

School for New Learning
DePaul University
Course Syllabus: HC 273 Reframing Organizations
Course Number:
Winter, 2010

1. General Information

Faculty: Michael Shapiro
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Location: TBA

Dates/Time: Thursday, 6:00 – 9:00 pm

Credit Hours: 4

2. Course Description and Faculty Biographical Sketch

General Description

We are surrounded by organizations of varying size and purpose. The workplace from large corporations to small-entrepreneurial companies, non-profit organizations, the spiritual community, and academic institutions all provide ample opportunities for failure in communication, effective management, and a thriving workforce. This course identifies the various strategies, tactics, and solutions that have been successfully employed to understand and resolve organizational problems at the levels of both theory and practice. Each of the solutions offers a particular perspective on organizational life with a focus on organizational structures, human relationships, political processes, and organizational symbols.

Biography

Michael Shapiro is a Management Consultant and Business Coach with over 25 years of business experience. He is President of Dynamic Management Solutions, Inc.

His practice focuses on helping entrepreneurs and their companies build, manage, and grow their businesses. He provides leadership development advice, consults on organizational structure, and offers rookie-manager training. Michael also founded and facilitates *The Entrepreneurs Group* – a facilitated, peer-support group for individuals in a business, professional services practice, or organizational leadership role.

Michael's academic credentials include both a Bachelors degree in Small Business Management and a Master's degree in Technological Consulting and Management from DePaul University's School for New Learning. His recent continuing education has included participation and leadership training in organizational dynamics and group relations programs sponsored by Northwestern University, the Institute for Management Transformation, the A.K. Rice Institute, and Chicago Center for the Study of Groups and Organizations. Michael has recently been certified by the A.K. Rice Institute to work as a consultant in Tavistock Group Relations Conferences.

3. Competencies

H-2-C: Can identify an organizational problem and design a plan for change based on an understanding of social science theories or models. *Students will learn how to identify organizational and cultural problems within a business system and develop a strategy for change through case studies and individual projects.*

A-3-D: Can assess the assumptions and implications of a significant thinker's ideas about work and leisure. *Students will learn the characteristics of organizational life by examining the development of OD theory and practice from 1900's through today using four frames: the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames.*

F-X: Can understand and use strategies and tactics to resolve organizational problems in the workplace. *Students will negotiate individual projects.*

H-3-X: Can analyze the impact of organizational life on the individual. *Students will negotiate individual projects.*

4. Learning Experience

This course has been designed for students to learn about the characteristics of an organization and the various elements essential to developing an understanding of organizational behavior through the use of four frames. Students will learn the attributes of each frame: structural, human relations, political, and symbolic and apply the underlying theory to specific problems and situations.. The many aspects of organizational development will be covered through readings, case studies, classroom discussion, in-class team discussions, and the final project.

Required reading for the course:

Reframing Organizations, Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, Third Edition

For Week 1 – Introduction to Reframing

Chapters 1 and 2

For Week 2 – The Structural Frame I

Chapters 3 and 4

For Week 3 – The Structural Frame II

Chapter 5

For Week 4 – The Human Resource Frame I

Chapter 6

For Week 5 - The Human Resource Frame II

Chapters 7 and 8

For Week 6 – The Political Frame I

Chapter 9

For Week 7 – The Political Frame II

Chapters 10 and 11

For Week 8 – The Symbolic Frame I

Chapters 12 and 13

For Week 9 – The Symbolic Frame II

Chapters 14 and 17

- Learning Strategies will include: discussion, lecture, role-playing, collaborative learning, individual and team projects. Extensive use of Blackboard requires that students have an active account and access to the site.
- The reading list above represents all of the required readings.
- Evidence of learning will include a written case study and four written analyses applying the four frames to the case. A final project class-presentation of your analysis will take place Week 10.
- The final course grade will be based on:
 - 25% Written personal case describe an organizational event or experience that was significant or challenging for you – 5 – 6 pages in length.
 - 25% Four-frame analysis based on your case study of 10 - 15 pages in length
 - 25% Class presentation
 - 10% Class attendance
 - 15% Class participation

Personal Case Assignment

Your personal case paper should describe an organizational event or experience that was significant or challenging for you. The personal case should be a description, not an analysis or interpretation, of the events. In subsequent papers, you will have the opportunity to analyze and interpret your case.

