MBAD 261: ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERSHIP

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Course Objectives
This course is about organizations and leadership, with an emphasis on health care organizations. The course has four objectives. The primary purpose is to expose you to a useful body of knowledge about people and organizations. We will review a variety of concepts and ideas, provide a critique of those ideas, and examine corresponding practices. This is an abbreviated course (1.5 credit) so that necessarily limits what we can cover. I’ll focus on those ideas that are especially useful to managers or leaders. The second purpose is to encourage students to assume a reflective and developmental posture about this knowledge in relation to their personal and professional lives. You cannot learn to be a capable manager or leader from reading a couple of books or taking an MBA course. If you want to improve your management/leadership capabilities you must be determined to develop yourself through ongoing deliberate reflection on your experiences, and then adjusting your actions. That won’t happen overnight. The third purpose is to instill a sense that the challenges of the modern health care workplace require more adept management of the human element than ever before. Finally, students will acquire some practical ideas and tools that they can creatively apply to their work setting and leadership practices immediately.

Learning Methods
The course consists of readings, lecture notes, discussions, self-assessments, and exercises. I have chosen the materials and exercises carefully so that they compliment each other. At first glance the course may seem fragmented but it is actually well thought out, well integrated, so you will pick up a surprising amount of information if you are diligent. The workload is designed specifically for a short 1.5 credit course; it is predictable, flexible, and comfortably paced, and so should be congenial to working professionals with severely constrained time schedules. The course is designed so we all have the opportunity to learn from, and to teach, each other. Everyone will have the opportunity to participate.
Course Readings

Book: The required book is Hardwiring Excellence, by Quint Studer (2004) available new, used and Kindle on Amazon, also direct from the publisher, Fire Starter Publishing. The book is aimed at health care professionals in organizational settings, but it is applicable to almost any organization. It is an easy read, but do not be deceived by its folksy presentation and tone. Read the book carefully and thoughtfully; it is practical, easy to grasp, and strongly (albeit subtly) grounded in sound organization and behavior theory. It is also grounded in reality; Studer’s ideas and methods are being used to transform healthcare organizations around the country.

Optional Book (not required for this course): If you are a clinician, such as a physician, charge nurse, clinical team leader, nurse practitioner, therapist, clinical supervisor or office/practice manager, or are about to start your own medical practice or need to improve your practice, I recommend: Practicing Excellence by Stephen Beeson, as a companion book to Studer. It is also published by Fire Starter and available on Amazon. Beeson is a practicing physician who carefully applies Studer’s central ideas and philosophy to the clinical setting.

Other readings: I will supply weekly supplemental notes to critique or embellish Studer where needed, or add additional material.

Course Requirements

Briefly, here is what you will need to do for this class:

1. Read any weekly notes supplied by me. Read the required chapters from the book.
2. Participate in the weekly discussion board. Read as many student posts as possible.
3. Complete the leadership development exercises.
4. Complete the final takeaway paper assignment.
5. Utilize the non-graded open forum as needed.

Course Requirements Details

All course deliverables will be uploaded to Blackboard. Please do not email any course deliverables to myself or the TAs, unless specifically directed.

Exams: There are no exams for this course.

Participation in online discussion (60%):
Student participation occurs through weekly discussions on Blackboard Discussion Board. Each week, except for the final week of class, I will supply a discussion question for student comment. You will be graded each week on your comment.

Rules and format for comments in the graded discussion forum: Read carefully. You will be able to make a comment on the weekly discussion question any time during the week, Monday through Sunday. Prior to commenting on the question you should read the assigned material from Studer and also read my weekly teaching note. You will be graded on the quality of your comments, their thoughtfulness, clarity, concision, and the overall degree to which they add value to the discussion. You may not alter your comments once made, nor can you make a
comment after the particular discussion ends. *Weekly discussions end Midnight EST Sunday so remember your time zone.* I will usually take down the discussion temporarily to grade.

Please contribute only ONE comment for each graded discussion. Your comment should consist of one well-crafted paragraph. 100 words would be a decent minimum length, but no longer than 200 words per comment. If you make more than one comment per discussion in the graded forum it will be deleted.

Exception to the one-comment rule: TAs may make as many comments as they like. You can also answer follow up questions from me or the TAs. If you want to pursue further discussion of a particular point with another student you can move it over to the Open Forum.

Comment grading criteria: A valuable comment is a response to the question, or someone else’s comment, observation, or reflection that:

- offers a different and unique, but relevant, insight to the issue or question, perhaps based on your unique role or experience
- moves the discussion forward with a concrete example to generate a deeper appreciation of the concept or issue
- includes reference to the readings, other cases, exercises, or personal experience
- identifies possible tradeoffs or dilemmas, creates an interesting contrast or comparison
- re-shapes or reframes the original question in a more interesting way
- re-defines the problem in a more interesting or creative way

**Leadership development exercises (30%):**
Students will be guided through a series of leadership development exercises that will require scheduled deliverables throughout the course. Schedules and exercises will be detailed separately on Blackboard. Keep track of the due dates.

**Final Takeaway Paper (10%):**
Please prepare a one page single-spaced paper describing your main takeaways from the course and how you will apply, or act on what you learned. Your paper should draw briefly on all components of the course.

**Participation in Open Forum online discussion (not graded):**
I’ve set up an Open Forum discussion area so students may engage in free-form conversation, as a means to discuss other organizational, behavioral or leadership issues and problems. If you have a problem or issue you need help with, someone in the class is likely to have a decent solution. You are free to post to this as often as you like and to create threads. The Open Forum will be monitored but not graded.

**Grading Policy**
GWSB MBA Grading Policy recommends a curved grade distribution with an average between 3.2 and 3.4. The expected distribution is that the top 20% will receive an A, the next 20% an A-, the next 20% a B+, the next 20% a B, and the next 20% a B- or lower. It is ultimately up to the instructor to decide on any grade distribution.
Course Policy

Points of contact: Due to the large size of this class if you have questions during the course regarding your assignments or grades your initial point of contact should be your assigned teaching assistants. They are here to help you.

Students are responsible to complete all assignments by their due date, without exception. Late papers or other deliverables are not accepted without good reason. No additional student comments can be made or graded once the discussion is closed for the week.

Blackboard and email will be primary means of communications, and you will need to check both frequently to make certain you keep abreast of any changes.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is expected of all class participants and applies to all class-related activities. Any violation of academic integrity will result in failure of the assignment and course. I encourage each of you to review the university’s policy regarding academic integrity at www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity if you are unclear about what constitutes academic dishonesty or if you have questions. Please also see www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code/html for GWU’s Code of Academic Integrity.

Accommodation

Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation as a result of a disability should contact me during the first day of class to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Disability Support Services office at 202.994.8250 to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodation. For additional information you may refer to http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss.

Miscellaneous

Record-keeping mistakes happen, so please keep all papers to ensure you have received proper credit for all assignments. Also, flexibility is an operative concept here, and is necessary to meet the needs of the class and the demands of the broader situation. Any changes will be announced in detail and will be posted on Blackboard.

Course Schedule

Posted on Blackboard