1. **INSTRUCTOR**  
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   I can be reached via email, text, twitter, cellphone, and Skype among other things. Today's reality for most of us. Everything eventually makes its way to me, regardless of where you start. You'll have a better chance of a quick response by starting with email. From there we can work out whether, where, and when to meet.

2. **COURSE DESCRIPTION**  
   - Organizational effectiveness

   Organizations survive by maintaining a dynamic equilibrium between themselves and their environment. Which is a fancy way to say "if it's raining outside, most people grab an umbrella". Some complain about the rain, most get on with heading to their destination, and a few abandon the umbrella and dance. Regardless, all form some temporary balance with the rain that constitutes their environment.

   In this course, we will look at the subject of organizational effectiveness from the perspective of striking and maintaining a balance within the system of the organization and its environment. What theories of stability and change do we carry in our heads? How well do they map to reality? What does it mean to speak of an organization as a system? How does that system fit within its broader environment? What happens when changes in the environment force the system to adapt? What happens when the system wishes to strike a new balance with the environment?

3. **LEARNING STRATEGIES & LEARNING RESOURCES**
   - Required Texts

   Both these books are available at the Bookstore and at Amazon.com. They are also both available in e-book formats as well as print.

   Other readings assigned will be available digitally from the Library.
4. LEARNING OUTCOMES
   - The topics covered in this course will help students:
     - Develop a richer vocabulary of concepts to see and talk about organizational systems and the forces acting on them for stability and change
     - Critique, evaluate, and refine their existing theories of organizational effectiveness and change
     - Recognize situations where change is called for and contribute to designing interventions to drive change in desired directions

5. LEARNING ASSIGNMENTS or DELIVERABLES
   The evidence that I use to assess how this course is influencing your thinking comes from three sources:

   1. Class Participation: Class participation is essential for this kind of course to succeed. I look for quality in terms of clarity of thought and expression, timing and relevance in the flow of discussion, and building on the conversation as it evolves
   2. Blogs/Working Journals: I expect each student to maintain some form of written journal or blog. I’m a firm believer that we can’t know what we think until we see what we say. These journals should be a place for you to “think out loud”. This journal should be the place where you capture reflective assessment and analysis of the readings and of the “questions/provocations” that are part of each session’s agenda. I DO NOT care about spelling, typos, awkward grammar, or confusion about what you’re thinking. I DO want to be able to look at entries in your journal to react to your thinking and to help you calibrate your assessments.
   3. Final Paper: I expect each student to prepare and submit a paper about an ongoing or proposed organizational change initiative with which they have some familiarity. The paper should analyze and assess the organizational context, the environmental forces for change, the existing systems structure, and the interventions used (or proposed) to bring about change. I would strongly encourage students to select a target organization early on and to use your Working Journal to explore how concepts introduced in the course apply to the selected organization. My experience with this type of approach is that 60-80% of the Final Paper can be extracted from the Working Journals and enhanced to form the core of the Final Paper.

6. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING & GRADES
   - What am I thinking about and looking for as evidence of what students are getting out of and putting into the course? This is not a field that lends itself to simple formulas (or even complex ones) and problem sets. It’s about developing a practical theory of effectiveness and change and how they can be influenced. To that end, these are the kinds of questions in my head as we collaborate in this course:
     - What kind of baseline knowledge do students display about organizations and change? Do students gripe about organizations in clichéd ways or do they show a degree of sensitivity and insight about the realities of organizations?
     - What preferred theories and language do students use to describe organizational systems, change and potential change situations?
     - Are students making an attempt to use the language and concepts introduced during the course? Are they mindful about seeking feedback to calibrate their attempts?
     - How diligent are they about bringing data about organizational situations (and personal) to support their arguments?
     - How willing and able are they to interact among themselves to strengthen their arguments?

Class attendance and engaged participation are essential to the success of this course overall and for what each student will take away from it. Given the condensed nature of the calendar for this course, I will be reluctant to grant an excused absence without a compelling argument. Unexcused absences will be reflected in your class participation grade.
Class participation, working journals, and the final paper each account for approximately a third of your final grade.

