

The University of Texas at Dallas
Naveen Jindal School of Management
Organizational Behavior (OB 6301/SYSM6333.501)
Course Syllabus (Draft)
Spring Semester, 2025

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Course Overview

Here's a simple, working definition of Organizational Behavior (OB): OB is primarily about how you do your work. Most of the other courses in your degree curriculum focus on what you do in your work. Your finance courses are focused on finance work; accounting courses on accounting, etc. Our OB course will focus on how you lead and manage that work, regardless of the functional area, e.g. by communicating with and motivating others, by organizing and leading teams, by making ethical use of power and politics (e.g. influence) to accomplish work, etc.

The overall purpose of our OB course, therefore, is for each of you to develop, refine and improve upon how you work—your own unique approach to managing and leading. To develop your approach, we will seek to maximize the amount of time spent actually *doing*, getting feedback on, and improving on, the performances that matter most for you and your career. The focus will be on what you can do, rather than what you know, on relevant performances rather than static skills.

The course content is divided into four sections, moving from historical, to current, to future-oriented perspectives: Section 1: Context—We begin by re-evaluating some taken-for-granted assumptions about what organizations are, and how they operate, along with the topics of learning, communication, and problem framing. Then we 'zoom out' through three successive levels of focus. Section 2: Self-understanding; Section 3: Leading and motivating others, groups and teams; and Section 4: Leading organizations—today and into the future.

Weekly Schedule

We will operate our course on a weekly, Tuesday-to-Tuesday schedule. In the first half of each weekly class session, we will focus on presentations on the topics from the previous week. Then in the second half of each weekly class session, we will introduce and discuss the topics and assignment for the following week.

Most assignments will involve peer review, using the Kritik platform. These assignment will have three steps: 1) your original submission; 2) peers' anonymous feedback to you, on your original submission, with a score, and 3) instructor feedback, with a score. Unless otherwise noted, assignments will be due at classtime—Tuesday, 7PM central time. After submission, you will have 1 week to provide peer feedback to three (3) of your peers' work. As a reviewer, you will have the identity of the submitter/author, but your identity as reviewer will be anonymous for the submitter/author. Because your work is distributed to peers, assignments must be submitted on time—Tuesday, 7PM. You peer review content—i.e. the feedback you provide to your peer's work, may also be periodically reviewed and graded by the instructor.

If the original assignment submission deadline is missed, then you will also miss the peer feedback portion. Thus, late submittals cannot be accepted—I have no way of working them into the workflow que, if they come in late. Because

many of the submissions files will be video/audio recordings, they will be large files, and may take some time to upload. Please plan accordingly.

About assignment submittal: Please use UTD Box exclusively for storage of your completed work. Then, create shareable links from UTD Box, and paste these links (not the original source material) into Kritik as your assignment submissions. Sharepoint, MS Teams—these platforms frequently create access errors when others (peers and instructors) try to access your work. So please avoid them, and use UTD Box exclusively, for the storing and sharing (with links) of your of your completed work. We will discuss more during the first class session.

Targeted Outcomes

Here are the top 10 goals we will pursue. As you can see, we are aiming high, and some of these goals extend far beyond this semester, but our objective will be to make as much progress on them as we can.

1. Be a **great** communicator, by communicating successfully for meaning not just for messaging, including across boundaries of all kinds--generational, departmental, economic, cultural, racial, etc. If I had to limit our course goals to just one, this would be it; if I had to limit to just one the competency that I hope our graduates would be known for, after graduation from UT Dallas and throughout their career, this would be it. Fortunately, we are not limited to just one, thus:
2. Be a great storyteller, capable of winning the hearts and minds of a wide range of colleagues and customers, while remaining mindful of the power of storytelling and narrative to achieve ethical or unethical objectives
3. Be creative in your approaches to opportunities, problems and problem solving, by making proactive use of problem framing, sensemaking and improvisation
4. Understand where you came from, and who you are today, professionally--from your own and from others' perspectives—and have a clear, nuanced and contextualized understanding of 'what you're doing when you're at your best'—i.e. your 'professional sweet spot'
5. Looking forward, understand who you want to become professionally (your professional identity), and have a concrete, specific, actionable plan for how to get there
6. Have an actionable plan for harnessing the unequalled power of an enabling departmental/organizational culture, and, secondarily, of organizational structure
7. Understand how, and the degree to which you will make use of power and politics (influence) to get work accomplished, according to your own ethical guidelines
8. Be an effective and ethical leader, developer of others toward these same and/or similar goals
9. Be an effective and engaging leader of teams, both traditional (in-person) and 'virtual'
10. Have a clear understanding of the history of management, organizations and leadership, paired with some clear and compelling ideas about their future, and the contributions that you, personally, will make to that future

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING POLICIES

This is a challenging course, for at least two reasons. First, the content itself is challenging. There are no formulaic answers/responses to matters of leadership, motivation, communication, etc. The course is intentionally designed to provide substantial 'upside' with no 'ceiling,' for those who want to invest the time and effort to truly grow professionally in these important areas. Unlike other courses, where you can get all the answers 'correct' and earn a maximum of 100%, with the topics of OB, there is always room to improve, as will be true for the remainder of your career.

