Welcome to Managing Organizational Performance, the second course in the core management sequence. The first course, Managing Politics and the Policy Process (PBAF 511), positioned you as a leader looking outward to the authorizing environment and a variety of stakeholders. We build on Managing Politics and the Policy Process by addressing leadership and strategy, but this course positions you as a leader looking inward to processes, people (human resources), and organizational change. While the course emphasizes conventional management frameworks, the assigned readings and cases also address public values, ethics, and diversity. In keeping with the approach in Managing Politics and the Policy Process, we will make extensive use of teaching cases, supplemented by readings, to improve your knowledge and application of relevant analytic frameworks.

Building on insights from organizational theory, the course is divided into three modules:

• Processes (Rider / Rational Systems / Structural Frame): A rational systems perspective views organizations as: “collectivities oriented to the pursuit of relatively specific goals and exhibiting relatively highly formalized social structures” (Scott and Davis 2007, pg. 29). Sometimes described as the “organizations without people” definition, this perspective highlights structures and formal policies that shape organizational design, measurement, and accountability.

• People (Elephant / Natural Systems / Political & HR Frame): A natural systems perspective views organizations as: “collectivities whose participants are pursuing multiple interests, both disparate and common, but who recognize the value of perpetuating the organization as an important resource” (Scott and Davis 2007, pg. 30). Sometimes described as the “people without organizations” definition, this perspective highlights relationships and informal practices that shape motivation, diversity, and power / influence.
Change (Path / Open Systems / Symbolic Frame): An open systems perspective views organizations as: “congeries of interdependent flows and activities linking shifting coalitions of participants embedded in wider material-resource and institutional environments” (Scott & Davis 2007, pg. 32). In addition to emphasizing change by blending rational and natural systems, this perspective highlights how organizational boundaries shape culture, learning, and inter-organizational ties.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES
Your final grade for this course depends on your performance in five domains of class activity. Your performance in each domain determines a specific percentage of your final grade:

- Memo 1 (due by Week 5 - February 2): 20%
- Memo 2: 20%
- Management Dilemma / Current Event Overview: 20%
- Participation: 10%
- Final Group Project (due March 13, by 11:59 PM): 30%

Memos (20% Each)
There are two required memos for this course. One memo must be written by week 5 (February 2), but other than that you have discretion as to which topic interests you enough to be the focus of a memo. Because we will be doing a group simulation on the Space Shuttle Columbia on February 23, that is the only date that is unavailable for a memo. Your memos must be posted to Canvas by midnight on the Sunday before the relevant class meeting. We will not accept late memos. Please put your name, date, and page numbers on all of your work. If you are not satisfied with your grade on one of your memos, you have the option to write a third memo. The memos should be two pages long, single-spaced.

We will grade the memos for content and style, and review the grading criteria in class and in TA sections. The memos must be solo-authored, with a two-page, single-spaced limit (attachments do not count against the two-page limit). Unlike some of the memo assignments for 511 (depending on the instructor), I ask students to make explicit references to the readings (e.g. Trujillo, 2014; Heath & Heath, 2010; Rainey, 2003). Although you do not need to cite all of the readings for the given week, you need to demonstrate how you are applying the readings to the case and how the readings are relevant to the solutions you propose. Optional readings are not expected to be referenced in your memos, but if you choose to incorporate them, we may choose to give extra credit for the additional effort.

In general, all good memos will apply the readings from the week in order offer a solution to the management challenge in the assigned case for the week. When you write your memo, put yourself “in the shoes” of the leader / manager in the case. You do not need to spend substantial time summarizing the case for the leaders since they should be familiar with their organizations. Instead, focus on the solutions you are going to offer. What would you
recommend they do if you were in their position? There are two central components to consider:

- **Management Challenge:** What kind of problem does the decision-maker face (rational systems / process, natural systems / relational, or both)? What is the primary issue you are addressing in the memo? What is the organizational context?
- **Substantive Proposal:** What specifically should be done? How will the decision-maker gain support, and who are the relevant players? What are the technical details of your proposal?