- For additional information pertaining to grade designations, see following links:
  http://snl/StudentResources/Graduate_Resources/Grades.asp

7. **SCHEDULE (General Map of Course Sessions)**

1 – Jun 14. **A systems perspective on organizations**

**Topics**

- Course overview and expectations
- Perspectives on organizations and individuals
- Basic models of organization and environment
- Getting data we can trust and make use of

**Reading**

- Meadows
  - Introduction: The Systems Lens
  - Systems Structures and Behaviors
  - The Basics
- Weinberg
  - Why Consulting Is So Tough
  - Cultivating a Paradoxical Frame of Mind

**Questions/provocations**

- What theories and models of people and organization do you use?
- What kinds of changes have you sought out and attempted to make succeed?
- What kinds of changes have you been subjected to that caused you to resist and fight change?

2 – Jun 21. **The building blocks of organization**

**Topics**

- Basic design elements of all organizations.
- Seeing organizational patterns
- Organizational health and pathology
- Organizational intuitions

**Reading**

- Galbraith, Jay. "Organization Design: An Information Processing View"
- Galbraith, Jay. The Star Model
- Keidel, Robert. “Rethinking Organizational Design”
Questions/provocations

- How can you tell whether your organization is performing as designed?
- What problem was your organization designed to solve?
- Does this problem still exist? How has it changed and evolved?

3 – Jun 28. Hierarchies and Networks - New News or Old Wine in New Bottles

Topics

- Why do organizations exist?
- Where does hierarchy emerge?
- Decision Rights
- Are we seeing new organizational forms?

Reading

- Mintzberg, H. “Organization Design: Fashion or Fit?”

Questions/provocations

- What organizational silos are evident in your organization?
- What useful functions do these silos serve?
- Where do these silos cause problems?
- How much of your work activity depends on other people within your silo? Within your organization? With people outside your organization?

4 – Jul 5. Stability and change in systems

Topics

- Learning to see systems
- Change at the personal level
- Change at the organizational level
- Forces for stability and change in systems

Reading

- Weinberg
  - Being Effective When You Don't Know What You're Doing

Questions/provocations

- What’s the point of stability in systems?
- What parts of your organizational life are predictable? Predictably unpredictable? Seemingly random?
5 – Jul 12. Modeling complex, dynamic systems

Topics

- Analyzing Systems
  - Elements of Systems Models – Stocks and Flows
  - Feedback Loops – Virtuous and Vicious Cycles
  - Complexity
- Understanding systems behavior; predictable and counterintuitive behavior
- Recurring patterns in complex systems
- Tools for modeling dynamic systems

Reading

- Meadows
  - Systems Structures and Behaviors
  - A Brief Visit to the Systems Zoo
- Forrester, Jay. “Counterintuitive Behavior of Social Systems”
- Forrester, Jay. “Systems Dynamics and the Lessons of 35 Years”
- Perrow, Charles. “Normal Accidents”

Questions/provocations

- What kinds of systems do you encounter on a regular basis?
- When is it useful to think about these systems as systems in Meadows sense?
- When is it more trouble than it's worth?

6 – Jul 19. Stability and change in systems

Topics

- Analyzing systems
  - Sources and sinks
  - Feedback Loops
  - Leads and lags
- Dealing with Change
  - Planned vs. Unplanned
  - Sought out
  - Imposed
  - Evolutionary vs. Revolutionary

Reading

- Meadows
  - Systems and Us
  - Why Systems Work So Well
  - Why Systems Surprise Us
- Weinberg
  - Seeing What's There
  - Seeing What's Not There

Questions/provocations
• Resistance to change is a frequently invoked concept. Is it a useful one?
• Why do people and organizations ignore signals calling for change?

7 – Jul 26. Theories and Mythologies of Change

Topics
• How we talk about change
• What can be managed during change?
• Resisting change

Reading
• Argyris, Chris. “Skilled Incompetence”
• Argyris, Chris. “Teaching Smart People How To Learn”
• Gosling & Mintzberg. “The Education Of Practicing Managers”
• Greiner, L “Evolution And Revolution As Organizations Grow”

Questions/provocations
• What changes have you made in your practices without significant pain or resistance? Why?

