

Organizational Learning and Systems Thinking
MBA634 – Fall 200 ♦ Wednesdays
Lilly Science Hall 026♦ 5:45-8:45pm

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The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn - Alvin Toffler

Learn avidly. Question repeatedly what you have learned. Analyze it carefully. Then put what you have learned into practice intelligently. – Confucius

All learning begins with the simple phrase, "I don't know". - I don't know.

Text and materials: *Course Pack* of articles via BlackBoard and/or Class Wiki

The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook .ISBN: 0-385-47256-0 Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross and Smith.

Ten Steps to a Learning Organization (Paperback) by Peter Kline (Author), Bernard Saunders (Author) Publisher: Great River Books; 2 Sub edition (December 1997) ISBN-10: 0915556324 ISBN-13: 978-0915556328

Systems Thinking Tools: A User's Reference Guide (Toolbox Reprint Series) (Paperback) by Daniel H. Kim (Author). Publisher: Pegasus Communications. ISBN-10: 1883823021 ISBN-13: 978-1883823023

Not required, but recommended: *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. ISBN: 0385260954 Senge.

Anticipated Learning: After completion of this course, you will have an understanding of the core competencies required for creating & building a culture of learning in organizations. You will have the experience of participating in a learning community. You will have an enhanced ability to think systemically, communicate more effectively, and lead more effectively. You will be asked to clarify personal and professional visions, and then use those personal visions to create a shared vision that can guide an organization on its path to becoming a learning organization.

Course Requirements:

Reading: It is expected that each student will have read the assigned material prior to each class session. Please refer to the class outline (*note: the outline may be adjusted as the class unfolds.*). Class meetings may sometimes involve experiential learning activities.

Class Discussion: Each student will be responsible for sharing questions and insights with other class members. Each student will also be responsible for **leading** (or co-leading) the discussion at some point during the class. Each class member will be evaluated on the quantity and quality of their participation. Attendance will also be taken into account.

Students are encouraged to bring and share items related to assigned readings and discussion topics. Participation credit will be given.

Assignments

Learning Journal

Each student is expected to keep a journal of learning that occurs for you during the semester. It is anticipated that the ideas presented in this class will give you the chance to look at your work, family, and community in new ways. This is different than notes taken in class. It's your new insights that occur as you reflect on the materials of this course while observing your everyday world. I would view this as a supplement to any notes that are taken during class. Keeping a record of new thoughts, ideas, and observations will make it easier for you to write the various papers that are required for this class. Learning Journal templates can be found on Blackboard behind the **Course Information** link.

Learning Discipline Synthesis MicroPapers

Throughout the course of the semester you will be asked to write a short paper on each discipline. This paper should include: 1) a summary of the discipline (your summary, not the book definition); 2) your interpretation of the discipline. In other words, what does it mean to you; 3) integration of the discipline into an organizational environment – **examples from your own experiences?** Grammar, spelling, and punctuation all count. Proofread your work! Due dates for each paper follow:

Systems Thinking (ST)	Sept 14
Personal Mastery (PM)	Sept 28
Mental Models (MM)	Oct 12
Shared Vision (SV)	Oct 26
Team Learning (TL)	Nov 2

Team Project

You each will be part of a “**learning circle**”. It will consist of 3-4 other members of this class. Time will be budgeted most weeks for the learning circles to connect during class. This will be a chance to reflect and learn collectively in a smaller group setting. It's also possible that you may find it necessary to meet outside of class.

Your “team project” will consist of your group taking a “deeper dive” on one of the disciplines. Your “circle” will be expected to become our “resident experts” on that particular discipline.

This will include a presentation to the class on key points from your learning. The presentation/lesson can take any form, and should be approximately 50-60 minutes in length. Those presentations will be scheduled toward the end of the class.

You also will be expected to provide a written summary of your group's work for each member of the class. This will be due at the time of the presentation. Please supply enough copies for each class member. Everyone in your group should play a role in the development of the paper and presentation.

It's expected that you will determine the pace and manner in which your group tackles this project. Part of your grade will include an "after action review" to assess team learning. Additional details on this aspect will be shared later in the course.

Final Paper

Because much of the material covered this semester will focus on concepts that sometimes don't appear to hang together, there will be a paper that is designed to have you do some reflection and "sense making" of the content. As we proceed into the class, more details on what is expected in this paper will be provided.

Paper Format Requirements

All papers submitted should be, 12-point font, 1" margins left and right, and top and bottom. Papers **MUST** be submitted electronically via Blackboard. Preferred style is APA. An example of this style is posted on our class BlackBoard site under the *Course Information* link.

