MBA 653
Organizational Behavior
Fall 2011
Dr. Kevin Rockmann

| Class meets:       | Monday: 7:20 – 10:00pm in Fairfax University Hall 1200 (Patriots Cohort)  
|                   | Thursday: 7:20 – 10:00pm in Arlington Founders Hall 118 (Ravens Cohort) |
| Office:           | Enterprise Hall 217                                                 |
| Office hours:     | Before class and by appointment                                      |
| Contact:          | krockman@gmu.edu                                                     |
| Course Website:   | mymason.gmu.edu                                                       |

**Course Objective**
To change the way you think about and analyze behavior in organizations so that you become a more thoughtful and effective employee, co-worker, and manager.

**Learning Goals**
- Students should become familiar with the major concepts of organizational behavior.
- Students should understand how the structures of organizational systems affect human behavior.
- Students should become familiar with the kinds of issues managers encounter and with principles, practices and models that help managers deal with these issues.
- Students should examine the relationships among people within organizational systems and see how they influence organizational effectiveness.
- Students should deepen their understanding of their own behavior in organizations and improve their interpersonal and managerial skills.
- Students will demonstrate the team leadership and interpersonal skills needed to form, lead, and work effectively on diverse organizational teams.

**Class Format**
Understanding human behavior in organizations requires a variety of skills. For example, before one can analyze behavior–let alone change it–one must observe it. Likewise, a management or behavioral concept is of little service until one is able to link it to experience and vary behavior accordingly. Finally, understanding and skills improve with practice and feedback. Accordingly, the course design incorporates all these dimensions of learning through
the use of cases, exercises, group work, self-reflection, readings, discussion, lectures, written work, and opportunities for feedback.

**EVALUATION**

**Every graded deliverable in this class will be given a letter grade.** There are generally three levels of understanding that you can demonstrate. The first level is correct explanation and application of the concepts (B level work); the second level is correct explanation of the concepts along with a demonstration of somewhat creative thinking OR an exceptionally accurate description of concepts (B+/A- level work); the third level is correct explanation and demonstration that you have thought enough about the concepts and their application to have significantly learned from that thinking and gained insight (A level work). Things that are missing or wrong will earn C’s or lower. To earn A grades in this class, it therefore means that you not only have to know the material, but you have to challenge your thinking on the topics, engage the material at a deep level, and be willing to think critically about the implications of what you are studying.

A. **In-Class Quiz.** A well educated person has mastered the vocabulary and concepts involved in a field of study. Accordingly, you will be expected to learn and learn to correctly use key terms, concepts and constructs important to the field of Organizational Behavior. In an early session of our course you will be asked to demonstrate the state of your knowledge of such material on an in-class, closed book quiz. Feedback on this quiz will also provide you with an idea of just how well your approach to the material and study habits is working at that point in time.

B. **Module Assignment:** The Module Assignment is a short paper that must relate to one specific topic or concept from that specific module. The assignment should go beyond a simple summary. It could critique or extend an argument given in the readings, it could illustrate a point with examples drawn from your own experience, it could draw connections from the readings to other concepts covered inside or outside the class, it could bring in other articles you have read on the topic (or in the extra module resources) and how they relate to the readings, or it could relate to one of the module’s topics or assigned readings in other ways. I am relatively open regarding the manner in which the assignment connects to the topic, as long as it is not a simple summary and as long as you make a specific and clear connection to something in the readings. The Module Assignment should be between 500-600 words and you do not need a title page.

C. **Personal Application Assignment (PAA):** A central part of the course is helping you master self-referent observational and analytic skills and the ability to apply course concepts to your observations. Mastery of these skills will be assessed with the PAA. The class web site contains more information, including documents that specify the criteria on which the PAA will be graded.

D. **Final Exam:** This exam will test your understanding of the central ideas of the course. The core concepts will be emphasized in lecture and will often be explored in cases and exercises. The test will consist of short essay questions, and will require you to demonstrate your understanding of the key theories and concepts and your ability to apply them in work settings. I am not particularly interested in your memory of case details or of author names, except when the names are needed to identify a particular theory or perspective. The final exam will be comprehensive.
E. **Team Case Analysis**: Your team will be required to write two case analyses. More information about this assignment is provided on the course website.