Another reason the course is challenging, is that you and the others admitted to UTD and JSOM are talented! Year in and year out, the top performing participants in this class take advantage of there being no upside-limit, and submit truly exceptional work. Course grades will be 'curved'—your score represents your performance relative to other members of the class—on a 100-point scale.

The course evaluation is split 80/20 between instructor and peers, respectively. Obviously, 20% is a significant portion of the overall grade. So, from the outset, please be aware of the impact this will have on your final grade, and build and manage your relationships accordingly, throughout the semester.

Instructor-Evaluated	80%
Individual & Group Assignments	50%
Quizzes	20%
Attendance, participation and contribution to the course discussions and activities	10%
Peer-Evaluated	20%
Peer evaluation—at end of semester, from study group members	10%
Peer feedback—peers’ evaluation of your submitted assignments	10%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

94% to 100%	A
90% to 93%	A-
87% to 89%	B+
84% to 86%	B
80% to 83%	B-
77% to 79%	C+
70% to 76%	C
Below 70.0%	F

Individual & Group Assignments

Individual and group assignments will be either credit/no-credit (“0” or “1”), or receive a score. Unless otherwise noted, submissions are due at classtime—Tuesdays, 7PM. These are (by design) the largest single component of the course and grade. In total, individual and group assignments will constitute 50% of the overall course grade.

Quizzes

Quizzes will be mostly multiple choice, and based primarily on readings—textbook chapters and assigned articles. Quizzes are posted on, and completed, in eLearning. Most quizzes are 25 questions, and once you begin, you will have 40 minutes to complete and submit the quiz. If not submitted sooner, quizzes are automatically finalized and submitted at the 40 minute mark. Unless otherwise notes, quizzes are due at class time—Tuesdays, 7PM. Late or make-up quizzes are not accepted for credit, except in the event of unforeseen and/or unavoidable circumstances. In total, quizzes account for 20% of the course grade.

Participation and contribution to course discussions and activities

Aligned with our focus on the ‘co-creation’ of knowledge, rather than its ‘transfer,’ participation by all participants in our class discussions and course activities is important. This will include participation in class discussions, in eLearning discussion board(s) and other course activities, thus accommodating both synchronous and asynchronous participation. Both the frequency and the quality of these contributions are taken into account. Participation accounts for 10% of the course grade.

Peer Evaluation—from study group members

Course participants will be organized into study groups. These groups are a critically important part of the design of this course. Commensurate with their importance, peer evaluation from your study group members will account for 10% of the course grade. At the end of the semester, you will be asked to provide a numerical evaluation, from “1” to “10” for each of your study group members. If, for example, you receive “10”s from all of your study group members, you will receive the full 10% toward your overall course grade.

Within your groups, you are welcome to produce your own, group-specific measurement system—e.g. an agreed-to set of measures and weightings, as complex or as simple as you wish, even based perhaps on an agreed-to team charter the team creates early in the semester. But the number reported to me, should be 1-to-10, as described above. We may also do a mid-semester peer evaluation, for informational purposes only, that will not count toward the course grade. The study group peer evaluations you submit to me will be kept strictly confidential—only the total, averaged score will be reported by me, individually to each evaluatee.

Peer Feedback—peers' evaluation of your submitted assignments

For assignments that include peer review (most assignments) you will be asked to review and evaluate the submissions of two peers. This minimum number of peer reviews may be increased—we will revisit this a few weeks into the semester. Peer Feedback will account for 10% of the total course grade.

COURSE POLICIES AND MATERIALS

Contact and Correspondence

Please use only your UTD email for any messages. Please also include both the course number and the section number, as I have several courses this semester.

Assignment Submission

All completed assignments should first be uploaded to UTD Box, then shared links created, and then the links posted into eLearning.

Required Text

Text: Organizational Behavior, 5th edition, by Bauer and Erdogan

<https://students.flatworldknowledge.com/engage/courses/2612120>

<<Note: Only the "Online Access" version is required. Other versions—print, downloads, etc—are optional>>

Kritik: Platform for peer eval and feedback. Invitation and purchase info to be sent via UTD email.