Grading:

<i>Paper 1</i>	7%
<i>Paper 2</i>	7%
<i>Paper 3</i>	8%
<i>Paper 4</i>	8%
<i>Paper 5</i>	10%
<i>Team Presentation/Paper</i>	15%
<i>Final Reflection Paper</i>	30%
<i>Class Participation/Discussion</i>	15%

Grading Scale:

A	= 95%-100%
A-	= 90%-94.9%
B+	= 85%-89.9%
B	= 80%-84.9%
B-	= 75%-79.9%

A word about class participation and attendance: This class is structured for engagement. What that means is much of the learning that occurs will take place in the many conversations we have throughout the course. Because of this, attendance and your participation is essential. Now, having said that, I also realize that we all are professionals and have many things going on in our lives. If you must miss a class session I ask two things: 1) please let me know (e-mail or phone will be fine); 2) you will assume responsibility for working with another class member to get any notes or handouts from the class. We will also be using a class wiki which allows for a lot more interaction between/among us. You all will be given full "editor" status so that you can add and change things as you see fit.

A final thought:

Since I am an adjunct faculty member, I don't have regular office hours. I do however want to be available to answer any questions that you have. E-mail always works well. For conversations that may be more involved, feel free to call or use any of the instant messenger programs. That info is provided on page 1 of this syllabus.

As the cliché goes, the more you put into this class the more you will take from it. I really believe that to be true in a course like this. This is content that is sometimes hard to wrap your brain around. I understand that. I've been there... and at times am still there! There will be times when your brain hurts. That's a good thing. Take that as a sign that some good learning is going on. We do four things in this class.... read, discuss, think, and write. If you keep up with the readings, take the learning journal seriously, and engage in the class conversations you should have a good experience.

Course Outline

Please note: this schedule is subject to modification. Check the class wiki for up to date schedule

Date	Topic	Resource/Reading	Discussion Leader(s)
<i>Aug 27</i>	Introductions, and orientation to the class. Creating a learning environment, review of syllabus, expectations, assignments, and grading.	Senge video Everyone get logged into the class wiki: http://UIndyMBA634.pbwiki.com	Jeff
<i>Sept 3</i>	Introduction to Organizational Learning Form Learning Circles	Course "packet" can be downloaded from Blackboard. Look for the " Week 1 " folder under Course Documents . Read pp. 1-83 of the Fieldbook Be sure to bring your "Fieldbook" to class Please be ready to discuss each set of readings.	Jeff
<i>Sept 10</i>	Systems Thinking	Fieldbook: pp. 87-190 (please be ready to discuss)	
Paper 1 due – ST – by midnight on 9/14 – Submit via BlackBoard			
<i>Sept 17</i>	Personal Mastery	Fieldbook: pp. 193-232 Ten Steps: Step 1 & Step 6 (please be ready to discuss)	
<i>Sept 24</i>	No Class - Learning circles meet during this time or sometime this week to begin mapping out project		
Paper 2 due – PM – by midnight on 9/28 – Submit via BlackBoard			
<i>Oct 1</i>	Mental Models	Fieldbook: pp. 235-293 Ten Steps: Step 4 (please be ready to discuss)	
<i>Oct 8</i>	Shared Vision	Fieldbook: pp. 297-347 Ten Steps: Step 7 & Step 8 (please be ready to discuss)	
Paper 3 due – MM – by midnight on 10/12 Submit via BlackBoard			
<i>Oct 15</i>	Team Learning	Fieldbook: pp. 351-441 Ten Steps: Step 5 please be ready to discuss)	
Paper 4 due – SV – by midnight on 10/26 Submit via BlackBoard			
<i>Oct 22</i>	Systems Thinking – Part Deux	Ten Steps: Step 9 & 10 Systems Thinking Tools – all (please be ready to discuss)	
<i>Oct 29</i>	Integration of the Five Disciplines - Arenas of Practice	Fieldbook: pp. 445-504 (please be ready to discuss) (additional readings will be posted on the wiki)	
Paper 5 due – TL – by midnight on 11/2 – Submit via BlackBoard			
<i>Nov 5</i>	TBA		
<i>Nov 12</i>	TBA (most likely will be an out of class assignment)		
<i>Nov 19</i>	TBA		
<i>Nov 26</i>	No Class – Thanksgiving holiday		
Dec. 3	Learning Circle Presentations		XXX
Dec. 10	Learning Circle Presentations Class wrap-up, evaluation, and special presentation.	Special presentation: Organizational learning goes to the movies	XXX
Final Paper Due – Submit via BlackBoard			