Organizing Culture Change

HIST 387/ PSYC 461/ MGMT 491-002/ CONF 399/ SOC 395
M 1:30-4:10 PM
Enterprise Hall 174

Instructor of record: Peter N. Stearns
Participating faculty: Mandy O’Neill, Lester Kurtz, Seth Kaplan, Mara Schoeny

Culture change constitutes an important and complex phenomenon, both in human societies and in organizations. Changes in culture, and resistance to change, deeply affect a variety of contemporary issues. This course assesses several types of culture change, both American and international, in an interdisciplinary context, drawing from psychology, sociology, business, conflict analysis, and history. Case studies will range from religious conversions to corporate settings to conflict management, toward finding common patterns and best practices in implementing and analyzing culture change. Students, drawn from several relevant majors, will develop research topics and group discussions to explore additional themes in the field.
Draft Syllabus

Mon, Aug 29 | Session 1: Introducing culture and culture change; culture as causation; cultural globalization.

   Question: identify a current “culture issue” in society, an organization, or at GMU where you would like to see change.


Mon, Sept 5 | Session 2: Big Change: religious conversion, national transformations (HIST).

   AND

   Pick one of the following themes/readings: (1) Israeli culture; (2) Turkish cultural change; (3) Japanese culture and identity


Mon, Sept 12 | Session 3: Conceptualization of Culture and Culture Change (MGMT)


Mon, Sept 19 | Session 4: Doing Research on Organizational Culture (PSYCH).


**Mon, Sept 26 | Session 5: Theories of change, culture and constructive conflict (CONF).**

**Mon, Oct 3 | Session 6: Religion, change and the problem of violence (SOC).**


Recommended Readings:


**Tue, Oct 11 | Session 7: Mobilizing culture change: demilitarization; gay rights (HIST).**


**Mon, Oct 17 | Session 8: Culture and contestation/conflict; “culture wars” (CONF).**

**Mon, Oct 24 | Session 9: Social movements: mobilizing for change (SOC).**


Recommended Readings:


Mon, Nov 7 | Session 11: Culture and emotions (MGMT).

Mon, Nov 14 | Session 12: Emotional culture and remediation: the example of shame (HIST).

Mon, Nov 21 | Session 13: Culture change and policy: environment, abortion, birth control (HIST).

NOV 23-27 THANKSGIVING RECESS

Mon, Nov 28 | Session 14: Final student presentations; lessons learned – what are the dos and don’ts of culture change?
Requirements:
• Several brief reaction papers to assigned readings.
• A research topic proposal and exploration. Each student will develop a project but will discuss it periodically in an interdisciplinary student group. (Group discussions will occur as part of several of the later class sessions).
• Take home final examination.