



UNSW Course Outline

ZBUS8314 People and Systems - 2024

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General Course Information

Course Code : ZBUS8314

Year : 2024

Term : Semester 1

Teaching Period : Z1

Is a multi-term course? : No

Faculty : UNSW Canberra

Academic Unit : UC School of Business

Delivery Mode : Online

Delivery Format : Standard

Delivery Location : UNSW Canberra at ADFA

Campus : UNSW Canberra

Study Level : Postgraduate

Units of Credit : 6

Useful Links

[Handbook Class Timetable](#)

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

The People and Systems course considers the role of people in delivering organizational effectiveness and high performance, in conjunction with the impact of their managers on the outcomes. The concept of systems thinking and the role of people as part of those systems will

be introduced. The course then considers the role of people and reflects on the way people will behave within the systems. The key course outcome is to ensure that managers recognise their role in enabling and supporting others to achieve their goals, and the consequences of not doing this well. The course will take students through a number of real world case studies and present the challenges faced by managers when first taking responsibility for a team of people within an organisation.

Course Aims

The course aims to prepare students to understand the role of people in delivering organisational effectiveness and high performance.

The concept of systems thinking and the role of people as part of those systems will be discussed as the core element of the course. The course will review the role of people and reflect on the way that people will behave within the systems. The key course outcome is to ensure that you, as managers, recognise your role in enabling and supporting others to achieve their goals, and the consequences of not doing this well.

Topics covered include:

- What is a system and why does it matter?
- Understanding complex systems: key concepts and principles
- System traps and organisational performance
- What is organisational effectiveness?
- What is a high performance organisation?
- The role of people in developing a high performance organisation
- Open, closed, soft and hard systems
- Complexity and middle managers
- Applying systems thinking to complex problems
- Reasons why individuals will, and will not, act in ways that align to organisational goals.

During the course we will look at a number of case studies and apply your learning to the workplace. The assessments are designed to enable analysis and application of the learning in a real-world context.

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CLO1 : Explain to others how people fit into systems theory, assessing the implications for middle manager decision making and recognising the elements of the people system, which will create instability or support adaptability
CLO2 : Recognise the determinants of organisational performance and the role of people achieving organisational performance
CLO3 : Determine the drivers of individual motivation and engagement and apply this knowledge to develop implementation plans and create effective teams
CLO4 : Synthesise a range of theories about individuals and groups in order to evaluate a range of possibilities for implementing given strategies

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CLO1 : Explain to others how people fit into systems theory, assessing the implications for middle manager decision making and recognising the elements of the people system, which will create instability or support adaptability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• System Traps Poster and 2-page explanation• Case Study Analysis
CLO2 : Recognise the determinants of organisational performance and the role of people achieving organisational performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• System Traps Implementation Report• System Traps Poster and 2-page explanation
CLO3 : Determine the drivers of individual motivation and engagement and apply this knowledge to develop implementation plans and create effective teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case Study Analysis• System Traps Implementation Report
CLO4 : Synthesise a range of theories about individuals and groups in order to evaluate a range of possibilities for implementing given strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case Study Analysis• System Traps Implementation Report

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System | Blackboard Collaborate

Learning and Teaching in this course

This course is taught completely online. There is a week-by-week program which it is recommended that you follow as it supports the learning needed for the assignment strategy. You will be provided with guided readings, video clips, a voiced over power point presentation for most weeks, as well as discussion forums with each other and the Course Convenors. Full

details of all the activities will be on Moodle from Week 1.

This course utilises Class Collaborate, a virtual classroom system accessible via Moodle. There are 6 Class Collaborate sessions scheduled this semester. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the sessions. The sessions will be recorded and made available on Moodle for later review.

Workload

Students are expected to undertake an average of 10 hours of study per week for a 6 UOC course. This includes engagement with course readings and other activities, assessment preparation and research, as well as contact time with the lecturer and fellow students.

Other Professional Outcomes

Developing Program Attributes

Students will be encouraged to develop the following School of Business program attributes by undertaking the course activities and mastering the knowledge content:

1: Business knowledge

Our graduates will have in-depth disciplinary knowledge applicable in local and global contexts (applying knowledge to a specific context).

2: Problem solving

Our graduates will be critical thinkers and effective problem solvers (identifying an issue or a problem and analysing it using relevant theory and data).

3: Business communication

Our graduates will be effective professional written communicators.

4: Teamwork

Our graduates will be able to demonstrate an understanding of, and the ability to apply, the principles of teamwork and collaboration. Participates effectively in the collaborative team process.

