

Comm 6750 *Communication and Cultural
Change in Organizations*
Spring 2009 T/R 12-2, W 2-3, and by appointment.

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COURSE CONCEPT:

Theoretically guided change efforts are core to both managerial and critical work in organizations. Intervention may be to aid efficiency and effectiveness in fore-fronted organizational goal attainment but is also used to enhance the inclusion of wider social values into organizational practices and decisions. Interventions, thus, may also relate to environmental impacts, quality of work life, diversity and advancement of underrepresented groups and interests, and so forth.

The primary purpose of the course is to address the role of communication in change efforts especially during periods of transition, technological innovations and globalization. Included is a development of the nature and function of organizational cultures, discussion of the role of formal and informal leaders in providing visions and framing organizational events, investigations of ethical issues, and careful examination of the importance of member involvement in change processes. A significant period of time will be devoted to looking participatory action research and other research activities directed toward doing research while engaged in change efforts.

We will discuss theories of change as well as work directly on a change effort. We as a class will be involved in one or more change case projects. The details of this and our involvement will be worked out in class.

TEXTS

Poole, M. S., & Van de Ven, A. (2004). *Handbook of organizational change and innovation*.
New York: Oxford University Press.

Additional readings will be distributed throughout the semester.

EXPECTATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The course assumes a working familiarity with contemporary communication theory and basic theories of organizational behavior, but no specific prior course work is required. Needless to say, all class members are expected to attend regularly, read assigned as well as other relevant materials, actively participate in class and engage appropriately and effectively in case projects. The course grade will be based on class discussions, project reports and the research paper for the course.

The research paper for the course should identify an interesting organization problem related to communication and cultural change in organizations and synthesize the “best thinking” on the issue. Projects based on the class member’s ethnography or continuing research agenda or a case study of a particular change effort are possible including class projects. The paper (5000-6000 words in length) is due May 1st and should be in final form following the APA style sheet. I encourage everyone to turn in earlier drafts so that I may offer writing suggestions and be involved in the formative processes.

ROUGH SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction and Discussion of Class Projects

Week 2-3: Conceptions of Organizational Change Processes

Read: Poole & Van de Ven, chapters 1, 4, 5, 6, 9 & 13 ; Lewis & Seibold; Chia

Week 4: Research and Assessment in Change processes

Read: McPherson & Deetz; Reason; Deetz, et al, chapter 10; Poole & Van de Ven, chapter 10

Week 5: Organizational Culture and Change

Read: Deetz, et al, chapters 1-2; Poole & Van de Ven, chapter 7

Week 6: Leaders, Vision, Values, Stories, Frames, Vocabularies

Read: Deetz, "The business concept, discursive power, and managerial control in a knowledge-intensive company"; Deetz, et al., chapters 3-4

Week 7: Identity and Identification in Organizations and Culture Work

Read: TBA

Week 8: Stakeholders and Participation in Change Processes

Read: Deetz, et al. Chapter 5; Steurer; Poole & Van de Ven, chapter 8; Lewis; Lewis, et al.; Thackaberry

Week 9: Ethics and Change Processes

Read: Deetz, et al., chapter 6; Knights & Morgan, "Corporate strategy, organizations, and subjectivity"

Week 10: Technological Change and Organizational Change

Read: TBA

Week 11-15: Working on Cases

Read: Different essays relevant to cases

Readings Distributed and Suggested

- Argyris, C. (1990). *Overcoming organizational defenses: Facilitating organizational learning*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Bennis, W., & Biederman, P. (1997). *Organizing genius: The secrets of creative collaboration*. Reading, MA: Perseus.
- Cheney, G. (1983). The rhetoric of identification and the study of organizational communication. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 69: 143-158.
- Chia, R. (1999). A 'rhizomic' model of organizational change and transformation: Perspective from a metaphysics.... *British Journal of Management*, 10(3), 209-228
- Chia, R. (1996). The problem of reflexivity in organizational research: Towards a postmodern science of organization. *Organization*, 3(1), 31-59.
- Deetz, S. (1995). *Transforming communication, transforming business: Building responsive and responsible workplaces*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.
- Deetz, S. (1997). The business concept, discursive power, and managerial control in a knowledge-intensive company: A case study. In B. Sypher (ed.) *Case studies in organizational communication*, 2nd edition (pp. 173-202). New York: Guilford Press.
- Deetz, S., Tracy, S., and Simpson, J. (2000). *Leading organizations through transitions: Communication and cultural change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- DeWine, S. (2001). *The consultant's craft: Improving organizational communication*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Ford, J. D., & Ford, L. W. (1994). Logics of identity, contradiction, and attraction in change. *Academy of Management Review*, 12, 366-380.
- Ford, J. D., & Ford, L. W. (1995). The role of conversations in producing intentional change in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 20, 541-570.
- Knights, D. & Morgan, G. (1991). Corporate strategy, organizations, and subjectivity: A critique. *Organization Studies*, 12, 251-273.
- Lewis, L.K. & Seibold, D.R. (1998). Reconceptualizing organizational change implementation as a communication problem: A review of literature and research agenda. In M.E. Roloff (ed.) *Communication Yearbook 21* (pp. 93-152). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lewis, L.K. (1999). Disseminating information and soliciting input during planned organizational change: Implementers' targets, sources, and channels for communicating. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 13, 43-75.

- Lewis, L.K., Hamel, S.A., & Richardson, B.K. (2001). Communicating change to nonprofit stakeholders: Models and predictors of implementers' approaches. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 15, 5-41.
- McPherson, J. & Deetz, S. (2005). A high-tech organizational change initiative in the public sector: Theory engaged in practice. In J. Simpson and P. Shockley (eds.), *Engaging communication, transforming organizations: Scholarship and engagement in action* (pp.79-97). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Peled, A. (2001). Outsourcing and political power: Bureaucrats, consultants, vendors and public information technology. *Public Personnel Management*, 30, 495-514.
- Reason, P. (1994). *Participation in human inquiry*. London: Sage.
- Schoenberger, E. (1997). *The cultural crisis of the firm*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Steurer, R., Langer, M., Konrad, A. & Martinuzzi, A. (2005). Corporations, Stakeholders and Sustainable Development I: A Theoretical Exploration of Business–Society Relations, [*Journal of Business Ethics*, 61/3, 263-281.](#)
- Steurer, R. (2006): Mapping Stakeholder Theory Anew: From a 'Theory of the Firm' to Three Perspectives on Business-Society Relations, *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 15/1, 55-69.
- Srivastva, S., & Cooperrider, D. (1999). *Appreciative management and leadership*. Williams Custom Publishing.
- Tretheway, A. (1997). Resistance, identity, and empowerment: A postmodern feminist analysis of clients in a human service organization. *Communication Monographs*, 64: 281-301.
- Tsoukas, H., & Chia, R. (2000). On organizational becoming: Rethinking organizational change. *Organization Science*, 13(5), 567-582.
- Vigoda, E. (2002). From responsiveness to collaboration: Governance, citizens, and the next generation of public administration. *Public Administration Review*, 62, 527-540.
- Weick, K. E., & Ashford, S. J. (2001). Learning in organizations. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods*(pp. 704-731). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Whyte, W. H. (1991). *Participatory action research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.