**Memo Grading – Substance:**

**Stronger memos contain:**
- A thesis statement (a clear argument stated in the first paragraph)
- Arguments systematically derived from frameworks
- Justifications for recommendations
- Relevant references to the readings / theory
- Frameworks applied in a clear, coherent, and logical manner

**Weaker memos contain:**
- Unjustified recommendations (e.g., “do this, do that”)  
- Arguments that float free of frameworks  
- Excessive space devoted to summarizing the case or defining frameworks  
- Inconsistent or inappropriate use of frameworks  
- No mention of the course articles

**Memo Grading – Style:**

**Stronger memos contain:**
- Text written with audience in mind  
- Simple, clear, straightforward sentences  
- Logical structure

**Weaker memos contain:**
- Typos (e.g., misspellings, inconsistent punctuation, grammatical errors)  
- Passive phrasing (avoiding making strong, clear recommendations)  
- Undefined jargon

**Management Dilemma / Current Event Overview (20%)**

This objective of this assignment is to link the management themes from this course to current events. Based on an article you identify in the popular press, you are expected to provide a 2-3 page, single-spaced overview of a current management dilemma in the public or nonprofit sector. Your current event summary must be posted to Canvas by midnight on the Sunday before the relevant class meeting, meaning that the current event should apply to the theme we will be discussing that week in class. In addition, you are required to upload the article that inspired your current event overview to the Discussion board section of Canvas. As part of your current event overview, please explain why you chose the particular article, why it is interesting to you, and why you think other students in the class would benefit from reading it. I strongly encourage you to scan relevant newspapers and magazines.
regularly so that you do not have to scramble to find an applicable current event on the last week of class. To get you started, I suggest you start with some of the following websites:

- Seattle Times [www.seattletimes.com](http://www.seattletimes.com)
- WA Newspapers: [https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/wa_newspapers.aspx](https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/wa_newspapers.aspx)
- Washington Post: [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)
- The Atlantic: [www.theatlantic.com](http://www.theatlantic.com)
- The New Yorker: [www.newyorker.com](http://www.newyorker.com)
- Governing Magazine: [www.governing.com](http://www.governing.com)

Stronger Current Event Overviews will be:

- Clear and interesting illustrations of a dilemma, problem, trend or theme for the given week.
- Analytical, with references to or linkages made to concepts covered in the readings or case study for the given week, and aimed at offering us alternative viewpoints for understanding the dilemma considered.
- Conducive to discussion in class and facilitative of the learning of the class.

Unlike most policy memos, you are not required to offer a solution to the ‘dilemma’ or case you present. Instead, we are looking at these current examples to be a springboard for comparative discussion on the theme for the week. We seek vivid, provocative cases that can be read quickly and connected to themes in the readings and lectures.

**Participation (10%)**

Effective participation in discussions is an art and a crucial professional skill for public leaders and managers. You will participate in this class in several different ways.

- **Full Class / Small Group Activities:** We will have many group activities, and your active engagement is expected. Checking your email, instant messaging, and working on unrelated tasks during group activities are not actions that qualify as active engagement.
- **In-Class and Online (Canvas) Responses:** In some weeks the TA or I may pose a question to the class and give you 5 minutes to write your answer on a 3x5 card. Questions will require a reflective response; we will not test specific factual knowledge. Cards will be collected each week, but they will not be graded formally. For some weeks I might pose a question on Canvas instead of using a 3x5 card.
- **Class Attendance:** You are required to attend all classes. If you must miss a class, please let the TA know in advance. ‘Unapproved’ absences will decrease your participation grade.
- **Teaching Assistant (TA) Sections:** Based on feedback from course evaluations, I have decided that TA Sections will not be required – attendance in section will not be part of your participation grade. However, the TA will review course readings in sections, and any questions you have about assignments will be addressed in sections.
Moreover, as described below, final project teams will be based on section membership. Sections offer a time when all students are expected to be able to meet. If students are unable to meet with their final project team outside of class, then they must be available to meet during their scheduled section time.

