Course Description:

This course will focus on theory and research on human service organizations, those agencies mainly concerned with directly supporting, constraining, or changing human behavior. Students will learn about the context, operation, and structure of human service organizations, as well as the role and impact of such organizations on contemporary social welfare. The purpose of this course is threefold: 1) to advance student knowledge of organizational theory and research, particularly as it pertains to the description and analysis of human service organizations, 2) to relate human service organizations to the communities and social systems in which they are active, or to whom they are accountable, and 3) to familiarize students with the current organizational context in which the management and change of human service organizations occurs.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Review and describe basic organizational concepts and terms, and apply them descriptively and analytically in assessing organizations.
2. Describe the nature and origin of structures and processes in human service organizations, and develop the capacity to pose analytic questions about their relationship to organization-client interactions.
3. List and explain the requirements for analyzing and administering organizations or systems of organizations, and compare the different models associated with the assessment of efficiency and effectiveness.
4. Identify, categorize, and compare different theoretical and empirical traditions, which may produce conflicting or complementary assessments, and interpret organizations and organizational behavior (e.g., these approaches may include contingency, resource dependence, ecological, institutional, transaction cost, and feminist theories of organizations, as well as post-modern forms of analysis).

5. Describe and discuss the prevalence of organizations in modern societies, their importance as a main loci of authority and action, and their roles in preventing and resolving social problems, as well as creating and perpetuating them.

6. Identify and analyze the unique position of professionals, especially social workers, in organizations, including the frequently-found norms, rules, and ethical decisions facing social workers in the context of human service organizations, communities, and social systems.

**Relationship of the Course to Curricular Themes:**

- *Multiculturalism and Diversity* will be addressed analytically as internal and external conditions that affect an organization's capacity for survival and growth. Relevant topic areas will include: the history of the study of organizations, organizational environments, intergroup relations, work-force and workplace diversity (including underrepresented groups in leadership positions), and organizational learning and change.

- *Social Justice and Social Change* will be addressed analytically from the perspective of understanding the role organizations play in maximizing the welfare of the least advantaged groups in society. Relevant topic areas will include: the history of the study of organizations; organizational environments, interorganizational relations, and organization-client interactions; innovation, transformation, change, and organizational learning; models of organizational effectiveness; and the nature, origin, and effects of organizational culture.

- *Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation* will be addressed in the sense that organizations are conceptualized as having unique forms, as operating under different auspices, as serving different purposes, and as encompassing different work activity systems, or technologies. Exploring the nature and implications of these differences forms the basis for connecting the study of human service organizations to the policy themes of promotion, prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. Relevant topic areas will include: taxonomies of organization, and the issue of organizational auspices; organizational environments; interorganizational relations; the nature of work activity systems; levels of analysis issues; and models of organizational effectiveness.

- *Behavioral and Social Science Research* will be addressed in the sense that organizational theory is a domain of social science inquiry in its own right, characterized by a strong, multidisciplinary tradition of empirical investigation and theoretical analysis. This course will focus on literature from this domain. Students will acquire knowledge of human service organizations by reading and analyzing centrally important contributions to this literature, with particular emphasis on the relationship between an organization and the community and social system(s) which form key elements in its larger environment.
Course Responsibilities and Grading

**Class participation (10%)**  All students are expected to attend class and participate in discussions on a weekly basis. The “graded” portion of class participation consists of students bringing to class each week either an article/news item or at least two written questions or issues pertaining to the readings/class content to discuss with the class. Each week is worth 1% so turning something in every class session will result in receiving the full 10% for class participation.

**Response Papers (20%)**  Students will hand in a 1-2 page (double-spaced) response paper for 6 of the class sessions (#2-10). The purpose of these assignments is to facilitate thinking about some of the issues covered during the course and to allow an opportunity for demonstrating understanding and synthesis of the material. In the papers you can relate the readings to the textbook, critique or evaluate the main points or research findings, raise concerns or issues, incorporate your experiences in placement or with other organizations, etc. These papers will not be assigned an individual letter grade, but students may be asked to rewrite if the paper is of poor quality.

**Organization Analysis Paper (30%)**  Students will prepare a paper that critically analyzes an organization with which she/he is familiar. The paper will utilize concepts and models from the text, class lectures, and discussions. A preliminary assignment for this paper, assessing organization structure is due October 11. Students will turn in the final paper and discuss main points and insights in class on November 29.

**Mid-term (15%) and Final Exam (25%).**  Both exams will be in-class examinations comprised of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions covering material from the readings, lectures, and discussions. The mid-term will be given on October 18 and the final exam on December 13. Students are allowed to prepare a one page “cheat sheet” to use during the exam. Several short, ungraded quizzes will be given throughout the term to help students assess how well they are incorporating the material from the course.

**Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all classes. If you know that you must miss a class session, please speak with me prior to that planned absence. Excessive absences may lead to a failing grade.

**Grading Scale**

Using a 100 point system

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Required Reading Materials


Coursepack (CP) – available at Ulrich’s Bookstore.

Additional materials related to the weekly themes will be distributed as needed.

Class Schedule:

September 6, Session One - Intro to Human Service Organizations

September 13, Session Two – Organization Theory

Daft, Chapter 1 Organizations and Organization Theory


September 20, Social Work 80th Anniversary

No class. Need to attend workshops/presentations for 9/27 response paper on org culture
September 27, Session Three – Organizational Culture and Ethics

Daft, Chapter 7 Organizational Culture and Ethical Values


October 4, Session 4 Organization Strategy and Effectiveness

Daft, Chapter 2 – Strategy, Organization Design, and Effectiveness


October 11, Session Five - Organization Structure and Control

Assignment Due: Organization Structure – formal/informal

Daft, Chapter 3 Fundamentals of Organizational Structure
Daft, Chapter 5 Service Technology (p. 81-93)
Daft, Chapter 6  Organization Bureaucracy and Control (p. 104-110)


**October 18, Session Six – Midterm Exam & Organizational Environment**

*Midterm exam*

Daft, Chapter 4 – The External Environment


(Internet) Bielefeld, W., & John, C. (1996). The institutionalization of nonprofit human service delivery; The role of political culture Administration and Society, 28(3), 362-389

**October 25, Session Seven – Inter-Organizational Relationships**

(Handout) Daft – Interorganizational Relationships


**November 1, Session Eight – Organization Life Cycle, Size**

Daft, Chapter 6  Organization Size, Life Cycle, and Control


**November 8, Session Nine - Organizational Change**

Daft, Chapter 8  Innovation and Change

November 15, Session Ten  - Decision making process and “when things go wrong”

Daft, Chapter 9  Decision Making Processes


November 22 Thanksgiving Break

No class – enjoy the holiday!!

November 29, Session Eleven – Conflict, Power, and Politics

Assignment Due:  Organization Analysis Paper

Daft, Chapter 10  Conflict, Power, and Politics


December 6, Session Twelve- Human Service Orgs. and Social Justice & Exam Review


**December 13 Final Exam**

**In-class examination**

**Additional Resources:**

A. **Books**


B. Journals

Academy of Management Journal
Academy of Management Review
Administration in Social Work
Administrative Science Quarterly
American Journal of Sociology
American Sociological Review
Annual Review of Sociology
Human Relations
Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly
Organizational Behavior and Human Performance
Organizational Dynamics
Organization Science
Research in Organizational Behavior
Research in the Sociology of Organizations
Social Forces
Social Service Review
Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Non-Profit Organisations