

Organizational Behavior - PSY 330

Spring 2008

Tuesday, 4:00 - 6:40, Bush 162

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide you with a greater understanding of the psychological processes involved in organizational life. Drawing on current research and theory, we will focus on issues such as employee selection, training, leadership, motivation, work and family conflict, and organizational change. Since I/O Psychology is an applied field, special emphasis will be placed on the process of applying psychological principles to important issues in the workplace. To link the general psychological principles in the course to your specific work experiences and career interests, we will explore the process of career planning using Holland's Self-Directed Search approach.

Course Goals

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Discuss the major psychological factors that contribute to meaningful and satisfying work
2. Identify strategies used by I/O psychologists to help groups and individuals improve performance.
3. Describe how organizations change and how change affects organizational members
4. Apply psychological theories and principles to explore occupational interests and career planning.

Required Texts and Study Materials

Muchinsky, P. M. (2006). *Psychology Applied to Work*, (8th ed.) Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Houston, J. M. (2002). *Case Studies in Industrial/Organizational Psychology*.

Holland, J. L. (1994). *SDS: Self-Directed Search, Form R: You and Your Career; Assessment Booklet; and The Occupations Finder* (4th ed.). Lutz, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.

Requirements

1. **Tests and Final Exam.** Two tests consisting of multiple choice questions and short essays will represent 45% of your final course grade. In addition, a comprehensive final exam will determine 25% of your final grade. Make-up tests will not be given except in cases involving a medical problem.

2. **Attendance.** Due to the extensive use of discussion teams and group activities, class attendance is mandatory. Absences that are required for job, medical or related reasons will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Since research indicates that absenteeism influences work attitudes, values, motivation, and performance (see p. 79 of our text), please report all of your absences in this class within 48 hours to me via e-mail. The e-mail must include an accurate report of the total classes missed and a brief explanation for the absence. Course grades will be lowered for failure to comply with this attendance policy. This policy is based on my firm belief that each class member possesses insights and ideas that will directly contribute to the success of this course.

3. **Short Case Studies and Discussion Teams.** To provide you with some practice in applying key theories and principles, you will form a *discussion team* with three other class members. Each week the role of the discussion facilitator within the team will rotate so that everyone will have three chances to lead a discussion. Since we will analyze 9 cases, some cases will require more than one leader. As the facilitator or co-facilitator you will lead a discussion on the assigned case and then write up a 2 page case analysis for the next class. Since the quality of the facilitator's analysis is enhanced by the thoughts and insights exchanged during the team discussions, you are

expected to read all of the assigned cases and come to class ready to contribute to your team's discussion. Your three case analysis papers as well as your performance as a facilitator and team member will represent 15% of your grade.

4. Class presentation and Discussion Teams: Each discussion team will be required to make a class presentation on a key topic in I/O Psychology based on the training modules developed by the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP). These modules can be found online at www.siop.org/Instruct/InGuide.htm and contain everything necessary for an effective 20 to 25 minute presentation. Presentations will be assessed on criteria such as: Clarity, Organization, Interest, Creativity, and Response to Questions (a complete description of the criteria will be distributed in class). The class presentation will represent 10% of your course grade.

5. Work Profile Project: Work can take on a vast array of forms and can affect our behavior, thoughts, and emotions. Since our own work experiences tend to be quite limited, this project is designed to harness the power of the entire class to investigate the diversity and complexity of work. By systematically collecting information about work through a series of structured interviews (face to face or phone or e-mail) and sharing this information with the class, we will explore how the theories and principles in I/O Psychology play out in the work environment. To fulfill this assignment, you will need to find one person willing to participate in a series of interviews who has worked for an organization full-time for at least 2 years. You may recruit a family member or family friend to participate in this project but try to avoid using students or Rollins College employees (collectively we want to sample a diverse group of jobs and organizations). Before interviewing the person ensure that he or she understands what the project involves and how the data will be used. You also need to assure the participant that you will maintain confidentiality and not use any actual names (for example: "a female manager at a large technology company" not "my aunt, Ima Winer, a customer service manager at Oracle Corp. in Tampa"). You will record the information from the interview in a typed journal format which will be collected periodically during the semester (a detailed information sheet for this project will be provided). This project will represent 5% of your course grade.

6. The Holland Self-Directed Search: To stimulate your own career planning and introduce you to vocational interest inventories, each member of the class will be required to complete the SDS form R.

Optional Paper

A 7-10 page **APA style** paper (either a research paper or an organizational problem paper) may be written to replace the grade of your lowest test. The assignment is **due April 22**. A half grade penalty will be deducted from papers turned in between April 23 – April 29. No papers will be accepted after April 29.

