MBA 653 (001/002): Organizational Behavior
Fall 2012
Dr. Olivia (Mandy) O’Neill

| Class meets:          | Monday, 7:20-10pm (002); University Hall 1200 (Fairfax campus)  
                        | Thursday, 7:20-10pm (001); Founders Hall 113 (Arlington campus) |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Office:               | Enterprise Hall 225 (Fairfax campus)                             |
| Office hours:         | Thursday 6:30-7:20 (Arlington), Friday, 2:30-3:20pm (Fairfax) and by appointment |
| Contact:              | ooneill@gmu.edu                                                  |
| Website:              | www.gmu.edu/~ooneill                                            |

**Course Objective**
To deepen your analysis and understanding of human behavior in organizations so that you become a more thoughtful and effective employee, co-worker, and manager.

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

**Class Format**
Understanding human behavior in organizations requires a variety of skills. For example, before an employee or a manager can change behavior, he or she must observe it and analyze it. Likewise, a management concept is of little use until one is able to link it to experience and apply it to future situations accordingly. Finally, conceptual 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. In a course like this, there are generally three levels of understanding that you can demonstrate to receive a B grade or better. The first level is correct explanation and application of the concepts (B-/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/A+ level work). Thus, to earn A/A+ grades in this class, 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 learning.

A. Completion of Harvard Business School Spreadsheet Modeling Course (5%). As part of the MBA program, you are required to complete an online spreadsheet modeling course. Because the skills obtained in this course will be used as early as the first week of classes, you are required to complete this course with a passing grade (i.e., greater than 70%) by Monday, August 27th.

B. In-Class Quiz (5%). A deep understanding of organizational behavior requires mastery of 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. At the mid-term 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 your study habits are working at that point in time.

C. Module Assignment (5%): The Module Assignment is a short paper that must relate to one specific topic or concept from a specific module. The paper must 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 an argument, findings, or a concept from the readings.

Formatting instructions:
- 500-600 words
- The word count in () at the end of the MA.
- 12-pt font, double-spaced
- 1 sheet of paper (front and back).
- No title page; only your name and Mason # at the top of the 1st page.

D. Personal Application Assignment (PAA) (20%): 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 personal, educational, or work-related challenges and experiences. 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 and hints for writing the PAA.
E. Final Exam (20%): 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 a short essay, multiple-choice questions, and an analysis of a case. It will require you to demonstrate your understanding of the key theories and concepts and your ability to apply them to problems or opportunists often found in work settings. The final exam will be comprehensive.

F. Team Case Analysis (2@ 10%= 20%): Learning teams will be formed early in the semester. Your team will be required to write two case analyses, and all members must be ready and able to present your ideas and opinions to the rest of class when the case is discussed. More information about this assignment is provided on the course website.

G. Class Participation (10%): Fundamental to this course is learning how to diagnose and understand both your and other’s 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 participate. I will work hard in class to make sure that everyone that wants to participate can participate. You can also demonstrate participation outside of class through email and Blackboard, as well as while working in your teams. More specific guidance as to what is meant by effective participation will be provided during the first class. I will conduct a midterm self-assessment to gauge whether you are where you want to be at that point in the semester.

H. Science meets Practice (2@ 2.5% = 5%): The field of organizational behavior is based on science, which has both immediate and long-range applications to management practice. This grade component is designed to promote your thinking of the management practice implications of course material. Over the course of the semester, you will have several opportunities to identify an “OB challenge” (e.g. retention of key personnel during an acquisition or merger) that is currently in the news and to briefly describe how it relates to course material under discussion. Two examples from the news must be turned in during the appropriate point in the semester. More details about will be provided in class. Note however that each submission is to be aligned with the topic currently being treated in class and turned in at that point in the course.

I. Ungraded Assignments (Combined=10%). Because the course involves a fair amount of experiential learning, you will be expected to respond to requests to complete a set of assignments that support this method. While each assignment will not be graded, maximum points can be earned by approaching each one in a conscientious manner, turning each in according to the format provided and turning it in when it is due.

   G1. Managerial Styles Survey. In the first few weeks of the semester, you will complete an online survey containing questionnaires that will assess personality traits and preferences that influence your managerial style. Individual scores will be calculated and complete data (minus any identifying information) will be available in an Excel spreadsheet. Throughout the semester, we will analyze and discuss your results in comparison to national samples as well as your own GMU peers.

   G2. 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 document that will help you work as a team. Details on the team charter assignment will be provided in class. Each team member will be expected to turn in foundational documents and a copy of the team charter.

   G3. 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 Revised 8/14/12
will be a web based survey. All answers will be confidential. Only summarized information will be provided to the class. Importantly, each student will receive a personal profile of scores regarding how he or she is characterized by team mates on the 4 dimensions of teaming skills. More details on this assignment will be provided in class.

G4. 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 single-spaced and no more than one page (front and back) long. Citations are not required. 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.

