ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

MAN 4282

Summer A 2023

Tues. & Thurs. 1:15pm – 4:45pm

BSN 124

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:00pm - 1:00pm or by appointment

Course Description

One of the most fundamental activities we engage in as people is solving problems, whether it's in our personal lives or as students or as employees. In many ways, we demonstrate an extraordinary capacity to solve complex problems — creating new medicines, exploring the reaches of space and oceans, building economies and technologies that connect every person around the world. Yet, we also demonstrate an extraordinary ability to make terrible, self-defeating decisions over and over again — continuing to invest when we should cut our losses, believing we want more options when we're usually satisfied with fewer, and relying on fads and gut feelings when a simple experiment could show us the truth. How is it possible that we are capable of solving incredibly difficult problems while also getting stuck on incredibly easy ones? With this paradox as a backdrop, in this course, we will explore a set of processes through which you will be able to recognize problems in organizations, systematically investigate their causes, and evaluate potential solutions. These processes all fall under the umbrella of *organizational assessment*. To learn how to execute these processes, we will spend a little bit of time getting familiar with the tools that are available for collecting the data to diagnose inefficiencies. The vast majority of our time, however, will be spent applying this knowledge using case studies and original research projects. What I hope you will get out of this course is this: a skillset that will enable you to analyze organizational situations and propose and implement appropriate solutions to change an organization for the better.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Define problems: Distill complex organizational issues into measurable discrepancies
2. Analyze problems:
    a. Develop an appropriate plan for collecting data that will enable an accurate diagnosis of a problem
    b. Design data collection tools (e.g., surveys, interviews) that will enable an accurate diagnosis of a problem
3. Test solutions:
    a. Provide one or more solutions that are based on evidence and sound reasoning and that accommodate situational constraints
    b. Design a research study that would test the efficacy of a solution(s)
4. Evaluate results: draw appropriate inferences from the results of a research study

Materials

All materials will be provided on Canvas.

Assignments

Reflection Posts

Engaging actively with the content of this course will be essential to your learning. The purpose of Reflection Posts is to help ensure that you are consistently prepared to participate in the activities that will take place in class and to successfully

complete your Organizational Assessment Project. If you read first, you'll have a better understanding of what's being discussed. And, after having read and processed the content, if there is something in there that you don't understand, you'll be able to ask about it in the online class sessions.

There are six Reflection Posts due throughout the semester. There are two components: an original post (due Tuesdays) and a comment on a peer's post (due Thursdays). Here are the requirements for this assignment:
- *Original posts*
    a. should be at least 200 words,
    b. include discussion of all assigned articles/videos for the week, and
    c. should always end with a discussion question.
- *Comments*
    a. should be at least 75 words, and
    b. offer either a new insight or a differing opinion. (Simply stating that you agree or disagree with someone will result in 0 points for this portion of the assignment.)

The purpose of these Reflection Posts is to think critically about what you're reading, not to summarize it. Below are some questions to help spur your thinking about what to include in your Reflection Posts. (Note: you do **not** need to respond to every question.)
- What are the key takeaways?
- What was interesting to you, and why? What did you learn?
- Are you skeptical about anything you read or heard? If so, why?
- How do your professional or personal experiences relate to the content?
- How do the ideas in these readings relate to other content presented in the course or previous courses?
- How might you apply what you learned to your current job or future career?
- What are the practical implications of the readings for organizations?

Grades will be determined based on the following criteria: (1) presenting information, arguments, and supporting evidence clearly (50%), (2) reader can easily follow the line of reasoning (40%), and (3) spelling, punctuation, and grammar (10%).

Application Activities
Every week, you will complete two Application Activities that will give you the opportunity to practice a key concept described in the readings and/or lectures. This practice will help reinforce what you're learning. It will also better prepare you for successfully completing the Organizational Assessment project.

Organizational Assessment Project
This course is a very practical one. As I mentioned in the Course Description, we'll only be spending a little bit of our time learning new content, while the majority of the course will be dedicated to learning how to apply this content. The way we'll be doing that is through conducting organizational assessments of our own!

In the fall or spring semesters, we work with businesses in the local community. However, because of how compressed the summer semester is, you have two options: (1) conduct the Organizational Assessment project with a business (which probably includes wherever you work!), or (2) execute this project based on case studies I've written for this course. Both options involve writing four, short papers that align with our four Student Learning Objectives. However, if you choose option 1, you'll receive 10% extra credit on each paper (i.e., each paper is worth 60 points, so that's 6 points per paper). You will select your preferred option at the end of the first week of the semester.

Final Exam
The purpose of the exam in this course is to ensure that you develop a solid foundation of course-relevant knowledge. One exam will be given at the end of the semester. There will be a combination of multiple-choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Summary of Assignments

Category (% of grade)	Specific Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Weekly Reflections (24%)	Original Post 1 – 6	150	2.5% each
	Comment 1 – 6	90	1.5% each
Application Activities (30%)	Application Activity 1 – 12	300	2.5% each
OA Project (26%)	Paper 1 – 4	240	6% each
Final Exam (20%)	Final Exam	200	20%

Grading
Final grades will be calculated by summing all the points you have accumulated in the course. Grades will be determined using the grading scale shown below. Final grades will not be "rounded up."

F	≥ 599		D	600 – 699		C	700 – 799		B	800 – 899		A	900 – 1000

Policies

Communication
The best way to contact me is through email. I answer email regularly (and usually within a couple hours) on weekdays. I may respond to it less frequently on weekends and holidays; during those times, you can expect an answer to your email within 24 hours. There may be times during the semester when I do not have access to email. I will be sure to notify you if such situations occur.