Option #1: Organizational Problem Paper

This paper provides you with an opportunity to apply psychological principles to a real problem in the workplace. The assignment involves describing and analyzing some organizational concern and developing a well-reasoned solution to the problem. The paper should be 7-10 pages and 1) describe the problem and the setting in which it occurs, 2) analyze the problem (its possible causes and effects) using the information from class readings and discussions, and 3) suggest a solution to the problem based on your analysis. Theories and research studies from the course should be used to support your suggested solution. Outside readings may also be used if the problem is not directly address by course materials. You may be affiliated with the organization you select or know someone who can provide you with relevant information about the organization.

Option #2: Research Review Paper

For this assignment, select a specific topic in I/O Psychology (e.g. honesty testing in personnel selection) and find some recent journal articles that address this topic. The journal articles can be either empirical studies or literature reviews. From these articles, write a 7-10 page paper that 1) communicates the current status of what is known about the topic, 2) describes and evaluates the methods of research on the topic and 3) gives your views about what research should be done next on this topic. If you select this option make sure to turn in a copy of the journal articles with your paper. Journals such as *Academy of Management Review*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, and *Personnel Psychology* are all excellent sources of material for this assignment. **Avoid magazines**

such as *Newsweek*, *Training*, and *Time* since they do not present primary source material and often neglect to include critical details about studies.

If you are interested in writing this paper, please see me before you begin to ensure that the topic is reasonably focused and can be found in the current I/O research publications (1990-present). Make sure to give yourself adequate time to read and thoughtfully process the material, 4-7 articles should be sufficient to review for this paper. Some examples of topics students have selected include: Gossip and Power in the Workplace; Emotional Intelligence and Leadership; Evaluating Sex Discrimination Claims: Attribution and Judgments; The Psychology Contract in Organizations; and Emerging Standards of Fairness in Employment. During the final class you will have an opportunity to share your major findings with the class in the form of a panel discussion.

Grades. Your final grade will be based on the following factors:

(2) Tests	45%
(1) Comprehensive Final Exam	25%
(3) Case Analyses & Team Discussions	15%
(1) Class Presentation	10%
(1) Work Profile	5%
Optional Paper	(22.5%) (Replaces lowest test score)

Academic Honor Code

Membership in the student body of Rollins College carries with it an obligation, and requires a commitment, to act with honor in all things. Because academic integrity is fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge and truth and is the heart of the academic life of Rollins College, it is the responsibility of all members of the College community to practice it and to report apparent violations.

The following pledge is a binding commitment by the students of Rollins College:

The development of the virtues of Honor and Integrity are integral to a Rollins College education and to membership in the Rollins College community. Therefore, I, a student of Rollins College, pledge to show my commitment to these virtues by abstaining from any lying, cheating, or plagiarism in my academic endeavors and by behaving responsibly, respectfully and honorably in my social life and in my relationships with others.

This pledge is reinforced every time a student submits work for academic credit as his/her own. Students shall add to all papers, quizzes, tests, lab reports, etc., the following handwritten abbreviated pledge followed by their signature:

“On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work.”

Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge; submission implies signing the pledge.

Our Commitment to Students with Disabilities

Rollins College is committed to equal access and does not discriminate unlawfully against persons with disabilities in its policies, procedures, programs or employment processes. The College recognizes its obligations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to provide an environment that does not discriminate against persons with disabilities.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodation in order to participate in this class, please make appropriate arrangements by contacting Disability Services, located in the Thomas P. Johnson Student Resource Center, (407) 646-2354.
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Course Syllabus

Week 1: January 15
Topic (Reading): Introduction and Overview (Chapters 1)

Week 2: January 22
Topic (Reading): Research in Organizations (Chapter 2)
Case Study #1 discussion

Week 3: January 29
Topic (Reading): Criteria and Job Analysis (Chapters 3)
Holland's SDS: Self-Directed Search
Work Profile Project Phase 1 due

Week 4: February 5
Topic (Reading): Assessment (Chapters 4)
Case Study #2 discussion

Week 5: February 12
Topic (Reading): Personnel Decisions (Chapter 5)
Team Presentation on Selection

Week 6: February 19
*******TEST on Chapters 1-5*******

Week 7: February 26
Topic (Reading): Training and Development (Chapter 6)
Case #3 discussion
Team Presentation on Sexual Harassment

Week 8: March 4
Topic (Reading): Performance Appraisal (Chapter 7)
Case #4 discussion
Team Presentation on Evaluating Performance

