EDU 7274 Organizational Consulting
Winter Term 2018
Course Syllabus

Instructor
Dr. Al McCready
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Office Hours: By Appointment

Class Hours
This class meets online for 12 weeks. Classes begin on Tuesday, January 8, 2018 and ends on Saturday, March 31, 2018.

Course Overview
Effective leadership requires the ability to critically diagnose and provide consultative services to an organization. This key competency helps leaders to continually identify and implement robust organizational systems and processes. This is a practice-based course that reviews various consulting strategies and organizational assessment models. Students select an organization and apply theory and models to conduct an organizational diagnosis. This team project is an actual client consulting project. Through the process, they gain a comprehensive understanding of the theories, models, variables, and perspectives used to understand complex organizational processes. Student diagnoses include all components of the consulting process in their analyses including: entry, data collection, interpretation, synthesis, and diagnostic conclusions. A report containing the team's observations and recommendations is delivered to the client organization.

Textbooks
There are now two required texts plus the APA Manual and one optional text.


Supplemental reading assignments selected from the literature listed below will be posted on Blackboard.
Supplemental Readings

Optional Books


Articles


Falkenberg, Loren & I. Herremans. (1995). Ethical behaviors in organizations: Directed by the formal or


**Course Outcomes**

With the successful completion of this course students should be able to do the following:

1. Describe processes of organizational diagnosis and organizational consulting
2. Describe the issues related to the consulting process and how it that understanding contributes to an understanding of both real-world and doctoral research problems
3. Evaluate and implement different consulting models and methods used to diagnosis organizations
4. Apply organizational diagnosis and consulting models to real-world organizational challenges to improve organizational performance

**Doctoral Studies Skill Development**

During the course, students will build the following scholarly research and writing skills:

1. *Identifying real-world problems for research:* Students are given the opportunity to learn how to uncover and isolate a real-world problem for investigation and to argue the importance of exploring the problem using the literature.

2. *Employing theoretical frameworks:* Students develop their skills in identifying and employing theoretical frameworks to investigate real-world problems, gaining a fundamental understanding of how theory guides inquiry.

3. *Understanding scholarly research and theory:* Students are asked to learn about the seminal foundations of one or more of the major threads of the scholarly conversation on organizational theory topics.

4. *Ascertaining implications for practice:* Students are introduced to the capability to pull out and draw conclusions from research findings and to construct recommendations for practice.

**Teaching Methods**

**Reading:** Each week readings will be assigned. Students are expected to read all the assigned readings and as they read they should continually ask themselves key questions: Do I understand the concepts, theories, and models of this material? What questions do I have for clarity? In what way is this material relevant to both my practice and research as an organizational leader? Ultimately, how is the content pertinent to my development as a doctor of education?

**Discussion:** Each week students will participate in online discussions. Discussions provide students with a forum through which they can explore organizational phenomena from the perspectives of research, theory, and practice. In addition, discussions provide students with an opportunity to interact with and to learn from their peers. This interaction is critical to student learning. Much of the value of the class comes from prepared, thoughtful, and informed dialogue among classmates. In this course, the team process is a very important part of your class participation. A confidential peer evaluation process will be conducted at the end of the term.
Research: Students will have the opportunity to explore and review the organizational consulting literature. By reviewing this literature students will build literature review skills and become familiar with the process of conducting organizational diagnoses. In addition, students will collect and analyze data, developing fundamental research skills.

Organizational Consulting Methods Application: Students will have the opportunity to conduct an organizational diagnosis using consulting models.

### Evaluation Plan

The final grade for the course is based on the points you earn from the team consulting project A1, the individual Consulting Perspective paper A2, and class participation (A3). The weight of each element is outlined below, and the requirements for each assignment are summarized in the next section of the syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Due Date/Time Midnight On:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Team Consulting Project</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Consulting Perspective Paper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Part 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Consulting Perspective Paper</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Class Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Assignments are to be turned in by Midnight on the date due. Deadline extensions are not given as a matter of course. Unusual circumstances that are well beyond the student's control may occasionally warrant an extension. The grade for assignments submitted after the deadline will be reduced by 10% for each day (or part of a day) late.

In this course, the team process is a very important part of your class participation. A confidential peer evaluation process will be conducted at the end of the term. The results of that peer evaluation will be incorporated into the Class Participation points score.

