

Theories of Change in International Contexts
EDUC-896-DL3

George Mason University
Spring 2021, January 25 – May 3

Instructor: Dr. David Farris

Phone: (703) 993-2507

Email: dfarris@gmu.edu

Office: George Mason University
4393 University Drive
Fairfax VA, 22030

Virtual Office Hours – By appointment

Course Description

This course provides an overview of contemporary organizational change theory and change techniques in a variety of organizations and global contexts with particular attention to organizational structure, culture, and strategy. Curriculum and assignments are oriented around the practical application of organizational change theories using case studies selected by students. This is an asynchronous virtual graduate level seminar with an emphasis on independent reading and critical thinking facilitated by lectures, small group discussion boards, and vertical assignments that culminate in a comprehensive change strategy to address a contemporary or hypothetical organizational challenge selected by students.

Course Objectives

1. Develop a broad understanding of organizational constructs, models, and functions;
2. Understand fundamental organizational change theories, challenges, strategies, and processes;
3. Apply learning objectives to contemporary organizational challenges;
4. Develop practical solutions, and recommend strategies for managing organizational change;
5. Nurture and demonstrate critical thinking through technical writing; and,
6. Create specialized knowledge of organizational behavior, change, and administration for advanced work such as thesis, comprehensive exams, and dissertations.

Course Delivery Method – Asynchronous

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using [select either a synchronous or an asynchronous] format via Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available by Friday, January 22, 2021.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a

face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers. To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows Media Player: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Expectations

- Course Week: Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will start on Monday and finish on Sunday.
- Log-in Frequency: Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least three times per week.
- Participation: Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions. All students are expected to participate in whatever capacity you are most comfortable. Questions, comments, reflections can be shared with me before class via email and I will bring them to the class for discussion. I encourage thoughtful dialog, disagreement, and debate however disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. Respect for others opinions, experiences, and emotions is required. You may be asked to leave class if you are unable to engage in civil discourse.
- Technical Competence: Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.

- **Technical Issues:** Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- **Workload:** Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- **Instructor Support:** Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- **Netiquette:** The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.
- **Accommodations:** Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Course Policies

Office Hours: By appointment only. Please arrange time to meet virtually, evenings and weekend meetings are possible to accommodate individual schedules.

Late and Early Assignments: All assignments must be submitted on the due date noted. Please contact me before the due date if you cannot complete and submit an assignment on time. Points will be deducted for late assignments unless an exception is negotiated. Conversely, assignments may be completed before the deadline so long the course materials are reviewed/completed prior to the assignment.

Incompletes: No incompletes will be granted for this class unless there are extenuating circumstances and alternative arrangements for missed work is negotiated and completed by the ninth week of the semester. All incomplete coursework and requests will be graded according to university policies found at: <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/policies/>.

One on One Meetings: During the semester one on one meeting will be scheduled to discuss individual progress, concerns, questions, and final projects. These meetings are intended to assist in the creation of final projects, discuss individual learning, and professional goals. These meetings will be scheduled near the middle of the semester at a time that is convenient for each student.

University Policies/Services

University Honor Code: To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, student members of the university community set forth this honor code: *Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.*

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a ‘Responsible Employee’ and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as the Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 3-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 3-8730 or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

Office of Disability Services: If you require academic accommodations, please contact disAbility Services at 703-993-2474 or ds@gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Readings

There are no required texts for this course. Articles and multimedia will be posted in Blackboard.

Assignments and Grading

The intention of coursework, lectures, and discussions is to use the course curriculum as a lens to understand contemporary organizational change scenarios and develop a change management strategy that incorporates organizational culture, structure, processes, context, and extant research. Assignments are vertical; assignments are built upon previous assignments to produce a comprehensive change strategy at the end of the semester.

All assignments should be formatted in accordance with the APA manual 7th edition. All assignments must be submitted via Blackboard. If the format of an assignment is not accepted by Blackboard they may be submitted directly to the professor via email.

