers combined are worth 5% of the course grade, for a total of 15%.

6.3 Individual Project

Recognizing that different students have different strengths, the format of this project is up to you. You may choose a traditional report or you may choose to produce a video report, write a play, create your own cartoon strip, or whatever else you come up with. Past students have created scrap books and even a board game. I encourage you to select a format for your project that takes advantage of your particular strengths. You will pick three topics from the group section of the class and create a project which conveys your understanding of the individual concepts and your ability to evaluate, apply, and synthesize them in an organizational setting. Because of the unique nature of each project, a proposal is due approximately two weeks into the group topics section of the class, which explains the project and how it conveys the learning objectives identified here and above. You are welcome to use a movie for the organizational context, but the movie choice must be cleared with me.

6.4 Group Work (Presentation)

A critical part of organizational behavior is the ability to work in groups. Your group will look at an organization that at least one of your members is involved in or familiar with from the perspectives of at least three topics covered in class, one of which is an analysis of the ethical considerations facing the organization as a whole, its members, or both. The other two topics will come from materials in class at one level of analysis. The course is structured according to the three levels of analysis, and group presentations will be the capstone of each section. Therefore, keep in mind that the selection of your topic controls when your group will present. Ideally, we will have two groups interested in topics for each level of analysis, but I may adjust the schedule if required.

In addition to the presentation, every member of the group must hand in an individual paper reflecting on their group process. Since we will have covered different topics at the time, your reflections should focus on topics from the appropriate level of analysis. For example, the first groups should focus on individual aspects of organizational behavior within the group such as motivation or perception and attribution, while the second set of groups should focus on group concepts like leadership and conflict, and the last set of groups should focus on organizational concepts like structure or social networks. This report is the other individual paper required for this course.

I will create six teams and attempt to introduce diversity into the teams while accommodating your requests you have to work together as much as possible.

6.5 In Class Examinations

The midterm and final exam will both be in-class, closed book examinations and comprise both a section of multiple choice/short answer questions and open-ended essay questions. The final will be administered during the allocated time for this class, **Thursday, May 11th at 9:00am**. Both exams will be cumulative to that point in the class and worth 15% of your final grade.

7. Absences, Emergencies, and Late Assignments

I understand that situations may arise which require you to prioritize your attendance and work for this course against competing demands. It is your responsibility to resolve these to the best of your ability, carefully weighing your options and the consequences of your actions, and choosing the path with the consequences you are most ready to accept. While I will generally be recording who is present in each class, absences (in excess of the three potentially “dropped” above) will only affect your grade through your participation grade. However, class sessions and activities often cover material not in the readings and all of it is fair game for the midterm and final. I am always available to help you work through such decisions or to clarify the impact any action you are considering may have for this class. If you miss a class for any reason, it is your responsibility to make sure you get appropriate notes, handouts, etc. from your classmates.

If you have special circumstances, please inform your Dean who will help you in making sure your professors are aware of the situation and taking appropriate action. I strongly encourage you to follow this procedure, and, as such, I will require appropriate documentation from your Dean for any such circumstance. Other excused absences, such as away games or medical emergencies, also require documentation from the appropriate department.

In addition to absences, sometimes resolving conflicting priorities may require completing an assignment late. Unless otherwise specified with a date and time, all assignments are due **before the beginning of class** and should be submitted electronically through WebCT (always check the **DATE & TIME** of the assignment on WebCT). WebCT’s timestamp is the final authority of whether an assignment is late or not. In general, late assignments will be penalized 5 points if they are received anytime later in the day they are due (until midnight), and five more points for any day or part thereof after that. Since I understand that you are balancing multiple priorities, if you give me at least 24 hours notice **before** it would be due, I will allow up to one calendar week grace period for any individual assignment with only a 1 point penalty per day. This may only be used **once** for each student, and cannot be used on a group presentation.

8. Classroom norms

I expect you to make your best effort to be on time for class. Coming in late is very disruptive to the entire class. If you are unavoidably late, please wait until **after class** to ask your classmates to fill you in on what is going on, because that distracts those who were on time from the current class activity. Please keep your cell phones and any other electronic devices set to silent mode or, even better, turned off if at all possible. If there is a situation which requires you to have a cell phone or other device active and you have an urgent need to respond to it, please plan ahead: sit near the back of the room, quietly leave the room to answer it, and make sure I am aware of the situation ahead of time. (See the section above about emergencies.) Finally, we are going to talk about a lot of issues in this class and there will be times when some of us will disagree with each other. It is imperative that even when we disagree, we do so respectfully. I simply will not tolerate anyone in the class treating anyone else disrespectfully in any way.

