

EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

***ORG 675: SYSTEMIC PROBLEM SOLVING IN
MANAGEMENT***

Schedule: June session 2006, May 27th – June 17

The course will begin on Saturday, May 27th and will be held on Wednesday evenings and Saturdays. It will continue through Saturday, June 17th. Wednesday classes will run from 6:00 p.m. to 8.45 p.m.

Saturday classes will run as follows: May 27th: 8.30 – 12.30; the other three Saturday meetings: from 8.30 am. to 5:00 p.m. (8.30-10, 10.15-11.45, 12.45-2.15, 2.30-5.00 pm)

Venue- Main Campus in Willimantic, Room Webb 113

Lecturer: Dr Don Petkov, office WH446, Office tel (860) 465 0264 or (860)465 4667 (secretary), email petkovd@easternct.edu, web site: ECSU site-Faculty/Staff-Petkov or <http://www.easternct.edu/personal/faculty/petkovd/index.html>

Student consultations during office hours: Wednesday 4.30-6 pm , Saturday – 12-12.30pm. and 5-6 pm. Students should provide the instructor with a working email address to allow urgent communication. The students are expected to check the course web site at least two times a week for instructions related to the course.

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, will be available in the ECSU bookstore.

Additional materials that are relevant for particular topics will be recommended in class and will be available at the library electronic repository for ORG675 by D Petkov. 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 examinations and complete the term project and assignments. Grading is as follows:

Class participation	20%
Group project and presentation (GROUPS OF 3-4 students)	30%
4 Individual homeworks	20%
Final INDIVIDUAL research paper	30%

Homeworks are to be submitted on paper unless otherwise instructed. All homeworks must be submitted by June 17th. Topics of homeworks to be provided in class. The individual final paper is to be submitted by July 1st 2006.

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

Group project : to be submitted by June 16th 9 pm by email and then in hard copy on June 17th when the presentations will take place.

Topic of 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.

Individual final research paper to be submitted by email (in MS Word format) by July 1st 2006.

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.

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 topics and case study work. Please bring your text books always to class.

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 5573. To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations you should contact the Office of AccessAbility as soon as possible.

Please note that the Vice President of Academic Affairs cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until his office has received an accommodation letter from the Office of Accessibility Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.