Approach

Case writing is very much like telling a good story. When writing about a case in which you were involved, it usually works best to write in the first person. Describe what happened as you saw it, including your own thoughts and feelings (but make sure that your thoughts and feelings are labeled as such). It is usually best to focus the paper around a particular experience or series of experiences, rather than trying to cover many months or years. A single critical event (or sequence of events) usually works best. Examples include the early stages of a challenging project, a critical meeting, a tough decision, or a major conflict. Like a good drama, a good case rarely arises from a situation in which everything was smooth and easy. Obstacles, conflict, or dilemmas are likely to be the ingredients that make a case interesting.

Organization of the Paper

The following are suggestions that have often been helpful to students in the past. You should feel free to organize the paper differently if you feel that another format enables you to develop your case and tell your story more effectively.

1. Set the stage with a relatively brief description of the organizational setting and your role in it. Provide information that you think will help the reader understand the most important elements in the situation. (This will require selectivity: part of the art of case writing is separating the essential facts from the mass of information that might be included.)
2. Focus on direct description of events. If there was a significant meeting, provide a description of what people actually said and did in it. (A script representing part of the conversation is very helpful in such cases.)
3. Think about the following as possible elements:
 - a. Structural issues (for example, structure, goals, technology, size).
 - b. "People" issues (for example, issues of management style, group process, interpersonal relations).
 - c. Politics (Was there conflict? About what? Between whom?).
 - d. Symbols (think about organizational culture, symbols, myths, and rituals; were there questions about what really happened or about what it really meant?).
4. A good case often ends with a question or unsolved problem (for example, What should I do now? How could I solve this problem?).
5. I will provide feedback on your written case, and you are free to amend or rewrite it before you use it for your case analysis paper.

Final Paper: Personal Case Analysis

Overview

The final paper asks you to do a four-frame analysis of your personal case situation. The purposes of the paper are to provide you with opportunities to:

1. Work with and integrate the four frames as a useful tool for diagnosis and action.
2. Integrate your learnings from the course and apply them to a real-life situation from your work experiences.
3. Reflect on your own professional practice.

Assignment

First, use the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames to analyze (1) what happened in your personal case and (2) what alternative courses of action were suggested for you by each of the four frames. Devote equal attention to each of the four frames.

Second, rethink your role in the case in light of the four-frame analysis. In other words, what would you now do differently if you could relive your personal case? Why? How useful were the four frames in helping you to clarify alternative courses of action for yourself in this case situation?

Criteria for Grading

Papers will be graded on the following:

1. Quality and thoroughness of analysis.
2. Clear focus, organization, writing, and presentation.
3. Internal consistency of the arguments.
4. Accurate and effective use of theory to reflect on and provide new insights into personal case experiences.

Cautions

Common errors in the past have included the following:

1. Providing description of case events (what happened) rather than analysis of the events—good analysis tells why things happened.
2. Trying to discuss every single aspect of the case—it is better to write thoroughly about a few well-defined topics than superficially about many.
3. Making inferences and generalizations without providing data from the case to support the generalizations, examples to help define them, and/or theory references to ground them (for example, you might say that everyone in the case wanted “involvement” and “participation”—How do you know that? What evidence do you have? What do you mean by involvement and participation?).
4. Ignoring theory and writing only about opinions—good papers take a set of theoretical ideas and show how those ideas can be applied to some specific aspect of the case.
5. Ignoring one’s own interpretations and restating theory after theory from the readings—good papers use theory to support insights and to cast a new light on personal experiences and observations.

Final Paper: Personal Case Analysis Presentation

A presentation to the class of your Final Paper constitutes the last element of your grade. You will have ten minutes to summarize your case and apply your four-frame analysis. This will require thinking of your paper in a different way – not as a document but as a source of research and your findings. You may use PowerPoint if you like however this is not required and in and of itself, will not effect your grade.

