

INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP DYNAMICS
MGT 401A-1 and MGB 401AY-1

Fall 2023

Professor Beth Bechky

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Office hours (on zoom): Wednesday, 10-11. Link: <https://ucdavis.zoom.us/j/97340744459>

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Course Description

This is an introductory course in managing and leading modern organizations. The purpose of this course is to provide you with frameworks to understand managing and leading in organizational settings and tools and opportunities to act on what you learn. The course uses readings, cases, exercises, and simulations to survey problems confronting organizational managers, and demonstrate practical skills for analyzing and solving those problems. Topics include leadership, change, group and team functioning, decision making, managing structure, and organizational culture.

Required Readings and Course Materials

- This syllabus. You are fully responsible for all content and policies described here.
- Online Textpak available – Some of the readings will need to be purchased through Harvard Business Review Publishing. The link/instructions for access (also available on Canvas): <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1087915>. These items are noted in the schedule with [HBS].
- Other readings, videos, exercises, cases, etc. posted on Canvas or distributed by email.
 - Linked items are available online or through the UC Davis library. If noted, links will need to be accessed from on campus or by using the [library VPN](#). Some items will need to be searched for directly. The link will take you to main the database page of the journal. Click on “Search within this publication” and then search for the indicated text written as, “AN [Insert number]” in the second field.
- Everest leadership and team simulation. You will need to login to Harvard Business School Publishing and create an account to purchase and run this simulation. The link is specific to your section and can be found in Session 4 of the schedule below.

Course Requirements

Case Analyses	30%
Group Project	25%
Leadership Lab	10%
Contribution to the Learning Environment	20%
Final Exam	15%

1. Three case analyses (30% of Grade): We will often use cases as the basis for our in-class discussions. When approaching the cases, I suggest starting with the non-case readings, reading the case questions (see the end of this syllabus), and thinking about how both the readings and questions apply as you read the case. (See also the “Guide to case analysis” in this syllabus for other tips.) You will turn in a written analysis (3-4 pages) for three cases.

For the case assignments, we will be doing a reflection on different learning modalities. You will do the first case in your study group and the second case individually, in both cases adhering to our standard policy of NO assistance from AI. For the third case you will use any generative AI of your choosing (ChatGPT, Bing, etc). We will discuss the value and challenges of collaborating (with people and with technology) after all the assignments are complete. To that end, in addition to the case analysis itself, you will complete a short reflection each time you hand in a case analysis.

- 1. Harrah’s Entertainment** (Week 3): You will complete this case analysis in your study groups. You should not use AI.
- 2. Tariq Khan** (Week 5): You will hand this case analysis in individually. For this analysis, you should not use AI.
- 3. Caroline Regis** (Week 8): You will hand this case analysis in individually. For this analysis, you should use generative AI in whatever way you wish. In addition to the case analysis, you will add a last page explaining what you used AI to do.

Written case analyses are due by the start of class the day the case is assigned (upload to Canvas).

****Before starting this assignment, read the case assignment & grading rubric in Canvas.*

2. One group project (25% of grade) This project will be done in your assigned study groups. It is designed to help you sharpen your analytical skills by applying course material to understanding a pressing problem facing real world organizations. This project entails selecting a novel problem or challenge in leadership or management on which you want to become an expert. This problem can come from your work experiences, press accounts, or interviews that you conduct. It will be a practical topic for which you can develop ideas for solutions informed by scientific knowledge in organizational behavior. The group project is due by the start of our last class, but you will work on this assignment with your team throughout the quarter. ****Before starting this assignment, read the team project assignment & grading rubric in Canvas.*

3. Two Leadership Labs (10% of Grade): The goal of the Leadership Lab is to give you a forum to apply course concepts to challenges that you and your classmates face in the organizations in which you manage and lead. These assignments include a discussion with your study group and a 1-2 page written reflection on what you learned from the discussion, and will be graded on a check/plus/minus basis. The Labs will be held during week 6 and week 7. ****Before the first Lab, read the leadership lab assignment in Canvas.*

4. Final Exam: Case analysis (15% of grade). The final exam for the course will be held during the assigned final exam period and will include short essays asking you to analyze a case using course concepts.

