UNSW Course Outline

AGSM9274 Systems for Change (WEB Weekly) - 2024

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General Course Information

Course Code : AGSM9274
Year : 2024
Term : Term 2
Teaching Period : T2
Is a multi-term course? : No
Faculty : UNSW Business School
Academic Unit : AGSM MBA Programs
Delivery Mode : Online
Delivery Format : Standard
Delivery Location : Online - Asynchronous
Campus : Sydney
Study Level : Postgraduate
Units of Credit : 6

<u>Useful Links</u>

<u>Handbook</u> <u>Class Timetable</u>

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

NOTE: *This course was previously identified as MBAX6274*

Contemporary organisations operate in complex and turbulent environments. These

environments compel change, both episodic and continual. *Systems for Change* analyses change in organisations by viewing the organisation as a system comprising interdependent units, processes, procedures, rules and events, which can be leveraged to enable successful change.

Further, the organisation is an open system, positioned in and influenced by its external environment. The course highlights the uncertain and paradoxical nature of change and stresses those involved in initiating and sustaining change must embrace complexity, and adopt an open-systems perspective. The course also affirms change managers must continually assess and continually improve their personal effectiveness.

Systems for Change has three themes. First, organisations are complex and are in complex, turbulent environments. Second, in this context we propose that sustaining change is critical. Third, we argue that a 'systems thinking' perspective is essential for change agents. We offer various approaches to sustain continuous change in complexity, including:

- individual perspectives (e.g. paradoxical thinking),
- structural perspectives (e.g. ambidexterity),
- cultural perspectives (e.g. broad-based diversity) and
- leveraging established organisational sub-systems (e.g. the employment relations sub-system).

In this course, when we talk about change we mean sustainable and continuous change. This might mean sustaining changes once they have been made. Or change could mean sustaining the organisation's capacity for, and success in, generating changes to meet its challenges and seize its opportunities. Therefore, our focus is on one-off change and also on ongoing, continuous change.

In each Unit, we will ask you to think about how systems increase the organisation's ability to sustain change and change constantly. Further, we will ask you to think about how self-sustainable the systems are. That is, to what extent do they need constant management? Can they operate independently of individual people? Do they include feedback loops in their design, which lead to modifications to the sub-system? Are they designed for self-renewal?

Specifically, this course aims to show how:

- effective organisational change depends on the degree to which systems support, motivate and enable change
- effective systems are those that respond to and positively influence other systems, organisational strategies and the wider environment
- effective systems are self-sustaining

- effective change agents recognise the complexities of organisational change and in turbulent environments how a systems perspective can help sustain both episodic and continual change effective change agents critically review and learn from their experiences.

We explore the organisation as a whole. We focus on specific systems and how they can contribute to organisational change.

Relationship to Other Courses

AGSM9271 Approaches to Change is a prerequisite for this course.

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes	Program learning outcomes
CLO1 : describe and critically apply different theoretical concepts of change to work environments	• PLO2 : Problem Solving
CLO2 : reflect on, integrate and apply appropriate theoretical change-management concepts and processes to develop a comprehensive change project plan detailing a change needs analysis, implementation strategy and evaluation	• PLO2 : Problem Solving
CLO3 : recognise and illustrate the complexities of implementing/managing change in open, dynamic and interdependent systems	• PLO1 : Business Knowledge
CLO4 : critically review personal effectiveness as a change agent	• PLO7 : Leadership Development
CLO5 : analyse the role of diversity and the impact of the external environment on organisations in open systems	• PLO6 : Global and Cultural Competence
CLO6 : prepare written documents containing critical argument and perspectives about change management	• PLO3 : Business Communication
CLO7 : critically analyse, evaluate and interpret organisational data to assess the need for change in a work environment	• PLO2 : Problem Solving
CLO8 : describe ethical practice and social responsibility in the change management process	• PLO5 : Responsible Business Practice

