

Introduction to Organization Development Fall 2008

New York University
Psychology Department
MA Course G89.2074
Mondays 6:20 - 8:10

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Course description:

This course is designed to provide students with different perspectives on Organization Development at the individual, group, and organizational levels of analysis. Theoretical models will be considered, along with real-world examples of organizations that have or have not benefited in the past, or that might or might not benefit in the future, from Organization Development interventions. Students will learn how to use theoretical models to evaluate organizations that they research (and/or where they are currently working or have worked in the past), and will also learn how to evaluate theoretical models in terms of their research and work experience. The course is structured to cover both the “process” (classes 1 - 4) and the “content” (classes 5 - 12) of Organization Development.

Readings:

Cummings, T.G. & Worley, C.G. (2005). Organization Development and Change (8th Ed.). Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Publishing.

Additional materials are available on the course Blackboard, which should be printed out each week and brought to class.

Office hours, Mondays 5:15pm-6:15pm (in room 161G, office phone: 212-998-3563):

Office hours are held one hour before class. The demands of my consulting practice make it unlikely that I will be able to review and respond to written materials that you email me at other times during the week. However, you are welcome to give me written materials to review when class meets and then schedule a phone call to discuss what you have handed in, or to email me materials that you would like me to review during office hours.

Course grading:

<u>Class participation/resource sharing</u>	10%	
<u>Best practices presentation/class facilitation</u>	40%	(half determined by classmates)
<u>Final paper</u>	50%	

Class participation and resource sharing

In order to get the most value out of this class, and to contribute the most value to this class, it is important that all students come to class fully prepared to discuss and debate that week’s readings. This course is also a collaborative endeavor, so during the semester, each student is required to distribute, either electronically and/or via hard copy, at least two OD-relevant handouts, web links, or other materials or resources that your classmates may find interesting and useful. For example, information about conferences or events, organizations that students can join, listserves, etc.

Best practice presentation and class facilitation

Students will sign up in pairs on October 6th to jointly present “best practices” in one OD content area based on a literature review. You will find evidence in a given content area, such as merger integration, executive coaching, or organizational design for “best practices” in OD interventions. If no consensus has emerged in the literature about best practices in the area you choose, make your own evidence-based argument for what should be considered best practices.

Drawing on theory, quantitative data and case studies, you will make an argument for if, when and how a certain kind of OD intervention is worth the investment of time and resources that an organization would need to make. Your presentation should build on your basic I/O knowledge as well as course concepts, and should consider how the intervention that you are describing can impact, and be impacted by, other organizational factors and systems. Imagine that you are a team of internal or external OD consultants who are making an argument, based on evidence and precedents, to a skeptical CEO or board of directors, about why their organization should do the intervention in the first place, and why it should be done in a manner congruent with the best practices that you identify and document. There should also be an analysis of the intervention(s) in the context of OD theories and models.

You will also prepare a PowerPoint slide handout/summary, as well as any appendices or supplementary materials, to hand in and to distribute to your classmates at the class at which you and your partner present. The two of you will spend 20 minutes presenting your research, answering questions, and facilitating class discussion about how the best practices you are describing can be integrated with the textbook and other course readings. You and your partner are required to schedule time in office hours or after class at least one week in advance of your presentation to review a draft of your slides and to receive feedback. You will record feedback meetings and outline/draft submissions in an “activity log” that you will submit on the last day of class.

Recommended topics for the presentation include:

Human Process: Executive coaching; process consultation; conflict resolution

Technostructural: Organizational design; work design; responsibility charting

Human Resource Management: Performance management; 360 degree feedback, leadership development; workforce diversity; mentoring programs; downsizings; employee retention

Strategic: Mergers and acquisitions; culture change

Grading criteria for the best practices presentation and class facilitation

In the spirit of collaboration, half of your grade for your presentation will be determined by your classmates’ ratings of your performance and the quality and utility of the handouts you distribute to the class. Ideally, your classmates should find your work professional and thorough enough to save your handouts as a background resource for their class papers, preparing for “O” comps questions, and/or for practical use in the field. The best practices presentation will be evaluated based on: 1) Structure- how well the presentation is structured; 2) Comprehensiveness- the quantity and quality of information that you and your partner present; 3) Integration- how well the presentation and the discussion that you facilitate integrates with the textbook and other course materials. The final criterion for the presentation is 4) Utility. After each presentation, presenters will leave the room and the class will designate a facilitator/feedback provider to collect feedback and ratings of your work, which s/he will write up and then debrief with you after class. Please make a copy of the written feedback and ratings you get and hand it in to me at the following class.

Final paper:

For the 12-15 page final paper, you are free to write about interventions that either internal consultants, external consultants, or both internal and external consultants might conduct. The only constraint to your choice of topic is that it has to be different than the focus of your best practices presentation, although you are free to draw upon your classmates' presentations. In addition to the recommended topics below, you are welcome to choose any other kind of OD intervention listed in Cummings & Worley or to pick another type of OD intervention not described in the textbook, as long as you can find enough written about that topic and discuss the topic with me first. You will need to select a real world organization that is facing organizational challenges, research those challenges, describe those challenges, and present one or more relevant, integrated OD interventions that could help the organization successfully adapt to those challenges. Your argument for what the organization should do should be based on evidence and precedents, case studies and best practices, and you will need to closely link what was done at other organizations to what should be done at the organization you are endeavoring to assist. It is helpful to simultaneously consider solutions and problems as you pick a topic, as it is often easier to start with solutions and find an organization that could benefit than to start with the organizational problem and search for solutions. This assignment should help you both in terms of preparing for comps, and in terms of learning how to respond to client requests in the real world.