5. Contribution to learning environment (20% of grade): Students are expected to attend all classes and be prepared for class by completing assigned readings and cases. Students are also expected to actively participate in class discussions and group exercises. Learning in this course is a collaborative, active endeavor. You will learn as much from each other as you will from me and the course material. To facilitate this, it is critical that you contribute to our full class discussions and are actively engaged in all small group activities and discussions. I know it can be difficult for some people to speak up in front of others. Please consider this course a low stakes opportunity to practice this critically important skill.

Highly-rated class participation involves thoughtful comments and questions, not just “floor time” or repetition of facts from the readings. The following rubric is used to grade attendance and participation in each class:

- 3 points: Excellent participation. Present and engaged in class. Also, several comments on point that further discussion.
- 2 points: Good participation. Present and engaged in class. Also, at least one comment on point that furthers discussion.
- 1 point: Satisfactory participation: Present and engaged in class, but no comments
- 0 points: Absent with reasonable cause and advance notification;
- 3 points: Absent without cause

NOTES ABOUT EXPECTATIONS FOR CLASS BEHAVIOR

1. Come to class, on time. We all lead busy, complicated lives, but coming late, leaving early, or not showing up at all affects your classmates and impedes your ability to benefit from this course. If circumstance arise that will cause you to miss part or all of a class, please let me know (via email) before the missed class. If circumstances arise that cause you to miss more than 2 classes, it is important to let me know right away and I will let you know how to make up for missing class.

2. All class members will treat each other with respect and dignity. It is not acceptable behavior to insult, harass, or demean any member of the class. Professional business behavior should be modeled in the classroom, including use of appropriate language, jokes, or stories.

3. Follow all assignment policies and deadlines. Late assignments will not be accepted and there are no make-up or extra-credit opportunities. Please note that all assignments are required, even if they are not graded. This includes any surveys and short assignments listed on the course schedule.

When completing all written work:

- Use 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced with 1" margins on all four sides.
- Follow the assignment page limits.
- Please cite course readings appropriately.

Regrade policy: You may request a regrade of your assignments in writing within 7 days of the return of the assignment, with a complete explanation of why you think you deserve a different grade. Please note that when regrading I will reread and reconsider the entirety of the assignment, and as such it can result in a grade being raised, lowered or staying the same.

4. All students are required to comply with the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct, found here: (<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/cac.pdf>).

NOTE: For the purposes of this class, assistance from AI tools is considered plagiarism (with the exception of case #3).

In general, students should adhere to the [UC Davis Principles of Community](#), copied below.

The University of California, Davis, is first and foremost an institution of learning and teaching, committed to serving the needs of society. Our campus community reflects and is a part of a society comprising all races, creeds and social circumstances. The successful conduct of the university's affairs requires that every member of the university community acknowledge and practice the following basic principles:

We affirm the inherent dignity in all of us, and we strive to maintain a climate of justice marked by respect for each other. We acknowledge that our society carries within it historical and deep-rooted

misunderstandings and biases, and therefore we will endeavor to foster mutual understanding among the many parts of our whole.

We affirm the right of freedom of expression within our community and affirm our commitment to the highest standards of civility and decency towards all. We recognize the right of every individual to think and speak as dictated by personal belief, to express any idea, and to disagree with or counter another's point of view, limited only by university regulations governing time, place and manner. We promote open expression of our individuality and our diversity within the bounds of courtesy, sensitivity and respect.

We confront and reject all manifestations of discrimination, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, status within or outside the university, or any of the other differences among people which have been excuses for misunderstanding, dissension or hatred. We recognize and cherish the richness contributed to our lives by our diversity. We take pride in our various achievements, and we celebrate our differences. We recognize that each of us has an obligation to the community of which we have chosen to be a part. We will strive to build a true community of spirit and purpose based on mutual respect and caring.