In and outside of class, we expect and encourage you to practice the Evans School’s Community Conversation Norms:

At the Evans School, we value the richness of our differences and how they can greatly enhance our conversations and learning. As a professional school, we also have a responsibility to communicate with each other—inside and outside of the classroom—in a manner consistent with conduct in today’s increasingly diverse places of work. We hold ourselves individually and collectively responsible for our communication by:

- Listening carefully and respectfully
- Sharing and teaching each other generously
- Clarifying the intent and impact of our comments
- Giving and receiving feedback in a “relationship building” manner
- Working together to expand our knowledge by using high standards for evidence and analysis.

**Final Group Project (30%)**:
The final group project consists of a case analysis that addresses organizational performance in relation to people, processes, and change. The case will be one of the assigned readings from the course. It is possible that all teams will analyze the same case, but it is also possible that I will utilize several different cases.

Group teams will be assigned randomly, although they will be structured around section membership. Each team will have between 5-7 students, preferably teams of 6 students. As mentioned above, each case analysis will have three major sections: people, processes, and change. In this respect the group project is supposed to be a summative assignment that builds on all three modules of the course.

You are expected to draw on the readings, and many aspects of the memos could be useful for the project. However, rather than emphasizing the readings from a given week, here you are thinking about the whole course and a comprehensive organizational analysis. Cases should not be longer than 7 single-spaced pages, not including figures, tables, exhibits, and a bibliography.

As an example, if I assign the Harlem Children’s Zone as the final project, teams will have to offer an organizational analysis in the context of people, and processes and change. Students that write their individual memos on the Harlem Children’s Zone will emphasize the readings on measurement processes that I assigned for that given week, but they obviously would not be expected to discuss readings from other weeks on people and change. By the time the course concludes, though, we will have discussed many topics, and the analysis of the Harlem Children’s Zone could be expanded and deepened to consider these other issues.

The final project is due by 11:59 PM on Sunday, March 13.
READINGS
The required readings include one book, a course pack, and materials on our Canvas website.
2. PBAF 512 Course Pack
   • Register as a student at: [cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cb/register](http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cb/register)
   • Once registered, go to: [https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/43464066](https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/43464066)
3. All other cases and materials are on Canvas

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
As a student in this course, you acknowledge that you are a member of a learning community in the Evans School of Public Affairs that is committed to the highest academic standards. As a member of this community, you agree to uphold the fundamental standards of honesty, respect and integrity, and you accept the responsibility to encourage others to adhere to these standards. If you are uncertain about whether a particular action constitutes academic misconduct, please ask me or the teaching assistant for guidance before an assignment is due.
You must write your own memos, not copy or paraphrase memos others have written. Plagiarized memos will receive a grade of 0. Group projects must also be original work done by the group.

STATEMENT ON DISABILITIES:
The university will provide reasonable accommodation of academically qualified students with disabilities so those students can participate fully in the university's educational programs and activities. Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with Disability Resources for Students (DRS). You can apply at this website: [depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/](http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/) Please inform me of your accommodation so that I can prepare adequate resources for you.
Schedule

Week 1 (January 5): Introduction to Performance Management

Case:

Theory:


Switch, Chapter 1.

PROCESSES (RIDER / RATIONAL SYSTEMS / STRUCTURAL FRAME)

Week 2 (January 12): Organizational Design

Case:

Theory:


Switch, Chapters 2-4.

**Week 3 (January 19): Measurement**

**Case:**

**Theory:**


**Week 4 (January 26): Accountability**

**Case:**

**Theory:**


PEOPLE (ELEPHANT / NATURAL SYSTEMS / POLITICAL & HR FRAME)

Week 5 (February 2): Motivation

Case:

Theory:


Switch, Chapters 5-7.


Week 6 (February 9): Diversity and Representative Bureaucracy

**Guest Speaker: Elmer Dixon, Executive Diversity Services**

Case:

Theory


**Week 7 (February 16): Status, Influence, and Power**

**In-Class Simulation: Change Management – Politics and Power**

Case:

Theory:


**CHANGE (PATH / OPEN SYSTEMS / SYMBOLIC FRAME)**
**Week 8 (February 23): Organizational Culture**

**Case:**

**Theory:**


*Switch*, Chapters 8-9.


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**Week 9 (March 1): Innovation and Organizational Learning**

**Case:**

**Theory:**


*Switch*, Chapters 10-11.
Week 10 (March 8): Contracting and Collaborating

Case:

Theory:


