LEADING IN ORGANIZATIONS
LEONARD N. STERN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

B01.1302.00, Spring 2011

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Course Blackboard Site: http://sternclasses.nyu.edu
Lecture slides, additional readings, course material, and communications from the instructor will be posted on the Blackboard.

COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW:

The objective of this course is to help you develop skills to analyze and address management challenges and opportunities as you lead organizations and lead in organizations. Leading in organizations today is more challenging than ever. Managers have to cope with rapid changes in organizational environments and technologies, hyper-competitive environments, globalization, increasing diversity and decreased stability of the workforce, and changes in workers’ needs and preferences.

This course will introduce you to some of the central theories and frameworks in management and will help you understand how to apply those theories and frameworks to analyze and address real managerial and organizational problems. It will also provide you with a better basis for understanding and evaluating organizations and their management practices. Some of you may already be in management positions, and this course will help you perform your roles more effectively. Others may be moving along a career trajectory that will lead to such a position in the future. Regardless of your current situation, the course will facilitate your development and progress, which depend on your ability to accurately read and respond to the organizational context within which you work. It is my hope that by the end of the semester, you will be more knowledgeable about how organizations systems work, be able to see organizational and managerial problems in ways you could not see them before, and be more conscious of the choices you make as a manager and their consequences.

The course has three major components. The first is “macro” in nature. It focuses on organizational level issues and problems, such as how an organization should be designed (e.g., centralized or decentralized?), what strategy it should follow (e.g., where and how will we compete?), and how culture and control affect organizational dynamics. The
second part is more “micro” in nature. It focuses on teams and individuals and addresses challenges such as how to make effective decisions, how to build and manage effective teams, how to cope with the political nature of organizations, and how to motivate employees. The macro component is concerned with overall organizational performance, while the micro component is concerned with managing individual and group effectiveness. The third part of the course brings these two perspectives together through the lens of leadership and organizational change.

Structure and method: Management and leadership skills are most effectively developed through practice. It is essential that you have considerable opportunity to work on actual management problems. In order to do this we will rely heavily on case analyses. THE PRIMARY VEHICLE FOR LEARNING IN THIS CLASS IS CASE ANALYSIS. YOU ARE EXPECTED TO READ EACH CASE AND THE ASSIGNED READING MATERIAL CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND TO BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THEM DURING THE APPROPRIATE CLASS SESSION. Case discussions will be supplemented by lectures, exercises, videos and small group discussions. We’ll have a fifteen minutes break at suitable points throughout each class session.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Required reading:

1. The majority of the cases and readings are to be found in a digital course pack prepared for this course and referred to as DCP in this syllabus.
2. Additional cases and readings will be posted on Blackboard – referred to as BB in this syllabus.
3. Course slides – the course slides, which will be posted on Blackboard after each session, are part of the material that will be used in our discussions and in your assignments.

Suggested reading:

4. Daft, R. L. Organization Theory and Design, 10th Edition. South-Western, Cengage Learning (can be ordered from NYU bookstore or Amazon) – referred to as Daft in this syllabus. This is a textbook that includes chapters on many of the course topics. It is offered to students who wish to get more theoretical background to the issues discussed in the course. The syllabus indicates in parentheses the pages that a relevant to each session. Earlier (and less expensive) editions of this book may also be consulted. However, the page numbers are given only for the 10th edition.

GRADING:

- First team case analysis – 10%
- Second team case analysis – 15%
- Individual case analysis – 25%
- Final team project and presentation -- 30%
- Preparation, in-class participation, and reactions -- 20%

This course gives no quizzes to determine whether you are keeping up with the readings. However, preparation is a necessary part of successful case analysis and class participation, and it is assumed that you know all of the material that came before the case you are analyzing for a particular class session.

**Grading in detail:**

**Team Assignments (in general):**

Fifty five percent of your grade in this course will depend on team products. One of the most important managerial skills is team management. To advance your skills in this area, you will work in teams and will have the opportunity to learn from your colleagues as you work on the team assignments.

One concern that some students have about working in teams, and consequently about team grades, is the issue of equity. If you work harder and do better work than your peers why should your grade be dependent on them? This view is generally a function of coming from educational environments that only ask for and measure individual performance.

Your output for many of the assignments in this school will be a team product, such as a group case analysis. The reader of a case analysis cannot determine individual contribution any more than a manager reading a group report. Some processes require groups and therefore should be evaluated on a group basis. Group tasks should be given group rewards. This means that you not only must make a direct contribution to the development of the written assignment, but that you also have an obligation to make your team work effectively.

An infrequent problem associated with group projects is a team member who does not do his/her share of the job. You are urged not to let problems develop to the point where they become serious.

Everyone in this class is expected to carry an equal share of the team workload. I will not supervise the team process closely. Rather, you are expected to get the work done and to manage each other. Groups often ignore problems wishing that they just disappeared. They typically don’t – they just get worse. Try to set up clear procedures regarding how the team cases will get done at the beginning of the semester (i.e., how the group should work together in very concrete and explicit terms). You are expected to solve any problems among yourselves. If you really can’t, bring it to me. However, I am extremely reluctant to intervene except in extreme circumstances, as I truly believe that making your teams work is part of the learning experience for this class.
Assignment 1 – First Team Case Analysis – 10%

This short assignment is given early in the course in order to enable me to provide early feedback to guide your further work in the course. This assignment will ask you to analyze one of the cases that will be discussed in class (SMA – MIPD, included in the DCP). You will be asked to identify the main issue raised by the case, analyze its causes, and make recommendations to the management of the organization.

Your assignment is due no later than 10 am on February 26 (before the third session). Please submit your analysis via email to bshamir@stern.nyu.edu.

The page limit for this analysis is 3 pages. You may submit an additional page of appendices including figures or tables. Your analysis must be typed with 12 point font, double spaced, with normal 1 inch margins. Please name the file you send me in the following way: Lio_GroupX_MIPD. Include the group number and the names of all group members in the title page of your paper.

Assignment 2 – Second Team Case Analysis – 15%

This assignment will require you to analyze a case integrating concept learned in the first part of course dealing with strategy, structure, organizational environment, organizational life cycle, organizational culture and the congruence or lack of congruence among these elements.

The case to be analyzed is not included in the DCP. It will be posted, together with some guiding questions on Blackboard on March 12. Your assignment is due no later than 10 am on March 26 (before the sixth session). Please submit your analysis via email to bshamir@stern.nyu.edu. No late assignments will be accepted.

The page limit for this analysis is 5 pages. You may submit additional 1-2 pages of appendices including figures or tables. Your analysis must be typed with 12 point font, double spaced, with normal 1 inch margins. Please name the file you send me in the following way: Lio_GroupX_Name of Case. Include the group number and the names of all group members in the title page of your paper.

Assignment 3 – Individual Case Analyses – 25%

Each participant will submit a case analysis in the second half of the course. The cases to be analyzed are included in the DCP. You have a choice between two cases:

- Managing Xerox’s Multinational Development Center
- SAS institute

For each case, there are analysis guiding questions outlined in the syllabus (see below). These questions can guide your thinking and serve to frame your critical review of case
issues. However, they are intended to help orient you to the issues in the cases. They should be considered broad guidelines for the case analysis in the sense that they suggest entry points for analysis and possible issues to overcome with the recommendations, but you should view them as starting points rather than endpoints for your analysis.

Choose the most central issues in the case and focus your analysis and recommendations on these issues. State at the beginning of your paper which issues you’ve chosen to analyze and why you’ve chosen them. (Your ability to identify the central issues will be one of the criteria on which your assignment will be graded). Devote about two thirds of you paper to an analysis of these issues using relevant course material from the sessions preceding the discussion of the case you analyze and the readings for that session, and about one third to recommendations that clearly follow from your analysis. Discuss the feasibility of your recommendations, how they can be implemented, what might be the difficulties in implementing them, and whether implementing them may have undesirable side effects.

The page limit for this analysis is 5 pages (double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins). You may submit additional 1-2 pages of appendices including figures or tables. Please submit your analyses via email to bshamir@stern.nyu.edu no later than 10:00 a.m. on the day of the class session for which the analyzed case is assigned (SAS on April 9 and Xerox on April 16). Please name the file you send me in the following way: Lio_Name_of_Case. Include your name in the title page of your paper. No late assignments will be accepted.

Assignment 4 – Final Team Project - 30%

Your final team project will involve selecting an organization to analyze using the tools that we have covered in class. This assignment will require you to use and integrate analytical frameworks regarding the three levels of analysis the course covers: Individuals, teams, and entire organizations. The main part of the project will involve learning about and assessing the key characteristics of the chosen organization as well as attempting to understand the main issues with which the organization appears to be wrestling. Your team will address the general issue of how the performance of the organization can be improved. Improvement will mean different things in different organizational contexts.

The goals of the project are:

- To help you lean to apply the content of this course to the analysis of an organization in “real time”.
- To facilitate the retention of the core teas, ideas, research and frameworks in the course.
- To experience the value of these tools in making sense of complex situations and in generating well reasoned conclusion about and organization’s likely future and well reasoned recommendations for improvement.
- To see how the material works together to yield an integrated understanding of the
organization of our choosing.
• To practice presentation skills.
• To enable you to share learning experience with the other students in your class and enrich the course’s contribution.

Do not focus on more than 3 issues. One of the requirements of this assignment is to integrate material from various parts of the course. Therefore, do not restrict your analysis only to macro level issues (environment, strategy, structure, culture) discussed in the first part of the course. If you choose to focus largely on macro level issues, choose at least one issue which has implications for the more micro level issues that are going to be discussed in the second part of the course (such as motivation, performance management, team processes, power and politics, conflict), and discuss these implications in relation to the macro level issues. If you choose to focus largely on micro level issues, relate these issues in your analysis to macro level considerations.

You can choose to analyze an entire organization or a unit within an organization. You can choose an organization with which one or more of you are familiar or an organization you would like to learn more about. I do not expect comprehensive research about the organization but gaining sufficient knowledge (from media reports, company reports, books, articles, interviews or other sources) to enable you to identify central issues, analyze root causes, and make recommendations. Most of the published sources on organizations address macro issues. Therefore, in order to also address micro issues in your analysis you’ll have to either search for published sources that cover these issues or gain information (e.g. through interviews) with organization members who are familiar with these issues.

It is advisable to start planning for the project and collect material before the first deliverable. I will be available to meet teams or team representatives who wish to consult with me on issues that arise during the planning and preparation of the final project.

**Deliverables for the team project:**

• APR 2 – Submit the following:
  o Group number
  o Names of team members
  o Name of the organization you plan to analyze (and the unit, in case you are going to analyze a sub-unit of the organization).
  o List of the issues you plan to focus on in your analysis
  o List of the sources you are going to use to gather information about the organization.

• APR 30 or MAY 7 (dates to be assigned by me) – deliver a 15 minutes PowerPoint Presentation to the class. Choose an audience for this presentation. The audience can be the management of the organization (in which case you can think about yourselves as an internal task force or an external consultant group), prospective investors or buyers (or donors in the case of a non-profit organization), or, in the case of a government organization, a body or committee that evaluates the
performance of the organization for the sake of budget allocation. Submit the slides of your presentation by e-mail to bshamir@stern.nyu.edu no later than 24 hours before the beginning of the class session in which you are going to present. Please name the PowerPoint file in the following manner LiO_Group Number_Finalpp.

