Overview

Organizations are ubiquitous. For most of us, our initial encounter with the world is in an organization – a hospital. We spend the bulk of our childhood and adolescence attending another organization – the school. Most Americans – approximately 90% — will work in an organization as distinct from being self-employed. Organizations are a fixture in our lives at an early age. The ubiquity of organizations is such that we often take them for granted, rarely stopping to consider how they influence our lives. Organizational change has garnered considerable attention from academics, private consultants and policy-makers. This interest cuts across organizational sectors — for-profit, non-profit, and government organizations.
This class focuses on organizational change. Studies in Organizational Change is an advanced course in the Learning & Organizational Change major designed to introduce students to key constructs and ideas about change in organizations. The class is organized as follows: We will begin with a discussion of the notion of change in general and organizational change in particular. We will identify four levels of analysis that scholars who study organizational change focus on – individual, group, organization, and institution. We will then examine different levers or resources for organizational change including – routines, human capital, social capital, technology, culture, identity and organizational environments. We will conclude by considering how these resources interact with aspects of the organization such as time and developmental stage. Throughout the class, students will be expected to constantly apply the constructs and ideas to particular cases of organizational change.

Requirements

The course is organized as a seminar. We expect each of you to come to class well-prepared to take-up the discussion questions for each week, and be prepared to respond to objections from peers. To participate in this way, you will have to read the assigned texts carefully and critically before each class. We expect your comments to be referenced to the readings, and to use the readings thoughtfully and effectively. Voicing opinions without a basis in and reference to the required readings or some other source is not very helpful. We expect you to bring copies of the readings to class, so you can reference them easily during discussions. Contributions to class discussions will count for 35% of the course grade and judged based on

1. Clear well-organized arguments, the use of evidence from the readings (or from other sources), and the ability to respond to the critique of peers.

2. Two reaction papers (no more than two double-spaced typed, pages) where you react critically and thoughtfully to a particular reading or an issue (e.g., routines) that cuts across readings for a particular week. There will be a sign up sheet for these papers available at our first meeting.

In addition there will be two other assignments. The first of these assignments should be turned in by February 8th and will account for 25% of your final grade. This paper will require you to use the constructs and ideas from the first half of the class to critically analyze a case of organizational change. The paper should be 5 – 6 typed, double-spaced pages using APA style and submitted electronically.

The final assignment will be a group project where students will pick a case of organizational change in a particular institutional sector and use the constructs discussed in the course (and where necessary additional constructs) to analyzed change. Students will present their case in class and submit a written summary of their analysis as a report – 6 – 8 pages, typed and double-spaced, using APA style. It is due no later than March 13th and will account for 40% of your final grade.
Week 1, Jan 4: Introduction

Course Overview
Assignment Overview
Group Assignment
Sign up for reaction papers
What do we mean by change?
What is the relationship between change and learning?
What do we mean by organizational change?

Week 2, Jan 11: Organizational Change: Definitions and Dimensions

Required Readings:


Case One: Phase Zero: Introducing New Services at IDEO

Reference Materials:

Week 3, Jan 18: Routines

Required Readings:


Reference Materials:

Week 4, Jan 25: Culture

Required Readings


Case Two: Hewlett Packard: Culture in Changing Times

Reference Materials


Week 5, Feb 1: Human Capital

Required Readings:


Reference Materials:

Week 6, Feb 8: Social Capital

Required Readings:


Distribute cases for final assignment.
Reference Materials:


**Week 7, Feb 15: Technology**

Required Readings:


Reference Materials:

**Week 8, Feb 22: Organizational Identity**

Required Readings:


Week 9, March 1: Institutional Environments

Required Readings:


Reference Materials:

Week 10, March 8: Review and Organizational Life Cycles

Required Readings:


Reference Materials: