

EDUC 723 - ORGANIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
SUMMER 2016

Course Instructors

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Course Meetings

This course is an asynchronous, online course. You can access the course Blackboard site at: <https://uma.umassonline.net>. Should you wish to have a synchronous conversation, please contact the instructor(s) to arrange a time to meet in person, by phone, or via Skype.

Course Description

This course provides an overview of organizations in higher education. We will cover the conceptual foundations and practical applications of major theories of organization from a wide variety of social science perspectives. Building upon this foundation, we will focus on contemporary perspectives on organizational structure and leadership. At the conclusion of this course, you should have developed an understanding of:

- 1) The theoretical underpinnings of organization theory as it applies to higher education;
- 2) Multiple perspectives on organizational structure in higher education;
- 3) The application of organizational theory to real-life settings at various levels of analysis (individual, group, organizational, and systemic);
- 4) Current issues and future trends associated with organizational study.

Unpacking the Course Description

Colleges and universities are historical accidents. They arose as a very peculiar form of guild in the Medieval Era, and many continue to exist in a way that would be recognizable to their original members even today. Along the way, nation-states rose and fell; major paradigm shifts in science and mathematics fundamentally altered the way that people view the world; and the “new” form of art, music, dance, fashion, and architecture arose so often that post-modernists would reject even the idea of progress. In this course, we examine the adaptive organizational characteristics of higher education institutions that have enabled this remarkable longevity. We will also examine the more maladaptive institutional features that make them almost impossible to manage or govern effectively.

Required Text

Hatch, M. J., & Cunliffe, A. L. (2013). *Organization theory: Modern, symbolic and postmodern perspectives (3rd Ed.)*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Readings Available Online

Clark, B. R. (2004). Delineating the character of the entrepreneurial university. *Higher Education Policy*, 17(4), 355-370.

Etzioni, A. (1959). Authority structure and organizational effectiveness. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43-67.

Kezar, A. (2004). Obtaining integrity? Reviewing and examining the charter between higher education and society. *The Review of Higher Education*, 27(4), 429-459.

Meyer, J.W., Ramirez, F.O., Frank, D.J., & Schofer, E. (2005). *Higher education as an institution*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University

Swidler, A. (1986). Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies. *American Sociological Review*, 51(2), 273-286.

Tierney, W. G. (1988). Organizational culture in higher education: Defining the essentials. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 59(1), 2-21.

Grading & Assignments

Grading will be based upon a 100 point scale with the following correspondences between the points earned and the grade awarded:

A	More than 94 Points
A-	90-93 Points
B+	87-89 Points
B	83-86 Points
B-	80-82 Points
C+	77-79 Points
C	73-76 Points
C-	70-72 Points
D	60-69 Points
F	Less than 59 Points

Your main work this semester will be responsible for developing a case study of an organizational unit within a higher education setting using concepts from the class readings and other resources. As the course progresses, you will add to your case study and post your work to UMass Online in order to share your project with the instructors and classmates. You will work as a small group throughout the course, which will give you a venue for sharing your work, giving feedback to each other, and providing support. In addition to your own online posts you will be expected to read the posts of the your colleagues and provide online feedback to them. You are expected to post detailed feedback to another member of your small group for each case study installment.

The following assignments are included in the course grade:

- 1) **Participation [25 Percent of Final Grade]:** This course is taught asynchronously online. Most of the learning that will occur will be the result of your reflection on your own experiences within higher education and interaction with your peers (in the form of discussion board and blog posts). Active participation is crucial to create a successful learning environment for all. More specific expectations include: 1) a minimum of three responses for each threaded discussion (one response each week to the assigned readings, the case study posted as “Applying Theory,” and the About Campus articles posted as “Additional Perspectives”); 2) regular contributions to the development of your colleague’s case assignment; and 3) active engagement in the course as demonstrated by logging in at least twice weekly with at least two days between the logins.
- 2) **Initial & Revised Case [5 Percent of Final Grade]:** For this assignment, you will provide the details of a case in higher education that can be illuminated via organization theory. Since details are critical, the best cases to select are those with which you are personally familiar. Your initial and revised case must include: 1) a title; 2) a brief overview of the organizational unit—for example, its mission and where it fits in the context of the larger organization; 3) a cast of main characters including names (please use pseudonyms for all personal and institutional names), descriptions of their positions, role they play in the organization, and a description of their personalities; and 4) a detailed description of key issues facing the unit. The Initial and Revised Case should be no more than two double-spaced pages. **Initial Draft Due: July 17 | Revised Draft Due: July 24**
- 3) **Structure & Control Paper [20 Percent of Final Grade]:** In this paper, which should be between 5-7 pages double-spaced, you will develop and enhance your case by using the concepts discussed in the “Structure & Control” section of the course to inform your analysis. To aid you in using the course readings in your case study, guiding questions follow the syllabus. Remember these are intended as guides for your reading and writing and are not proscriptive. Your goal in this paper should be to use big ideas from the reading to examine how they are or are not reflected in your case. **Due: July 31**
- 4) **Culture, Process, & People Paper [20 Percent of Final Grade]:** In this paper, which should be between 5-7 pages double-spaced, you will develop and enhance your case by using the concepts discussed in the “Culture, Process, & People” section of the course to inform your analysis. To aid you in using the course readings in your case study, guiding questions follow the syllabus. Remember these are intended as guides for your reading and writing and are not proscriptive. Your goal in this paper should be to use big ideas from the reading to examine how they are or are not reflected in your case. **Due: August 7**
- 5) **Peer Feedback & Revised Culture, Process, & People Paper [30 Percent of Final Grade]:** After your colleagues post their initial Culture, Process, & People Paper, you will provide detailed feedback to two people from your group. This feedback will include suggestions for revisions focused on substantive issues. Examples include: requests for additional information, alternate interpretations of utilized theories, and connections between