- MAY 7 – submit a final project write up (maximum 8 pages, double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins). Appendices including tables and figures do not count toward the 10 page maximum. Submit your written report by e-mail to bshamir@stern.nyu.edu no later the beginning of the final session. Please name the PowerPoint file in the following manner LiO_Group Number_Final. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Evaluation of Written Assignments and Presentations

All written analyses will be evaluated according the following criteria:

a. Quality of analysis –
   1. Address of key case issues
   2. Identification of root causes of existing problems and/or potential problems.
   3. Use of course concepts and frameworks in the analysis – Are the relevant concepts and frameworks identified? Are they applied correctly as a lens for understanding what happens and why?

b. Quality of recommendations –
   1. Do they follow clearly from and reinforce the analysis?
   2. Are they realistic? Are they specific or vague and general? Will they help the executives in the situation to solve their problems?

c. Originality and insightfulness of ideas presented

d. Quality of writing and presentation

For the final project the grade will be based 70% on the written report and 30% on the presentation. The audience (class participants) will be involved in evaluating the presentations.

Preparation, Participation, and Reactions – 20%

WHAT YOU LEARN IN THIS COURSE IS DIRECTLY PROPORTIONAL TO HOW MUCH YOU CONTRIBUTE TO CLASS DISCUSSION.

Students are expected to actively participate in class in the analysis of cases, and in exercises and discussions. Doing so will require that you read the assigned material and prepare the assigned case(s) or exercise before coming to class. You are also expected to be in class on time. Absence, lateness, and lack of preparation will have a negative impact on your grade for participation. If you have difficulty with spoken English, or some other issue that will interfere with your ability to participate, you must discuss it with me within the first two weeks of class so that we can arrive at common expectations.
for your performance.

Attendance is monitored, and frequent absences will result in a reduced class contribution grade. I also expect that everyone will arrive to class on time and stay to the end of the class period. Remember, everyone’s learning experience in this class depends on everyone’s active participation. We are all inter-dependent and have an obligation to each other.

Attending class but not participating does not provide me with a sufficient basis for giving you a satisfactory grade for class participation. Not carrying your weight on team assignments can also have a detrimental impact on your participation grade. No one will receive an A or A- grade who is not an active and positively productive participant regardless of the points they accumulate in other assignments. I emphasize positively productive because I am far more interested in the quality of what you have to say than in the amount of talking that you do. Your goal should be to contribute to the class discussions. In order to do so, it will be necessary to listen to, and build upon, the comments of your classmates. Please don’t monopolize the discussion. Please don’t feel deterred if I pass over your hand or if I cut your comment short on occasion - it probably means that I think you have already contributed a lot and that others need the “air time” more.

My goal is to foster a supportive classroom environment that emphasizes learning. We will all learn from each other. As such, I request that we treat everyone with respect. Because there is typically no single “right” answer for organizational and management problems, I encourage debate. I encourage you to experiment and take risks; there is certainly no harm in giving an answer that turns out to be ineffective or inappropriate for the issue under discussion (i.e., you won’t be penalized for “wrong” answers). I like to run a classroom in which people are free to contribute as they choose but if I feel that people in the class are insufficiently prepared for a meaningful discussion, I will call on students, so be prepared!

**Short Preparation and Participation Notes** - As part of your participation assignment, you will also be asked to write and submit 2 “preparation notes” and 2 “reaction notes”. You can choose the 2 sessions for which to write the preparation notes and the 2 sessions on which to write your reaction notes (4 different sessions – not including Session 3 and the session devoted to the case you submit as an individual case analysis).

The preparation notes are to be submitted by e-mail before the beginning of the sessions in which the cases on which your write them are going to be discussed. In your preparation notes (1 page maximum) answer two questions briefly: (1) What is the main issue raised by the case to be discussed in the session? (2) What is your main recommendation for the manager or organization discussed in the case (justify briefly)? (You are not required to answer all the preparation questions attached to the case in the syllabus. The preparation questions are designed to help all the participants to prepare for the session but you are not required to submit your answers to them in writing).
The reaction notes are to be submitted no later than a week after the sessions on which you choose to write a reaction. In your reaction notes (maximum 1 page) select one or two issues of those discussed in class on which you have a reaction, a critique, an insight, a personal takeaway, or a good example, and address them briefly.