You are required to write and hand in 1) a comps-like problem statement/set of questions that summarizes the organizational situation/challenges you will be addressing in your paper, on or before October 27, 2) an outline for your paper, on or before November 10th and 3) a first draft of your paper, on or before November 24th. You will then schedule time during office hours or after class to discuss your question, outline and draft with me so that I can give you feedback and suggestions. You are also welcome to come to office hours anytime for feedback about subsequent problem statement/set of questions, outlines or drafts of your paper. As in the real world of OD, it is imperative to take a collaborative, iterative approach to working with your "client". As with the presentation, you will keep an activity log throughout the semester that will record your efforts.

Your paper should have a clear introduction that gives a preview of its structure and a clear conclusion that summarizes what you have covered. The paper itself should be well structured with a logical progression from one section to another in order to read as an integrated whole. Case studies should be woven in thematically, rather than being presented one at a time.

In the paper, it is suggested that you include both descriptions (how has this intervention successfully or unsuccessfully been done in the past) and prescriptions (how should this intervention be conducted at your client organization). The topic you choose should be approached from the OD perspective, not just from a technical, business, leadership, or HR perspective. In other words, OD is when an organization takes a holistic, systemic, integrated approach to creating or modifying a performance appraisal system, not when an HR department routinely administers an unchanging, pre-existing performance appraisal system. An OD focus means that consultants, internal or external, facilitated a change process that involved multiple aspects of an organizational system, in a manner consistent with the definitions of OD given in your textbook.

Given how hard it is to find relevant case examples, I recommend that you begin researching possible paper topics as soon as possible, and I will be glad to help you refine your ideas. I also suggest that you not choose a topic until you have verified that you can find enough relevant case studies and other kinds of evidence and data. Think of your paper as being analogous to the backup you would need in order to argue a case in court- you are making an argument for an OD solution to the organization's challenges based on evidence and precedents. While the presentation is general, best practices- and "solution"- focused, the paper is specific, case study- and "problem"- focused.

Grading criteria for the paper

The paper will be evaluated based on: 1) Structure- how well it is structured; 2) Comprehensiveness- the quantity and quality of references that you collect and present 3) Integration- how well the paper integrates references and evidence, descriptions and prescriptions; 4) Utility- the usefulness of your paper to your prospective client- e.g. if they only had your paper to go by, they would be able to design and implement an appropriate intervention, having a clear picture of the “who, what, where, why, when and how” of the intervention that you are advocating.

Late assignments will not be accepted unless there is a very compelling reason and you and I agree upon a revised due date in advance.

Please review this syllabus carefully throughout the semester and do not hesitate to ask questions at any time. OD is an iterative and collaborative process where being prepared and asking the right questions at the right time are the single biggest determinants of success. In addition to developing your substantive knowledge of OD, the goal of this course is to build your competence and confidence in researching, collaborating, writing, presenting, and making compelling, evidence-based arguments for your point of view.

Weekly schedule:

Class 1: **Introduction/course overview/content areas preview/history of OD; The role of the OD practitioner, values and ethics, organizational entry and contracting**
Sept 8

Cummings & Worley (2005) Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4

Class 2: **Diagnosis, data collection and analysis, feedback**
Sept 15

Cummings & Worley Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8
Cilliers & Koortzen (2000): TIP article: “The psychodynamic view on organizational behavior”

Class 3: **Intervention design, leading and managing change, evaluation and institutionalization**
Sept 22

Cummings & Worley Chapters 9, 10, 11

Sept 29: Rosh Hashanah - no class meeting

Class 4: **OD “Process” recap and review; social networks in OD**
Oct 6:

Dattner networking presentation

Sign up, with a partner, for best practices presentations

Oct 13 Columbus Day – no class meeting

Class 5: **Human process interventions I: Executive coaching**
Oct 20

Cummings & Worley Chapters 12, 13
MacFarquhar (2002): “The better boss”

Best practices presentations

Class 6: **Human process interventions II: Process consultation**
Oct 27

Best practices presentations

Final paper problem statements due

Class 7: **Human process interventions III: Conflict resolution**
Nov 3

Best practices presentations

Class 8: **Technostructural interventions I: Organizational design**

Nov 10

Cummings & Worley Chapters 14, 15, 16
Kaufmann “Organizational design” presentation

Best practices presentations

Final paper outlines due

Class 9: **Technostructural interventions II: Work design, responsibility charting**

Nov 17

Krantz (2004) “Responsibility charting” article

Best practices presentations

Class 10: **HR management interventions I: Performance management**

Nov 24

Cummings & Worley Chapters 17, 18

Best practices presentations

Final paper drafts due

Class 11: **HR management interventions II: Employee development, workforce diversity**

Dec 1

Hay Group: “Emotional Competence Inventory”, “Workforce Audit”

Best practices presentations

Class 12: **Strategic interventions: Mergers and acquisitions; Organizational Culture Change**

Dec 8

Cummings & Worley Chapters 19, 20; Kaufmann “Successful mergers” presentation
“Changing a culture of face time” HBR article

Best practices presentations

Activity logs due

Final papers due