

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
Faculty of Social Science  
Bachelor of Management and Organizational Studies  
**MOS 280F**  
**Organizational Behaviour: Theoretical Foundations**  
Fall 2006

Time: Tuesdays, 3:30 – 6:30, University College Room 202  
Professor: James O'Brien  
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Office Hours: Thursday 10-12 a.m. or by appointment

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### Required Texts

Pfeffer, J. & Sutton, R., (2006). *Hard Facts, Dangerous Half-Truths and Total Nonsense: Profiting From Evidence-Based Management*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Course Pack available at InPrint, Room 78, UCC Bldg.

### Useful Text

A current OB introductory text, such as Johns, G. and Saks, A. (2005). *Organizational Behaviour: Understanding and Managing Life at Work*. Prentice-Hall.

### Prerequisites

Prerequisite(s): Any 001-099 Social Science full-course or equivalent. Enrolment in BMOS.

### Course Requirements

|                    |                    |                       |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Final Exam         | 30% of final grade | December exam period  |
| Report             | 30%                | Due in-class, Nov. 21 |
| Group presentation | 20%                |                       |
| Class contribution | 20%                |                       |

### Course Overview

In your previous organizational behaviour coursework, you explored key topics at the individual, team, and organization levels of analysis, and formed an overview of this important body of knowledge. This course builds on prior learning, with particular

emphasis on the theories that shape what we know about the behaviour of people in organizations and in a related way, how we practice as managers. Management based on evidence, Pfeffer & Sutton (2006) argue, can be linked to superior organizational performance. Their discussion of evidence-based management is a powerful and pragmatic way to bridge theory and practice in organizational behaviour.

In MOS 280F, we will consider theoretical frameworks, evaluate evidence that informs what managers do, identify practices that may be popular but are perhaps not adequately supported by current thinking, and develop informed opinions on a wide range of issues in organizational behaviour. Sessions will include lecture portions, presentations from peers, discussions, exercises and small group break-outs.

### Course Schedule/ Sessions

| Date   | Session Title and Description | Readings                            | Remarks                   |
|--------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sep 12 | Introduction                  |                                     | Franchetti, 2006 in class |
| Sep 19 | Theory of the Organization    | Scott, Ch. 1                        |                           |
| Sep 26 | Evidence-Based Management     | Pfeffer & Sutton, Ch. 1 & 2         |                           |
| Oct 3  | Organizational Entry          | Schmidt & Hunter, 1998; P & S Ch. 4 |                           |
| Oct 10 | Work-Life Balance             | Konrad & Mangel, 2000; P & S Ch.3   |                           |
| Oct 17 | Motivation and Incentives     | Heath 1999; P & S Ch. 5             |                           |
| Oct 24 | Teams                         | Allen & Hecht 2004                  |                           |
| Oct 31 | Leadership                    | Conger 2004; P & S Ch. 8            |                           |
| Nov 7  | Change                        | P & S Ch. 7                         |                           |
| Nov 14 | Applied Topics                | Rynes et al, 2002                   |                           |
| Nov 21 | Class-Driven Topic (TBA)      | TBA                                 |                           |
| Nov 28 | Guest                         | TBA                                 |                           |
| Dec 5  | Integration                   | P & S Ch. 9                         |                           |

### Course Requirements

Each of these requirements will be described in greater detail in handouts distributed in class.

**Exam (30%)** Managers are expected to be subject matter experts, and often are expected to recall and apply knowledge extemporaneously, in meetings or discussions. The exam will include questions concerning both the content of the course and its application, through a scenario-based question.

Note: Computer-marked multiple choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

Report (30%). Responding to current issues in a detailed and analytical way is another important facet of managerial work. In this requirement, you will write an analysis of a contemporary issue, selected from a list supplied by the instructor. The report will include a position in relation to the issue, supported by evidence, and specific, actionable recommendations.

The report will be 8-10 pages in length (double-spaced, 12 point font) and conform to APA conventions. It is due on November 21, 2006, at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day.

