



## **MB709.02: MANAGING PEOPLE & ORGANIZATIONS**

Prof. Rich DeJordy

Fulton 415, Thursdays, 7:00 – 9:30

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### **1. Overview:**

This course is designed to help you in the art (or is it a science?) of managing people and organizations, or more specifically, managing people **in** organizations. Managing people in organizations is not (only) about assigning tasks to people you supervise and doing their reviews; rather it is the whole process of building productive systems of collaboration, development, and communication to move the organization (and yourself) forward. We do much of this without thinking based on what we've learned about interacting with others in our families, schools, neighborhoods, etc. But organizational life offers a unique context for such interactions and, while all those lessons we've learned are (potentially) useful, this course helps to provide a more explicit framework for dealing specifically with that context.

### **2. Course Objectives:**

At the end of this course, you will have the tools to:

- *Become more aware of your organizational milieu:* Recognize and identify social phenomena within your organization that can affect (positively or negatively) your performance (at the individual, group, or organizational level).
- *Avoid perceptual bias:* Objectively assess those phenomena to avoid attribution errors and uncover the contextual, structural, interpersonal, and individual factors that contribute to those phenomena.
- *Draw on relevant scholarship:* Identify the sociological and psychological dynamics that apply to the phenomena in question. Know (or be able to find) what constitutes “best practices” under these circumstances.
- *Increase your effectiveness:* Apply analytical and critical thinking skills to these situations to help identify, find, and filter relevant information; assess advice and input from colleagues, consultants, and coworkers; and make decisions to maximize your effectiveness in organizational life.

### **3. Course Structure**

This course is a survey course and, as with any survey course, we cannot go into significant depth in any one area, a condition exacerbated by the applied nature of this course. Nonetheless, each class will include both the presentation of frameworks as well as theory and research relevant to the topic of that week coupled with some form of exercise or activity that is designed to apply that information. Frequently, this will be a HBS case dealing with the topic at hand, but sometimes it will be an experiential exercise.

In addition, a few times during the semester, I will have guest speakers come in to share their insights and experiences. Although some are already set, some slots are still open, so if you have suggestions (either names or topics), please pass them on. Additionally, during several sessions we will have one or two “mini-topics” presented and facilitated by one of the groups. These are described below and are intended to introduce material we would not otherwise have time to include in the class.

#### **4. Course Materials**

##### Required Texts:

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

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

##### Other Required Materials:

**HBS Publishing Site:** In addition to the text books above, we will use Harvard Business School cases to discuss certain topics. These cases will be selected within one week of when we will discuss them and will be added to our HBS Course. You will need to buy the cases (they are generally \$4.00 each) in order to download and read them. I will post directions on how to access the our HBS course information on WebCT early in the semester.

**WebCT site:** All students registered for this class have access to the WebCT site for this class. This syllabus will be posted to the web site, as will the schedule and any supplemental materials for each class, and links to other information. I recommend checking this site regularly, but at a minimum every Monday night.

#### **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. Two general

rules of thumb: When in doubt about using material, make sure you cite and quote it. When in doubt about collaborating, sharing, etc., don't do it without checking with me.

## 6. Grading

There are six graded "assignments," three completed by your group and three individually, and several non-graded assignments, all to be completed individually. Group and individual work each comprise 50% of your final grade.

### Individual Components

- 5% Completing **all** required assignments that are not graded on time
- 10% Final memo capturing your end-of-course management philosophy
- 15% In-Class contributions to discussions and activities
- 20% Case write up (You have the choice of two cases to write up.)

### Group

- 15% Presentation of group project "work in progress"
- 15% Group lead discussion of "special topic"
- 20% Final group report (possibly adjusted based on peer reviews)

Each of these is described below. I will provide more details on all assignments as the course progresses. Refer to the course schedule for due dates and additional information.

#### 6.1 Completing required, non-graded assignments

During the semester, I will assign a few relatively short tasks that are really unsuitable for grading (i.e., an introductory memo and a couple surveys to complete). I assign these because they are helpful, often essential, to help frame our class discussions. Since they constitute work on your part, it seems only fair to give you credit for doing them, so you get 5 points towards your final grade if you complete all of them on time, but you lose that 5 points if you do not.

