

EDL 7020
Organizational and Systems Theory
Summer 2014

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Catalog Description

EDL 7020. Organizational and Systems Theory/(3). On Demand. This course will integrate essential features of research in organizational theory with the more recent developments in systems theory. How people and groups organize to accomplish tasks will be combined with how organizations combine to form systems. A special feature of the course will be its treatment of organizations and systems for public, non-profit enterprises. Models and case studies will be featured.

Course Rationale

Good work in educational leadership requires an in-depth understanding of organizations as complex systems. Effective leaders work in a constant mode of organizational analysis using a variety of perspectives and frames. Twenty-first century organizational leadership is highly dependent upon working with people in ways that demonstrate value and provide for positive contributions to the organization's purpose. Course readings and activities provide for looking into organizations from a variety of theoretical lenses including modern, symbolic, and postmodern perspectives.

What do these perspectives, and others, mean for those who work in and lead organizations? How do we make sense of what's going on in an organization? How do our ways of looking at organizations affect the ways we talk about and work in them? How might our leadership bring more energy, vitality, and fulfillment to those with whom we work? How do our analytical frames play out politically, socially, culturally, legally, physically, economically, and technologically? How does change come about? The objective is to become knowledgeable about our educational leadership responsibilities of understanding, interpreting, verbalizing, and leading organizations.

Required Texts

Bush, T. (2011). *Theories of educational leadership and management* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
ISBN: 978-1-8-4860-191-8

Morgan, D. H. (2006). *Images of organization* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

ISBN: 978-1-4129-3979-9

Meadows, D. H. (2008). *Thinking in systems: A primer* (3rd ed.). Wright, D. (Ed.). White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green.
ISBN: 978-1-6035-8055-7

Marshall, S. P. (2006). *The power to transform: Leadership that brings learning and schooling to life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
ISBN: 978-0-7879-7501-2

Additional readings will be provided through the library electronic reserve and cohort website.

Course Objectives

- To understand and be able to apply, with a critical eye, various lenses, perspectives, and conceptual frameworks to educational organizations
- To understand how various lenses and perspectives lead to a variety of cultural, social, political, legal, physical, economical, and technological understandings of organizations
- To understand the importance of using a variety of lenses when analyzing organizations
- To understand organizations as complex systems
- To understand the importance of working collaboratively to create and sustain caring organizational environments.
- To explore the essential nature of applying various conceptual understandings to leadership choices

Course Norms and Expectations

- Prepare for class discussions by completing readings and assignments.
- Attend all classes regularly and participate in all class activities.
- Notify the professor if you must be absent.
- Support collaborative learning and participate in constructive peer feedback.
- It is expected that academic work is original and that appropriate credit is given to sources referenced in creative endeavors, both written and other.
- *The American Psychological Association Manual*, sixth edition, is the required style guide for manuscripts and citations. Purchase this manual if you do not have a copy.
- Students are required to adhere to the Appalachian State University integrity code, <http://judicailaffairs.appstate.edu>.

Assignments

Class Participation

It is of primary importance that students actively prepare for all class meetings. The class participation grade is based on class attendance, the quality of contribution to class discussions, and class presentations.

Organizational Analysis Paper

This paper will present an in-depth analysis of an organization using a variety of organizational lenses and perspectives studied in class. As the class supports the use of a variety of lenses and perspectives in organizational analysis, the paper must support the use of at least three in its analysis. The analysis could be based upon modern, symbolic, or post-modern perspectives and must include at least one concept from systems theory.