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CLO1 : describe and critically apply different theoretical concepts of change to work environments	• Dialogue Participation • Integrative change project proposal • Integrative change project final report
CLO2 : reflect on, integrate and apply appropriate theoretical change-management concepts and processes to develop a comprehensive change project plan detailing a change needs analysis, implementation strategy and evaluation	• Dialogue Participation • Integrative change project proposal • Integrative change project final report
CLO3 : recognise and illustrate the complexities of implementing/managing change in open, dynamic and interdependent systems	• Dialogue Participation • Integrative change project proposal • Integrative change project final report
CLO4 : critically review personal effectiveness as a change agent	• Dialogue Participation
CLO5 : analyse the role of diversity and the impact of the external environment on organisations in open systems	• Dialogue Participation
CLO6 : prepare written documents containing critical argument and perspectives about change management	• Integrative change project proposal • Integrative change project final report
CLO7 : critically analyse, evaluate and interpret organisational data to assess the need for change in a work environment	• Integrative change project proposal • Integrative change project final report • Dialogue Participation
CLO8 : describe ethical practice and social responsibility in the change management process	• Dialogue Participation

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System | Zoom

Learning and Teaching in this course

Approach to Learning and Teaching in the Course

In this course, you will gain benefit from a number of learning partnerships.

1. **Your co-participants.** Your colleagues are an invaluable potential source of learning for you. Their work and life, and their willingness to question and engage with the course materials, the Facilitator and your views, represent a great learning opportunity. They bring much valuable insight to the learning experience.

2. In-course learning partner or learning group. During this course, you will be asked to form a learning partnership with another participant in this course. You may wish to select someone you already know, or you may prefer to use a different person at different times during the course.

It is up to you to make the necessary arrangements and contact them. You might also consider having more than one learning partner. Some previous course participants have found it valuable to work in a learning group.

You will need to make initial contact with your learning partner in Week 1 and establish when it is a good time to contact them in future weeks. Perhaps you could organise a time each week to phone, video-chat via MS Teams or similar, or to talk face to face. But do set aside some uninterrupted time, about 30 minutes, for your dialogue. Your learning partner is doing the course with you, and together you can explore some of the issues that will be raised.

All participants will post a personal introduction in the Moodle class in the Participant Profiles forum, which might be helpful when considering who you might like to engage as a learning partner. Details on accessing this forum are part of our introductory activities for the course.

You may be asked to discuss your reactions to an article or reading, you may need to do some collaborative work together, or you may need to exchange information with each other. The tasks will vary from Unit to Unit. Your learning partner will also be an invaluable source of support for your project.

3. The online dialogues. *Systems for Change* has an opening dialogue (not assessed) and four assessed online dialogues throughout the course.

- **Opening** dialogue: Week 1
- Online dialogue 1: Week 3
- Online dialogue 2: Week 6
- Online dialogue 3: Week 8
- Online dialogue 4: Week 10

You will engage in dialogue to explore and apply course concepts, and share personal reflections about your role as a change agent. You will be required to consider several questions during each dialogue. Your facilitator will post these questions in Moodle before the start of the online-dialogue period. You will be assigned to an online-dialogue syndicate and details will be posted online in the News space. You will also have access to, and are free to participate in, other syndicate dialogues.

However, only your contribution to your assigned dialogue syndicate will be graded. Collectively, these dialogues account for 20% of the marks for the course.

4. Your Facilitator, who will:

- facilitate the five designated online dialogues
- conduct three videoconferences
- grade and provide feedback on your assessments
- respond to your academic enquiries and offer assistance where appropriate.

Additional Course Information

Course Structure

In **Unit 1, The change project,** we provide in-depth guidance on the requirements of the change project. This assessment requires both reflecting on and applying materials from Approaches to Change, as well as the Systems for Change materials. This is a challenging task. So we devote Unit 1 to helping you make an early and informed start on your project and provide suggestions for reflecting on and integrating course materials. We offer the Change Process Framework as an appropriate process and provide fresh perspectives on aspects of the framework.