9. Course Schedule

** Note: This schedule may be changed as needed, for example to accommodate guest speakers, group presentations, or future analysis of particularly relevant topics. Changes will be announced in class and posted to the WebCT site.

(NQ refers to the Nelson & Quick textbook, DC refers to Difficult Conversations.)

Introduction to Organizational Behavior

DATE	TOPIC	Readings	Deliverables
18-Jan	Introduction & Course Overview		
20-Jan	Organizational Behavior: What is it and why study it?	Review the syllabus and skim the chapter summaries in the textbook. Come to class ready to make recommendations for any changes you would like.	1. Introductory memo. (See handout for detailed questions.) 2. Complete Meyers-Briggs Survey linked from WebCT site by Thursday 5pm. If you have troubles with WebCT, contact me!
23-Jan	Perception & Attribution	DC: Chapters 1, 2, 3, & 4.	.
25-Jan	Personality & Individual Differences	NQ: Chapter 3	Any requests for group assignment must be submitted on WebCT before class today
27-Jan	MBTI & Personality Characteristics	Gladwell: <i>Personality Plus</i>	
30-Jan	MBTI	None	
1-Feb	Attitudes & Values	NQ: Chapter 4	
3-Feb	Emotions at Work	<i>Emotions in the Workplace</i> DC: Chapters 5, 6	Group 1&2 project outline due
6-Feb	Motivation I	NQ: Chapter 5	
8-Feb	Motivation II	NQ: Chapter 6 WebCT: On the folly of rewarding A while hoping for B.	
10-Feb	Stress at Work	NQ Chapter 7 DC: Chapter 7	
13-Feb	Ethics	WebCT: <i>Business Ethics: Oxymoron or Good Business</i> WebCT: Accounting Mental Models	One to two page reflection paper on an ethical dilemma from your personal experience
15-Feb	Cognition and Sensemaking	WebCT Readings DC: Chapter 8, 9	
17-Feb	Groups 1 & 2 Presentations		Individual papers from members of Groups 4, 5, & 6 on individual topics
20-Feb	Individual concepts wrap-up and integration.	Read the Google case on NQ p 245	Come prepared to discuss the case in teams.
22-Feb	Midterm		
24-Feb	Communication	NQ: Chapter 8 DC: Chapter 10	Reflection paper on your participation in class so far and how it affects the in-class group experience.

27-Feb	Discuss Midterms & Projects		
1-Mar	Introduction to Groups & Teams	NQ: Chapter 9	
3-Mar	Decision Making	NQ Chapter 10 DC: Chapter 11	Groups 1 & 2 papers due.
6-Mar	Spring Break – NO CLASS		Project Proposals Due (ALL)
8-Mar	Spring Break – NO CLASS		
10-Mar	Spring Break – NO CLASS		
13-Mar	Power & Politics	NQ: Chapter 11	
15-Mar	Leadership (Concepts)	NQ: Chapter 12	
17-Mar	Emotional Intelligence	Goleman: What Makes a Leader DC: Chapter 12	Group 3&4 Project Outlines Due
20-Mar	Diversity	NQ Chapter 2	
22-Mar	Conflict	NQ: Chapter 13	
24-Mar	Conflict & Negotion	<i>Getting To Yes</i>	
27-Mar	Negotiations	<i>Getting To Yes</i>	
29-Mar	Negotiations	<i>Getting To Yes</i>	
31-Mar	Groups 3 & 4 Presentations		
3-Apr	Group/Team Wrap-Up & Integration	Read case on NQ p456. Come to class prepared to discuss the case in teams.	Reflection paper on your participation so far, has changed since your last reflection? if so, how, why, and what has been the result.
5-Apr	Organizational Structure	NQ: Chapter 15	
7-Apr	Institutions	WebCT Readings	
10-Apr	Organizational Culture I	NQ: Chapter 16	
12-Apr	Organizational Culture II		Group 5&6 Project Outlines Due
14-Apr	NO CLASS – Easter Break		
17-Apr	NO CLASS –Easter Break		
19-Apr	Organizational Change I	NQ: Chapter 18	Individual papers about Group process from Groups 3 & 4
21-Apr	Organizational Change II:	Articles TBD	Individual Projects on Group Topics due from everyone .
24-Apr	Social Networks		
26-Apr	Work/Family Balance & Career Management	NQ Chapter 17 <i>The Case of the Part Time Partner</i>	Come to class prepared to discuss the Ethical Dilemma on page 239.
28-Apr	Groups 5 & 6 Presentations		Groups 1, 2, & 3 individual papers on Organizational Topics due
1-May	Organizational Concepts Wrap-Up and Integration	NQ: Chapter 1. Read case on NQ p634. Come to class prepared to discuss the case in teams.	
3-May	Review for Final		Individual papers about group process from Groups 5 & 6 due by 12-May