#### 6.2 Final memo capturing your management philosophy

Part of the introductory memo you will write in the first week is your management philosophy coming into the course. Toward the end of the course, you will write another memo which captures your management philosophy at that point and compares it to your original management philosophy, drawing on insights from the class (both the material we covered and your individual and group experiences) to explain how they reinforced, refined, or radically altered your management philosophy. NOTE: This assignment is designed to assess your ability to synthesize material and apply it to real life experiences. As such, it is the application and integration of experience and material from class that will be graded, not the philosophy itself.

#### 6.3 In-Class contributions to discussions and activities

There are two developmental reasons for this item: First, the potential learning for this class is highly dependent on everyone being "fully present" and "engaged" in class. Everyone will get much more out of this class if there are 50 of us sharing our insights and experiences rather than just me. Part of your responsibility in this class is to contribute to the overall learning by

applying what we study to your own experiences and then sharing that with the class to help make them real.

Second, developing the ability to comfortably process information as you take it in, integrate and synthesize it with your own experiences, and contribute to the on-going discussion *in real time* is one of the most important skills you can develop in organizational life. Think of this as a positive variation of the adage “the squeaky wheel gets the oil.” The person who is known for making valuable contributions is given more opportunities to do so.

NOTE: If you do not share your questions, insights, comments, or criticisms of the material we cover in class, your grade will be adversely affected. If you know this kind of sharing is particularly challenging for you, and you not sure you are up to the challenge, you may want to seek out a different section of this course because, just like all your other assignments, **you must earn these points**. If you do not make any in-class contributions during the semester, you will receive a zero for this part of your grade.

NOTE2: Do not mistake quantity and air-time with quality and contribution. The person who wastes class time by rambling or, worse, simply restating points already covered, without expanding on them, applying them to their own experiences, synthesizing them with other material, etc., does the class a disservice. Time is a precious commodity in this class, and taking it away from those who might make an actual contribution in moving our discussions forward squanders it, and will be reflected in your grade.

#### 6.4 Case Write-Up

You will also write up one case during the course of the semester. The case write up is deigned to assess your ability to process and filter information by identifying what is most relevant, your ability to synthesize that information into a coherent picture of the current situation, your ability to apply the material from class, and your analytic and critical thinking skills in making a recommendation. Therefore, your case-write up should focus on demonstrating these things. In particular, it should concisely summarize the relevant information from the case (1-1.5 pages), describe and frame the dilemma facing the decision maker in the case and enumerate the options available , including the strengths and weaknesses of each (2-3 pages), and make and justify a recommendation for what they should do (1-2 pages).

#### 6.5 Presentation of group project “work in progress”

Before Thanksgiving, each group will present the current state of their project (see below) as a *work in progress*. While this is meant **not** to be the typical final, definitive presentation you typically do, it and you should certainly be professional. However, unlike most group presentations that focus on the final deliverable, this one focuses on how you solicit (and provide) information from others, which is another critical skill to developed for organizational life. Of the 15% of your grade for this assignment, 10% is based on your presentation and your facilitation of the ensuing discussion in which you solicit feedback from the class. In particular, it will be based on well you frame your project, present what you know and what you don’t, sell us on why that is important with compelling illustrations, and solicit feedback using inquiry and non-defensive communication. The remaining 5% will be based on the quality of feedback your group provides to the presenting groups by demonstrating how engaged you were with the

presentation, your ability to process information and provide feedback in a constructive manner. Peer evaluations may adjust individual grades on group work.

### 6.6 Final group report

As the capstone for the course, each group will be responsible for delivering a “strategic plan” that details why and how the management of your group’s organization could and should do something differently relating to two topics from class **and** the short topic that your group presented. These should not be three distinct sets of recommendations, but rather an integrated plan that reflects a strategic effort to improve the effectiveness with respect to managing the organization and the people who comprise it. Ideally, these recommendations will be based on an organization that at least one member is/was a member of and has access to. (This will be decided in the first class.)

## **7. 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. 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.

## **8. Attendance**

As mentioned above, everyone’s active engagement with the materials during class discussions is essential to maximize the learning potential in this class. Since that is not possible if you are not here, attendance is also critical. Having earned my MBA at night while working full time, I do understand the challenges of coming to class every week; but I also know that planning in advance can mitigate most conflicts. If you are going to miss (or miss a class unexpectedly), please make arrangements to get caught up on the material **and** to talk to me about the absence. Ideally, this conversation will happen before you miss the class. Missing a class without discussing the issue with me will adversely affect your in-class contribution grade.