The paper is to be outlined as follows:

- An introduction to the selected organization (a pseudonym may be used)
- An introduction to the lenses used in the paper (cite relevant literature)
- An application of each frame to the organization, followed by findings (What does each analysis reveal, or not reveal, about your organization?).
- A discussion of what the findings mean for the organization. Where do you find conflicting information or areas of overlap open to various interpretations for understanding? What do you still want to know about this organization?
- A summary of what you now know, and still don't know, about your organization
- What are the implications of this knowledge (findings) for the health of the organization? How could/should a leader plan/prioritize for change leadership initiatives?
- If you are the leader of this organization, how do these findings affect your leadership priorities and your ways of leading? If you are not the appointed leader, how would you prioritize and plan for leading if you were the leader? From your current position, how will you prioritize your own focus for leadership and revamp or continue the ways you are leading in an effort to move the organization forward?
- Reference list

Papers should be 12-15 pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point font. See *APA Manual*. Further guidelines will be provided. Due July 22.

Readers Theatre

Collaboratively we will write and present a readers theatre interpretation of the organizations selected for our papers. Guidelines will be provided.

Organizational Change Presentations

In collaborative teams, we will study and prepare a presentation about one of the following current, innovative organizational change strategies: Appreciative Inquiry, Future Search, Open Space Technology, or World Cafe. Presentations will explain the conceptual framework, key principles, and applications for educational organizations. Resource materials, tools/methods, and references/resources will be shared with the class. When possible, teams should use the strategy in the presentations. Due July 29.

Reflective Learning

The final assignment is a reflective learning paper focused on looking back on the lenses/concepts/frames/perspectives presented in this course. Use these questions as a basis for preparing your reflection:

- What aspects of organizational theory have you found to be particularly interesting? What concepts excite or intrigue you? Are there concepts you wish to know more about? Discuss.
- In what ways does this course address the immediate challenges facing your own organization and your understandings and practice of educational leadership within that organization? In what ways might you begin using aspects of this class in your own work?
- How might the course concepts be used in creating a new organization?
- What has this course meant to you as an educational leader?
- What do you see as your own personal next steps to increasing your knowledge of organizations and leadership?

This paper is to be approximately 6 pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point font. Due August 5.

Evaluation

Every effort will be made to ensure that assignments are clear. It is my assumption that we are all motivated, serious professionals. That being said, I assume that we will do our best work—reading thoroughly and thoughtfully, participating deliberately and actively in class and with peer groups outside class, and in online discussions where applicable. Assignments must meet guidelines and reflect serious work (including requirements of originality, depth/breadth, cohesion, appropriate research and citations, etc.). Assignments that do not meet these guidelines will be returned for resubmission.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

Class Participation	20%
Organizational Analysis Paper	45%
Readers theatre	10%
Organizational Change Presentations	15%
Final Reflection	10%

A	95-100 points
A-	90-94 points
B+	86-88 points
B	83-85 points
B-	80-82 points
C+	77-79 points
C	72-76 points
Below 72 is failing.	

Other ASU Policies of Note

Academic Integrity

As a community of learners at Appalachian State University, we must create an atmosphere of honesty, fairness, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of each other. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of an Appalachian degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form and will oppose any instance of academic dishonesty. This course will follow the provisions of the Academic Integrity Code, which can be found on the Office of Student Conduct Web Site: www.studentconduct.appstate.edu.

Accommodations

Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Those seeking accommodations based on a substantially limiting disability must contact and register with The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at <http://www.ods.appstate.edu> or 828-262-3056. Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.

Religious Observances Policy

Faculty members are required to make reasonable accommodations for students requesting to miss class due to the observance of religious holidays. All ASU students are allowed a minimum of two absences per year for religious observances. Up to two absences for such observances will be excused, without penalty to the student, provided that the student has informed the instructor in the manner specified in the syllabus. Notice must be given by the student to the instructor before the absence occurs and no later than three weeks after the start of the semester in which the absence(s) will occur. Arrangements will be made to make up work missed by these religious observances, without penalty to the student. For the purposes of this policy, ASU defines the term "religious observance" to include religious holidays, holy days, or similar observances associated with a student's faith that require absence from class. Faculty, at their discretion, may include class attendance as a criterion in determining a student's final grade in the course. On the first day of class, faculty must inform students of their class attendance policy and the effect of that policy on their final grade; both policies must be clearly stated in the class syllabus.