1. Virtual Introductions – Develop a short introduction 2-4 minutes (audio or video file). Your introduction should include your name, a little about the organization you are currently affiliated with, your academic and research interests, reason for enrolling in this class, and something(s) you want our class to know about you.
2. Organizational Profile – Develop a profile of your organization or an organization that you are familiar with. This organization should be the same organization that you will use as focus of your final project; your case study. This paper should be 1500 words and include:
 - Describe the purpose or mission of the of the organization;
 - Provide a graphic depicting the organizational structure (existing or one that you design);

- Describe the key features of this organizational structure;
 - Identify which specific department or position will be your focus for future assignments (e.g., impetus or loci of change);
 - Identify four key stakeholders;
 - Explain why each stakeholder is important to your organizations/function's operations;
 - Outline the existing relationship between each stakeholder;
 - Discuss the benefits and challenges associated with this structure with particular emphasis on decision making, collaboration, organizational performance, and;
 - Make a recommendation(s) for improving the organizational structure and provide justification.
3. Change Philosophy – In 2000 words define your change philosophy and the steps that you attempt to follow during a change process that you implement and manage. How do you approach change and why? How do your past experiences, education, and ambitions influence your strategy? How do you incorporate the various perspectives, needs, requirements, and attitudes of stakeholders? What are your priorities and what aspects of change are least important to your philosophy and why? Provide a visual to accompany your change philosophy narrative.
4. Impetus for Change – In 100 words identify a change needed in your organization (i.e., new process, new structure, new strategy, address an organizational culture/political issue, fix to a known problem/deficiency, etc.). Using your previous assignments (Organization Profile, Organizational Landscape, and Change Philosophy outline the factors that are driving change as well as the existing or anticipated obstacles to change. Can you anticipate challenges or obstructions to change (e.g., resentment, increased cost, burnout or change fatigue, additional work for other areas of your organization, loss of good will, setting precedent, etc.) that need to be considered. Conversely, are there aspects of the organization or landscape that encourage change (enthusiasm, market forces, politics, opportunity, etc.) that support organizational change.
5. Change Proposal – In 1000 words outline a proposed change for your organization/function. This paper should be modeled after a formal proposal. This document should be something you would feel comfortable sharing with your supervisor and organizational leadership. This recommendation will serve as the foundation for future assignments so please be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timebound, meaning your change strategy must be practical, reasonable, and actionable.
- Describe the problem (reason for change – synopsis of the Impetus for change assignment);
 - Outline the proposed change (solution);
 - Provide justification for why your solution is valid;
 - Provide a brief summary of the process that you intend to use to manage change;
 - Estimate resources needed and cost;
 - Outline the anticipated benefits to the organization/function.

6. Identifying and engaging stakeholders – Using your previous assignments, provide a list of the stakeholders that must be engaged in crafting and implementing your proposed change.
 - Why are these individuals, entities, or organizations important to your strategy?
 - Can you anticipate each stakeholders' expectations, concerns, or objections (e.g., what is most important to each and why)?
 - Outline the existing relationship between each stakeholder;
 - How do you engage these stakeholders to craft and shepherd change in your organization?
7. Change Communication – Using as many words as you deem necessary, draft an email (subject line and body) announcing your proposed change strategy to your organization. This email should take into consider your audience, provide a brief overview of your change strategy, and include any additional pertinent information/details that you feel is necessary to initiate the change you propose. Provide a brief synopsis the tone and impression you intend to convey as well as the timing and topics of future communications (i.e., strategic communications plan).
8. Leading for change – In 1500 words or less, outline the leadership/followership strategies and behavior that are needed to facilitate change. Describe formal and informal (i.e., positional and relational) leadership/followership behaviors that can facilitate change. Identify the short term and long term leadership/followership at different strata (vertical) and across functions (horizontal) to solidify change in your organization. This assignment should tie back to your organizational assignment and reference the key stakeholders/entities that are critical to your organizations/function's success.
9. Final Presentations – Provide a 10-15 minute presentation using and audio visual technology of your choice that can be uploaded to Blackboard. Your presentation should outline your change strategy and include a brief synopsis of the information that you gathered and provided for assignments #2-8. This presentation should be professional, well-orchestrated, and intended for a senior leadership team. This assignment will be made available to your classmates to review, provide feedback, and offer recommendations.
10. Provide Feed Back on Final Presentations – Select two of your classmate's final presentations and provide feedback and recommendations to help their change strategy be successful. Utilize the concepts learned in class, elements of your own change strategy, and personal experience to make thoughtful and practical recommendations to improve your classmates work.

