

# Management 238: Introduction to Organizational Behavior

---

Instructor: Professor Adam Grant  
E-mail: [grantad@wharton.upenn.edu](mailto:grantad@wharton.upenn.edu)  
Phone: 215.746.2529  
Office: 2107 Steinberg Hall-Dietrich Hall  
Office Hours: Mondays 1:30-4pm and Thursdays 9-10:30am

---



## Course Meeting Times and Locations

Fall 2011: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30am-12pm, JMHH G55

## Course Description and Objectives

Although skills in finance, accounting, marketing, operations, and strategy are crucial for organizational success, the ability to manage an organization, its groups, and its individuals is equally important. In your careers, you will depend on people to accomplish tasks, goals, and projects; you will need to work *for* other people, work *with* other people, and *supervise* other people. An understanding of the human side of management is an essential complement to the technical skills you are learning in other core business courses. Although we will focus on business organizations, you will find that the course concepts have valuable applications to other types of organizations, including non-profits, athletic teams, social clubs, and religious and political groups.

This course is an introduction to the basic concepts and topics in organizational behavior (OB) and management. The course focuses on OB at three levels: individual, interpersonal, and collective. We will start at the individual level, covering decision-making, motivation, and personality. We will then turn to the interpersonal level, covering power, influence, and negotiations. Finally, we will move up to the collective level, covering leadership and organizational context.

The course is designed to accomplish three main goals:

- Increase your knowledge of OB concepts so that you can understand and analyze how organizations and the people within them work.
- Provide you with opportunities to apply OB concepts to real-world problems faced by managers.
- Develop your leadership and management potential. Effective leaders often manage people and information to accomplish organizational goals under conditions not entirely in their control. Leaders must successfully be able to diagnose problems, communicate clearly, make effective decisions, motivate and influence others, manage diversity, and drive organizational change.

## Instructional Methods

To meet these goals, this course uses readings, lectures, exercises, cases, individual and team assignments, and class discussion. Reading assignments provide an important foundation for class discussion and must be completed prior to each class session. The due dates for all readings and other assignments are listed in the class schedule at the end of the syllabus. Lectures will be used to highlight key points from the readings and provide additional information to supplement the readings. Exercises and cases will provide you with the opportunity to apply what you have learned to real world issues and

scenarios. Because each of you brings unique perspectives and experiences to the class, participation in class discussions and activities is essential to your own learning as well as that of other class members.

## **Readings**

Coursepack: Available on Study.Net.

Supplemental materials: A few readings and exercises are not in the coursepack. These will be handed out in class throughout the semester.

**It is important that you have completed the assigned readings thoroughly *before* class on the day shown in the schedule at the end of the syllabus.** We will not have time to talk about everything covered in the readings in class, so be sure to email me or ask questions during office hours about anything that you do not understand. You will be expected to know the assigned readings for the papers and exams.

## **Assignments and Grading**

Your final grade in this course will be based on the following assignments, which represent a total of 400 possible points:

- |                        |                  |             |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| • Diagnosis Paper      | (120 points—30%) | October 13  |
| • Group Project Report | (80 points—20%)  | December 1  |
| • Final Exam           | (120 points—30%) | December 15 |
| • Class Participation  | (80 points—20%)  |             |

Each of these assignments is discussed in more detail below.

Diagnosis Paper (120 points—30 %): The theories and concepts taught in this course will only contribute to your business success if you apply what you have learned in the classroom to your everyday experiences. The objective of the diagnosis paper, due **October 13**, is to give you some practice in looking at your life through an organizational behavior lens. For this assignment, you will reflect on an organizational problem that you experienced. I use the term “organizational” quite broadly; you can write about an experience at a summer job, on a sports team, a school work group, or any other situation in which you worked with other people for the purposes of completing a collective task. Once you have selected an organizational problem from your past, you should describe and diagnose the problem using concepts from the course, outline the factors that contributed to the situation, and discuss how the concepts could have helped you and/or others deal with the situation more effectively. The paper should be between 5 and 8 pages, double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1” margins around.

Group Project Report (80 points—20 %): The goal of this assignment, due **December 1**, is to analyze and apply OB concepts in a real organization. You will be divided into groups of four to five members. Your group’s task will be to use concepts from the course to identify, analyze, and develop a plan for resolving a key problem that an organization is facing.

- Group formation and process: In October, you will fill out preference forms in class, and I will announce groups during the following week. Each group will be responsible for finding a local organization to study using interviews, observations, and/or surveys. The organization can be a business, extracurricular club, athletic team, or other social collective in the Philadelphia area. During class in late October, each group will announce the organization that it will study. Of

course, I would recommend starting the project earlier so that you have adequate time to collect data and write your report.

- Report guidelines: The report should answer the following questions, using data from your interviews, observations, and/or surveys to support each answer:
  - 1) What is the nature of the problem?
  - 2) What are the causes of the problem?
  - 3) How can OB concepts be applied and extended to solve the problem?
  - 4) What specific action steps should the organization take to solve the problem? What changes should be implemented?
  - 5) What are the potential barriers, obstacles, and challenges to following your recommendations?
  - 6) What are the risks, costs, and possible unintended consequences of following your recommendations?
  - 7) How will you communicate your findings to your clients and overcome potential resistance?

The report should be double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1" margins around. The minimum length is 15 pages and the maximum length is 20 pages. You should include a one-page executive summary before the introduction, and a letter of approval from a representative of your client organization. Throughout the report, feel free to use specific references to course readings and/or lectures to add credence to your diagnoses and recommendations. Also, please let me know if you would like me to make sample reports from past groups available to you.

- Selecting and working with your client organization: In choosing your organization, you are welcome to use your friend and family networks, prior work experiences, and campus affiliations. In the past, students have especially enjoyed this project when they find the organization fascinating, benefit from its services, or feel strongly committed to its purpose. With all of the resources available to you, I do not anticipate that any of you will have difficulty securing a site to do your project, but send me an email, talk to me after class, or drop by office hours if you run into any problems. I recommend starting the process by generating a list of possible organizations together. Then, you can work collaboratively to negotiate entry into the organization, find a liaison to help you gain access to relevant data and employees, diagnose the problem, write your report, and submit copies of the report to me and your liaison.
- Grading: Your group will receive one grade for the project. However, if multiple members of a group feel that particular individuals deserve higher or lower grades, I will consider the possibility of assigning individual grades to that group.

Final Exam (120 points—30 %): The final exam will be given during exam period at the time designated by the registrar: **December 15** from 9-11am. The exam will be a combination of multiple choice and essay questions, covering material presented in class and in the readings throughout the entire semester.

Class Participation (80 points—20 %): I believe that the best way to learn, especially about OB, is to actively participate in your education. In this class, "participation" is defined in terms of quality contributions to class discussion and exercises. There are four prerequisites for successful participation:

- Be here on time. If you're not here, you can't contribute much to class discussion. If you need to miss class for a predictable reason (job interview, athletic competition), please notify me at least 24 hours in advance so that I can make arrangements for any in-class exercises and so that you

can obtain the materials distributed during the class. I will also appreciate advance notice if you know that you need to arrive late or leave early on a particular day. Of course, I realize that in some cases unforeseeable emergencies arise. Although I will not directly penalize you for non-attendance, be aware that multiple absences will indirectly hurt you by preventing you from participating in class, thereby lowering your participation grade.

- Be prepared. To contribute to class discussion, you must come to class having carefully prepared all assignments (i.e., readings, cases, exercises). If you are unsure of the assignments for an upcoming class session, please ask me.
- Be brave. If you are here and you are prepared, the next step is mustering up the courage to speak. Everyone in this class is smart, interesting, and has unique life experiences to share. You will get the most out of this course if you share your thoughts with one another. I expect each of you to participate fully in all class exercises and to voice your views in class discussions. I also expect you to ask questions about things that you don't understand. Although this can be intimidating, asking questions helps your classmates, as well as you, by moving the discussion forward in a new direction. If you feel uncomfortable talking in class, please send me an email or set up an appointment to talk with me early in the semester. I will do everything I can to accommodate each of your individual circumstances, but I can only do so if they are brought to my attention.
- Be courteous. The final component of successful participation is treating your classmates in a respectful and professional manner. Listen carefully to the comments and questions that your classmates voice. You may learn something new from their perspectives, and you will be able to avoid simply repeating something that another classmate has said earlier in discussion. Also, it is perfectly acceptable for you to voice disagreement with an opinion provided by another student; open debate often leads to the most thoughtful and informative class discussions. However, please voice your disagreement in a kind and considerate manner. I require that you extend these courtesies to each other.

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

As in the business world, work must be received on time in order to receive full credit. If you are late on an assignment, your grade on that assignment will be reduced by 25% for each day it is late. You are always welcome to hand in an assignment before its due date if you know that you will be busy as the due date approaches. If you think that you will not be able to complete an assignment by the stated due date, please speak with me in advance to make alternative arrangements. My policy on late assignments will depend on the specific circumstances surrounding the problem, and thus may differ from student to student. Providing me with advance notice about a late assignment will *minimize* the penalty you receive on that assignment (as compared to providing me with no notice about the problem), but does not guarantee that there will be no penalty for turning the assignment in late.

### **Grading**

The written assignments (diagnosis paper and group project report) will be graded on five criteria:

- Organization and structure: The paper employs a logical framework and analyzes a critical issue.
- Depth of analysis: The paper demonstrates thorough research. The information is gathered from appropriate sources and is presented in a persuasive manner.
- Creativity and insight: The material is presented in an original, engaging, and interesting manner.
- Integration with course readings, lectures, and discussions: The paper draws on, applies, and seeks to extend OB concepts covered in the class.

- Style: The paper is smoothly and professionally written, using appropriate grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Academic honesty is expected in this course. Please be aware that plagiarism is a serious violation. With the exception of the group project, all assignments in this class must be completed independently. If you have any questions about any of these policies, please let me know.