F. **Class Participation**: Fundamental to this course is learning how to diagnose and understand both your and others’ real life experiences and sharing thoughts on the various readings and theories. Your participation is needed to accomplish this goal. Put simply, you learn more and others learn more when you add value through your participation. I will work hard in class to make sure that everyone that wants to participate can participate.

Here is a further description of ways in which you can add value to class:
1. Respond to questions (provide articulate answers, summaries, findings, facts, quotes)
2. Spontaneously offer your perspective (work-based, class-based)
3. Actively promote class discussion (react to others, faculty material, see linkages across articles)
4. Facilitate process (seek elaboration, ask for clarification, leverage points being made, summarize ideas being offered, seek feedback encourage others)
5. Be respectful
6. Be parsimonious (get to the point, stay on point, don’t “hog” air time)
7. Serve as a course liaison / team representative

G. **Ungraded Assignments.** While these assignments will not be graded, the maximum of 10% can be earned by approaching each one in a conscientious manner, turning in each assignment according to the format provided and when it is due.

a. **Team Charter**: You will be assigned to learning teams. In order to promote effective team based learning, you will be asked to work with your new team mates to create a “charter”, essentially a document that will help you work as a team. Details on the team charter assignment will be provided in class.

b. **Teaming Skills Survey**: Toward the end of the semester you will be asked to honestly describe how each of the members of your learning team behaved while working together. This will be a web based survey and all answers will be confidential. Each student will receive a personal profile of scores regarding how he or she is characterized by team mates on the dimensions of teaming skills. In addition to providing you with peer feedback, team member assessments will factor into the score that you will receive regarding “Class participation.”

c. **Personal Learning Note**: This is designed to give you an opportunity to reflect on the course and its goals, and summarize for yourself the most important information and action resolutions you take from the course–to look at the big picture. The personal learning note should be no more than 600 words. Use bullet points if you like. If you focus on writing something useful for yourself, it will meet my standards. This assignment is primarily for your sake–to help you identify the take-away messages that are most relevant to you. Approach it in that spirit. You may want to write the paper as a reminder to yourself of things
to remember or do. This assignment is due when you arrive to take the final exam, although you may also turn it in the week prior.

**A Note on Writing Deliverables**

Double-space, use a standard 12-point font, and place 1-inch margins in all assignments. You should only include a title page on the PAA and the team-case analyses. When you make references to assigned course materials, use the following format: (Last name of author(s), date). If you use other outside readings, give full bibliographic information at the end of the paper. **Because good writing skills are so important in the business world, each of your deliverables should be clearly written and completely free of spelling and grammatical errors.**

I cannot stress how important good writing is for your personal success as well as success in the program. Even if you have a great idea, if you can’t communicate that idea and persuade your manager (or teacher), that idea may be wasted. Use your MBA program to work on your writing as much as you possibly can.

**Summary**

All deliverables are due at the beginning of class on the date specified and **will incur a penalty of one letter grade for the first 24 hours and two letter grades thereafter up to one week.** Deliverables will not be accepted after one week. I will make exceptions if necessary due to illness or other GMU approved emergencies.

Semester grades will depend on an average of the letter grades you get throughout the semester following this breakdown:

- **Quiz** 5%
- **Module Assignment** 5% x 2 = 10%
- **Personal Application Assignment** 25%
- **Team Case Analysis** 10% x 2 = 20%
- **Final Exam** 20%
- **Class Participation** 10%
- **Ungraded Assignments** 10%

**BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS**

**Honor code:** The honor code applies to all work required for this class. You are free to confer with other people when working on your assignments (except for the final exam), but the final decisions about the papers and the writing should be your own. Furthermore, because I may re-use some questions, you may not show or discuss the examination with past or future MBA students. I urge you to discuss your weekly observations with others. More information about the GMU honor code is given on the GMU web site at various locations, including: [http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/](http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/).