Course Schedule

IMPORTANT NOTE: All “Readings” and “Cases” should be completed before class.

All “Exercises” and “Video Cases” will be completed during class unless noted as “Pre-Class”. No pre-work is necessary for these Exercises and Video Cases.

Session 1 – SR: 9/27 and 10/4, Davis: 10/3

Introduction to leading and managing in organizations Bias and prejudice in the workplace

Readings: *Subtle Biases and Covert Prejudice in the Workplace*, Dietz and Hamilton (2008).
[HBS]
Joseph and the Company Party Part A
The Syllabus

Case: Joseph and the Company Party

Pre-Class Exercise: Hidden Biases Computer Exercise
Do online prior to class at: <http://www.understandingprejudice.org/iat/>

Session 2 – SR: 10/7, Davis: 10/10

Leading Change

Readings: [Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail](#), Kotter (2007) **[Needs VPN, Search for, AN 23363656]**

Case: *Cynthia Carroll at Anglo American*, Mukunda, Mizzanti and Sisia (2015) **[HBS]**

In-Class Exercise: Management exercise (bring \$1 to class)

Case Questions:

1. What are the challenges Carroll will face as CEO of Anglo American?
2. What should Carroll do in the short term to deal with the series of deaths at the Rustenburg mines?
3. What should she do in the longer term to achieve her goal of zero-harm for all of Anglo American?

Session 3 – SR: 10/11 and 10/18, Davis: 10/17

Motivating people

Readings: *Do Financial Incentives Drive Company Performance?* Pfeffer and Sutton (2006)
[HBS]

Case: *Harrah's Entertainment, Inc: Rewarding our people*, DeLong and Vijayaraghavan (2003) [HBS]

Case questions:

1. Analyze how changes that Winn made to Harrah's HR practices relate to the transformation of the company's strategy and culture.
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Harrah's gain sharing program?
3. Do you think the company should keep the gain sharing program in its current form, change it in some way, or eliminate it? Explain.

Case Memo: What was easy and what was difficult about completing this case analysis in your study group?

(Your written analysis of this case and the memo should be **UPLOADED TO CANVAS** by the start of class)

In Class Exercise: Work Motivation Analysis

Session 4 – SR: 10/21, Davis: 10/24

Group Decision Making

Readings: [*What You Don't Know About Making Decisions*](#), Garvin and Roberto (2001)
[Needs VPN, Search for AN 5134704]

In Class Exercise: Leadership and Team Simulation: Everest [HBS, separate link from the readings, see below]

- Sign up online at least one week before class, bring laptops with wireless internet access to class. Cost is \$15.00.

Simulation Sign-Up Links:

San Ramon: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1087917>

Davis: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1087916>

Session 5 – SR: 10/25 and 11/1, Davis: 10/31 Facilitating Teamwork

Readings: *What Google learned* (Canvas)
Unified Commitment, Ch 5 Teamwork, Larson and LaFasto
Ch 1 Teamwork, Larson and LaFasto (background)

In class exercise: Is Artificial Intelligence good for society?

Case: *(Re)building a global team: Tariq Khan at Tek*, Neeley (2015) [HBS]

Case questions:

1. Should Tariq Khan take this job? Why or why not?
2. What are the root causes of the team's decline? Is it possible for Tariq Khan to turn things around for the team in under two years?
3. If Tariq Khan takes this job, what should be the first three things he does to get the team on track?

Case Memo (add this paragraph to your reflection memo from Case #1): What was easy and what was difficult about completing this case on your own? How did it compare with doing the case with your study group?

(Your written analysis of this case and the memo should be **UPLOADED TO CANVAS** by the start of class)

Session 6 – SR: 11/4, Davis: 11/7 Creating Structure

Readings: *Note on Organizational Structure*, Bernstein and Nohria (2016) [HBS]
Words in Sentences Instructions

In-class exercise: Words in Sentences

Leadership Lab 1: Discussion in class, written reflection due at start of class 7

Session 7 – SR: 11/8 and 11/15, Davis: 11/14 Leveraging Culture

- Readings: [What leaders need to know about organizational culture](#), Warrick (2017) [Needs VPN]
Bridgewater overview (Canvas)
- Video Case: Bridgewater Case [HBS]
- Leadership Lab 2: Discussion in class, written reflection due at start of class 8

Session 8 – SR: 11/18, Davis: 11/21 Navigating power and politics

- Readings: *What it really means to manage: Exercising power and influence*, Hill (2000) [HBS]
Best Stuff on Earth Instructions (Canvas)
- Exercise: Best Stuff on Earth
- Case: *Caroline Regis at Excel Systems*, Mayo and Roberts (2015) [HBS]

Case questions:

1. Why has Caroline Regis been successful in her career so far?
2. What are the root causes of the situation Caroline Regis now faces? Who is at fault?
3. Imagine you are Caroline Regis. What do you need to focus on and would you do next?
4. Include on an additional page how you used generative AI to complete this assignment.

Case Memo (add this paragraph to your memo from Case #2): What was easy and what was difficult about doing this analysis with help from generative AI? How did it compare to doing an individual and group case analysis?

(Your written analysis of this case and the memo should be **UPLOADED TO CANVAS** by the start of class)

Thanksgiving Break – No class on November 21, 22 and 25th.

Session 9 – SR: 11/29 and 12/6, Davis: 11/28
Leadership styles

Readings: [*When Should a Leader be Directive or Empowering? How to Develop Your Own Situational Theory of Leadership*](#), Sims, Faraj and Yun (2009) **[Needs VPN]**

Exercise: Assigned Leader Group Exercise

Video Case: *Top Chef*

Session 10 – SR: 12/9, Davis: 12/5
Final Group Presentations and course wrap up

CASE PREPARATION QUESTIONS (some weeks do not have a case to prepare in advance)

Leading Change. *Cynthia Carroll at Anglo American.*

1. What are the challenges Carroll will face as CEO of Anglo American?
 2. What should Carroll do in the short term to deal with the series of deaths at the Rustenburg mines?
 3. What should she do in the longer term to achieve her goal of zero-harm for all of Anglo American?
- (No written analysis due for this case)

Motivating People. *Harrah's Entertainment, Inc.: Rewarding Our People*

1. Analyze how changes that Winn made to Harrah's HR practices relate to the transformation of the company's strategy and culture.
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Harrah's gain sharing program?
3. Do you think the company should keep the gain sharing program in its current form, change it in some way, or eliminate it? Explain.

Case Memo: What was easy and what was difficult about completing this case analysis in your study group?

Facilitating Teamwork. *Tariq Khan at Tek*

1. Should Tariq Khan take this job? Why or why not?
2. What are the root causes of the team's decline? Is it possible for Tariq Khan to turn things around for the team in under two years?
3. If Tariq Khan takes this job, what should be the first three things he does to get the team on track?

Case Memo (add this paragraph to your memo from Case #1): What was easy and what was difficult about completing this case on your own? How did it compare with doing the case with your study group?

Navigating Power & Politics. *Caroline Regis at Excel Systems*

1. Why has Caroline Regis been successful in her career so far?
2. What are the root causes of the situation Caroline Regis now faces? Who is at fault?
3. Imagine you are Caroline Regis. What do you need to focus on and would you do next?
4. Include on an additional page how you used generative AI to complete this assignment.

Case Memo (add this paragraph to your memo from Case #2): What was easy and what was difficult about doing this analysis with help from generative AI? How did it compare to doing an individual and group case analysis?

A GUIDE TO CASE ANALYSIS

Many students find case analysis to be difficult due to the relative lack of structure of most management problems. No correctly answered list of questions or mechanical process will lead to the “right” answer. In fact, there is no “right” solution to most managerial problems. When analyzing a case, remember that there are many possible approaches and solutions. The goal is not to figure out “the answer” but to sharpen your analytic, problem-solving, decision-making, and leadership skills. The following steps outline the basic approach you should follow when analyzing a case, whether for class discussion or in preparation for a written analysis.

