

Eastern Connecticut State University
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
ORG 675: SYSTEMS THINKING IN MANAGEMENT
Section 1, Wed 7-9.45 pm Webb 407

Lecturer: Dr Don Petkov, office WH336, Office tel (860) 465 0264 or (860)465 4620 (secretary), email petkovd@easternct.edu, web site: www.easternct.edu/~petkovd

Student consultations during office hours in Webb 336: Tuesday 11-12 am, 1.30-2.45 pm, Wed 4-6.30 pm, Thursday 4-5 pm. and by appointment. The students are expected to check the course web site at least three times a week for instructions related to the course. Students should use only Blackboard email for communication and anything else needs to be used only in case of a last resort.

If you cannot attach your assignment from home for any reason you have to use the computers in the labs at ECSU. If you cannot attach at ECSU as well you have to try another computer or you have to contact the ITD help desk for assistance with your user profile or your computer settings.

Students should communicate with each other only via Blackboard Vista and should arrange regular instant sessions in the Blackboard chat room that corresponds to their group number allocated by the instructor..

Students are expected to attend every session.

Deadlines are declared in the schedule below and in the links for the corresponding elements in Vista, by 11 pm on the particular day. It is very important that you stick to them. You can submit without penalty within 3 days from the deadline which usually captures all cases of short trips or a short illness. If a submission is made between 4 and 7 days after the deadline for whatever reason, the penalty will be 10% of the corresponding grade. If a submission is made after 7 days past a deadline but no later than the evening of December 15th 2010, then the penalty will be 30%. No submissions will be accepted after that date.

How to submit assignments or the project

For an assignment or a project you must submit 1 (ONE) only MS Word file that includes the complete documentation for it, including any drawings, tables etc. If you have a Visio drawing or an Excel spreadsheet to complete then you need to paste it in the Word file with the other tasks for the readability of your report.

Students in the four person teams for the two projects have to submit each the project reports. If one student is reported to me via Vista email by the other that he/she does not prepare for group meetings (face to face or virtual) and does not cooperate for more than 7 days I have to be notified in Vista email by the other student asap. Then we have to meet with the students 15 mins before the next class session in class or in my office hours for which I will notify them by email. *If a student continues not to perform for another week then the student will have an F grade for the course as the projects are an essential part of the final grade and will have to repeat the course.* New teams will be formed of those remaining students.

Course Catalogue Description: This is a special topics course

Course learning objectives: After the completion of the course you will be able to:

- identify the stakeholders and forces affecting complex organizational situations;
- structure complex management problems;
- model the interrelationships between the elements of management systems;
- promote organizational learning about complex managerial issues.

Course outline: The course will introduce the foundations of systems thinking applied to organizational problems. In particular it will cover :

- Introduction to Complex Problem Solving: Action Research, Problem Structuring Techniques, Systems Thinking and Multiple Criteria Decision Making as potential approaches for such problems;
- Hard Systems Thinking versus Soft Systems Thinking Approaches to Management;
- Stakeholder Analysis;
- Ackoff's Interactive Planning;
- Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology;
- Critical Systems Thinking and Mixing Methods in Systemic Interventions.

Personal development student goals: The above goals will be pursued through the parallel development of analytic and information search skills, communication skills, development of self discipline and ability to cope with change and work under pressure individually and in small teams.

Methods and instructional materials employed: The course objectives will be pursued through class discussions, small group work on a project, work with the textbook (bring it to class please), through homeworks, library and Internet search.

Required textbook: M.C. Jackson, Systems Thinking, Creative Holism for Managers, John Wiley, November 2003, available in the ECSU bookstore.

Additional materials that are relevant for particular topics will be recommended in class and will be available at the Vista course site. You have to prepare in advance for every week as instructed by the professor please.

Requirements for completion of the course: To successfully complete this course the student must pass the examination and complete the mini project, the large project and the weekly assignments. For non submission a student gets 0%.

Group project and presentation (GROUPS OF 3-4 students)	25%
4 Individual homeworks	20%
Miniproject in groups	10%
Class participation	10%
Problem solving test	10%
Final INDIVIDUAL research paper	25%

Homeworks are to be submitted via Vista unless otherwise instructed. All homeworks must be submitted by the end of November. Topics of homeworks to be provided in class.

Class participation will be judged from your involvement in small group work in class.

Large Group project : to be submitted by November 20th 11 pm via Vista. The presentations will take place on Dec 1st.

Topic of large group project: Provide your own assumptions and develop a plan for systemic intervention, develop the relevant artifacts of the hypothetical intervention on the following problem: Merger of the management systems of two companies in a particular industry (each group to choose a separate industry in consultation with the instructor). The two companies may be from the same or from different industries. Provide your own assumptions.