8 – Aug 2. Influencing the course of change

Topics
• Generating energy and momentum for change
• Sustaining change in the face of forces for stability
• Project and program management as undervalued tools for change
• Why most change management efforts don’t

Reading
• Meadows
  ◦ Systems and Us
  ◦ Systems Traps…and Opportunities
• Weinberg
  ◦ Avoiding Traps
  ◦ Amplifying Your Impact

Questions/provocations
• If you have a choice over how fast to change, what factors favor faster or slower approaches?
• Are there circumstances where it makes sense to ignore the people side of systems change?
9 – Aug 9. Intended change by design

Topics

• Designing interventions to bring about intended changes
• Places to intervene in systems

Reading

• Meadows
  ◦ Creating Change - in Systems and in our Philosophy
  ◦ Leverage Points-Places to Intervene in a System
• Weinberg
  ◦ Gaining Control of Change
  ◦ How to Make Changes Safely
  ◦ What to Do When They Resist
• Berry, Wendell. "Solving for Pattern"

Questions/provocations

• Jay Forrester, one of the creators of systems dynamics, once observed that most people know where the feedback loops and leverage points are in their organizations and are diligently pushing in the wrong direction. Is there any hope of getting past that reaction?
• What kind of balance between design and execution is most likely to lead to successful change?

10 – Aug 16. Living in a world of perpetual change

Topics

• Shaping personal change
• Participating in organizational change

Reading

• Meadows
  ◦ Creating Change - in Systems and in our Philosophy
  ◦ Living in a World of Systems
• Weinberg
  ◦ How to Be Trusted
  ◦ Getting People to Follow Your Advice
• Kuntz & Rittel. "Issues as Elements of Information Systems"
• Ghosal, S. “Bad Management Theories”
• Conklin, J. “Wicked Problems and Social Complexity”

Questions/provocations

• Much of what has been written on the topic of change assumes change as an infrequent and passing phenomenon. How does our thinking about change change in a world that is evolving at a more rapid and visible pace?
8. **EXPECTATIONS, POLICIES & OTHER RESOURCES**

**Adult/Professional Engagement:** All course participants (students & instructors alike) are responsible for co-creating the learning space of this course—contributing individual uniquenesses while also modulating them for the sake of group learning. In this regard, **professional engagement** is expected from all—and particularly in areas of difference. Such engagement manifests itself through punctual attendance, thorough preparation, focused and respectful interactions (turning off electronic devices; curtailing side-conversations; active listening; informed contributions; probing questions; involved discussion; open-mindedness; etc.) as well as a high degree of both self-motivation and self-accountability. In addition, as adults, we are all responsible for **requesting what we need** to improve/sustain learning. The answer may be ‘yes’ or ‘no’—but, **not to request** is to leave the matter to chance. For additional information pertaining to DePaul’s Code of Student Responsibility, see: [http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/handbook/index.html](http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/handbook/index.html)

This course includes and adheres to the college and university policies described in the links below:
- Academic Integrity Policy (UGRAD)
- Academic Integrity Policy (GRAD)
- Incomplete Policy
- Course Withdrawal Timelines and Grade/Fee Consequences
- Accommodations Based on the Impact of a Disability
- Protection of Human Research Participants
- APA citation format (GRAD)
- University Attendance Policy

9. **INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY**

You can find more than you'd ever want to know about my background and experience on LinkedIn. Here's the short version:

I started my career as a tech weenie designing databases and building accounting and executive information and reporting systems. Went back to school for an MBA to get a grasp on the bigger picture in general and strategy in particular. More consulting and a focus on creating technology systems that made a strategic difference in their business and industry. Frustration with strategic and technological efforts that failed to reach their full potential led me back to school one more time.

I went back to the Harvard Business School to study with the people I believed had the best grasp on how technology and strategy fit together. I spent six years there learning how organizational design and change fit into the puzzle as well. I left with a Ph.D., a few answers, and much more productive questions.

Since then I've consulted, started companies, taught, and continued to explore the boundary where technology, strategy, and organization come together.