Pack of case studies--purchase information will be provided

Case Study Materials

Link for purchase: TBD

Regarding the use of ChatGPT and other Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools

ChatGPT and similar tools can be useful, particularly in the early stages of research—to identify and explore new ideas, to identify authors and sources of further information, etc. In this way, these increasingly popular tools are no different than other tools that have been with us for many years, such as library database searches, or internet search engines like Google. However, the policies and guidelines for academic integrity and academic dishonesty also remain in place and remain largely unchanged in their essence: each participant is expected to create and submit their own original work, and to appropriately cite any referenced materials, and to avoid plagiarism, collusion, cheating and fabrication, as more fully described in the UTD policies, accessible via the link below. In other words, you are welcome to make use of AI tools in the same way you have made use of other search tools in the past: You can use them to identify information, to decide on its relevance to your work, and if incorporated, to then properly attribute and cite, according to the published guidelines.

Note: the results of AI queries are not themselves referencable sources. They may help identify referencable sources, e.g. published, peer-reviewed research, which can then be appropriately cited. Also note that current versions of AI tools, including ChatGPT, produce many errors—they misidentify/mismatch authors, journal titles, publication dates,

etc. Thus they are a potentially useful first step in one's research, but the end and submitted results thereof, remain subject to the policies and guidelines already in place.

Because of an increase in the violations of these policies and guidelines, submitted work will be processed by technology designed to detect plagiarism, uncited or unattributed work, and/or the use of AI-generated work. Suspected violations will be immediately referred, without advance notice, to the UTD Office of Community Standards and Conduct ([OCSC](#)) for adjudication.

For citations, any standard format—MLA, APA, and others—is acceptable. Regardless of format, however, the citations should in all cases enable a reader/reviewer to 1) clearly identify which portion of the submitted work is being referenced, and 2) trace the referenced work back to the corresponding original published source. Designation of end notes, footnotes, etc. (this is an example: cited work¹), must be placed in the text itself, and placed immediately adjacent to the portion of the work being referenced. A list of references used, appearing at the end of a submitted document, but without a corresponding in-text designation(s), is not acceptable.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same:

“As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

University Policies

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1	
Main Ideas & Questions for Discussion and Application (Section 1: Context)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Intro • Opportunities, challenges and implications of looking at management as a <u>social</u> (not a <u>technical</u>) discipline; organizations as <u>social spaces</u>; brief history of 'organizations,' and implications for today's leaders; learning = doing
Assignments Due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 1: Issues and Opportunities
Readings & Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Narrated PowerPoint for Week 1 2. Re-thinking the goals of public education (Hicks) 3. NSFW: "70% of org change initiatives fail. So what?" (Hicks)
Week 2	
Main Ideas & Questions for Discussion and Application (Section 1: Context)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Communication' is one of the single most important competencies for business, yet it's also the single most-often cited reason for business/organizational problems • Communicating for meaning, instead of just for messaging • Question for Week 2: How will you ensure meaning-ful communication, for the groups you lead and manage?
Assignments Due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz: Text Ch. 8 • Quiz: Re-Thnking the Goals of Public Education
Readings & Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Narrated PowerPoint for Week 2 2. Outcome-focused communication plan (Corp. Exec. Board) 3. Text ch. 8
Week 3	
Main Ideas & Questions for Discussion and Application (Section 1: Context)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive-level work begins not with problem solving, but with problem framing—deciding what <u>you will choose</u> to treat as problematic • Your ability to solve problems, depends on how well you frame them in the first place
Assignments Due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz: "If you can't solve the problem..." • Quiz: Text Ch. 11 • Assignment 2: Personality Assessments and Team Identity • Assignment 3: Communications planning

Readings & Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Narrated PowerPoint for Week 3 2. If you can't solve the problem, change the problem you're solving (Hicks) 3. Video: How Words Change Minds (Kendall-Taylor) 4. Text Ch. 11
Week 4	
Main Ideas & Questions for Discussion and Application (Section 1: Context)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Storytelling • You're the experts—groups select one of the 'Issues and Opportunities' and present a set of recommendations to address it.
Assignments Due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 4: Problem Framing
Readings & Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials on Pyramid Structure and Business Storytelling. Additional readings correspond to your choice for Assignment 4.
Week 5	
Main Ideas & Questions for Discussion and Application (Section 2: Self-Understanding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective management and leadership begin with self-understanding • Two perspectives on the self: The traditional (and Western) notion of 'the self' is something which is 'inside,' and 'found' only through deep, individual introspection. Addresses the questions: Who are you, and where have you come from, professionally? • Relational/Narrative Self—An 'outside-in' perspective. Well-suited to today's dynamic and diverse business environment. Addresses the question: Where are you going, professionally? • Question for Week 5: What is the professional identity you want to embody, and what is your plan for realizing it?
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz: Text Ch. 3 & 4 • Assignment 5 Outline
Readings & Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Narrated Powerpoint for Week 5--Overview 2. Discovering Your Authentic Leadership (George et al) (moved to Optional) 3. Situational Intelligence Narrated PowerPoint 4. How to Play to Your Strengths (Roberts et al) 5. Provisional Selves (Ibarra) (Moved to Optional) 6. What's Your Story? (Ibarra) (moved to Optional) 7. Text Ch. 3 & 4
Week 6	

