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ISSUES IN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION: STUDIES & APPLICATIONS  
(MCCE2140-sect 1)  

Course description: Students examine major concepts related to  
organizational cultures with a particular focus on the 4 stages  
related to composing a professional life: a) Anticipation  
(expectations we have about a particular field/career & the  
facets that influence career decisions; b) Organizational Entry  
(e.g., interview process and salary negotiation); c) Assimilation  
(e.g., learning the ropes, roles, rituals and performances in  
workplace settings; mentoring; challenges and barriers to  
"fitting in"; managing and leading effectively; dealing with  
conflict productively; impact of technology); d) Exit (e.g.,  
sources of stress; work/life choices; clash of organizational  
norms/expectations and personal values)  

Objectives: To provide students with an understanding of:  
a) transformations of organizational life and culture; b) how our  
different standpoints of identity influence expectations about  
and, how we experience the workplace (e.g. gender, 
race/ethnicity; culture, sexual orientation, age); c) examination  
of how we can influence/alter the organizational climate through  
impression management of verbal and nonverbal message tactics.  

Required Readings:  
University of California Press  

Coursepack: Available at Advanced Copy Center--735 LaGuardia  
Place (listed under Borisoff:MCCE2140). Contains articles and  
chapters that articulate with the course description and  
objectives. Additional articles will be distributed for  
presentations/discussion.  

Course Requirements/Assessment:  
1. Research paper and/or preparation of an in-depth case study.  
(Sample topics for the term papers and criteria for developing a  
case study are attached.) By the 5th or 6th class, please submit  
a brief abstract and/or outline of your topic. Approximate  
length: 15-20 pages, typed, double-spaced. Due: Second to last  
class: 60 points.  
2. Interview with an interviewer. Estimated: 3-5 pages (criteria  
and format will be distributed along with due date): 25 points.  
3. Attendance/participation/small group presentations/short  
assignments related to readings: 15 points.
Course Grading: Presenting the work/words of others as your own (uncited) constitutes plagiarism. University policy on plagiarism specifies possible consequences.

Disability: Those who are registered at NYU as persons with a disability should notify me early in the semester regarding any special arrangements or needs that may facilitate the completion of any given assignments or general success in the class. All students affected should register with NYU's Office of Disability Services.
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES/ASSIGNMENTS

Note: Articles from course pack designed with (P); Topics discussed by professor designed with (L).

Week 1: Introduction and overview of course. Organizational Traits (identification and definition) (L); Distribution of criteria for interviewing an interviewer (due week 5) ← (Feb. 2)

Assignment: Read: Fredric M. Jablin: "Organizational Entry, Assimilation, and Exit" (P)
Organizational Anticipation: Written assignment: Indicate your projected field as well as projected goals (i.e., position-level, responsibilities) in this field. Include the values, traits and skills that you have (or hope to obtain) that you believe qualify you and will enable you to succeed in your given career (will be collected). (Estimated length: 1-1 1/2 pages typed, double-spaced.) ← (Feb 1)

Week 2: Discussion of Jablin; Discussion of projected goals; Perspectives on Organizational Cultures (4 types) (L)

Assignment: Read: Michael Pacanowsky & Nick Trujillo: "Organizational Communication as Cultural Performance."
Small group assignments will be assigned that ask you to provide examples that relate to the diverse dimensions of performance discussed in the article.

Week 3: Discussion of article; small group discussion and full-class discussion of the implications of cultural performance.

Assignment: Steven M. Ralston & William G. Kirkwood: "Overcoming Managerial Bias in Employment Interviewing (P); Jane Hyun: "Perfect for the Part: Mastering the Face-to-Face Job Interview" (Breaking the Bamboo Ceiling) (P).
Written assignments: Prepare sample cover letter/application letter; resume. Reminder: Written assignment of your interview with an interviewer is due week 5.

Week 4: Organizational entry: Discussion of issues raised in the readings related to self-representation as part of the selection process. Ethical issues related to the performance dimension of interviews will be examined as well as implications related to how factors such as gender, race, culture, sexual orientation may impact how we are read by others. Articles in the media will be distributed for discussion.

Week 5: Organizational entry continued: continuation of articles; assessment of verbal/nonverbal communication competence as this relates to hiring practices/decision. Due: interview with → Feb interviewer; Due this week or next week: outline and/or brief paragraphs on projected final paper for class
Assignment: Read: Jeffrey Lax: "Do employer requests for salary history discriminate against women" (P)

Week 6: Organizational entry continued: Discussion of reading as well as media articles related to challenges related to compensation; strategies for effective negotiations. Patterns and themes related to hiring decisions/practices related to traits, behaviors (deriving from interview with interviewers.)

Assignment: Organizational Assimilation: Read: Karl Weick: "The Nature of Sensemaking" (P); Joan C. Williams: "Masculine Norms at Work" (P); Arlie Hochschild: The Managed Heart

Week 7: Discussion of readings and media articles that relate to how we make meaning of the workplace environment and the impact on expectations for performance.

Assignment: Organizational Assimilation continued--The Meaning of 'Difference' and Implications for Organizational Communication: Read: Rosabeth Moss Kanter: "The New Workforce Meets the Changing Workplace: Strains, Dilemmas, and Contradictions in Attempts to Implement Participative and Entrepreneurial Management."(P); The meaning of age (articles will be distributed for group discussion); Brenda J. Allen: "Feminist Standpoint Theory: A Black Woman's (Re)view of Organizational Socialization" (P) (the meaning of race); Jane Hyun: "Asian Cultural Values" (P); Anna L. Spradlin: "The Price of 'Passing': A Lesbian Perspective on Authenticity in Organizations" (P); Bren Ortega Murphy & Ted Zorn: "Gendered Interaction in Professional Relationships" (P); Belle Ragins, Bickely Townsend, Mary Mattis: "Gender Gap in the Executive Suite." (P)

Week 8 & 9: Discussion of readings above: Challenges/barriers Application from training programs (L)--examples.

Assignment for Week 10: Organizational Assimilation continued--Challenges related to crossing the line; The Meaning of Mentoring to preventing problems; to promoting "fitting in". Read: Robin P. Clair: "The Use of Framing Devices to Sequester Organizational Narratives: Hegemony and Harassment" (P); Michael Hackman & Craig Johnson: section on finding a mentor; functions of a mentor (P); Jane Hyun: "Superior Mentoring Strategies" (P)

Week 10: Discussion of readings

Assignment for Week 11: Self-assessments: Instrument in course pack: Complete the Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument; Read: Michael Hackman and Craig Johnson: "Leadership and Followership Communication Styles" (P); Daniel Goleman: "The Leadership Repertoire" (P)(meaning of emotional intelligence). Articles will be distributed for small group presentations that address challenges of leading; changes in leading (impact of gender); strategies for resolving/addressing conflict in the workplace (how we get along
with/manage others).

Week 11: Discussion of readings; results of self-assessments; articles related to leadership styles and the impact on the workplace (assimilation and/or sense of "fitting in."

Assignment for Week 12: Challenges to "Fitting In"--impact on deciding to stay; to exit: The impact of FMLA--altering how the workplace is experienced. 
Read: Arlie Russell Hochschild & Anne Machung, "The Second Shift" (P); Arlie Russell Hochschild: "The Time Bind" (P); Erika Kirby & Kathleen Krone: "The Policy Exists But You Can't Really Use it": Communication and the Structuration of Work-Family Policies" (P); Lisa Belkin: "The Opt-Out Revolution"; Sylvia Ann Hewlett Creating a Life

Week 12: Discussion of above readings and lecture on implications. FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE ON WEEK 13.

Assignment for Week 13: FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE ON WEEK 13.
Read: Sandra Herndon & Cassandra George: "Workers in Crisis: The Lure of Work, the Lure of Technology, and the Limits of Human Endurance" (P); Patricia Wallace: "The Changing Context of Employment" (P); Patricia Wallace: "Work, Nonwork, and Fuzzy Lines between Them" (P); Kathryn Fonner & Michael Roloff "Why Teleworkers are More Satisfied with their Jobs than are Office-Based Workers: When Less Contact is Beneficial" (P)

Week 13: FINAL PAPER IS DUE. Discussion of above readings. Media articles that speak to how workers are impacted by technology and changing values (L). — 웨도. 아프. 희. 야

Week 14: Final class: Strategies to promote retention and easing stress in the workplace: limits of technology; Hewlett's "Off Ramps/On Ramps"; challenges related to re-entry into the workplace
ASSIGNMENT: INTERVIEW WITH AN INDIVIDUAL IN THE WORKPLACE WHO CONDUCTS EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

Instructions: Please see the categories/questions below. Your report should summarize his/her responses. Assignment should be typed, double-spaced (typically 2-3 pages in length).

1. Brief background/overview
   a. Name of company and type of organization.
   b. Name/position (title) of person interviewed. How long have they been at this company; what size is the company; and ask them to estimate how often they hire and for what types of positions.
   c. To be completed by you (do not ask!): approximate age of the individual and demographic information (gender, culture, ethnicity).