Group Presentation (20%). Much contemporary work is team-based, and experience working in this way is valuable on many levels. The class will form groups of 4-5, and each group will select a session from Weeks 2-11 of the course outline. The requirement is to present a short summary of recent and previous learning in that topic area to the class, to prepare a 1-page handout for distribution to the class on the day of the presentation, and to field questions from the class. The first 15 minutes of each session will be allotted to this requirement. The group hosting our guest speaker will meet with the instructor to discuss this unique requirement.

Presentations will be graded on form, content, and creativity. Each member of the group will receive the group mark, and all are expected to contribute to the preparation and delivery of the presentation.

Class Contribution (20%) Our time together in class represents a valuable, scarce resource, and the quality of the collective experience depends to a very great extent on the value of our individual contributions to class. At a minimum, we ought to attend class, be prepared, and engage in courteous, respectful dialogue with each other. We may also promote discussion in line with the principles discussed in Bonnycastle (1996), create opportunities for others to engage, clarify abstract or difficult points, or be helpful to the group in any number of ways.

### **Academic conduct**

Students are expected to act ethically and in a manner consistent with professional norms of Canadian management practice.

### **A Note on Plagiarism:**

From Academic Policies and Regulations, The University of Western Ontario Academic Calendar 2006:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to licensing agreement, currently between the University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### **Rules for Missed Exams and Deadlines**

The Social Science Academic Counselling website describes policies and procedures related to missing assignments, classes, and exams, at <http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/missed-exams.htm>

Some important excerpts from this document are as follows:

If, on medical or compassionate grounds, you are unable to write term tests or final examinations or complete course work by the due date, you should follow the instructions listed below.

You should understand that academic accommodation will not be granted automatically on request. You must demonstrate to your instructor that there are compelling medical or compassionate grounds that can be documented before academic accommodation will be considered. Different regulations apply to term tests, final examinations and late assignments. Read the instructions carefully. In all cases, action must be taken at the earliest possible opportunity, preferably prior to the scheduled examination, test or assignment.

1. Check the course outline to see if the instructor has a policy for missed tests, examinations, late assignments or attendance.
2. Bring your request for academic accommodation to the attention of the instructor prior to the scheduled time of the test or examination or due date of the assignment. If you are unable to contact the instructor, leave a message for him/her at the department office or advise the academic counselling office, room 2105, social science centre, telephone 519 661-2011, or fax 519 661-3384.
3. If you decide to write a test or an examination you should be prepared to accept the mark you earn. Rewriting tests or examinations or having the value of the test or examination reweighted on a retroactive basis is not permitted.

## References

**The following readings will be included in the Course Pack** (listed in chronological order of consideration):

Scott, W. R. (2003) "Chapter 1: The Subject is Organizations." In *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*. Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, pp. 3-30.

Schmidt, Frank L. and Hunter, John E. (1998). "The Validity and Utility of Selection Methods in Personnel Psychology Practical and Theoretical Implications of 85 Years of Research Findings." *Psychological Bulletin*, 124(2), 262-274.

Konrad, Alison M. and Mangel, Robert. (2000). "The Impact of Work-Life Programs on Firm Productivity." *Strategic Management Journal*, 21(12), 1225-1237.

Heath, Chip. (1999). "On the Social Psychology of Agency Relationships: Lay Theories of Motivation Overemphasize Extrinsic Incentives." *Organizational Behavior And Human Decision Processes*, 78(1), 25-62.

Allen, Natalie and Hecht, Tracy. (2004) "The 'romance of teams': Towards an understanding of its psychological underpinnings and implications. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 77, 439-461.

Conger, Jay. (2004). "Developing leadership capability: What's inside the black box?" *Academy Of Management Executive*, 18 (3), 136-139.

Rynes, Sara; Brown, Kenneth G.; and Colbert, Amy E. (2002). "Seven common misconceptions about human resource practices: Research findings versus practitioner beliefs." *Academy of Management Executive*, 16 (3), 92-102.