First, attend to the assigned material (e.g., readings, videos), which will play a role in your analysis of the case. The frameworks and readings assigned are typically intended to be relevant to the case.

Second, read the case preparation questions. Take notes about the important issues that the case raises and the text relevant to that issue. The questions provided are a guide to issues that you must consider, but you will need to go beyond merely answering the questions.

Third, analyze the case. You should be able to identify outcomes in the case and/or issues that the organization faces. These outcomes may be bad (e.g., shrinking market share, hostile employees, conflict among departments, inability to control operations), or they may be good. There may be numerous problems and issues. The goal of analysis is to explain the underlying mechanisms that are producing the outcomes or problems that you see in the situation. This process will require you to distinguish between symptoms and causes. Good analysis cleverly weaves symptoms into a causal map that gets to the underlying root of the situation. What I look for in the case analysis is the cogency of your explanation of the process leading to the symptoms. At the outset you are likely to struggle with this. It is a difficult and time-consuming process to develop these analytical skills.

Remember that the specific cases are assigned because they present good opportunities to practice using frameworks and concepts we will be developing in the course. You will likely find the frameworks and concepts we examine in the course to be helpful in supporting your analysis. You should view the theories as a way to explain the underlying causal mechanisms contributing to the outcomes in the case, and as a way to organize and justify your arguments. Avoid the tendency to throw in course terminology as “buzzwords.” If it does not advance your analysis, don’t use the idea.

Recognize that some cases do not have problems as such. The organization may be doing quite well. Cases are situations, not necessarily examples of bad or even good management. Don’t make up a problem when none exists. Take the situation for what it is rather than approaching it with a point of view. Be alert for the danger that some information in some cases is coming from biased participants and therefore must be taken with a grain of salt.

A characteristic of cases is that you never have all the information that you want and there is often considerable information that is irrelevant, trivial, or even obfuscating. The absence of essential information may make you feel as if you must make some assumptions. Only make assumptions if necessary, state them clearly as such, and make sure they are reasonable.

IS THE MATERIAL IN INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP DYNAMICS SUBJECTIVE?

The short answer is no.

The longer answer is that the science of organizational behavior includes knowledge that we are pretty certain about as well as knowledge that we are less certain about. In this sense, it mirrors any other science like physics, astronomy or epidemiology. What sometimes appears as subjective in organizational behavior, then, is related to the ambiguity of knowledge, not its status as a science. This ambiguity is instead due to the complexity of the phenomenon we study: people in organizations. Basically, two people in an organization will not see the same situation in the same way, and those two people may behave quite differently in the same situation. Moreover, the same person may behave differently in two instances that seem like the same situation. These are very simple reflections of the complex reality we are dealing with.

At the same time, Individual and Group Dynamics also shows us that people are much more predictable than we give credit, and that the science can help us make sense of why people see the world in particular ways and why they behave in a particular manner. Thus, most people stop at a red light, most people pursue goals that are easier to track with more energy, and most people look for a match between their beliefs and their behavior. What this means is that although there may not be perfectly clear “right” or “wrong” answers when we examine organizational situations, there are definitely “better” and “worse” answers. The key is to see that, like courses in Accounting or Finance, Individual and Group Dynamics provides analytical frameworks to understand the world around us.

Like material from other courses (e.g., accounting, finance, etc.) the material from this class is meant to provide a basis for you to become an effective organizational contributor. Unlike the material in other courses, though, the frameworks that we will cover are not useful if you need to find them in a book before you use them. In other words, these frameworks cannot be used simply as a reference. These frameworks are useful only when you have them available in your mind to use in your day-to-day interactions with others, to understand the nature and reasons for given actions in the organization. As a consequence, you will find a constant emphasis on the practical use of these frameworks in the course of the quarter.