SYLLABUS

*Psychology 639*

**SURVEY OF ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**Spring 2008**

Instructor: Reeshad S. Dalal, Ph.D.

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Office: David King 3077

Office Hours: By appointment

Class Day, Time, and Location: Tuesday, 4:30 PM – 7:10 PM, Robinson B 218

**COURSE OVERVIEW:**

This is a graduate-level survey of research in organizational psychology. One of the major, and most obvious, objectives of this course is to introduce students to the primary areas of research in the field. The focus is firmly on basic scientific research, and an attempt has been made to include some very highly cited papers as well as some papers that are models of good research method or interdisciplinary breadth. However, an attempt is also made to discuss how this research might inform practice in organizations—thereby furthering the nascent “evidence-based management” movement. Yet another objective is to keep the amount of reading in any given week to a manageable length. The hope is that this will encourage students to actually complete all the assigned reading. Finally, a more insidious objective is to convince students that organizational psychology and decision-making are inextricably intertwined, and that the study of the former is, in many ways, the study of the latter applied to organizations.

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is expected, barring exceptional events, and constitutes a part of the participation grade. Internship-related activities will generally not be considered sufficient grounds for absence.
COURSE READINGS:

In the first part of this course, we will be reading the articles listed below. Readings marked with an asterisk ("*") are optional, albeit warmly recommended for personal development.

Every student is expected to contribute to the class discussion. Students who do not voluntarily contribute will be “encouraged” to contribute. In other words, if necessary, I will deliberately put you on the spot. It is important for every student to read all the assigned articles and to contribute to the class discussion because the quality of this course will be heavily influenced by the quality of the discussion ($p < 0.01$).

The article list follows:

*Note: “*” indicates a reading that is not required, but that is warmly recommended for personal development.*

January 22
FIRST CLASS MEETING

No readings.

January 29
INTRODUCTION


February 5
MOTIVATION - I (GOAL-SETTING AND RELATED APPROACHES)


February 12
MOTIVATION - II (OTHER APPROACHES)


*February 19

**JOB ATTITUDES – I (JOB EVALUATIONS AND AFFECT)**


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**February 26**

**JOB ATTITUDES – II (OUTCOMES)**


March 4
STRESS, HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION, AND DIVERSITY


March 11
SPRING BREAK

No readings.

March 18
ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE, ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, AND NATIONAL/SOCIETAL CULTURE


March 25

LEADERSHIP


**April 1**

**WORK GROUPS/TEAMS**


121, 43-64.


April 8

DECISION-MAKING AND NEGOTIATION/CONFLICT


NOTE: Two-page outlines due today.


April 22

EMPIRICAL EXEMPLARS – II


**April 29**
POSTER PRESENTATIONS

**May 6**
“READING DAY”

**May 12**
TERM PAPERS DUE (9 AM)
LEADING CLASS DISCUSSION

Students will form groups of 3 or 4 at the beginning of the semester. Each group will lead discussion twice during the semester. Members of the group that is leading discussion in a given week should meet prior to class in order to coordinate activities. Discussion leaders should plan for discussion to last approximately 2 hours per week. During that time, they should ensure that they solicit discussion from all the other groups.

The following discussion questions are neither necessary nor sufficient, but are provided as examples of questions that discussion leaders may choose to ask:

- Why do you think Reeshad chose this article?
- What are the strengths of this article?
- What are the weaknesses of this article?
- Was there anything in this article that you found surprising or particularly interesting?
- How does this article relate to other articles that we have read this week or in previous weeks?

APPLIED PROJECT

Scenario: The ACME Corporation, a Fairfax-based corporation with 350,000 employees, is considering downsizing 10,000 employees in order to boost profits. For the layoff process, the management at ACME is concerned about adopting “best practices” based on the research literature on organizational justice. ACME management has therefore hired your consulting firm, which specializes in “evidence-based practice,” to advise them regarding this process.

Your task: Recommend how the management at ACME should proceed. Provide at least 3 general recommendations, in an “if [situation], then [recommended action]” form. Recommendations should be based on papers required or recommended for this course (i.e., Cascio & Wynn, 2004; Colquitt et al., 2001; Greenberg, 2007; Kahneman et al., 1986; Shaw et al., 2003), plus two other papers obtained by you.

Guidelines: This is a group project. Therefore, you will be working in a group of 3-4 persons (if you like, you may think of your group as a “boutique” consulting firm). The paper should use double-spaced 12-point Times New Roman font, and should be 5-7 pages in length—excluding the title page, executive summary (maximum 0.5 page), references, and any tables or figures you may have. Papers should be formatted in American Psychological Association (APA) or Academy of Management (AOM) style. However, creative departures from APA/AOM style (e.g., the use of bullets), aimed at attracting and retaining the attention of putative organizational decision-makers, will be permitted.
RESEARCH PROPOSAL: POSTER PRESENTATION + TERM PAPER

This is a group project. Therefore, you will be working in a group of 3-4 persons. In practical terms, the end product will essentially be the “introduction” section of an empirical journal article. That is, you will first review the literature on a particular topic and then propose your own hypotheses. Each hypothesis should be preceded by a sound rationale.

This is a proposal for basic scientific research, and should focus on psychological constructs and their inter-relationships. A paper discussing an applied research problem (e.g., a consulting project) is inappropriate and will receive a failing grade.

The topic should be specific. For example, whereas “leadership” or even “leader-member exchange” is too broad, something like “ecological momentary assessment of the temporal development of leader-member exchange” would be more appropriate. You should propose original research: replications are not suitable here.

Papers should be formatted in American Psychological Association (APA) or Academy of Management (AOM) style. Another good resource, which I strongly encourage you to read before beginning your paper, is:


The paper should use double-spaced 12-point Times New Roman font, and should be 9-12 pages in length—excluding the title page, references, and any tables or figures you may have. You do not need an abstract, and you do not need a method, results, or discussion section. Note, however, that a good introduction section will foreshadow the method and results sections. Thus, although these sections will not be included in the paper, they do need to be given some thought.

The short length of the paper does not obviate the necessity of thoroughness or precision.

To facilitate viable research proposals, the submission of the paper will be preceded by the following steps:
1) A two-page bulleted outline
2) A poster presentation

Further details will be provided at a later date.
GRADING SCHEME

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<tr>
<td>Leading Class Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participating in Class (includes Attendance)</td>
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<td>Applied Project</td>
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<td>Poster Presentation</td>
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<td>Term Paper</td>
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Note that this is not a “guaranteed A” course. Poor work will receive poor grades.

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus with reasonable advance notice. Changes may be announced in class or via email.