In **Unit 2, Systems for sustaining change,** we turn to the first of two topics at the heart of this course: sustaining change. We distinguish between episodic and continuous change and identify the factors that affect the sustainability of change. Our second topic is the nature of systems thinking, which is central to this course. We stress how important this approach is for change agents, particularly in complex environments.

In **Unit 3, Complexity and paradox,** three topics offer mechanisms for dealing with change in complex settings. First, managing the paradoxical demands often present in complex settings. How can we harness paradox rather than be disabled by it?

Second, we look at a structural response to complexity, and paradox in particular: the ambidextrous organisation.

Third, we consider individual responses to paradox, arguing that both cognitive complexity and behavioural complexity are essential change agent capabilities.

In **Unit 4, Building organisational capabilities for change,** We identify organisational capabilities that can be leveraged to respond to complexity and to sustain change. Of particular interest are 'dynamic' capabilities, which enhance an organisation's agility.

Unit 5, Managing IT systems for sustained change. We delve into another well-recognised organisational sub-system, information technology (IT). We explore using IT as a vehicle for change. Again, we adopt a systems perspective, emphasising the boundaries between sub-systems and how these need to be negotiated.

In **Unit 6, Building intelligent organisations**, we use the concept of the intelligent organisation to draw together research and ideas from two streams of thinking: organisational learning and knowledge management. We argue these two processes and attendant systems offer mechanisms that facilitate continuous change through learning and adaptation.

In **Unit 7, Using diversity to generate and sustain change**, we present a means of stimulating continuous and sustainable change. We take an inclusive and expanded view of diversity and explore the potential for such outcomes as innovation and creativity. We use diversity as an example of the need for systems thinking when generating continuous change.

In **Unit 8, Sustaining innovation for change**, we assume innovation is a major force for change. Organisations must value innovation and use it as a driver for change. We are particularly interested in organising for sustained innovation and the associated change that implies.

In **Unit 9, Employment relations sub-system**, we demonstrate the central and pervasive nature of Employment Relations within organisations, and its potential to generate, support and embed change. Further, Employment Relations is an excellent example of the working of complex systems in organisations, and the need for an appropriate systems stance to capitalise on this potential.

Unit 10, Corporate social responsibility and stakeholder management, is structured around the following logic. Organisations are conceived as open systems that influence and are influenced by their environment, notably key stakeholders. Organisational sustainability is determined mainly by engagement with these stakeholders. In turn, sustainability raises issues of an organisation's obligations towards its stakeholders, and its corporate social responsibility (CSR). For organisations and for those responsible for leading change, the dialogue surrounding CSR leads to considering challenging ethical issues.

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates	Program learning outcomes
Dialogue Participation Assessment Format: Individual	20%	Start Date: Monday of Week 3, 6, 8 and 10	• PLO1 : Business Knowledge • PLO2 : Problem Solving • PLO5 : Responsible Business Practice • PLO6 : Global and Cultural Competence • PLO7 : Leadership Development
Integrative change project proposal Assessment Format: Individual Short Extension: Yes (7 days)	25%	Due Date: Monday of Week 5 by 3pm Sydney time	• PLO1 : Business Knowledge • PLO2 : Problem Solving • PLO3 : Business Communication
Integrative change project final report Assessment Format: Individual Short Extension: Yes (7 days)	55%	Due Date: Monday of Week 12 by 3pm Sydney time	• PLO1 : Business Knowledge • PLO2 : Problem Solving • PLO3 : Business Communication

Assessment Details

Dialogue Participation

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : describe and critically apply different theoretical concepts of change to work environments
- CLO2 : reflect on, integrate and apply appropriate theoretical change-management concepts and processes to develop a comprehensive change project plan detailing a change needs analysis, implementation strategy and evaluation
- CLO3 : recognise and illustrate the complexities of implementing/managing change in open, dynamic and interdependent systems
- CLO4 : critically review personal effectiveness as a change agent
- CLO5 : analyse the role of diversity and the impact of the external environment on organisations in open systems
- CLO7 : critically analyse, evaluate and interpret organisational data to assess the need for change in a work environment
- CLO8 : describe ethical practice and social responsibility in the change management process