Main Ideas & Questions for Discussion and Application (Section 3: Leading Others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National and ethnic cultures have real, tangible, and significant impacts on team and organizational performance. Traditional (but still useful!) theories of team management Questions for Week 6: What is your approach for leading and managing across cultural, ethnic, generational, language and other divides?
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment 5: You're the experts—Round One. Group assignment w/peer review
Readings & Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> PowerPoint for Week 6 Quiz: Text Ch. 9 McDonalds Japan (Hicks) Managing Multicultural Teams (Brett et al)
Week 7	
Main Ideas for Class Discussion & Application (Section 3: Leading others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team management and motivation revisited. Question for Week 7: What is your approach for team management and for keeping members motivated and engaged?
Assignments Due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment 6: Professional Identity. Individual assignment w/peer review Quiz: Text ch. 5 & 6 & 7
Readings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Powerpoint for Week 7 Text Ch. 5 & 6 & 7 What makes work meaningful (and meaningless)? (Bailey)
Week 8	
Main Ideas for Class Discussion & Application (Section 3: Leading Others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizational culture is one of the most powerful (and most often overlooked) factors affecting organizational performance—positively or negatively Questions for Week 8: Leaders cannot control organizational culture, but they can (and do—intentionally or otherwise) influence or steer organizational culture. How will you positively influence and steer the organizational culture for the groups you lead and manage?
Assignments Due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st half study group peer review and debrief Quiz: Text ch. 15
Readings & Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text Ch. 15
Week 9	

Main Ideas for Class Discussion & Application (Section 4: Leading Organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Org structure(s), network forms of organizing and implications for leaders • Formal structure of 'organization' should be the downstream result of upstream 'organizing' • Questions for Week 9: What organizational structure would best enable the work you are doing? Think about your most recent job—how could the structure have been modified to better enable the work?
Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 7. Case Study: Managing a Global Team. Group assignment w/peer review.
Readings & Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PowerPoint for Week 9 2. Text ch. 14 3. Wildfire Entertainment (Galunic)
Week 11	
Main Ideas for Class Discussion & Application (Section 3: Leading Organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion for Assignment 8: You're the Experts—Round 2
Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assignments due this week
Readings & Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading depending on choice for Assignment 8
Week 12	
Main Ideas for Class Discussion & Application (Section 3: Leading Organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Until recently, power and politics were considered 'taboo' topics, inappropriate for a management curriculum. We will discuss the reasons <i>why</i>, and also how an <i>understanding</i> of political maneuvering—regardless of whether you choose to <i>participate</i> in such maneuvering yourself—is a required minimum for almost any career. • Week 12 Questions: What are your own, personal ethical guidelines? What are your own boundaries that demarcate an ethical from an unethical use of power? Where do you draw the line between influence and manipulation?
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 8: You're the Experts, Round 2
Readings & Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PowerPoint for Week 12 2. Text ch. 10 & 13 3. Cialdini video 4. The Danger of Being Under-Political (Howell)
Week 13	

Main Ideas for Discussion & Application (Section 4: Leading Organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming multilingual on leadership—leadership as ‘traits,’ as ‘behaviors,’ as ‘situational,’ as ‘power/influence’ and other approaches • Leadership development as a process of assuming, and embodying a new self-identity as a leader; ‘knowing’ to ‘doing’ to ‘being’ • Leading Leaders: Most of our course has been focused on you, as up-and-coming leaders. But as discussed, there is a ‘duality’ to all course content and discussions—they are relevant to you and also to those that you work with, in formal or informal work relations. • Week 13 questions: What is your approach for developing aspiring/potential leaders?
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 9: Snape vs. Longbottom. Group assignment. No Peer review.
Readings & Materials	1. Readings for Case Study 2
Week 14	
Main Ideas for Discussion & Application (Section 4: Leading Organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion for Assignment 10: Leading Leaders
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No assignments due this week
Readings & Materials	1. TBD
Week 15	
Main Ideas for Discussion & Application (Section 4: Leading Organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of Assignment 10
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 8: You’re the Experts—Round 2 • Quiz: Text ch. 12
Readings & Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text ch. 12 • Becoming the Boss (Hill) • New Leadership Playbook for the Digital Age (MIT)
Week 16	
Main Ideas for Discussion & Application (Section 4: Leading Organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 10: Leading Leaders—Your approach and plan for developing aspiring/potential leaders. Individual assignment w/ peer review. Class meets online. Individual assignment w/peer review

Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assignment 10: Leading Leaders—Your approach and plan for developing aspiring/potential leaders. Individual assignment w/ peer review. Class meets online. Individual assignment w/peer review• 2nd Half Study Group Peer review
Readings & Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No additional readings