Week 9: March 11
*******SPRING BREAK!*******

Week 10: March 18
Topic (Reading): Organizational Structure and Change (Chapter 8)
Case # 10 discussion
Work Profile Project Phase 2 due

Week 11: March 25
Topic (Reading): Teams and Teamwork (Chapter 9)
Case # 8 discussion
Team Presentation on Work Teams

Week 12: April 1
Topic (Reading): Organizational Attitudes and Behavior (Chapter 10)

Case #6 discussion
Team Presentation on Attitudes

Week 13: April 8
*******Test on Chapters 6 - 10*******

Week 14: April 15
Topic (Reading): Occupational Health and Work Motivation (Chapters 11 & 12)
Case #5 discussion
Work Profile Project Phase 3 due
Team Presentation on Work-Family Balance

Week 15: April 22
Topic (Reading): Leadership (Chapter 13)
Case #7 discussion
Optional Paper due

Week 16: April 29
Final Exam

Disclaimers: The above schedule is a publication of my best intentions for the coverage of topics and due dates. Because something almost always gets in the way of best intentions to keep them from being realized, I reserve the right to change any of the topics for coverage, assigned due dates, or any rules or procedures published in this syllabus. Changes will be announced in class.

Course Policies

1. **Due dates for case studies:** It is the policy of this course that *case studies are due at the beginning of the class following the in-class team discussion*. All case studies will be graded on a 10-point scale and one point (one full grade) will be deducted for papers turned in late. If circumstances prevent you from attending class on the night the case study is due, you may e-mail your paper to me before the start of class without incurring the one point penalty. No case studies will be accepted after **April 29**.

2. **Diagnosed learning disabilities** must be registered with the Academic Resource Center before special consideration can be given in regards to testing mechanics or format.

General Guidelines for Scientific Prose and Case Studies

One of the primary objectives of scientific writing is clear communication. Based on the principles presented in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th edition), here are some general guidelines you should follow in drafting your case study papers.

1. **Orderly Presentation of Ideas:** Though units—whether a single word, a sentence or paragraph, or a longer sequence—must be orderly. You must aim for continuity in words, concepts, and thematic development from opening statement to the conclusion. Punctuation marks and transitional words are two effective strategies for achieving continuity.
2. **Smoothness of Expression:** Since scientific prose must be clear and logical, avoid abruptness that may result from sudden shifts in verb tense, topic, or person. Please note that creative writing devices such as setting up ambiguity, inserting the unexpected, and omitting the expected can confuse and annoy readers of scientific prose and should also be avoided in your case studies.
3. **Economy of Expression:** Say only what needs to be said. Although the appropriate use of technical terms add precision and clarity to your paper, wordiness, jargon, and redundancy weaken your paper and blur your ideas. This does not mean you should write only short, simple sentences. Excessive use of short sentences produces choppy and boring prose that can be painful to read. Since too many long, convoluted sentences can also cause problems, try to vary sentence length and keep the needs of the reader in mind.
4. **Precision and Clarity:** Make sure every word means exactly what you intend it to mean. Remember that “I feel” does not mean the same thing as “I believe” or “I think.” You should also avoid colloquial expressions which undermine clarity.
5. **Good Grammar:** Incorrect grammar and careless construction of sentences distract the reader, introduce ambiguity, and generally obstruct communication. Use the active rather than the passive voice, and select tense or mood carefully.
6. **Linguistic Devices:** Devices that attract attention to words, sounds, or other embellishments instead of to ideas are inappropriate in scientific writing. Avoid heavy alliteration, rhyming, poetic expression, and clichés. Use metaphors sparingly; although they can help simplify complicated ideas, metaphors can be distracting.
7. **Reduce Bias in Language:** Constructions that might imply bias against persons on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, disability, or age should be avoided in scientific writing. However, long-standing cultural practice can exert a powerful influence over even the most conscientious writer. You can test your writing for implied evaluation by reading it while (1) substituting your own group for the group or groups you are discussing or (2) imagining you are a member of the group you are discussing. If you feel excluded or offended, your material needs further revision. You can also ask people from that group to read your paper and give you candid feedback.

Some Basic Rules for Analyzing Case Studies

- Carefully read the case study and the text to ensure that your analysis is both theoretically sound and practical. Your analysis should reflect the dual concerns of the Scientist-Practitioner Model.
- Clearly indicate when you are basing your analysis on empirical data and when you are making a logical inference or offering a personal opinion.
- Do not infer that specific actions or events occurred unless they are reported in the case study.
- Do not change the fact pattern presented in the case study. The cases are based on actual historic events and cannot be altered. Address the situation as it is described.