I will not grade the preparation and reaction papers and will not provide ongoing feedback on them. They will be taken into account in your participation grade. Failure to submit reasonable notes will deduct from your grade. Particularly good notes, insights, examples or critical points will add to your grade.

COURSE OUTLINE:

SESSION PLAN

SESSION 1 - INTRODUCTION – FEB 5

READ:
1. Course Syllabus and Appendix 1 to this syllabus: A guide to case analysis.
2. Congruence Model (BB)

PREPARE:
The Paradoxical Twins: Acme and Omega Electronics – Parts 1 and 2 (BB).

Preparation Questions:

1. What are the similarities and differences in the organizational structures and processes of Acme and Omega?
2. Who is the more effective leader, Tyler or Rawls?

SESSION 2 – WHAT MAKES AN ORGANIZATION EFFECTIVE: THE ALIGNMENT BETWEEN STRATEGY, STRUCTURE, AND CULTURE – FEB 12

READ:
1. “Are You Sure You Have a Strategy?” (DCP)
2. “What is strategy?” (DCP)
3. (Daft: Ch. 2, pp. 56-77).

PREPARE:
Southwest (DCP)

Preparation Questions:
1. Analyze Southwest’s strategy. What are the pros and cons of that strategy? How appropriate is that strategy given the organization’s strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats within the environment?
2. How has Southwest been able to deliver consistent high performance over such a long period of time? What is its competitive advantage?
3. What are the main characteristics of Southwest’s culture? How do they contribute to Southwest’s success?
4. What are the most serious issues facing Southwest? What recommendations would you offer for Southwest for addressing these issues?

SESSION 3 – ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE– FEB 26

NOTE:
SUBMIT FIRST TEAM CASE ANALYSIS (SMA-MIPD) BEFORE 10 AM.

READ:
1. “A Note on Organizational Structure” (DCP)
2. (Daft: Ch. 3, pp. 88-128).

PREPARE:
SMA (DCP)

Preparation Questions:

1. What are the “performance gaps” that MEPD is experiencing? Why are they occurring? In particular, why is it experiencing problems related to new product development?
2. How are MEPD’s environment and structure different from those of other division of SMA, and how are these differences affecting the division’s performance?
3. Assess MEPD’s approach to differentiation and integration. What linking mechanisms do they use, and how effective are they? Analyze other structural dimensions and how they might be contributing to the problems being experienced?
4. What recommendations would you offer Guido Spichty for addressing the division’s problems? If you propose a new organizational structure, draw an organizational chart of the new structure.

SESSION 4 – ADAPTATION TO CHANGES: ALIGNING THE ORGANIZATION TO CHANGES IN ITS ENVIRONMENT, SIZE, AND LIFE CYCLE – MAR 5

READ:
1. “Evolution and Revolution as Organizations Grow” (DCP)
2. “The External Environment” (BB)
3. (Daft: Ch. 4, pp. 138-166; Ch. 9, pp. 332-352, 356-360)

PREPARE:
Microsoft and Wang (NYU cases will be posted on BB)

Preparation Questions:

1. Analyze how growth affected Microsoft and how Gates managed the company’s expansion. How did Gates’ responses to growth differ from An Wang’s?
2. Analyze both Microsoft and Wang using the life cycle model and the model of organizational decline. Which life cycle crises (if any) has Microsoft experienced? Wang? Were they able to avoid any such crises? Why?
3. What organizational perils or life cycle crisis do Gates and Microsoft face at the end of the case? How should Gates and his team deal with these?
4. Why is leading growing companies so difficult?

