

GPA 8020: Organizational Theory and Behavior

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Class Meets: Tuesday Evenings, 6:00 – 9:30 PM in Grad-Law Conference 008

Business and government organizations play a major role in the achievement of social and economic well being in this country. The large complex organization has become the dominant tool for defining, solving and even creating problems. Consequently, there are increasing demands for competent managers – people who can understand and analyze organizations and take informed action.

Unfortunately, many of us see and understand organizations in only very limited ways. The aim of this course is to increase the ways you are able to see, understand and analyze organizational behavior. The course focuses on the dynamics of organizational life. As we will see, these dynamics involve various tensions: between the individual and the organization, between individuals with competing interests, between groups within organizations, and between the organizations and the wider society. Given these many potential sources of conflict it is amazing that people maintain themselves in "organizations" and that productive work gets done! By the end of this course I hope class members will have a deepened appreciation for the complexities of organizing and this appreciation will lead to more reflective approaches to organizing and managing.

Course Objectives:

Included in the course goals for students are the following objectives:

- 1) To have students become familiar with and able to apply a variety of theoretical perspectives to the problem of "reading" organizational situations.
- 2) To develop a capacity for self-reflection – a capacity to see yourself as an organizational actor and "read" yourself and your options as well as the external situation.
- 3) To be able to diagnose organizational situations and prescribe courses of action from a variety of perspectives.

Texts:

Images of Organization by Gareth Morgan, Sage Publications, 1997.

Course Readings Packet

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. I will consider it a personal courtesy if an absence is unavoidable to call me and notify me prior to class time. You will be responsible for any handouts or assignments discussed in class (I encourage you to use the "buddy system").

Evaluation:

There will be at least one exam to assess your understanding of the various concepts and perspectives. Your aim is to demonstrate to me that you understand the material covered and that you can integrate the readings and class discussions and weave solid, well rounded and reasonable arguments.

You are also required to write a Personal Case Study in which you will 1) describe in detail a problematic organizational situation you were involved in and 2) present a multi-perspective analysis of that situation and 3) address the "So What" question. I anticipate this assignment will not be easy so I encourage you to begin thinking about it soon. You will turn in a "case in progress" twice so that you can receive feedback on how you are doing. The cases will be due at the end of the course. This is a difficult assignment, but I believe it offers a tremendous potential for learning. **Important dates to remember are June 20th and July 11th.**

Grading Summary:

Exam I	35%
Case Study Project	45%
Class participation	20%

Tentative Course Schedule

Tuesday, June 6: Understanding organizations and organizing

Introductions
CASE (to be read in class): Eagle Smelting

Tues. June 13: Mechanical Images of organizations

Read: Morgan chap. 1 & 2; "Moral Mazes: Bureaucracy and Managerial Work" – Jackall; "Human Behavior in Organizations" – Argyris; "The Personality vs. the Organization Hypothesis" – Strauss.

CASE: A Visit to McDonalds
CASE: The Paradoxical Twins: Acme and Omega

Saturday AM , June 17: Mechanical Images of Organizations (con't)

CASE: Lincoln Electric Co. Be prepared to discuss the "genius" of this organization's design as well as the problems you foresee for this company. (Read Morgan first)

Saturday PM, June 17: Organismic Images of Organization

Read: Morgan chap. 3

Tuesday, June 20: Organismic Images of Organizations (con't)

Read: "Stages of Group Development" - Carew, Carew & Blanchard.
CASE: The Bill Smith Case
DUE: Part 1 of "Personal Case in Progress".

Tuesday, June 27: Organizations as Cultures

Read: Morgan Chap 5; "Mimic Your Way to the Top" – Newsweek.
Due: Understanding the Culture of Your Organization Exercise

Distributing Mid-Term Exam
Mid-Course Evaluation

Personal Case Study Projects

Part I: The Situation and the questions you have about it. Part I should tell the story or describe a situation, one that involved you and that you are still curious about. (This assignment should be done on a situation that has some element of "unfinished business"). It MUST end with a series of numbered questions that your story provokes you to ask (minimum 5-7 pages).

DUE: JUNE 20.

Part II Multi-metaphor analysis. Take the perspective of each of the metaphors in turn (machine, the organismic, culture, political, psychic prison, instrument of domination) and examine how the situation looks from each of these frames. What light does each metaphor shed on the focus of your inquiry? For example, if your question is: "Why was ABC Co. such a difficult place to work?" each perspective may give you a different answer. This section is an analysis concerned with explaining, understanding why... it is NOT a re-description of the situation. You should incorporate material from the readings as well as the text. (Use at least 2-3 pages for each metaphor, although some may be longer depending on your case).

DUE: JULY 11.

Part III So what and now what? This is a reflections section. You have already done the multi-metaphor analysis (using 4 lenses), so what insights/learnings have come from doing it? Is your perspective on the situation any different from when you started? What courses of action do you see now that perhaps you did not see before? What metaphor (s) appear to provide the most insight into understanding WHY THIS SITUATION HAPPENED THE WAY IT DID? What metaphor (s) appear to provide you with the most insight in terms of future actions in similar situations (the "now what")? Other editorial comments or self-reflections you may wish to include go here. (Approximately 5 pages for this section).

REMEMBER:

- Title your case
- Turn in all previous drafts (typed & double-spaced) with the final draft, but the final draft of the whole case must be of finished quality.
- The final project is due **July 25**.

*** It may prove very helpful to you to read ahead Morgan's chapters 10 & 11 to get a sense of where this case may go. DO THIS ANY TIME IN THE SEMESTER.