Summary

All deliverables are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completion of spreadsheet modeling course</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Class Quiz</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module Assignment</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Application Assignment</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team Case Analysis</td>
<td>10% x 2 = 20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science Meets Practice</td>
<td>2.5% x 2 = 5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ungraded Assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
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A Note on Writing Deliverables

All assignments should be double-spaced, using a standard 12-point font, and 1-inch margins. Clip art is prohibited and folders and binders are strongly discouraged. Use a title page only 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, provide APA- or MLA-formatted bibliographic information at the end of the paper. All deliverables should be clearly written and completely free of spelling and grammatical errors.

A Note on Team Grades and Free Ridership

All team members will get the same grade on each of the team assignments unless at least two people in the team decide to change to a peer performance appraisal system. Under such a system, members will rate one another’s contribution for each of the team assignments that your team chooses to invoke the peer appraisals on, and individual grades will be adjusted (both upward and downward) based on these ratings. If you decide to go with the peer performance appraisal system, prepare a document to that effect signed by at least two members of your team to be submitted with each team assignment(s) for which you wish to do this, and I will contact you for your evaluation of your fellow team members’ contributions. You cannot decide to do peer performance appraisal after you receive your grade. You must tell me and hand in the document with signatures of the majority of the team when the assignment is due.

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 Revised 8/14/12
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/.

**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

**Readings**
To succeed in this course, you must not only read the assigned papers, but you must also analyze
them carefully. Come to class prepared to discuss the readings. 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?

The link to purchase Harvard materials will be sent via email. The other readings are on the
course website.

**Other Items**

**Writing Center:** [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/)

**Counseling Center:** [http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdc/](http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdc/)

**Disability Resources:** [http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc)

**E-mail:** I will regularly send electronic messages to the entire class via Blackboard. Thus, be
sure you check the Blackboard site frequently or arrange for mail sent to your GMU e-mail
account to be forwarded to whatever e-mail account you normally use. You are fully responsible
for taking the steps listed above, for checking your e-mail regularly, and for any information
communicated to the class via e-mail.

**Inclement weather:** Information regarding weather related change in the University’s
schedule (e.g., closing or late opening) will be provided on the University’s main information
line (703-993-1000), the university website, and local media outlets (although media coverage
cannot be guaranteed). I will plan to hold class unless the GMU campus is officially closed.

**Cell phones, laptops, & beepers:** Cell phones are distracting and disrespectful. Please turn
off all audible signals before class. Laptops may be used for note-taking purposes only.

Revised 8/14/12
**CLASS SCHEDULE**

All readings are available on the course website (Blackboard) except where noted. *HBR* = Harvard Business Review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CLASS SCHEDULE</strong></th>
<th><strong>GETTING STARTED</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WEEK 1: 8/27, 8/30</strong></td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Organizational Behavior</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Deliverable: Completion of online spreadsheet modeling course (HBSP) &amp; online managerial styles survey</strong> (survey link will be emailed to you)</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>WEEK 2: 9/10, 9/13</strong></th>
<th><strong>Understanding Yourself and Perceiving Others</strong></th>
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<tr>
<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>.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>WEEK 3: 9/17, 9/20</strong></th>
<th><strong>Making Better Decisions</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<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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<th><strong>WEEK 4: 9/24, 9/27</strong></th>
<th><strong>Emotions</strong></th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Class Exercise: Tannegrams</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Deliverable: Module Assignment</strong> (if you write on a topic from Module 1)</td>
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Revised 8/14/12
## Module 2: Interpersonal Level

### Week 5: 10/1, 10/4
**Understanding Your Coworkers and Employees**


### Week 6: 10/9 (Tuesday), 10/11
**Motivating Your Employees**


### Week 7: 10/15, 10/18
**Using Your Power and Influence**


**Class Exercise: Perspective-taking**

**Deliverable: In-class quiz & midterm participation self-assessment**

### Week 8: 10/22, 10/25
**Respecting and Caring for Your Employees and Coworkers**


**Case** (For Team Project #1): Kathryn McNeil (HBS Case #9-394-111)

**Deliverable: Team Case Project #1**

**Deliverable: Module Assignment** (if you write on a topic from Module 2)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MODULE 3: TEAM LEVEL</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WEEK 9: 10/29, 11/1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Building Effective Teams</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Class Exercise: Murder Mystery</strong> (Handout in class)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WEEK 10: 11/5, 11/8</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Making Good Group Decisions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eisenhardt, K. M., Kahwajy, J. L., &amp; Bourgeois, L. J. How management teams can have a good fight. <em>HBR</em> July/August, p. 77-85.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Case: Carter Racing</strong> (Handout in Class)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deliverable: Personal Application Assignment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deliverable: Module Assignment</strong> (if you write on a topic from Module 3)</td>
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**In-class Case Exercise: When salaries aren’t secret.** |
**In-class Video Case:** John Abbott, Stanford Business School Leadership Series  
**Deliverable:** Team Skills Survey  
**Deliverable:** Module Assignment (if you write on a topic from Module 4) |
| Week 13 12/3, 12/6 | Putting it all Together | **Case** (for Team Project #2): Hausser Food Products (HBS 9-402-055)  
**In-class exercise:** MBA OB Toolbox, Course Award Ceremony  
**Deliverable:** Team Case Project #2, Personal Learning Note |

Final Exam (Take-Home) due Thursday, December 13th by midnight

Revised 8/14/12