The group mini project is the service element of your learning in ORG 675. You have to identify any real organizational department in an organization to which you can get access through work or relatives or good friends. Your task is to apply SP, AP and RJ analysis of the problems associated with this work system (see the papers by S Alter, especially the fourth file in Subject resources) as a preparation for that. Produce a detailed report identifying what are the problems associated with that system (SP), what opportunities you have identified (AP analysis) and what are your recommendations that you justify for improvement of the work system. You are encouraged to show your work (ON PAPER) to your instructor before the deadline.

Individual final research paper to be submitted in Vista. The individual final paper is to be submitted by December 10th 2010.

Topic: On the applicability of soft systems thinking to management – reflections on the methodologies and cases covered in our course and my lessons from them as they may be applicable to a particular problem situation. Note the situation could be from your work experience or any other meaningful situation that you may discuss, single spaced, between 3500 and 4000 words, it is an individual paper, use Harvard system of referencing <http://www.nhgs.co.uk/technology/harvard.pdf>. or alternatively use APA referencing (you need to be consistent). Provide an overview of the material and on your experiences during the course as applied to the chosen case.

The **grading scale** will be 93-100 =A; 90-92=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 80-82=B-; 77-79=C+; 72-76=C; 70-72=C-; 67-69=D+; 63-66=D; 60-62=D-, 0-59=F.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Schedule of sessions: Sometimes there will be lectures, sometimes video presentations or small group work. The student is supposed to prepare for each session in advance covering on their own the material. The sessions in class will be in the form of a review of important highlights of the particular chapter, quizzes and exercises. Please bring your text books always to class.

Unit	Lecture Topic	Reading Assign	Projects/Assignments Announcements
One, starting 09.01 Wed	Introduction to the Course. Alter, the 2002 and 2008 EJIS papers on the WSM	Ch 1 -3 Jackson, Alter the paper on WSM in Subject resources	

Two 09.08 And 09.15	Overview of ch 1-4 Jackson Alter's papers on WSM in the folder in Subject resources and especially the fourth file Applying WSM and developing WS snapshots that contains examples	Ch 5 Jackson plus the Alter papers revision	Definition of teams and topics for miniproject and large project
Three 09.22	Systems dynamics and The Fifth Discipline Ch 5 Jackson	Ch 8 Jackson	A1 due 09.21
Four 09.29 and 10.06	Complex Problem Solving, Action Research, Strategic Assumptions Surfacing and testing, Jackson ch 8	Revision of all previous material + Ch 9-10 Jackson	Project assessment by each team in the week 09.28- any questions to be asked in class or by Vista email before that – both on the miniproject and on the large project Miniproject fully completed is due 10.04
Five 10.13 and 10.20	Interactive planning and Soft systems methodology Ch 9-10 Jackson	Ch 9-10 Jackson and other material to be added in Vista	Project work by each team A2 -10.19
Six 10.26	<i>Revision Introduction to Critical Systems Thinking</i>		A3-11.02
Seven 11.03 and 11.10	Critical Systems practice Ch 15 Jackson		

Eight 11.17 Recess	Mixing methods in a systemic intervention	Papers in Vista	Problem solving test in class 11.17 Team project due Nov 20th
Nine 12.1 and 12.8 12.15 (last class)	Revision 12.15 –Reflection on papers		Presentations of team projects Dec 15th^t A4 due Dec 7nd Research paper due Dec 10th

Accommodation of students with disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of AccessAbility Services at 465-0189. To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations, you should contact the Office of AccessAbility Services as soon as possible. Please note that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from the Office of AccessAbility Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

*Students are encouraged to use the support offered by the **Academic Services Center** located on the ground floor of the Library. Tutoring, Math, Writing, and supplemental Advising Services are available for students in the Center at the following times: Sun. 2-9; M.-Th. 9-9, Fri. 9-5. (Closed Sat.) For further information call 465-4272 or check the ASC website at <http://academicaffairs.easternct.edu/ASC-FAQs.html> ”*

Academic Honesty and Writing Policy Statement

Among the primary purposes of a university education is the development of abilities and attitudes necessary to engage thoughtfully and ethically with the ideas of others--so that you make fully, accurately, and appropriately clear in your writing (or speaking) where and how those others have influenced your thinking and your conclusions. These abilities and attitudes are generally part of the larger concept of "academic honesty."

Academic honesty involves taking responsibility for your own education, completing all work required of you on your own, and contributing thoughtfully and fully to any group work assigned or sanctioned by your instructors. In more straightforward terms, academic honesty means not cheating on tests and not plagiarizing.