5: Responsible business practice

Our graduates will be able to explain to others how people fit into systems theory, assessing the implications for middle manager decision making and recognising the elements of the people

system which will create instability or support adaptability.

6: Global and cultural competence

N/A

7: Leadership development

Our graduates will be able to demonstrate the capacity to apply systems frameworks to support effective leadership, change and innovation.

Developing Graduate Capabilities

Successful completion of this course contributes to the acquisition of UNSW graduate capabilities. UNSW aspires to develop globally focused graduates who are **rigorous scholars**, capable of **leadership** and **professional practice** in an **international** community.

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates
System Traps Poster and 2-page explanation Assessment Format: Individual	20%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: 02/04/2024 09:00 AM
Case Study Analysis Assessment Format: Individual	40%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: 13/05/2024 11:59 PM
System Traps Implementation Report Assessment Format: Individual	40%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: 11/06/2024 11:59 PM Post Date: 10/07/2024 03:00 PM

Assessment Details

System Traps Poster and 2-page explanation

Assessment Overview

Students will identify an issue related to the management of people and map the system and its traps.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Explain to others how people fit into systems theory, assessing the implications for middle manager decision making and recognising the elements of the people system, which will create instability or support adaptability

- CL02 : Recognise the determinants of organisational performance and the role of people achieving organisational performance

Detailed Assessment Description

1. Refer to the course Moodle site for further information on this assessment task.

2. A detailed assessment rubric will be released in Week 2.

3. Permitted use of Generative AI: DRAFTING ASSISTANCE

As this assessment task involves some planning or creative processes, you are permitted to use software to generate initial ideas and structure. However, you must develop or edit those ideas to such a significant extent that what is submitted is your own work, i.e., what is generated by the software should not be a part of your final submission. It is a good idea to keep copies of your initial drafts to show your lecturer if there is any uncertainty about the originality of your work.

Please note that your submission will be passed through an AI-text detection tool. If your marker has concerns that your answer contains passages of AI-generated text that have not been sufficiently modified you may be asked to explain your work, but we recognise that you are permitted to use AI generated text as a starting point and some traces may remain. If you are unable to satisfactorily demonstrate your understanding of your submission you may be referred to UNSW Conduct & Integrity Office for investigation for academic misconduct and possible penalties.

Assessment Length

One page poster and a two page explanatory note

Submission notes

Submit via an electronic forum on course Moodle site.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This is not a Turnitin assignment

Case Study Analysis

Assessment Overview

Students will analyse a case using both systems and people management theories to improve systemic issues.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Explain to others how people fit into systems theory, assessing the implications for

middle manager decision making and recognising the elements of the people system, which will create instability or support adaptability

- CLO3 : Determine the drivers of individual motivation and engagement and apply this knowledge to develop implementation plans and create effective teams
- CLO4 : Synthesise a range of theories about individuals and groups in order to evaluate a range of possibilities for implementing given strategies

Detailed Assessment Description

1. Refer to the course Moodle for further information on this assessment task.

2. A detailed assessment rubric will be released in Week 4.

3. Permitted use of Generative AI: DRAFTING ASSISTANCE

As this assessment task involves some planning or creative processes, you are permitted to use software to generate initial ideas and structure. However, you must develop or edit those ideas to such a significant extent that what is submitted is your own work, i.e., what is generated by the software should not be a part of your final submission. It is a good idea to keep copies of your initial drafts to show your lecturer if there is any uncertainty about the originality of your work.

Please note that your submission will be passed through an AI-text detection tool. If your marker has concerns that your answer contains passages of AI-generated text that have not been sufficiently modified you may be asked to explain your work, but we recognise that you are permitted to use AI generated text as a starting point and some traces may remain. If you are unable to satisfactorily demonstrate your understanding of your submission you may be referred to UNSW Conduct & Integrity Office for investigation for academic misconduct and possible penalties.

Assessment Length

2000 words (+/- 10%) excluding references

Submission notes

Submit via Turnitin.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

System Traps Implementation Report

Assessment Overview

Students will write a report linking theory and practice to explain an issue and how it can be

improved.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO2 : Recognise the determinants of organisational performance and the role of people achieving organisational performance
- CLO3 : Determine the drivers of individual motivation and engagement and apply this knowledge to develop implementation plans and create effective teams
- CLO4 : Synthesise a range of theories about individuals and groups in order to evaluate a range of possibilities for implementing given strategies

Detailed Assessment Description

1. Refer to the course Moodle for further information on this assessment task.

2. A detailed assessment rubric will be released in Week 6.

3. Permitted use of Generative AI: DRAFTING ASSISTANCE

As this assessment task involves some planning or creative processes, you are permitted to use software to generate initial ideas and structure. However, you must develop or edit those ideas to such a significant extent that what is submitted is your own work, i.e., what is generated by the software should not be a part of your final submission. It is a good idea to keep copies of your initial drafts to show your lecturer if there is any uncertainty about the originality of your work.