SESSION 5 – ORGANIZATIONAL CULUTRE AS A COORDINATION AND CONTROL SYSTEM –MAR 12

NOTE:
INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECOND TEAM CASE ANALYSIS WILL BE POSTED. PAPERS ARE DUE BEFORE 10 AM ON MAR 26.

READ:
1. “Leading by Leveraging Culture” (DCP)
2. (Daft, Ch. 9, pp. 352-356, Ch. 10, pp. 372-389)

PREPARE:
Duane Morris (DCP)

Preparation Questions:

1. What factors have led to Duane Morris’s success?
2. What aspects of Duane Morris's culture are most easily scalable? Which are the least so?
3. How should Duane Morris plan to integrate their new acquisition?
4. What are biggest risks faced by Duane Morris in next five to ten years and how should they be approached?
SESSION 6 – BUILDING AND MANAGING TEAMS – MAR 26

NOTE:
(1) SECOND TEAM CASE ANALYSES ARE DUE BEFORE 10 AM.
(2) THERE ARE TWO CASES TO PREPARE FOR THIS SESSION.

READ:
1. “A note on team process” (DCP)

PREPARE:
1. Henry Tam and the MGI team (DCP)
2. Taran Swan at Nickelodeon Latin America (DCP)

Preparation Questions for Henry Tam:
1. What is your evaluation of the MGI team’s process? What were the root-causes of the team’s process problems?
2. What were the strengths of the MGI team? How would you have evaluated the MGI team “on paper,” that is, before their first meeting?
3. What could Henry have done earlier to avoid the team’s problems?
4. At the end of the case, what actions could have Henry taken to increase the team’s effectiveness?

Preparation Questions for Tarran Swan:
1. Describe the culture at Nickelodeon. Be specific.
2. How did Swan go about building that culture? (Consider the interrelationships among Nickelodeon’s context, design factors, culture and outcomes.)
3. Describe Swan’s leadership style. What impact has it had on the culture? Is she a Level 5 leader?
4. What are the challenges that Swan faces at the end of the case? What actions should she take?

SESSION 7 – DECISION MAKING BY INDIVIDUALS AND TEAMS – APR 2

NOTE: SUBMIT PLAN FOR FINAL PROJECT: GROUP NUMBER, NAMES OF GROUP MEMBERS, NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION YOU ARE GOING TO ANALYZE, LIST OF ISSUES YOU PLAN TO FOCUS ON, AND LIST OF SOURCES YOUR ARE GOING TO RELY ON.

READ:
1. “A note on team process” (DCP)
2. (Daft: Ch. 12, pp. 450-470, 478-484).

PREPARE:
Group Processes in the Challenger Launch Decision – A and B (DCP)

Preparation Questions:

1. How would you characterize the broader context surrounding the January 1986 teleconference? What impact might that have on the group’s decision-making process?
2. Put yourself in each of the participant’s (Roger Boisjoly’s, Bob Lund, Larry Mulloy) shoes. The teleconference is scheduled for tonight. What might you be concerned about? What approach will you take with the group to get support for your perspective? What will you actually say during the meeting?
3. Why did the group fail to cooperate in this collective decision? What was wrong with the decision making process?
4. If you were in charge of the teleconference, what would you do to prevent or deal with the problems in the decision making process?

SESSION 8 – MANAGING MOTIVATION AND PERFORMANCE – APR 9

NOTE: SUBMIT INDIVIDUAL CASE ANALYSIS BEFORE 10 AM IF YOU’VE CHOSEN TO WRITE ON THE SAS CASE.

READ:
1. “Do financial incentives drive company performance?” (DCP)

PREPARE:
SAS Institute (DCP)

Preparation Questions:

1. What is Goodnight’s view of the use of pecuniary and non-pecuniary incentives?
2. How has this view shaped the culture, HR policies and practices, performance management, and incentives of SAS?
3. Could the principles and methods of hiring, motivating employees and managing performance employed by SAS be used in other organizations, other industries, other types of tasks, and other types of employees? Why or why not?
4. Could SAS continue to succeed with the same management practices that had brought it to its present position? What are your recommendations to SAS management as the company grows and moves forward?
SESSION 9 – MANAGING POWER, POLITICS AND CONFLICTS IN ORGANIZATIONS – APR 16

NOTE: SUBMIT INDIVIDUAL CASE ANALYSIS BEFORE 10 AM IF YOU’VE CHOSEN TO WRITE ON THE XEROX CASE.