Grading

Assignment	Percent of grade
Virtual Introduction	4
Organizational Profile	9
Change Philosophy	9
Impetus for Change	9
Change Proposal	9
Identifying and Engaging Stakeholders	9
Change Communication	9
Leading for Change	9
Final Presentation	16
Provide Feedback on Final Presentation	9
Discussion Board Responses	8

Weekly Schedule

Week	Day/Date	Class Overview	Readings
Week 1	January 25	Introduction to Course & Organizational Profiles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course introduction and format • Course objectives • Review assignments • Organizational structure and change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Week 2	February 1	Organizational Contexts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal - External (local and regional) • International, Political, Regulatory • Mapping Landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gnyawali & Stewart, 2003 • Itkin & Nagy, 2014 • Janicijevic, 2014
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion Board Questions - Introduction Video 	
Week 3	February 8	Theories of Change Part I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular Change Theories • Application of Change Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tsoukas & Chia, 2002 • Gready, 2013
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion Board Questions 	
Week 4	February 15	Theories of Change Part II: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top Down vs. Bottom Up • Globalization and Contemporary Org Change Theory • Decision Making Structures and Process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heyden et. al., 2017 • Burnes, 2005
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizational Profile - Discussion Board Questions 	
Week 5	February 22	Impetus for Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for organizational change • Prioritization and Risk Management • Holistic change management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bess, 2015 • Bathurst & Monin, 2010
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change Philosophy 	

Week 6	March 1	Identifying and Engaging Stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of stakeholder engagement • Stakeholder interests and concerns • Strategies for engaging stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seitanidi, Koufopoulos & Palmer, 2011
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change Proposal - Discussion Board Questions 	
Week 7	March 8	Communicating Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of communicating change strategy • Strategic communications process • Informal and formal communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tucker, Yeow & Viki, 2012 • Guette & Vandenbempt, 2017
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No Assignment - One on One Meetings 	
Week 8	March 15	Leading Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and followership as functions of change • Leadership Typologies • Formal and informal leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nkomo & Kreik, 2011 • Neil, Wagstaff, Weller & Lewis, 2016
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify Stakeholders - Discussion Board Questions Only 	
Week 9	March 22	Responding to Resistance to Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does resistance to change manifest • How is resistance identified and addressed • The value of resistance to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oreg, 2007 • Schweiger, Stouten, & Bleijenbergh, 2018
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicating Change - Discussion Board Questions 	
Week 10	March 29	Monitoring Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is change monitored • Why is monitoring and surveillance important • System Archetypes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kim, 2008 • Apostolopoulos, Halikias, Maroukian & Tsaramirsis, 2015
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leading Change - Discussion Board Questions Only 	
Week 11	April 5	Change Interruption and Deviations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change evolution • Feedback loops and learning organizations • Reflexive change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Readings
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Late assignments due - One on One Meetings 	
Week 12	April 12	Change Paradox: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Paradox • Unintentional consequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cunha et. al., 2018 • Jian, 2007
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion Board Questions Only - One on One Meetings 	
Week 13	April 19	Organizational Culture, Politics, Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of culture and politics • Strategic vs operational change • Theory X, Y, and Z 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banerjee & Srivastava, 2017 • Burnes, 2009
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion Board Questions Only 	

Week 14	April 26	Final Presentation and Peer Feedback (Group A) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post final presentation and supporting materials • Review two final presentations and provide feedback 	• No Readings
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final Presentations - Review Two Final Presentations 	
Week 15	May 3	Final Presentation and Peer Feedback (Group B) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post final presentation and supporting materials • Review two final presentations and provide feedback 	• No Readings
	Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final Presentations - Review Two Final Presentations 	