theories used and theories read in past (or subsequent) weeks. Feedback should take the form of a 1-2 page review of their work that highlights strengths and weaknesses. Once you have done that, you will revise your paper based on the feedback of your colleagues. Revisions should be substantive and submitted to the instructors with modifications highlighted (or designated via track changes). Your resubmitted piece should also include a 1-2 page reflexive essay detailing your contributions to the peer review process throughout as well as summarizing the impact of your colleagues' feedback on your own work. **Peer Feedback Due: August 14; Revisions (& Reflection) Due: August 21**

Course Meetings

*Please note: there will be 20-25 pages of additional reading per week to support class discussions. You will also be required to listen to or view relevant recordings. These activities take the place of lectures or in-class exercises and are integrated into the structure of the discussion threads.

Week One (July 11-17)

Introduction: Conceptual Issues

Hatch & Cunliffe (2013) – Chapters 1-2

Week Two (July 18-24)

Structure & Control: Contextual Approaches

Hatch & Cunliffe (2013) – Chapters 3, 4

Meyer, Ramirez, Frank & Shofer (2005), pp. 1-58

Week Three (July 25-31)

Structure & Control: Scientific Approaches

Hatch & Cunliffe (2013) – Chapters 5, 7

Etzioni (1959)

Week Four (August 1-August 7)

Culture, Process, & People: Cultural Approaches

Hatch & Cunliffe (2013) – Chapter 6

Swidler (1986); Tierney (1988)

Week Five (August 8-14)

Culture, Process, & People: Political Approaches

Hatch & Cunliffe (2013) – Chapter 8

Birnbaum (1989)

Week Six (August 15-21)

Alternate Perspectives: Emerging Ideas in Theory and Application

Hatch & Cunliffe (2013) – Chapters 9-10

Clark (2004); Kezar (2004)

Course Policies

Academic Honesty - Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate Department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent.

Access - The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have documented a disability diagnosis with the appropriate university offices, you are likely eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. However, I am committed to supporting your learning as best as I can regardless of the documentation process, and I encourage you to contact me at any point throughout the semester should you feel that I could better support your learning. If you know of a need for support prior to the start of the class, I would ask that you inform at some point during the first two weeks of the semester so that we can create a plan for appropriate accommodations and support. I also ask that you please inform me of any religious observances that will require you to miss class or require special accommodation.

Citation Style - Wherever possible, you should provide references to sources utilizing APA style, which is standard in most education-related areas of study. The full guide to APA style is can be found in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (Sixth Edition). A short guide is available online at Purdue's Online Writing Lab (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu>). In all written assignments, you should provide a bibliography. Apart from citation style, you may format your written assignments however you would like provided you do so consistently.

Electronic Submission of Work - Unless otherwise specified, all assignments should be submitted by email. I will respond to your email within one business day to let you know that I have received it. If you do not receive an email to that effect, you are responsible for contacting me to confirm that I have received it. Please do not provide a paper copy.

Late Assignments - Late works for which an extension is not received will be awarded a grade one letter grade lower than that which it would otherwise have been assigned. *If you would like to turn in an assignment later than the date on the syllabus, I require that you notify me at least 48 hours in advance.* All work must be submitted prior to the end of the semester; since a grade is a measurement of learning over a discrete period of time, *I do not award incompletes.*

Analytic Questions for Case Studies

Section One: Structure and Control

- Given the mission of the unit, what are the primary goals and “products” of the unit?
- How does the organization define its environment?
- How tightly or loosely-coupled is organizational decision-making and action?
- What are the unit’s major external threats and opportunities?
- What are the major internal strengths and weaknesses of the unit?
- What are sources of tension within the unit?
- Who are the key internal decision-makers?
- Who are the key external stakeholders?
- How are data used to inform strategic decisions within the unit?
- How are key decisions made within the unit?
- How is information shared within the organization?
- What are the key resources (material, symbolic, and human) needed by the unit?
- What are the primary sources of those resources?
- In what ways is the unit “organized”? In what ways is it an “anarchy”?
- How much autonomy do individuals and groups have within the organizational unit?
- In what ways is decision-making centralized in the unit? De-centralized?

Section Two: Culture, Process, and People

- How would you describe the formal organization of the unit?
- In what ways do formal policies and structures guide organizational action?
- What are the most stable features of the unit?
- Which types of key organizational decisions are made through hierarchical processes and which are made through committees and collegial processes?
- What are the key artifacts and symbols in the organization?
- What are the behavioral norms for decision-making? For communication?
- How do new members become socialized? How is it articulated?
- How widely shared are values, beliefs, norms and meanings?
- How congruent are the cultural elements (values, beliefs, norms, meanings, artifacts and symbols) of the organization?
- How congruent are these cultural elements with formal rules and regulations?
- How consistent are the cultural elements across the different levels and sub-groups (sub-cultures) within the organization?
- How “responsive” is the unit to its external environment?
- In what ways does the unit react to the needs of key stakeholders?
- Who are the formal and informal leaders (individual and collective) within the unit? What are their bases of power?