Course Attendance

Students missing more than one class of our ten week course will not have met the requirements for a passing grade. Students must attend and participate in the class presentation in order to receive a passing grade. A grade of “Incomplete” cannot be given if the Final Project has not been completed and presented.

5. Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this class, students will:

1. Understand the use of frames to understand organizations
2. Identify the distinctions between structural, human relations, political, and symbolic frames.
3. Experience the process of developing a functional team
4. Understand the components of an organizational assessment
5. Apply the concepts of organizational theory in workplace roles
6. Become more discriminating consumers of organizational theory and advice.
7. Understand and work with the ambiguity and complexity in both the discipline’s theory base and organizational reality.
8. Translate the flood of organizational solutions and leadership prescriptions into usable diagnostic tools.

6. Evidence the Students will Submit

- Evidence of learning will include one written case-study, a four frame-analysis of the case, and an in-class presentation.
- Students will abide by the University’s guidelines on academic integrity (see policy in addenda below)
- All work must be original. Please refer to the DePaul Student Handbook for the definition of plagiarism. Non-original work will receive a grade of “F”.

7. Criteria for Assessment

- Student Work Product Will be Evaluated As Follows:
 - A=** designates work of high quality; reflects thorough and comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand; reflects a clearly identifiable thesis and argument that demonstrates cogent and creative development and support of idea.
 - B=** designates work of good quality; reflects clearly organized and comprehensive understanding of issues at hand; presents substantive thesis and argument with evident development and support of ideas.
 - C=** designates work which minimally meets requirements set forward in assignment; reflects some organization and development of ideas but develops argument in

superficial or simplistic manner; may only address part of the assignment or be otherwise incomplete.

D= designates work of poor quality which does not meet minimum requirements set forth in the assignment; demonstrates poor organization of ideas and/or inattention to development of ideas, grammar, and spelling; treatment of material is superficial and/or simplistic; may indicate that student has not done reading assignments thoroughly.

- Unfinished work or work requiring revision will be given an Incomplete (IN) grade. In order to qualify for the IN, students must have attended no fewer than nine classes, and must complete the final project, in-class presentation during week ten. Work not submitted by the due date must be submitted within 2 weeks, and will be assessed on a P/F basis only.

8. Class Schedule

Week 1 – Introduction to Reframing

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Chapter 2 - Simple ideas – complex organizations

Week 2 – The Structural Frame I

Chapter 3 - Getting organized – Origins, focus, and content of the structural frame

Week 3 – The Structural Frame II

Chapter 4 - Structuring and restructuring – structural tensions when searching for an appropriate structure

Week 4 – The Human Resource Frame I

Chapter 5 - Organizing groups and teams

Chapter 6 - People and organizations

Week 5 - The Human Resource Frame II

Chapter 7 - Improving human resource management

Chapter 8 - Interpersonal and group dynamics

Week 6 – The Political Frame I

Chapter 9 - Power, conflict, and coalitions

Week 7 – The Political Frame II

Chapter 10 - The manager as politician

Chapter 11 - Organizations as political arenas and political agents

Week 8 – The Symbolic Frame I

Chapter 12 - Organizational culture and symbols

Chapter 13 - The organization as theatre

Week 9 – The Symbolic Frame II

Chapter 14 - Organizational culture in action

Chapter 17 - Leadership

Week 10 – Project Presentations

Addenda

DePaul University Academic Integrity Policy

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

DePaul University Incomplete Policy

Undergraduate and graduate students have two quarters to complete an incomplete. At the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) following the term in which the incomplete grade was assigned, remaining incompletes will automatically convert to "F" grades. In the case of the Law School incompletes must be completed by the end of the semester following the one in which the incomplete was assigned. Ordinarily no incomplete grade may be completed after the grace period has expired. Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee. This policy applies to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs. NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

n.b. The SNL student who wishes to receive the grade of IN must formally request in writing that the instructor issue this grade. This request must be made before the end of the quarter in which the student is enrolled in a course.

Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential.

To ensure that you receive the most appropriate accommodation based on your needs, contact the instructor as early as possible in the quarter, preferably within the first week of class, and make sure you have contacted:

- PLS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-4239 in the Schmidt Academic Center, room 220 or;
- The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-7290, DePaul University Student Center, room 307.