Please note that your submission will be passed through an AI-text detection tool. If your marker has concerns that your answer contains passages of AI-generated text that have not been sufficiently modified you may be asked to explain your work, but we recognise that you are permitted to use AI generated text as a starting point and some traces may remain. If you are unable to satisfactorily demonstrate your understanding of your submission you may be referred to UNSW Conduct & Integrity Office for investigation for academic misconduct and possible penalties.

Assessment Length

2,500 (+/- 10%), excluding references

Submission notes

Submit via Turnitin.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

General Assessment Information

Referencing

Students are required to reference using in-text citations and a reference list, following the APA 7th edition referencing style. Information about this referencing style is available on the course Moodle site.

Extensions and Special Consideration (School of Business, Postgraduate)

For assessment due during the semester: Your course convenor may approve extensions of up to five working days by email. Extension requests exceeding five working days must be submitted as a Special Consideration application.

For final assessments: All extension requests for final assessment items must be submitted as a Special Consideration application.

Extension requests and Special Consideration applications should be submitted BEFORE the assessment due date.

If extenuating circumstances prevent you from submitting an application before the due date, please notify your course convenor by email and submit the application as soon as possible.

If your application is approved, the outcome may be one of the following:

- A supplementary or alternative assessment,
- An extended deadline for the assessment (note the extension granted is normally equivalent to the period of impact outlined in your supporting documentation),
- An aggregated or averaged mark derived from other comparable completed assessments.

Please note, applying for Special Consideration does not automatically mean that you will be granted additional assessment, or that you will be awarded an amended result.

More information

Special consideration and application process: <https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>.

Late submission of assessment

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per day,
- for all assessments where a penalty applies,
- capped at five days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a student cannot submit an assessment, and
- no permitted variation.

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request extensions as early as possible before the deadline.

Grading Basis

Standard

Requirements to pass course

Students must achieve at least 50% overall to pass the course. Students are expected to engage actively in course learning activities and attempt all assessment requirements in the course.

Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 1 : 26 February - 1 March	Topic	What is a system and why does it matter?
Week 2 : 4 March - 8 March	Topic	Understanding complex systems: key concepts and principles
Week 3 : 11 March - 15 March	Topic	System traps and organisational performance - 1
Week 4 : 18 March - 22 March	Topic	System traps and organisational performance - 2
Week 5 : 25 March - 29 March	Topic	Organisations, employees and high performance
Week 6 : 1 April - 5 April	Topic	Feeding back and reflecting on Assessment 1
Week 7 : 22 April - 26 April	Topic	Hard, Soft, Open and Closed - analysing systems
Week 8 : 29 April - 3 May	Topic	Complexity and middle managers
Week 9 : 6 May - 10 May	Topic	Applying systems thinking to complex problems
Week 10 : 13 May - 17 May	Topic	What is agency and what makes people use it?
Week 11 : 20 May - 24 May	Topic	Performance management and accountability in complex systems
Week 12 : 27 May - 31 May	Topic	Unintended consequences and HR practices
Week 13 : 3 June - 7 June	Topic	Course review and reflection

Attendance Requirements

Not Applicable - as no class attendance is required

General Schedule Information

This course is known to require a steep learning curve, especially in the early weeks, so it is very

important to dedicate sufficient time to the course readings, lectures and opportunities to discuss course content with other students and Course Convenors during the Collaborate sessions.

Please see the course Moodle site for more information.

Course Resources

Prescribed Resources

There are no compulsory textbooks for this course. All required course readings will be made available on the course Moodle site.

Please note, there are chapters in the recommended texts (see below) that are heavily used to support the learning and assessments.

Recommended Resources

There are two recommended texts (details below) and other supplementary readings, all of which can be accessed via the course Moodle site.

Meadows, D. (2008). *Thinking in Systems: A Primer* (1st edition). Chelsea Green Publishing.

Gharajedaghi, J. (2011). *Systems Thinking Third Edition: Managing Chaos and Complexity: A Platform for Designing Business Architecture* (3rd edition). Morgan Kaufmann Publishing.