Assessment Length

Maximum 200 words per posting

Integrative change project proposal

<u>Course Learning Outcomes</u>

- CLO1 : describe and critically apply different theoretical concepts of change to work environments
- CLO2 : reflect on, integrate and apply appropriate theoretical change-management concepts and processes to develop a comprehensive change project plan detailing a change needs analysis, implementation strategy and evaluation
- CLO3 : recognise and illustrate the complexities of implementing/managing change in open, dynamic and interdependent systems
- CLO6 : prepare written documents containing critical argument and perspectives about change management
- CLO7 : critically analyse, evaluate and interpret organisational data to assess the need for change in a work environment

<u>Assessment Length</u>

2,500 words

Integrative change project final report

<u>Course Learning Outcomes</u>

- CLO1 : describe and critically apply different theoretical concepts of change to work environments
- CLO2 : reflect on, integrate and apply appropriate theoretical change-management concepts and processes to develop a comprehensive change project plan detailing a change needs analysis, implementation strategy and evaluation
- CLO3 : recognise and illustrate the complexities of implementing/managing change in open, dynamic and interdependent systems
- CLO6 : prepare written documents containing critical argument and perspectives about change management
- CLO7 : critically analyse, evaluate and interpret organisational data to assess the need for change in a work environment

<u>Assessment Length</u>

4,000 words, maximum

General Assessment Information

<u>Grading Basis</u>

Standard

<u>Requirements to pass course</u>

Students are expected to attempt all assessment requirements, and must achieve a composite mark of at least 50 out of 100 to pass the course.

Students are also expected to actively engage in course learning activities. Failure to engage in assessment tasks that are integrated into learning activities (e.g. class discussion, presentations) will be reflected in the marks for these assessable activities.

Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 1 : 27 May - 2 June	Topic	Unit 1: The integrative change project
	Other	Opening dialogue (not assessed) Participation not assessed but essential throughout the term
Week 2 : 3 June - 9 June	Topic	Unit 2: Systems for sustaining change
	Other	Videoconference 1 The videoconference will be recorded for students who are unable to attend
Week 3 : 10 June - 16 June	Topic	Unit 3: Complexity and paradox
	Assessment	Assessment 1: Dialogue participation
Week 4 : 17 June - 23 June	Topic	Unit 4: Building organisational capabilities for change
Week 5 : 24 June - 30 June	Topic	Unit 5: Managing IT systems for sustained change
	Assessment	Assessment 2: Integrative change project proposal due on Monday of Week 5 by 3pm Sydney time
	Other	Videoconference 2 The videoconference will be recorded for students who are unable to attend
Week 6 : 1 July - 7 July	Topic	Unit 6: Building intelligent organisations
	Assessment	Assessment 1: Dialogue participation
Week 7 : 8 July - 14 July	Topic	Unit 7: Using diversity to generate and sustain change
Week 8 : 15 July - 21 July	Topic	Unit 8: Sustaining innovation for change
	Assessment	Assessment 1: Dialogue participation
	Other	Videoconference 3 The videoconference will be recorded for students who are unable to attend
Week 9 : 22 July - 28 July	Topic	Unit 9: Employment relations sub-system
Week 10 : 29 July - 4 August	Topic	Unit 10: Corporate social responsibility and stakeholder management
	Assessment	Assessment 1: Dialogue participation
Week 11 : 5 August - 11 August	Other	Independent study
Week 12 : 12 August - 18 August	Assessment	Assessment 3: Integrative change project final report due on Monday of Week 12 by 3pm Sydney time

Attendance Requirements

Students must engage in weekly online asynchronous discussion forums and other activities. There are some optional webinars or drop-in group video calls (recorded for those who cannot attend).

Course Resources

Prescribed Resources

You have the following resources to help you learn:

The course materials, which you will access via your Moodle class. You will do much of your

learning outside the classroom by working through the course materials, and by completing the activities as they arise.