2. Tell the person that you are doing a survey on organizational entry; on how hiring decisions are determined. Below are the questions:
   a. If appropriate, considering the type of position that you would be applying for, approximately how many applicants do they typically receive for this type of position?
   b. What criteria is used to determine/decide who will be interviewed? How are applications submitted/reviewed?
   c. In general, how many applicants are actually interviewed for each position? Over what time period (e.g. 1 week, 2 weeks, etc.)? Do they expect/receive cover letters? How important is the cover letter (e.g., as or more important than the resume?)
   d. Typically, who interviews applicants? (e.g. 1 interview; series of interviews?; group interviews?)
   e. How would they characterize the organization? (adjectives/metaphors--e.g., 'fast-paced,' 'cutting-edge,' 'service-oriented,' 'family,' 'close-knit,' informal' etc).

3. The structure of the interview
   a. Does the company provide a list of/ or protocol of questions that must be asked OR, does the interviewer determine the questions?
   b. What are typical questions asked during the interview?
   c. Are there atypical questions that the interviewer finds helpful? Can they provide some examples?
   d. During the interview process, what are some examples of behaviors and/or responses to questions that are "turn-offs"?
   e. During the interview, what are some examples of behaviors and/or responses that are "turn-ons"?
   f. What communication traits/qualities does the interviewer look for in an applicant? (Verbal as well as non-verbal?)
   g. Can they provide examples of questions that the interviewee asks that they view as positive? That they view as negative?

4. What advice would they suggest for applicants who want to work for their company and/or in this field?

5. Final question: Are there particular challenges in this field that relate to negotiating work/life balance?
The topics listed below are merely suggestions of areas you may wish to explore. You may choose a topic and work alone; you may also decide to work with a partner and do a collaborative project. The third option is to do an in-depth case study.

General guidelines for preparing the paper:
1. Length should not exceed 20 pages (including references, typed, double spaced); 40 pages if working collaboratively. PAGINATE paper; use staple; on front of the paper include your email address, telephone number & student ID number.

2. An outline or brief paragraph(s) for the projected topic should be presented to me by class 5 or 6 (to help determine if the topic is too large, too general, etc.). This is to help you in the process.

3. If you plan to work collaboratively, I would need to know specifically (in writing) who will be responsible for the discrete areas of your joint work. Moreover, when the final work is submitted, you would need to include again who was responsible for which portions of the paper.

4. Citations: you may use APA or MLA style manual and or footnotes (Bobst library and NYU bookstore has materials on this.

5. Plagiarism: presenting the work/words of others as your own ideas/words (that is uncited). University policy on plagiarism includes the possibility of receiving an automatic "F" on one's work; the possibility of expulsion from the program. (Student handbook has information on this. I would be happy to answer questions on this topic.)

6. Use of outside/supporting sources: The paper should demonstrate and understanding of what we have covered in class. Depending on the topic you select would determine which class readings would be included if you decide to expand your chosen topic. For example, if you want to examine the transformation of leadership, you would include the readings on leadership as part of your paper and would provide additional sources that speak to the topic. If you want to explore issues related to race, or gender, or culture in the current workplace landscape, you would include the readings in the class on this topic as part of your examination. Once you determine your topic, I can help guide you on how readings for class and out of class would apply.
SAMPLE TOPICS:
1. "The Overworked American" has been an abiding theme in both academic and popular works for well over 6 decades. One approach to examining this topic is to examine the transformation of the meaning of work over time. It would be possible, as well, to compare two cultures: does the "overworked American" resonate in another culture?

2. "Family Friendly" has been used especially since the mid 1990s to describe many workplace environments (across fields). If you choose to examine the field in which you wish to work, is this an appropriate metaphor or, a contradiction in terms?

3. "Work/Life Balance" has been applied especially to gender and careers--particularly for women in diverse careers (i.e., higher education, law, accounting, medicine, technology industries, news/media industry, etc.). How does this metaphor function? This topic can be approached historically; it can also be approached from a cross-cultural lens--that is, comparing what we are reading in class to expectations in another culture.)

4. Work as performance. The notion of "acting"/wearing a "mask" in the workplace. Several scholars address this in our readings (Hochschild "Managed Heart"; Pacanowsky & Trujillo; Ralston & Kirkwood; to some extent Kanter). A critical essay could be done examining the threads that run through the discourse of the unauthentic self that we create in what for most of us will absorb the majority of our time for many decades.

5. Globalization has become an almost ubiquitous term to justify expectations/transformations in the workplace (e.g., "competitive edge," "24/7 service/accessibility," "cost of doing business in a global economy" vis à vis the justification of outsourcing of production and services to other countries. What are the repercussions of this discourse? (You do not need to identify every impact.)