Course Evaluation and Development

This is the eighth time the course has been run. Feedback has been sought mid-way and at the end of the course via email and Collaborate sessions, and through the myExperience survey.

Overall, the feedback gathered from previous cohorts has been very positive with students stating they found the course hard but very valuable, both academically and practically.

As a result of specific feedback: the weekly lectures have been re-ordered, the assessments have been modified, the Moodle site has been updated with details on self-assessments, a non-assessed quiz has been introduced, extra reading is more clearly focused, two more Collaborate sessions have been added, the focus on systems theory has been expanded and its role on developing outputs and outcomes further clarified.

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
Convenor	Megan Evans		Building 27, Room 306, School of Business, UNSW Canberra	+61 2 5114 5001	Please email for an appointment	Yes	Yes

Other Useful Information

Academic Information

Course Evaluation and Development

One of the key priorities in the 2025 Strategy for UNSW is a drive for academic excellence in education. One of the ways of determining how well UNSW is progressing towards this goal is by listening to our own students. Students will be asked to complete the myExperience survey towards the end of each course.

Students can also provide feedback during the semester via: direct contact with the lecturer, the “On-going Student Feedback” link in Moodle, Student-Staff Liaison Committee meetings in schools, informal feedback conducted by staff, and focus groups (where applicable). Student opinions really do make a difference. Refer to the Moodle site for your course to see how the feedback from previous students has contributed to the course development.

Important note: Students are reminded that any feedback provided should be constructive and professional and that they are bound by the Student Code of Conduct.

<https://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/studentcodepolicy.pdf>

Equitable Learning Services (ELS)

Students living with neurodivergent, physical and/or mental health conditions or caring for someone with these conditions may be eligible for support through the Equitable Learning Services team. Equitable Learning Services is a free and confidential service that provides practical support to ensure your mental or physical health conditions do not adversely affect your studies.

Our team of dedicated **Equitable Learning Facilitators (ELFs)** are here to assist you through this process. We offer a number of services to make your education at UNSW easier and more

equitable.

Further information about ELS for currently enrolled students can be found at: <https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/equitable-learning>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

UNSW has an ongoing commitment to fostering a culture of learning informed by academic integrity. All UNSW staff and students have a responsibility to adhere to this principle of academic integrity. All students are expected to adhere to UNSW's Student Code of Conduct. Find relevant information at: [Student Code of Conduct \(unsw.edu.au\)](https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/student-code-of-conduct)

Plagiarism undermines academic integrity and is not tolerated at UNSW. It is defined as using the words or ideas of others and passing them off as your own, and can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidental copying from a source without acknowledgement.

For more information, please refer to the following:

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism>

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Special Consideration

Special Consideration is the process for assessing and addressing the impact on students of short-term events, that are beyond the control of the student, and that affect performance in a specific assessment task or tasks.

Applications for Special Consideration will be accepted in the following circumstances only:

- Where academic work has been hampered to a substantial degree by illness or other cause;
- The circumstances are unexpected and beyond the student's control;
- The circumstances could not have reasonably been anticipated, avoided or guarded against by the student; and either:
 - (i) they occurred during a critical study period and was 3 consecutive days or more duration, or a total of 5 days within the critical study period; or
 - (ii) they prevented the ability to complete, attend or submit an assessment task for a specific date (e.g. final exam, in class test/quiz, in class presentation)

Applications for Special Consideration must be made as soon as practicable after the problem occurs and at the latest within three working days of the assessment or the period covered by the supporting documentation.

By sitting or submitting the assessment task the student is declaring that they are fit to do so and cannot later apply for Special Consideration (UNSW 'fit to sit or submit' requirement).

Sitting, accessing or submitting an assessment task on the scheduled assessment date, after applying for special consideration, renders the special consideration application void.

Find more information about special consideration at: <https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/special/consideration/guide>

Or apply for special consideration through your [MyUNSW portal](#).

Late Submission of assessment tasks (other than examinations)

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per day,
- capped at five days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a student cannot submit an assessment, and
- no permitted variation.

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request extensions as early as possible before the deadline.

Electronic submission of assessment

Except where the nature of an assessment task precludes its electronic submission, all assessments must be submitted to an electronic repository, approved by UNSW or the Faculty, for archiving and subsequent marking and analysis.

Release of final mark

All marks obtained for assessment items during the session are provisional. The final mark as published by the university following the assessment review group meeting is the only official mark.

School Contact Information

Email: Business@adfa.edu.au