**Virginia Tech, National Capital Region**

**MGT 5314: Dynamics of Organizational Behavior**

**Fall 2015[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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| **Professor** | Andrew Watson, Ph.D. |
| **Email** | andwat@vt.edu (preferred means of contact) |
| **Office, phone, etc.** | See Canvas site for class |
| **Class time** | Wednesday 6 - 8:50pm |
| **Textbook and other materials** | George & Jones: *Understanding and Managing Organizational Behavior* (6th ed.)  Cialdini: *Influence* (Revised ed.)  Harvard Coursepack: see link from Canvas; includes cases and a simulation. |

## Course Description

*This course examines the determinants and consequences of human behavior in formal organizations. The specific graduate focus is on understanding the individual, interpersonal, and group processes which underlie all human dynamics.*

The above quote is the official course description. As a formal description of what we'll be doing this semester, that's pretty good. If I could make one edit, it would be to add organizational processes to the focus list in the second sentence. If I could make a second, it would be to add the word *managing* to the same sentence.

We should all be aware of Virginia Tech’s official policies on plagiarism, and on other aspects of academic (mis)conduct.

## Assignments and Evaluation

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| **Assignment** | **Percentage** |
| Participation | 20 |
| Integrative paper (1) | 15 |
| Integrative paper (2) (\*) | 15 |
| Group presentation (1) \* | 10 |
| Group presentation (2) \* | 10 |
| Mid-term exam | 15 |
| Final exam | 15 |
| Extra credit assignments | 0 |

\* indicates a group assignment.  
(\*) indicates an assignment that you may choose to do as a group.  
Absence of \* indicates an individual assignment.

*Participation* means *active participation*. This requires *preparation*. I will post on Canvas details of how to prepare for each class meeting. Expect to be cold-called multiple times during the course. Participation also means listening. Punctuality is good, although capital region traffic is often bad. I hope this makes it clear that participation does not mean mere attendance. We will use Canvas for online discussions, which will provide opportunities to participate in the course outside of the classroom.

You will write two *integrative papers*. The first will be individual, and will cover the two motivation chapters (6, 7).

An integrative paper is more than a summary of material from the textbook chapter(s). It should integrate textbook content with other material, such as your own experience, current events, content from other chapters, content from other courses, or other books. It is also in a sense less than a summary of the chapter(s), in that it should focus on a subset of the material.

When you use content from the chapter(s), you should explain it clearly, and should not assume that your reader has access to the textbook (remember that high school English teacher!).

Do not double space. If you want to know what I consider to be reasonable in terms of things like point size and margins, take a look at this syllabus. (It is based on the current Word Blank Document template, modified only slightly.) I will collect papers using Scholar, rather than in hardcopy: to be specific, I will set up a Scholar Assignment for each paper.

Your writing should be correct and clear. It may well help to imagine that a high school English teacher will help me to grade your papers (but no the time-limited exams). To cite sources, you may use any format you want, as long as you use the same format consistently.

The second integrative paper differs from the first in at least one way. It will focus on a different chapter (or chapters). We as an organization will decide on the focal chapter(s) for the second paper, which will come from the second half of the textbook (i.e. ch. 10-18).

Another way in which the second paper may differ from the first is that it may be collaborative. It may be written by one student, by two, by three, by… you get the idea. Of course, expectations rise with the number of students collaborating.

A page guideline may be helpful, so here it is: three pages for an individual integrative paper; an additional page for each additional contributor. So if three students worked together on the second integrative paper, five pages would be the guideline. It may also be helpful to note that I (and the high school English teacher) value both conciseness and precision.

You will be involved in two *group presentations*. To state that is to raise at least two questions of timing. When will groups present? How long should each presentation be? The respective answers to these two questions are: see Schedule below; and about eight minutes, not including questions and answers (Q&A). Yes, each presentation will be followed by at least one question from the audience.

The presentation itself should be *very* *clear*. A strong introduction is important to clarity. So is careful selection of key points: if you try to make too many points in one short presentation, it is likely that some of the points will get lost in the crowd.

If you use PowerPoint, please post to Canvas, attaching your presentation file, by noon on the day of the presentation. This will allow me to print out your slides so that I can make notes on the hardcopy as you present. (If you won’t be using PowerPoint, please let me know. When I use slides in class, I will attach the PowerPoint to the appropriate Canvas entry.)

More information on the presentation assignments will emerge as we discuss issues such as group composition. I intend that you the students have significant input into these issues.

The *mid-term and final exams* will be in-class, open-note, open-book—but without access to the internet. They will not be tests of your ability to memorize and parrot definitions from the textbook. Rather, they will be tests of understanding, application, integration and analysis. I will distribute sample questions, and consider student suggestions for questions, as the exams approach. You will take these exams on your laptop, unless you tell me in advance that you would prefer not to.

The mid-term will focus on chapters 1-5, 8, and 9. It will not include questions on chapters 6 and 7, since you will demonstrate your grasp of these chapters in your first integrative paper.

The final will focus in chapters 10-18, minus the chapter(s) chosen as the focus of the second integrative paper.

## Schedule

The table below shows the schedule. Dates of class meetings are shown in **bold**. *I may have to make changes* to the schedule.

Things due from you (including being prepared for discussion) are shown in *italics*.

* To prepare for discussion of a case, you will need to read the case carefully, and to consider questions about the case. Some cases pose their own questions. I will often pose questions in the Canvas entry for the class meeting in which we discuss the case.
* To prepare for discussion of a textbook chapter, you need only skim the chapter.
* For other class preparation, see the Canvas entry for the class meeting.

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| Date | Activities |
| **Aug 26** | Introduction: *ch. 1* (skim after class).  Early finish, no break. |
| **Sep 2** | *Case: Managing Creativity at Shanghai Tang.*  *Newcastle Personality Assessor* (see Canvas entry for link). Individual differences: *ch 2.*  Learning: *ch 5*. |
| **Sep 9** | Work Motivation: *ch 6.* Motivating Environment: *ch 7*. Dan Pink video: but which one? |
| **Sep 16** | Values, Attitudes, etc: *ch. 3*. Perception, Attribution, Diversity: *ch 4*. *Integrative paper (1) due.* |
| **Sep 23** | *Case: Treadway Tire.*  Employment Relationships: *ch. 8.* *Group presentation (1).* |
| **Sep 30** | Stress and Work-Life Balance: *ch. 9*.  *Influence, ch. 1.*  Video: Milgram experiments. |
| **Oct 7** | *Mid-term exam: bring laptop.* |
| **Oct 14** | Groups: *chs 10, 11*. |
| **Oct 21** | Leadership: *ch 12*.  Organizational change: *ch 18*.  Video: Art Ryan at Prudential. |
| **Oct 28** | Communication: *ch 14*.  *Case: Erik Peterson at Biometra (A).* |
| **Nov 4** | *Influence,* revisited, via: *Group presentation (2).*  Politics*: ch 13.* |
| **Nov 11** | Decision making: *ch 15*. Culture: *ch 17.* |
| **Nov 18** | Organizational design: *ch 16*. *Case: Corporate Solutions at Jones Lang LaSalle (A).*  Course summary. |
| **Nov 25** | No class: Thanksgiving break |
| **Dec 2** | Everest simulation: *bring laptop.*  *Integrative paper (2) due.* |
| **Dec 9** | *Final exam: bring laptop.* |

1. This is version 1.0 of the syllabus, published before the first class meeting. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)