6. Being the perpetual "Other." Kanter's, Allen's and Spradlin's pieces speak to the effects of being a "token" in workplace settings. This topic can be examined in many ways. One might be to look at the field in which you want to work: what are the extant demographics of inclusion; at diverse ranks. This can be examined through interviews with individuals who are working in these fields (I would help you with this process).

7. How has our understanding of leadership been transformed over the past several decades? We'll be looking at several readings on this for the class. I'll have additional materials on this topic. Much has been writing since women's increased entry into and promotions within multiple fields.

8. Many metaphors have been used to describe women's experiences in the workplace: "Glass Ceiling," "Sticky Floor," "Maternal Wall." To what extent do these metaphors still apply? (You can
examine the discourse in general; a particular field.)

9. Technology has simultaneously been described as a "boon" and a "noose" in the workplace. These diametrically opposed metaphors would be interesting to examine. In what ways do these terms function—you can examine the area in which you plan to work/are working. What do these discourses reveal about organizational expectations? About the professional lives we are creating?
THE BASIS OF CASE ANALYSIS

The case study method is based on a systematic search of the case for the complex processes, events, or factors that have contributed to the presented problems, issues, or circumstances. Case analysis requires that we develop an understanding of a variety of research-based theories, propositions, and positions, which can then be used to explain the behaviors we see exhibited in a particular organization. These theories, propositions, and positions are also used to support the types of decisions and actions we propose as case solutions. In other words, case study analysis can be both explanatory and prescriptive. Analysis aims to provide theory-based explanations of events as opposed to anecdotal or conventional wisdom explanations. (In many cases, of course, theory-based and conventional wisdom explanations are the same.) Prescriptions are recommended courses of action based on an examination of options and theory-based reasoning for recommended decisions. Most cases lend themselves to an outline of description, analysis, and proposed solutions. Researching and reporting case studies can be accomplished in a three-step process: identify and describe the situation or problem; develop alternatives and test the "reality" of possible solutions; and propose solutions and suggest implementation plans.

IDENTIFY AND DESCRIBE THE SITUATION OR PROBLEM

The following list of questions will assist you in identifying and describing case situations and problems. The list is not exhaustive and is provided to help you begin a systematic search of the case.

What is factual information about this organization, its people, and their problems?
What is assumptive or inferential information?
What are the major and minor problems in the case?
What communication theories apply to these problems?
What organizational theories or perspectives are apparent?
How do environmental factors influence this situation?
What information is missing?
Are technological factors important?
Are formal organizational factors important?
Are individual behavior factors an issue?
Are group behavior factors an issue?

What appears to be most responsible for the communication

What are the "shared realities" of the organization?
Are the principal individuals good communicators? If not, what are the limitations?
Are the principals in the case assuming responsibility for their communication behaviors?
What are the major organizational strengths? Weaknesses?
What skills do the case principals exhibit? What is needed?
What is important or valuable to the individuals involved?
Do the principals share similar values?
How would you describe the culture of the organization?
Are individual and organizational goals compatible?

Case analysis requires that we not only identify answers to these questions but that we search for theory-based explanations of our answers. The annotated bibliography of this book provides a beginning. A review of the citations will help you identify theory that applies to cases in each chapter. Of course, the bibliography is not intended to be comprehensive to all potential theoretical explanations nor would it necessarily apply to original case material you develop. However, it will help you begin your search. The theories you select will add important analysis questions.

Often you will find that you lack important information for analysis. If this case does not provide information you believe to be important, state your need and make reasonable assumptions based on what is both present and missing. Be sure to identify any assumptions you make based on missing information. Moreover, watch for problem/symptom confusion. Many times organizational issues or concerns are symptoms of basic problems rather than the problem themselves. Continually ask "why" of identified symptoms and look for underlying causes or problems.

DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES AND TEST THE "REALITY" OF POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

What should be done based on your analysis?
What can be done?
How many alternatives for decisions/behaviors/changes can you identify?
What are the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative?
Can alternatives be combined?
Are the people involved willing to change?
Which theories, propositions, or positions support your choices?
What is the cost of your possible solutions?
PREPARING THE ORIGINAL CASE

If applicable, predict what will happen.

Discuss how your solution might be extended.

Discuss tradeoffs for implementation.

Identify who is responsible for what.

Section 1: Problem statement.

Explain your hierarchy of solution selection. Link solution.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

PROPOSE SOLUTIONS AND SUGGEST

(1) In the first place, the organization should not allow the process of selecting a potential sponsor to be an exercise in wishful thinking.

The process serves as a filter to identify those potential sponsors who are truly interested in the project. As a result, the process should

be designed to attract sponsors who are truly interested in the project.

Do you see alternatives to the problem? How is your process of selecting a potential sponsor affected by your alternative?

Appendix 24