

MSCI 311: Organization Design and Technology

Full 2018

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Course Description and Objectives

This is a course about the study of organizations. This course will survey and critically examine theories, concepts, and research aimed at understanding the structural design and functioning of human organizations. Topics include organizational design fundamentals, communication, organizational environments, technology in organizations, organizational goals and effectiveness, and decision making. The course objectives are for you to develop theoretical and practical approaches for: 1) understanding the behavioral properties of organizations as social systems and 2) improving the design and behavior of organizations.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Explain and compare concepts that are key to organization. Design organizational theories.
2. Explain, assess and contrast prescriptive and descriptive theories pertaining to different organizational processes such as goal setting and effectiveness, communication, decision making, power, and politics.
3. Predict how contingency factors such as technology and the environment impact organizational structure.
4. Use the concept of variety to model and assess an organization's ability to manage internal and external uncertainty.
5. Analyze an organization's design, hypothesize potential issues, and propose solutions.

Learning Resources

The primary sources of learning for this course are lectures, lecture slides and any readings, recordings, or handouts provided in lectures. Lecture material will also be made available on Learn. The following optional textbook is available for background reading and extra information related to most topics covered in the course.

Organizational Theory, Design, and Change, 7th Edition, Gareth R. Jones, Texas A&M University, 2013, Pearson.

Course Assessment

Five (4) Biweekly Mini-Quizzes (MQs): Short answer to one or two questions. 20 minutes in length at the beginning of class. Testing knowledge and comprehension. Responsible for lectures materials Closed book. Non-cumulative. No alternate arrangements for missed quizzes. Each MQ is 5%. Mini-Quizzes due date are reported in the schedule.	20%
Class Participation/activity (CAs): Occasional individual short deliverables/quizzes to facilitate class discussion. Each CA is 2% Class Activates due dates are reported in the schedule.	10%
Final project: Assigned teams of 4-5 members each. Tests application and synthesis skills. Three deliverables (PDs): PD1 is 8% PD2 is 5% PD3 is 12% Refer to project details document for each PD description. Three deliverables due date are reported in the schedule.	25%
Final Exam (FE): Responsible for lectures, handouts, in-class case studies, and tutorials Tests application and analysis skills. Closed book with 'cheat sheet': double-sided, 8.5"x11", font size unconstrained. Final exam date: TBA	45%

Tentative Topics

1. Different Approaches to Organizations
2. Fundamentals of Organizational Design
3. Communication
4. Organizational Environments
5. Technology
6. Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety
7. Organizational Goals & Effectiveness
8. Decision Making
9. Organizational Culture
10. Power and Politics

Tentative Topic/Lecture Schedule

Week #	Date	Lecture #	Topic	Work Due
Week 1	6-Sep	1	Orientation/Introduction to Organizations	
Week 2	11-Sep	2	Different approaches to organizations	
	13-Sep	3	Fundamentals of Organizational Design 1	CA1
Week 3	18-Sep	4	Fundamentals of Organizational Design 2	
	20-Sep	5	Organizational Communication 1	MQ1
Week 4	25-Sep	6	Organizational Communication 2	
	27-Sep	7	Organizational Communication 3	CA2
Week 5	2-Oct	8	Organizational Environments 1	
	4-Oct	9	Organizational Environments 2	
Week 6	9-Oct	N/A	Thanksgiving – Fall Reading Days	
	11-Oct	N/A	Projects Q&A session	MQ2
Week 7	16-Oct	10	Organizational Environments 3	PD1
	18-Oct	11	Technology 1	CA3
Week 8	23-Oct	12	Technology 2	
	25-Oct	13	Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety 1	MQ3
Week 9	30-Oct	14	Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety 1	
	1-Nov	15	Organizational Goals	
Week 10	6-Nov	16	Organizational Effectiveness	
	8-Nov	17	Decision Making - Individual	CA4
Week 11	13-Nov	18	Decision Making - Organizational	
	15-Nov	19	Culture	MQ4
Week 12	20-Nov	20	Culture	
	22-Nov	21	Power and Politics	
	26-Nov	N/A	PD2 deadline	PD2
Week 13	27-Nov	22	Power and Politics	
	29-Nov	23	TBA	
	30-Nov	N/A	Final project deadline	PD3

Relevant Policies and Information

Policy for late assignments, missed tests, etc.: If you have a legitimate reason (illness, etc.) for being late on an assignment or missing a test, quiz or exam, contact the instructor or TA beforehand to explain the situation. A medical note or other evidence will normally be required. In such cases, an extension may be granted or an alternative assignment may be assigned. Otherwise, assignment grades will be reduced by 10% per day late and missed tests, quizzes, or exams will receive a grade of zero. Academic integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information.]

Turnitin: Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. This is being done to verify that use of all materials and sources in assignments is documented. Students will be given an option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course. Students who do not want to submit their work to Turnitin must inform the instructor by the end of the first week of classes, and will need to do one of the following alternatives for each written assignment, as agreed upon with the instructor:

- an annotated bibliography
- a draft bibliography identifying and documenting all sources and submitted on a specified date
- before the due date for the assignment
- a review of available research data on the subject
- an oral presentation of the topic to demonstrate personal knowledge
- other options the instructor and student have agreed upon

Plagiarism and other academic offenses: Cheating will be taken seriously, so please don't do it. Students who may be tempted to hand in someone else's work as if it were their own, to hand in work that was prepared for a different course, to look over their neighbor's shoulder for the answer to a quiz or test question, or to commit any other sort of academic offense in an attempt to improve their grade in the course, should first read the following information very carefully: UW's Student Academic Discipline Policy (Policy 71) <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

Students who wish to avoid unintentional plagiarism should also read these documents to make sure they understand the rules (because unintentional plagiarism still counts as plagiarism according to the policy).

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72, Student Appeals.

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

The UW Writing Centre: The Writing Centre works across all faculties to help students clarify their ideas, develop their voices, and write in the style appropriate to their disciplines. Writing Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments and presentations, using and documenting research, organizing and structuring papers, and revising for clarity and coherence. You can make multiple appointments throughout the term, or drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit www.uwaterloo.ca/writing-centre. Group appointments for team-based projects, presentations, and papers are also available. Please note that writing specialists guide you to see your work as readers would. They can teach you revising skills and strategies, but will not proof-read or edit for you. Please bring hard copies of your assignment instructions and any notes or drafts to your appointment.