MBA 653–003: Organizational Behavior  
Fall 2013: India Cohort  
Professor David Kravitz

Class meets: Thursday 6:30 – 10:05pm in University Hall 1200  
Office: Enterprise Hall 212  
Office hours: Before class and by appointment  
Contact: e-mail: dkravitz@gmu.edu  
Work: 703-993-1781 (voice); 703-993-1870 (fax)  
Cell: 703-424-3703 (emergency only)  
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 and thus their professional success.  
- **Teamimg and Leading MBA Program Goal:** Students will demonstrate the team leadership and interpersonal skills needed to form, lead, and work effectively on diverse organizational teams.  
- **Communication Skills MBA Program Goal:** Students will be able to use their new understanding to critique organizational policies and practices and to design superior policies and practices.  
- **Ethics and Social Responsibility MBA Program Goal:** Students will have a sense of professional and social responsibility in the conduct of managerial affairs.

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 accurately. 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. Another reason for the diversity of activities is that different people have different learning styles and thus need different types of learning experiences.
**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.

Due dates and late penalties: Deliverables are due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the class schedule below 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 Mason approved emergencies.

A. **In-Class Quiz.** A high performing student has mastered the vocabulary and concepts involved in a field of study. Accordingly, you will be expected to learn and correctly use key terms, concepts and constructs important to the field of Organizational Behavior. In Week 5, you will be asked to demonstrate the state of your knowledge of such material on an in-class, closed book quiz. This quiz will include all aspects of Weeks 1 – 4 plus the readings assigned for Week 5. 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. **Science Meets Practice:** The Science Meets Practice assignment is a short paper in which you apply the course concepts to “OB problems” reported in the news. It must be at least two pages long and must be submitted to course Blackboard site any time before Week 6.

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 and hints for writing the PAA (Due Week 9).

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. It will be administered out of class and you will be free to use any written materials when working on it, but the exam time will be limited. I will provide more information as we approach the end of the semester.

E. **Team Case Analysis:** Your team will be required to write a case analysis which is due Week 7. 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. Your participation grade will be affected both by my own observations and by your classmates’ evaluations.

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 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 Week 10.

**Notes on Writing Deliverables**

*Writing*: Double-space, use a standard 12-point font, and place 1-inch margins in all assignments. You should 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. This will affect your grades.**
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.

**Delivery:** You must submit all writing assignments by clicking on the Assignments tab on the class Blackboard site. All of your assignments are submitted to SafeAssign, which checks for plagiarism. All members of the team are equally and jointly responsible for any plagiarism, regardless of which member submitted the offending text.

**A Note on Team Grades and Free Ridership**
All team members will get the same grade on the team assignment 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 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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Quiz</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science Meets Practice Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Application Assignment</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team Case Analysis</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungraded Assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**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 quiz and 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 quiz or examination with past or future MBA students. 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/). If you have a question regarding application of the honor code that remains unresolved after you have read the above, please talk to me about it.

**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.

Cell phone and beepers are distracting and their use during class (except for emergencies) is insulting. Please turn off all audible signals before class. Along the same lines, PCs and PDAs are to be used for class work only.

**OTHER**

**E-mail:** I will occasionally send e-mail messages to the entire class. I will use the GMU mailing list associated with this class. Thus, be sure you set up your GMU e-mail account and either use it or arrange for mail sent to that account to be forwarded to whatever e-mail account you normally use. You are fully responsible for taking these steps, for checking your e-mail regularly, and for any information communicated to the class via e-mail. You should always feel free to communicate with me via e-mail. I recommend that you keep all my e-mail messages to you and all your messages to me just in case you want to check on something I said or prove that you sent me a message or attachment. I try to keep all relevant messages, but am not perfect.

**Disability:** If you have a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. Please take care of this during the first two weeks of the semester. More information about ODS is available at [http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc)

**Religion:** Students who will miss class for religious reasons should inform me of their anticipated absences as soon as possible.

**Counseling center:** George Mason University has a counseling center that can provide assistance if you find yourself overwhelmed by life, want training in academic or life skills, or the like. More information is available at [http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdcc](http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdcc)

**Writing center:** George Mason University has a writing center that can help you improve your English writing skills. There is even an office in Enterprise Hall, which is home to the School of Management. More information is available at 703-993-1824 and [http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/)

**Inclement weather & campus emergencies:** Information regarding weather related changes in the University’s schedule (e.g., closing or late opening) will be provided on GMU-TV, on the University's information line (703-993-1000), and will be given to all local media outlets (although media coverage cannot be guaranteed). When in doubt, check the above sources of information. I plan to hold class unless the campus is officially closed. If class is cancelled due to inclement weather or other emergency, activities (e.g., coverage of material, exams, etc.) scheduled for that class will be moved to the next class. We will discuss further changes when we meet.
**READINGS**

Readings are available through the class Blackboard site, through Mason’s library, and from Harvard Business Publishing.

**Mason Library**
To download full text articles from the Mason library see:
http://library.gmu.edu/education/students/find_fulltext.html

**Harvard Business Publishing**
This message explains how to purchase the Harvard course materials you need for class.

Course link:
https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/20310700

You need to register on the site to create a user name if you do not already have one. Course materials are PDF documents and you can open them with Adobe Reader. You will have access to the course materials for 6 months.

After you register, you can get to the coursepack at any time by doing the following:
1. Visit hbsp.harvard.edu and log in.
2. Click My Coursepacks, and then click Organizational Behavior - Bermuda and India Cohorts Fall 2013

For technical assistance, please contact the Harvard Business Publishing Tech Help line at (800) 810-8858 (outside the U.S. and Canada, call 617-783-7700); or email techhelp@hbsp.harvard.edu.

**Study the 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.
Availability of each reading is indicated in [brackets] at the end of the citation, as follows:
C: Course Website
L: Library Website
H: Harvard Website

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<tr>
<th>Week/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
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Complete the Ethics Game exercise before class. |                                     |
| August 22       |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                     |
Go to [https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/). Click on the Social Attitudes link and “Take a Test” at the top. Pick two groups or dimensions to which you think you’ll have different emotional reactions. **Do this before you read the following article:**  
<p>| August 29       |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                     |
| September 5     |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                     |</p>
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<th>Deliverables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>DeLong, T. J., &amp; Vijayaraghavan, V. (2003). Let’s hear it for B players. <em>HBR.</em> [H]</td>
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<td>October 3</td>
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<td>Brockner, J. (2006). Why it’s so hard to be fair. <em>HBR.</em> [H]</td>
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<td>Case, J. (2001). When salaries aren’t secret. <em>HBR.</em> [H]</td>
<td>Team Case Analysis -</td>
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<td>Kathryn McNeil (HBS Case #9-394-111)</td>
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<td>Week/Date</td>
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<td>Classmate Contributions Survey</td>
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**Final Exam – Saturday, October 26th (afternoon)**