Grades will be determined in accordance with Northeastern University grading policies. The grading objective is to certify, at various levels, that students have learned the skills and knowledge. Fractional grades at the completion of the term will be rounded down (i.e. 89.7 = final grade 89).
Microsoft Word is the preferred format for submission of written assignments. Occasionally students submit Adobe pdf files instead. If you are concerned that some element of your writing or formatting will not display correctly once it leaves your computer, you may submit both an Adobe pdf file and the original Word file.

Group Assignment 1: Consulting Project (40%) Due Date: TBA

More details on this assignment (A1) will be provided in video form during the first two weeks of the class. Students will develop a plan that outlines their anticipated diagnostic activities. It should be approximately 5 pages in length. It should describe the organization under diagnosis and the challenge/problem to be investigated. It should address the following components of Block’s consulting model: contracting (describe how contracting will occur), data collection and analysis (how data will be collected and analyzed), and feedback (how recommendations will be presented to the client). Students will develop a final diagnostic report that includes the initial consulting plan. The report should follow the basic diagnostic steps. The report should include a discussion of theory, models, techniques, methods used, data collected, synthesis and interpretation of data, and diagnostic conclusions. A copy of all of the data should be included in the final report as an appendix, in addition to data shown in tables as part of the final narrative. The conclusions and recommendations for the client (written report, letter, email, or presentation slides) should be included either as part of this final group paper, or as a separate document in an appendix.

Assignment 1 will be assessed using the standards described in the syllabus and the course instructions.

Assignment 2 (A2) Consulting Perspective Paper. (40%) Due Date: TBA

Overview
First of all, although this is your own perspective, you are to write this in formal scholarly style (as stilted as that may seem to you), and that means no first person singular. APA guides us away from the use of first person singular pronouns, and the best scholarly writing doesn't use it, except for a few gurus who are opining on their own widely recognized theories (and a few others who break with the norm). You certainly are free to use phrases like "this writer" or "this researcher" or "this consultant" and so on.
This assignment has two parts. You will need work on these two parts separately, as the first part is turned in earlier than the second. However, at the end of the term you will submit one paper that fully integrates the two. APA compliant headings are required for this paper. The level 1 heading for the two parts are:

Diagnosis versus Consulting

Theory Applied

You are required to use APA compliant level 2 headings under these two main sections in your paper. The second section, "Theory Applied" should have a final (last) level 2 heading that is titled Observations and Lessons Learned as the last section of your paper. As you can see, the first section demonstrates your understanding and thinking about the theory and processes being studied, and the second section is your own analysis of the application in your team project. Although the topic of the second section is the team project, this second section of your paper is not a team effort. The length of these two sections, and consequently the full paper is up to you. However, I find it unlikely that you will successfully address either section in less than 8 pages. I'm expecting 10 to 14 pages for each section. If you write a great deal more than that, you should revise and condense to achieve the objective of "parsimony and clarity" or as others put it, only long enough to properly cover the subject and keep the reader's interest. The next two sections of this assignment description describe the specific requirements for the two main sections.
Diagnosis versus Consulting Section [Part 1 due on TBA]

This section of the paper is a description and analysis of Block's Flawless Consulting and Harrison's Diagnosing Organizations. You are to create the appropriate sub-sections and present these four elements: a summary of Harrison; a summary of Block; a "compare and contrast" discussion of the two; your preferred part(s) of the process. The last element will use phrases like "this consultant" or "this researcher of the consulting process" and it will describe whether you would prefer to be responsible for design of the project, the interview process, the analysis of the data, and/or final report preparation. You may choose to use these four elements as a guide for your headings, or you may create your own flow, which, for example, could involve an interspersed approach with equally clear and helpful headings.

Theory Applied Section [Part 2 -- Parts 1 and 2 due on TBA]

This section will be based on your experience on your team consulting project. Clearly, to do this part of the paper successfully, you will need to be very actively involved in your consulting team project. This paper will have at least three sections. The first section is your summary of the group process and approach to the consulting engagement. In short it is a description of the planned steps, the client organization, and your team's execution of the project. If you have the Morgan *Images* optional textbook, this is a place where you can apply one or more of the Morgan metaphors to the client organization. The second section is your critique of the process described in the first section. Here are examples of the sort of questions you will want to answer. What could have been done better? What different approach(es) might have yielded a different result? Where did the group stray from the best practices described in the textbooks? Did any issues in the group process get in the way of a more successful result? The third section is the one described earlier, your Observations about the consulting process and your and lessons learned. In this section, it is permissible to use the first person singular pronouns.