## 9. Written assignments

All the written assignments **MUST** be submitted through WebCT. **DO NOT** bring paper copies to class. I use the electronic submission to check if papers are late (which are penalized 5% per day) and to conserve paper. I will provide detailed feedback on WebCT. If you have problems with WebCT, call me and email me the assignment.

NOTE: Remember to **SUBMIT** the paper after you upload it.

Written assignments should also be submitted in Microsoft Word compatible format, using 1-inch margins, Times New Roman 12 point type, and double spaced. Playing with the margins, font, spacing, kerning, etc. to get around page requirements for the assignment (in either direction) will reflect negatively on your grade.

All written assignments are graded (if at all) in part on your written communication skills. Use the spell check and grammar check features of your word processor and make sure you review any words or passages they highlight, and fix them if necessary.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

<b>Class Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Case</b> All cases are in our class at the <a href="http://www.hbsp.com">www.hbsp.com</a> site	<b>In class activity</b>	<b>Assignment due for class unless otherwise noted. (W) = WebCT; (H) = HBSP site</b>
9/06	Introduction		Introductions	
9/13	Perception & Personality	What a star – What a jerk	MBTI exercise	<u>By Monday 9/10</u> <b>1. Introductory memo (Due on WebCT)</b> <b>2. Read HBR-MBTI article (W)</b> <b>2. Personality survey (W)</b>
9/20	Difficult Conversations	<b>Book:</b> Difficult Conversations	The P-C Case Group Time	Read the book <i>Requests for group mini-course topics due</i>
9/27	Motivation	Harrah’s entertainment: Rewarding our people	Guest Speaker	1. Read “On the Folly...” (W)
10/04	Leadership & Ethics	Accounting Fraud at WorldCom		
10/11	Leading Organizational Change	Leading change at Simmons Mattress	Guest Speaker	<b>Write Up Option 1</b>
10/18	Negotiation	<b>Book:</b> Getting to Yes		1. Read the book
10/25	Groups & Team Dynamics	Innovation & collaboration at Merrill Lynch <i>AND</i> The ARMY Crew Team		<b>Stonehill Group:</b> Mini course on Organizational Identity & Identification
11/01	Diversity	Managing diversity at CitySide Financial <i>AND</i> Neighborhood Health Clinic: Serving the underserved		<b>State Street Group:</b> Mini course on Managing in a Global Environment <b>Cambridge Assoc. Group:</b> Mini course on Stress in the Workplace
11/08	Decision Making	Executive decision making at General Motors		<b>CleanSweep Group:</b> Mini course on Succession Planning <b>GE Group:</b> Mini course on Managing Innovation
11/15	Structure & Culture	Southwest Airlines (HBS)		<b>Raytheon Group:</b> Mini course on 360 Evaluations <b>EMC/RSA Group:</b> Mini course on Knowledge Management <b>Write Up Options 2</b>
11/22	Thanksgiving – No class			
11/29	Work in Progress Presentations			<b>GROUP PRESENTATIONS</b> <i>We may have to alter class time</i>
12/06	Recruitment & Retention	Investment Bank: Resignation of a Star		<b>Final Management Philosophy Memo</b>
12/13	Entrepreneurship	Google		<b>Write Up Options 3</b>
12/17	Group Report Due @ 9AM			Submit report to WebCT by 9AM

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**SYLLABUS**

**Supplemental Topics for Group “Mini-Courses”**

The following topics are a list of possible topics for the “mini-courses” your groups will do.

The point of the mini-course assignment is to demonstrate your group’s ability to research a topic, determine what information is most important, and find an accessible way to present it to an audience (in this case the class, but frequently others in your organizations).

This is not an exhaustive list, so feel free to run other ideas by me.

Also, some of the topics on this list may be upgraded to a weekly topic (based on class feedback the first day), so they would no longer be available.

1. Managing virtual teams
2. Social Networks
3. Managing contingent workers
4. Managing across the generation gap
5. Managing “UP”
6. Managing in a global environment
7. Stress in the workplace
8. Balancing Work-Home domains
9. Emotions in the workplace
10. Using technology to manage more effectively
11. Succession planning
12. Working in family-run businesses
13. 360 Evaluations
14. Managing innovation
15. Knowledge management