To avoid confusion on my part, please follow the following guidelines when sending emails:
1. Use only this email address: lmsteele@usf.edu
2. Identify yourself as a student in MAN 4282 — including the section number — in either the subject line or the first paragraph of your email.
3. Always sign your emails, so that I know who sent them.
4. Treat your emails as professional communications — use proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling, and avoid internet shorthand.

I will hold myself to the same standards I expect of you. Emails that I receive that do not adhere to the guidelines above will not be answered.

Attendance
Attendance is encouraged but not required. If you do decide to attend class, the use of computers, tablets, and phones will be prohibited (unless needed to accommodate a disability). The research on the use of technology during class is unambiguous—it's not only counterproductive to your own learning (Ravizza et al., 2017) but also your classmates' (Sana et al., 2013). We only have a limited time together in the classroom each week; I want us to make the most of it by being focused and fully present.

Late Assignments
An assignment that is turned in late will be penalized 10% for every day that it's late. After one week passed the deadline, assignments may no longer be submitted for a grade.

There are three reasons I have this late assignment policy. First, each assignment during a given week is intended to be complementary to one another. Therefore, to get the most out of these assignments, it's important that they are completed close in time. Second, this policy helps to ensure everyone is held to the same standard. It is easy to imagine becoming frustrated that your work turned in on time earns the same grade as someone else's work turned in weeks late. I want to head off issues like those by having a consistent, late assignment policy. Finally, this policy is helpful to me as your professor as well. Grading all assignments at one time helps me to deliver grades back to you in a timely fashion;

furthermore, it ensures that I'm grading open-ended assignments (i.e., non-multiple-choice questions) in the same way for all students.

I recognize that extenuating circumstances can emerge, however. If this happens, please let me know immediately, and I will do my best to help you out. Communicating with me the moment a problem arises really helps with this, so please prioritize this. If you wait until weeks after the problem has passed, I can't do much for you. So, late assignments are only accepted in extenuating circumstances where documentation (or some other kind of verification) of the circumstance is provided.

Academic Integrity

The Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Here are the basic assumptions about academic work: (1) Students attend university in order to learn and grow, (2) academic assignments exist for the sake of this goal, (3) grades exist to show how fully the goal is attained, (4) thus, all work and all grades should result from the student's own effort to learn and grow. Academic work completed any other way is pointless, and grades obtained any other way are fraudulent.

Academic integrity means understanding and respecting these basic truths, without which no university can exist. Academic misconduct -- "cheating" -- is not just "against the rules"; it violates the assumptions at the heart of all learning. It destroys the mutual trust and respect that should exist between student and professor. Finally, it is unfair to students who earn their grades honestly.

Academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating (e.g., looking on another person's exam or allowing them to look on yours), plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person (i.e., copying someone else's work, allowing someone to do your papers or take your exams for you), taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. For more information on academic integrity, please see USF's policy here.

Honorlock Online Proctoring

Online exams and quizzes within this course may require online proctoring. Therefore, students will be required to have a webcam (USB or internal) with a microphone when taking an exam or quiz. Students understand that this remote recording device is purchased and controlled by the student and that recordings from any private residence must be done with the permission of any person residing in the residence.

To avoid any concerns in this regard, students should select private spaces for the testing. The University library and other academic sites at the University offer secure private settings for recordings and students with concerns may discuss location of an appropriate space for the recordings with their instructor or advisor. Students must ensure that any recordings do not invade any third-party privacy rights and accept all responsibility and liability for violations of any third-party privacy concerns.

Students are strictly responsible for ensuring that they take all exams using a reliable computer and high-speed internet connection. Setup information will be provided prior to taking the proctored exam. To use Honorlock students are required to download and install the Honorlock Google Chrome extension. For additional information please visit the USF online proctoring student FAQ and Honorlock student resources.

Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

As a faculty member, I am committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty at the beginning of the semester and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels (https://usf.edu/SAS). If you, as a student in this course, have a disability that may prevent you from fully demonstrating your abilities, contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss reasonable accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunity.

Course Calendar*

Dates	Topic	Application Activity	OA Project	Other Assignment Deadlines
Week 1 **May 16-20**	Introductions Using evidence as a manager to solve problems	1. Syllabus Quiz 2. Ramen Restaurant Case		5/17: Original reflection post 5/19: Comment on classmate's reflection post 5/20: Application activity 1 & 2
Week 2 **May 23-27**	Defining problems Analyzing problems (part 1)	3. Evaluate Problem Definitions 4. Write Problem Definitions	5/29: Paper 1	5/24: Original reflection post 5/26: Comment on classmate's reflection post 5/27: Application activity 3 & 4
Week 3 **May 30-June 3**	Analyzing problem (part 2)	5. What's Wrong with This Question 6. Kohl's Case	6/5: Paper 2	5/31: Original reflection post 6/2: Comment on classmate's reflection post 6/3: Application activity 5 & 6
Week 4 **June 6-10**	Testing solutions (part 1)	7. Generating Solutions 8. StubHub	6/12: Paper 3	6/7: Original reflection post 6/9: Comment on classmate's reflection post 6/10: Application activity 7 & 8
Week 5 **June 13-17**	Testing solutions (part 2) Evaluating results	9. Windermere Case 10. GPA and Extracurriculars	6/19: Paper 4	6/14: Original reflection post 6/16: Comment on classmate's reflection post 6/17: Application activity 9 & 10
Week 6 **June 20-24**	Pros and cons using evidence as a manager	11. & 12. Final Exam Study Guide		6/21: Original reflection post 6/23: Comment on classmate's reflection post 6/24: Application activity 11 & 12 6/24: Final exam

*The course calendar is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.