### **Feedback and Questions**

I am committed to making this course a valuable learning experience for you. After the first month of the course, we will spend part of a class session evaluating our progress, and I will make any necessary changes to keep us on track. However, I welcome your feedback regarding the class at any time in the semester. Also, please feel free to ask questions as they arise. It is easiest to reach me by email or during office hours, but I am always happy to set up an appointment. Additionally, if you have a disability which requires special accommodation, please let me know ASAP so that I can be helpful to you.

### **Instructor Biosketch**

Adam M. Grant is Associate Professor of Management with tenure at The Wharton School. He received his B.A. from Harvard University, where he graduated magna cum laude with highest honors in psychology, Phi Beta Kappa honors, and the John Harvard Scholarship for highest academic achievement. He received his Ph.D. and M.S. degrees in organizational psychology from the University of Michigan. He has been honored with the Excellence in Teaching Award for every class that he has taught at Wharton, at both the undergraduate and MBA levels: organizational behavior, negotiations, and teamwork and leadership. He has also earned the Goes Above and Beyond the Call of Duty MBA Teaching Award and has been recognized as one of the world's top 40 business professors under 40 by *Poets and Quants*. He has consulted for, studied, and taught executives at a wide range of organizations, including Google, Citi, Medco, Yahoo!, Accenture, Time-Warner Cable, the Royal Bank of Scotland, United Health Group, Havas, Borders Group, Duke Energy, Grant Thornton, Elsevier, Sunoco, the American Financial Services Association, Teach For America, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Air Force, Army, and Navy. He has designed several experiential learning activities based on *The Apprentice* in which students have raised over \$58,000 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation while developing leadership, influence, negotiation, and motivation skills.

Professor Grant has more than 50 publications in leading management and psychology journals on work motivation, job design, initiative and proactivity, leadership, and employee engagement. His pioneering research has introduced evidence-based techniques that increase performance and reduce burnout among engineers and sales professionals, enhance call center productivity, and motivate helping and safety behaviors among doctors, nurses, and lifeguards. His studies have been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Financial Times*, *USA Today*, *BusinessWeek*, *Fast Company*, *US News & World Report*, *CNN*, *Forbes*, *Harvard Business Review*, and Daniel Pink's bestselling book *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*. He has earned distinguished scholarly achievement awards from the Academy of Management, the National Science Foundation, the American Psychological Association, the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, and the American Academy of Political and Social Science. Prior to graduate school, he worked at Let's Go Publications, where he set numerous company records for advertising sales and won the Manager of the Year award. He has volunteered as a Harvard admissions interviewer, a Make-A-Wish Foundation board member, and a licensed conflict mediator. He is a former All-State and All-American springboard diver, and performed for more than a decade as a professional magician.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments
September 8	Introduction to OB	n/a
<b>Level 1: Individual</b>		
September 13	Decision-Making I: Are People Rational?	“The end of rational economics” (1)
September 15	Decision-Making II: Choice at Work	“Carter racing” (2)
September 20	Decision-Making III: Heuristics and Biases	n/a
September 22	Motivation I: Expectancies, Needs, and Values	“The hidden traps in decision-making” (3) and “Hausser Foods” (4)
September 27	Motivation II: Goal-Setting	“Goal-setting at GE & Goldman Sachs” (5)
September 29	Motivation III: Rewards	“Why incentive plans cannot work” (6) and “How customers can rally your troops” (7)
October 4	Personality I: Feedback	Complete Reflected Best Self Exercise; “How to play to your strengths” (8)
October 6	Personality II: The Big Five	Fill out Big Five personality scale and print your scores: <a href="http://www.adamgrant.info/assessments.php">www.adamgrant.info/assessments.php</a>
October 11	No class: Fall break	
October 13	Personality III: Selection and Hiring	Diagnosis paper due; Bring your resume to class
October 18	Guest Speaker	“Competent jerks, lovable fools” (9)

### Level 2: Interpersonal

October 20	Influence I: Acquiring and Using Power	Bring \$5 cash to class
October 25	Influence II: Hierarchies and Networks	“Donna Dubinsky” (10), “Heidi Roizen” (11), and “The power of reconnection” (12)
October 27	Influence III: Persuasion	“Harnessing the science of persuasion” (13); Outside persuasion assignment

November 1	Negotiation I: Distributive Bargaining	Prepare for negotiation #1
November 3	Negotiation II: Integrative Bargaining	Prepare for negotiation #2
November 8	Guest Speaker	“Successful negotiators” (14)

### **Level 3: Collective**

November 10	Leadership I: Team Effectiveness	“Sports teams as a model for workplace teams” (15)
November 15	Leadership II: Change Processes	GlobalTech player’s guide (16) and interviews (17)
November 17	Leadership III: Change Outcomes	Finish GlobalTech simulation; “Company vision” (18)
November 22	No class: Happy Thanksgiving!	n/a
November 24	No class: Happy Thanksgiving!	n/a
November 29	Organizational Context I: Dynamic Environments	“Process consultation” (19) and “Reaching and changing frontline employees” (20)
December 1	Organizational Context II: Culture	Group projects due
December 6	Guest Speaker	n/a
December 8	Wrap-up and Reflection	Complete course evaluations
December 13-14	Final exam review sessions	n/a
December 15	Final exam (9-11am)	n/a