Your interaction with your Facilitator. The Facilitator's job is:

- to guide your learning by conducting the online or face-to-face discussions,
- answering questions that might arise after you have done the week's work,
- providing insights from their practical experience and understanding of theory,
- providing you with feedback on your assessments, and
- directing discussions and debates that will occur between you and your co-participants in the course.

Your co-participants. Your course colleagues are an invaluable potential source of learning for you. Their work and life, and their willingness to question and argue with the course materials, the Facilitator and your views, represent a great learning opportunity. They bring much valuable insight to your learning experience.

Course Evaluation and Development

The facilitator is regularly encouraged by previous students' feedback to AGSM to continue to relate real-world examples to the course concepts.

Feedback to help improve students' writing skills is supporting the learning outcome: to prepare written documents containing critical argument and perspectives on change management. Feedback encouraging students to be more concise is because managers in the workplace are time-poor. Also, concise documents are frequently better argued.

In any class, there are diverse preferences for how students learn. To accommodate these preferences, we provide different activities and different forms of these activities. In practice, what this means is students will find many activities that suit their style and perhaps a few that do not suit their style. With online discussions on complex concepts, to ensure deep understanding and good application students need to make multiple posts in a week.

Some readings in Systems For Change are more difficult to understand than readings from Approaches To Change and Change Skills because of differences in the type of concepts. In Approaches To Change and Change Skills, concepts are more likely to apply to personal change or group change. Many students will have heard about or experienced many of the concepts in their daily work.

In contrast, in Systems For Change concepts are more likely to apply to organisational change.

Since most organisational change concepts are applied by senior managers, fewer students will have heard about or experienced many of the concepts in their daily work. So, the readings are challenging because the concepts are more complex and for many students the concepts are new.

To help students, we regularly review readings to find alternative ways to present the paper's ideas in the ebook or to use videos. For complex concepts, where more user-friendly resources become available, we use them.

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
Facilitator in charge	Gary Peacock					No	Yes

Other Useful Information

Academic Information

COURSE POLICIES AND SUPPORT

The Business School expects that you are familiar with the contents of this course outline and the UNSW and Business School learning expectations, rules, policies and support services as listed below:

- Program Learning Outcomes
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Student Responsibilities and Conduct
- Special Consideration
- Protocol for Viewing Final Exam Scripts
- Student Learning Support Services

Further information is provided on the key policies and support page.

Students may not circulate or post online any course materials such as handouts, exams, syllabi or similar resources from their courses without the written permission of their instructor.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) – under the Outcomes tab – are what you should be

able to demonstrate by the end of this course, if you participate fully in learning activities and successfully complete the assessment items.

CLOs also contribute to your achievement of the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), which are developed across the duration of a program. PLOs are, in turn, directly linked to UNSW graduate capabilities. More information on Coursework PLOs is available on the key policies and support page. For PG Research PLOs, including MPDBS, please refer to the UNSW HDR Learning Outcomes.

Academic Honesty and Plagarism

As a student at UNSW you are expected to display academic integrity in your work and interactions. Where a student breaches the UNSW Student Code with respect to academic integrity, the University may take disciplinary action under the Student Misconduct Procedure. To assure academic integrity, you may be required to demonstrate reasoning, research and the process of constructing work submitted for assessment.

To assist you in understanding what academic integrity means, and how to ensure that you do comply with the UNSW Student Code, it is strongly recommended that you complete the Working with Academic Integrity module before submitting your first assessment task. It is a free, online self-paced Moodle module that should take about one hour to complete.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

You can apply for special consideration when illness or other circumstances beyond your control interfere with your performance in a specific assessment task or tasks, including online exams. Students studying remotely who have exams scheduled between 10pm and 7am local time, are also able to apply for special consideration to sit a supplementary exam at a time outside of these hours.

Special consideration is primarily intended to provide you with an extra opportunity to demonstrate the level of performance of which you are capable. To apply, and for further information, see Special Consideration on the UNSW Current Students page.