READ:
1. “Power play” (DCP)
2. (Daft, Ch. 13, pp. 490-521)

PREPARE:
Managing Xerox’s Multinational Development Center (DCP)

Preparation Questions:

1. What have Clendenin’s objectives been at Xerox? What obstacles did he confront in accomplishing those objectives?
2. What kinds of power does Clendenin have? How does he influence others within or outside the MDC? How effective are his attempts at influence, and why?
3. Is Clendenin an effective leader? Is he too manipulative? Not manipulative enough? What are the potential costs and benefits of Clendenin’s leadership style?

SESSION 10 – LEADING AN ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION - APR 23

READ:
1. “Leading change: why transformation efforts fail” (DCP)
2. “Change through Persuasion” (DCP)
3. (Daft, Ch. 11, pp. 412-415, 428-439)

PREPARE:
Paul Levy: Taking Charge of the Beth Israel Medical Center – A (DCP)

Preparation and Assignment Questions:

1. How would you describe the situation Levy inherited at BIDMC? What challenges did he face? Why did previous turnaround efforts fail?
2. What Does Levy have to do in order to turnaround the situation and BIDMC?
SESSION 11 – FINAL PROJECTS PRESENTATIONS – APR 30

NOTE: TEAMS PRESENTING ON THIS DATE: SUBMIT YOUR PRESENTATION 24 HOURS BEFORE THE CLASS.

SESSION 12 – FINAL PROJECTS PRESENTATIONS AND COURSE WRAP UP – MAY 7

NOTES:
(1) TEAMS PRESENTING ON THIS DATE: SUBMIT YOUR PRESENTATION 24 HOURS BEFORE THE CLASS.

(2) FINAL PROJECT WRITE-UP TO BE SUBMITTED BY ALL TEAMS BEFORE THE SESSION.
Appendix 1: GUIDE TO CASE ANALYSIS

Many students find case analysis to be difficult due to the relative lack of structure of management problems. No correctly answered list of questions or mechanical process will lead to the "right" answer. In fact, there is no single "right" solution to most managerial problems. When analyzing a case, remember that there are many possible approaches and solutions. The goal is not to figure out "the answer" but to sharpen your analytic, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. The following steps outline the basic approach that you should follow when analyzing a case, whether for class discussion or in preparation for a written analysis.

First, read the assigned reading. The reading material should play an important role in your analysis of the case. Remember that case analysis in this course is cumulative. Thus material from earlier chapters or readings may be relevant and should be applied where relevant.

Second, read the case and the questions in the Case Preparation Questions. Take notes about the important issues that the case raises and the material from the reading that seems to apply. The guide questions indicate issues that you will want to consider, but you may need to go beyond merely answering the questions to effectively analyze the case. A written case analysis should be an integrated product, not a sequential set of answers to the questions.

Third, analyze what is occurring in the case and why. You should be able to identify outcomes in the case and/or issues that the organization faces. These outcomes may be bad (e.g., shrinking market share, hostile employees, conflict among departments, inability to control operations), or they may be good. The goal of analysis is to explain the underlying mechanisms that are producing the outcomes or problems that you see in the situation. This process will require you to distinguish between symptoms and casual mechanisms. Consider the following example: You go to the doctor with the "problem" of a cough or a fever. It may be easy for the physician to treat the cough or fever with a number of medicines much like we could treat worker dissatisfaction by paying higher wages. However, it is important for the physician to determine the causes of the problem. If the cause of the cough is tuberculosis then only treating the cough is apt to lead to serious long-run consequences because the underlying disease process will still be at work. Clearly the cough is just a symptom of a deeper underlying problem. Good analysis cleverly weaves symptoms into a causal map that gets to the underlying root of the situation. What I will look for in your case analyses is the cogency of your explanation of the process leading to the symptoms. At the outset you are likely to struggle with this. It is a difficult and time-consuming process to develop clinical skills.

Remember that specific cases are assigned because they present good opportunities to practice using different theories and frameworks. Therefore, you know in every instance that some material from the assigned reading, and often other material from earlier readings, must be applicable to the case. You will find theories and course frameworks
essential for supporting your analyses. You should view the theories as a way to explain
the underlying causal mechanisms contributing to the outcomes in the case, and as a way
to organize and justify your arguments. Be explicit in your use of course concepts and
theories, but avoid the tendency to throw in course terminology merely as “buzzwords.”

Recognize that some cases do not have problems as such. The organization may be doing
quite well. Cases are real-world situations, not necessarily examples of bad management.
Don’t make up problems when none exist. Take the situation for what it is rather than
approaching it with a point of view. Be alert for the danger that some information in
some cases is coming from biased participants and therefore must be taken with a grain
of salt.

A characteristic of cases is that you never have all the information that you want and
there is often considerable information that is irrelevant, trivial or even obfuscat ing. The
absence of essential information may force you to make one or more assumptions.
Assumptions should always be clearly labeled as such, they must be necessary and they
must be realistic. In general, you should try to avoid assumptions.

There is no need to describe events in your written analyses. This is merely a waste of
space, as I have read the case and am aware of all the facts. Rather, you should use
material from the case to support your analysis or to provide examples to back up your
arguments. Remember, your objective is to explain, not describe or report.

At the conclusion of each written case analysis, you will need to offer recommendations
for change, or recommendations for how the situation could have been better handled.
Keep in mind that recommendations typically have both positive and negative
consequences. For example, a solution may eventually work but be very costly, difficult
to implement and take a long time to have a significant impact. You should develop the
recommendation that has maximum positive impact and minimum negative
consequences.

Recommendations should logically follow from the analysis and they should be feasible.
For example, firing the boss and replacing her/him with a better manager may be a good
"theoretic" solution but it may not be feasible in a given set of circumstances.
Recommendations must be effective and efficient. Killing a fly with a bomb is effective
but not efficient. Keep in mind that only 30% of your grade will be based on your
recommendations. The remaining 70% will be based on your analysis. Space allocation
should reflect this distribution.

Finally, make sure that your case analyses are well written, clearly organized, and have
a logical flow. Poor writing will affect your grade. It usually helps to provide a brief
summary statement and “roadmap” at the beginning of the analysis to orient and guide
the reader. Also make sure that any recommendations you provide follow directly
from your analysis of the problem, and that your overall conclusions are consistent
with your analysis.
PARTICIPATING IN CASE DISCUSSIONS

1. Keep in mind that there is usually more than one right answer. A case is a problem-solving situation, and managerial effectiveness often depends upon seeing different solutions.

2. Offer your ideas, substantiating them with facts from the case and course material.

3. Adopt an open-minded stance, entertain new ideas from others and consider how your recommendations might change in light of these new insights.

4. Listen to your classmates and build on what they have to say. Resist the impulse to focus so strongly on what you want to say next that you lose track of where the discussion has moved.

5. Be fearless, but professional and most important, respectful in questioning or disagreeing with a colleague. Case discussions are also an opportunity to refine interpersonal skills. "I see some drawbacks to your proposal" or "I'm wondering if you considered the effects of x on y" creates a much different climate than "You're wrong" or "That's not a good idea."

6. Write down new ideas that occur to you and make note of any theories or course concepts brought to bear that you did not apply in your analysis.

7. Evaluate the discussion and your participation in it. What could you do to improve in the next case discussion?