**Standards of behavior:** The mission of the School of Management at George Mason University is to create and deliver high quality educational programs and research. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni who participate in these educational programs contribute to the well-being of society. High quality educational programs require an environment of trust and mutual respect, free expression and inquiry, and a commitment to truth, excellence, and lifelong learning. Students, program participants, faculty, staff, and alumni accept these principles
when they join the SOM community. In doing so, they agree to abide by the following standards of behavior:

- Respect for the rights, differences, and dignity of others
- Honesty and integrity in dealing with all members of the community
- Accountability for personal behavior

Integrity is an essential ingredient of a successful learning community. Ethical standards of behavior help promote a safe and productive community environment, and ensure every member the opportunity to pursue excellence. SOM can and should be a living model of these behavioral standards. To this end, community members have a personal responsibility to integrate these standards into every aspect of their experience at the SOM. Through our personal commitment to these Community Standards of Behavior, we can create an environment in which all can achieve their full potential.

**READINGS**

I would encourage you to not only read the assigned papers but to analyze them carefully. Think about each reading from both a conceptual and a practical perspective. As you read the papers, ask yourself:

- What are the key concepts and principles?
- What are the key points being made by the paper?
- So what? Why does this matter for the organization?
- What are the implications for my professional behavior and success?
- How can I critique the arguments being made?

You should come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

The readings are all available electronically. Link to purchase Harvard materials: [http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cb/access/9771879](http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cb/access/9771879)

The other readings are on the course website.

**OTHER ITEMS**

*Writing Center*: [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/)
*Disability Resources*: [http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc)
*Counseling Center*: [http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csd](http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csd)
**CLASS SCHEDULE**
C: Course Website
L: Library Website (library.gmu.edu)
H: Harvard Website (Must be purchased)

### INTRO: BEING A CRITICAL THINKER

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1: 8/29 9/1</th>
<th>Introduction to Organizational Behavior</th>
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### MODULE 1: COGNITION AND EMOTION

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<th>WEEK 2: 9/12 9/15</th>
<th>Perception and Attribution</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Go to <a href="https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/">https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/</a>. Click on the <em>Demonstration</em> button. Follow the links to the demonstration tests and complete two of them. Pick two groups or dimensions to which you think you’ll have different emotional reactions. <strong>Do this before you read the following article:</strong> Vedantam, S. (2005, January 23). See no bias. <em>The Washington Post</em>, pp. W12-17, W38-42.</td>
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<td><strong>Deliverable: Team Charter Individual Preparation</strong></td>
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<th>WEEK 3: 9/19 9/22</th>
<th>Decision-Making</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Class Exercise: Decision-Making Survey</strong> (Handout)</td>
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<td><strong>Deliverable: Team Charter</strong></td>
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### Week 4: 9/26 9/29

**Affect**


**Deliverable: Module Assignment #1**

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**Extra Resources**

- Lewis (2010). Betting on the Blind Side (excerpt)
- Livingston (2003). Pygmalion in Management (self-fulfilling prophecies). *HBR.*
- Ferguson (2010). Nudge Nudge, Wink Wink – Decision Making Critique

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### Module 2: Interpersonal Influence

#### Week 5: 10/3 10/6

**Understanding your Employees**


DeLong, T. J., & Vijayaraghavan, V. (2003). Let’s hear it for B players. *HBR*

**Class Exercise:** Tannegrams

**Deliverable:** Quiz

#### Week 6: 10/11 (tues) 10/13

**Influence and Power**


**Class Exercise:** Moms.com (Handout in class)

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**Week 7: 10/17 10/20**

**Motivating your Employees**


### Module 3: Teams

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<td><strong>Class Exercise:</strong> Murder Mystery (Handout in class)</td>
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<td>Thompson, L. (2003). Improving the creativity of organizational work groups. <em>Academy of Management Executive, 17</em>(1), 96-109.</td>
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<td><strong>Class Exercise:</strong> Carter Racing (Handout in Class)</td>
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<td><strong>Deliverable: Personal Application Assignment</strong></td>
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<td>Leigh L. Thompson’s <em>Making the Team: A Guide for Managers.</em> (3rd edition) Prentice Hall.</td>
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## Module 4: Organizational Systems

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<td><strong>Deliverable:</strong> Module Assignment #2</td>
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<td><strong>Class Exercise:</strong> Addressing your employees</td>
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<td><strong>Class Exercise:</strong> The Culture of Disney</td>
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<td><strong>Deliverable:</strong> Team Case Project #2 - Hausser Food Products <em>(HBS 9-402-055)</em></td>
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<td>Kanter, R.M. (2004). Middle Manager as Innovator <em>HBR</em></td>
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**Final Exam – take home – due Thursday, December 15th by midnight.**