Special consideration applications will be assessed centrally by the Case Review Team, who will update the online application with the outcome and add any relevant comments. The change to

the status of the application immediately sends an email to the student and to the assessor with the outcome of the application.

Please note the following:

1. Applications can only be made through Online Services in myUNSW (see the UNSW Current Students page). Applications will not be accepted by teaching staff. The lecturer-in-charge/ course coordinator will be automatically notified when your application is processed.
2. Applying for special consideration does not automatically mean that you will be granted a supplementary exam or other concession.
3. If you experience illness or misadventure in the lead up to an exam or assessment, you must submit an application for special consideration, either prior to the examination taking place, or prior to the assessment submission deadline, except where illness or misadventure prevent you from doing so.
4. If your circumstances stop you from applying before your exam or assessment due date, you must apply within 3 working days of the assessment or the period covered by your supporting documentation.
5. Under the UNSW Fit To Sit/Submit rule, if you sit the exam/submit an assignment, you are declaring yourself well enough to do so and are cannot subsequently apply for special consideration.
6. If you become unwell on the day of – or during – an exam, you must stop working on your exam, advise your course coordinator or tutor and provide a medical certificate dated within 24 hours of the exam, with your special consideration application. For online exams, you must contact your course coordinator or tutor immediately via email, Moodle or chat and advise them you are unwell and submit screenshots of your conversation along with your medical certificate and application.
7. Special consideration requests do not allow the awarding of additional marks to students.

Further information on Business School policy and procedure can be found under "Special Consideration" on the key policies and support page.

LATE SUBMISSION PENALTIES

For assessments other than examinations, late submission will incur a penalty of 5% per day or part thereof (including weekends) from the due date and time. An assessment will not be accepted after 5 days (120 hours) of the original deadline unless special consideration has been approved. An assignment is considered late if the requested format, such as hard copy or electronic copy, has not been submitted on time or where the 'wrong' assignment has been submitted.

For assessments which account for 10% or less of the overall course grade, and where answers

are immediately discussed or debriefed, the LIC may stipulate a different penalty. Details of such late penalties will be available on the course Moodle page.

FEEDBACK ON YOUR ASSESSMENT TASK PERFORMANCE

Feedback on student performance from formative and summative assessment tasks will be provided to students in a timely manner. Assessment tasks completed within the teaching period of a course, other than a final assessment, will be assessed and students provided with feedback, with or without a provisional result, within 10 working days of submission, under normal circumstances. Feedback on continuous assessment tasks (e.g. laboratory and studio-based, workplace-based, weekly quizzes) will be provided prior to the midpoint of the course.

Faculty-specific Information

PROTOCOL FOR VIEWING FINAL EXAM SCRIPTS

UNSW students have the right to view their final exam scripts, subject to a small number of very specific exemptions. The UNSW Business School has set a protocol under which students may view their final exam script. Individual schools within the Faculty may also set up additional local processes for viewing final exam scripts, so it is important that you check with your School.

If you are completing courses from the following schools, please note the additional school-specific information:

- Students in the **School of Accounting, Auditing & Taxation** who wish to view their final examination script should also refer to this page.
- Students in the **School of Banking & Finance** should also refer to this page.
- Students in the **School of Information Systems & Technology Management** should also refer to this page.

COURSE EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Feedback is regularly sought from students and continual improvements are made based on this feedback. At the end of this course, you will be asked to complete the myExperience survey, which provides a key source of student evaluative feedback. Your input into this quality enhancement process is extremely valuable in assisting us to meet the needs of our students and provide an effective and enriching learning experience. The results of all surveys are carefully considered and do lead to action towards enhancing educational quality.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Business School is actively monitoring student learning and quality of the student experience in all its programs. A random selection of completed assessment tasks may be used for quality assurance, such as to determine the extent to which program learning goals are being achieved. The information is required for accreditation purposes, and aggregated findings will be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of Business School programs. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential.

TEACHING TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Please note that teaching times and locations are subject to change. Students are strongly advised to refer to the Class Timetable website for the most up-to-date teaching times and locations.