Virtual Classroom – learning platforms

**Reading:** Key scholarly articles have been selected for this course; and when appropriate video links via maybe posted. Additionally, students are encouraged to engage in independent selection of readings to enhance their knowledge of the topics. Students will be organized into discussion groups to provide a forum for reflecting upon these readings and collectively making sense or creating new insights. Students are expected to read all the assigned readings.

**Video recordings:** During weekly sessions, brief lecturettes may be delivered if deemed useful for student learning. These lecturettes are not intended to summarize any readings, but instead to expound upon broader ideas and concepts both the discipline of organizational learning, as well as in doctoral studies in general. The lectures are intended to enhance student understanding of the research and practice of learning in organizational settings.

**Discussion Board / Discussion Groups:** Students will participate in online discussions. Students will be organized into small discussion groups to allow for more robust and interactive sensemaking discussions. Discussions provide students with a forum through which they can explore organizational learning and systems phenomena from the perspectives of research, theory, and practice. In addition, discussions provide students with an opportunity to interact with and to learn from their peers. This interaction is critical to student learning. Much of the value of the class comes from prepared, thoughtful, and informed dialogue among classmates.

**Research:** Students will have the opportunity to critique scholarship in organizational learning / knowledge capability field. By reviewing this literature (both theoretical papers & empirical research), students will become familiar emerging trends in the field.

**Application:** Students will have the opportunity to apply insights from their research of an emerging topic through an interview and document review of a leader within an organization.
Additional Information

Attendance

**Class attendance is mandatory.** If a student fails to participate in a required Discussion Board, the student will be responsible for writing an essay (2–3 pages) that addresses the topics discussed in the missed session. The instructor's goal is to ensure that each student gains knowledge about and becomes skilled at the concepts, theories, and models that comprise the course, thus the purpose of this policy is to ensure comprehensive learning.

Grade Appeals

If a student believes an error has been made on a grade for an assignment, please bring it to the instructor's attention within one week of the date the assignment has been returned to the student. When submitting a grade appeal, please first review the assignment instructions and grading criteria, and then summarize the reasons for concern. Grade appeals must be in writing.

Late Assignments

Each assignment is due on the date indicated. There are no make-up dates or extensions for the assignments except for documented personal emergencies or special permission granted by the instructor in writing. *Special permission must be requested in writing to the instructor at least two days prior to the due date of the assignment. Please note that assignments submitted late (without an extension from the instructor) will automatically be reduced 10% for each day or partial day late.*

Northeastern University Online Policies and Procedures

For comprehensive information please go to [http://www.cps.neu.edu/online/](http://www.cps.neu.edu/online/)

Academic Integrity Policy

The University views academic dishonesty as one of the most serious offenses that a student can commit while in college and imposes appropriate punitive sanctions on violators. Here are some examples of academic dishonesty. While this is not an all-inclusive list, we hope this will help you to understand some of the things instructors look for. The following is excerpted from the University’s policy on academic integrity; the complete policy is available in the Student Handbook. The Student Handbook is available on the CPS Student Resources page > Policies and Forms.

*Cheating* – intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in an academic exercise

*Fabrication* – intentional and unauthorized falsification, misrepresentation, or invention of any data, or citation in an academic exercise

*Plagiarism* – intentionally representing the words, ideas, or data of another as one’s own in any academic exercise without providing proper citation

*Unauthorized collaboration* – instances when students submit individual academic works that are substantially similar to one another; while several students may have the same source material, the analysis, interpretation,
and reporting of the data must be each individual’s independent work.

*Participation in academically dishonest activities* – any action taken by a student with the intent of gaining an unfair advantage

*Facilitating academic dishonesty* – intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to violate any provision of this policy

*Zero Tolerance Policy* – For this course, a finding of Academic Dishonesty will result in an automatic F for the course.

*Finally,* you should know that submitting the same work for two different classes is a violation of academic integrity unless the instructor gives permission.

For more information on Academic Integrity, including examples, please refer to the Student Handbook, pages 9-11.

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