



Organizational Psychology
Barnard Psych 2151
Spring, 2007



Instructor: Vanessa Bohns
vkb2101@columbia.edu

328 Milbank
Wed. 4:10-6:55

Course Topics

This course is an introduction to the field of human behavior in an organizational context. Specific topics we will cover include personality, group dynamics, creativity, leadership, management, motivation, conflict resolution, negotiation, organizational culture, and organizational change.

Course Format

This will be a highly interactive course. It is premised on a basic assumption that understanding and appreciation of organizational principles are best achieved via hands-on experiences, so long as these experiences are then grounded in a combination of lecture, discussion, reading, and reflection on the underlying psychological concepts. Various simulations have been selected to help illustrate points in readings and lectures and to motivate further reflection and reading by class members. Many of these exercises will put you in new, and potentially uncomfortable, situations, but within the relatively safe environment of the classroom. In these exercises, you are urged to try out new and creative behaviors, skills and tactics that have suggested themselves to you from your own reading and reflection.

Office Hours

Office Hours will be held from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Mondays in 415 Milbank. If you cannot make it during these times, please email me to set up an appointment. In general, the best way to contact me is via email.

Readings

Required Readings: All required readings will be available online via Courseworks. Required articles are listed on syllabus with a •
Recommended Readings: Recommended articles are listed on syllabus with a ◇

Readings must be completed prior to the class for which they are assigned. Any additions/changes to the reading schedule will be distributed in class or posted on courseworks. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact me to obtain any missed materials.

Grading

Attendance, Preparation, Participation	10%
Team Project	50%
Final Paper	20%
Exam	20%

Attendance, Preparation, Participation – 10%

YOU ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND ALL SESSIONS. Unless you arrive on time and prepared, you harm the learning experience of your classmates. If you foresee missing a session (for excused or unexcused reasons), you must e-mail me in advance of class. One excused absence is allowed for the semester (not including religious holidays). An unexcused miss costs you 3 of the 10 points in your participation grade. An attendance list will be passed around each session – it is your responsibility to sign it.

You must arrive to class with readings completed for the session. I will occasionally cold call students to assess their knowledge of the material. Inadequate preparation for any class meeting will cost 3 of the 10 points in your participation grade.

Team Project – 50%

In groups of 4, students will act as a team of consultations who are making a bid to get hired by a company to improve its organizational functioning. Early in the semester, each team will receive a “case” describing a current problem faced by a company. Your job is to convince a panel of company executives (the class) that you are the team that can best improve their current or future situation. This project will be graded in several distinct components. You will primarily be assessed on 1) written analyses of your individual and team dynamics, 2) the oral and written pitches prepared by your team, and 3) your contribution to the group’s teamwork.

- **Planning Paper – 10%.** Prior to the start of the project, your team will turn in a paper outlining your strategy for accomplishing the team project. Section 1 of the paper (approx 6 pages) will be crafted by the entire team, identifying team goals and plans for the project. In Section 2 of the paper, each team member will contribute 2 pages identifying her/his personal goals for the project.
- **Written Pitch – 15%.** Your group will prepare an 8-10 page prospectus of your team’s “plan of action” if you were to win the contract. This should be a professional document, weaving together elements of both strategy and marketing.
- **Oral Pitch – 15%.** Your group will have 15 minutes to give your pitch to the company execs. You have complete freedom as to how you will use this time – in prior years, students have drawn on video, posters, pamphlets, powerpoint, etc. to complement their presentations. This portion of your grade will be assessed by your classmates in the audience.
- **Teamwork – 10%.** There are no rules about how the work should be divided among team members. The criteria for success will be the seamlessness of the final product and the satisfaction of your teammates with your work. Each of your teammates will be given the opportunity to grade you anonymously on your effort and contributions to the group.

Final Paper – 20%.

In 6-8 pages you will analyze your team experience, drawing on concepts from the entire course. You will be graded on the quality of your writing, the depth of your analysis, and the successful incorporation of reading, lecture, and discussion topics.

Exam – 20%

On May 9th, there will be an exam, essay format, covering concepts and theories from the course.