



**BUS-PSYC 460 - Organizational Behavior:  
An Evidence-Based Approach  
Course Syllabus  
Spring 2024**

**Instructor:** John L. Dennis, Ph.D.

**Credits:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 45

**Prerequisites:** None

**Class Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 1045-1215

**Office Hours:** By appointment, use the [Calendly link](#) to reserve your meeting.

**Course Type:** Course with Service Learning component

**Lab/Site-Visits Fee:** USD\$100

*Working hard and working smart sometimes can be two different things – Byron Dorgan*

*Being a professional is doing the things you love to do – even on the days you don't feel like doing it - Julius Erving*

**Course Description**

This course introduces students to the concepts and topics in Organizational Behavior, using an evidence-based approach on three levels: the individual, the interpersonal, and the group. At the individual level, we look at decision-making, motivation, and personality. At the interpersonal level, we concentrate on power, influence, and negotiations. At the group level, we explore the leadership and organizational context, while looking at the intricate set of cultural assumptions and prejudices about human behavior that we unknowingly bring with us to the workplace. Emphasis is placed on the role of the first-line supervisor in balancing, coordinating, and integrating individual and organizational needs. It is intended that students gain a better basis for understanding, evaluating, and managing complex organizations.

Effectively using concepts of Organizational Behavior means being able to diagnose problems, communicate clearly, and make evidence-based decisions, while applying the intercultural tools necessary to work effectively in organizations on a worldwide level. Among these skills are the ability to analyze, develop, and implement appropriate solutions. It is intended that students become: 1) more perceptive and knowledgeable about how organizational systems work (and why they may not work); 2) more aware of the consequences of choices made as a manager; 3) more confident in possessing the necessary skills to succeed in a corporate setting. Other subjects covered include the development of management thought, the role of the supervisor as a decision-maker, and the processes of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling organizational activities. The intention is to motivate and influence others to drive organizational change. In this sense, this course will help students gain leadership skills within a structured classroom environment, additionally providing them with a direct experiential knowledge of working with local companies.

The course service learning project will use organizational behavior concepts studied in this course to help [Birrifficio La Gramigna](#) at the interpersonal and group levels. **Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Measures
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Reflect on organizational behavior concepts at the individual, interpersonal, and group levels	Class Discussion, Presentations, Podcast
Develop applicable critical thinking skills regarding organizational behavior concepts	Tickets, Class Discussion
Generate effective leadership skills	Presentations, Service Learning Project
Analyze how organizations and people within them work	Ticket, Service Learning Project
Gain knowledge of how leadership motivates and influences people regarding organizational change	Service Learning Project, Presentations
Design a project with community partner that applies organizational behavior concepts as viable solutions for a well-defined issue	Service Learning Project, Podcast
Create and broadcast materials that will help students to start thinking about their future careers	Class Discussion, Podcast, Community Engagement Presentations

### Course Materials

#### Books (selected chapters)

Clear, J. (2018). *Atomic Habits*. Random House.

Collins, J. (2009). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap and others don't*. Harper.

Coyle, D. (2017). *Culture Code*. Random House.

Edmondson, A.C. (2018). *The fearless organization: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth*. Wiley.

All the required chapters will be available online on the course Google Drive

#### **Instruction Methods**

This class uses a method in which students gain a significant amount of knowledge before each class begins. Once each class starts, students actively and interactively clarify and apply their new knowledge; the professor helps guide students through this process as a facilitator. This is referred to in pedagogy as a [flipped classroom instruction method](#).

Assignments will be done with the help of several cooperative tools that are consistent with the flipped instruction method outlined above

1. Students will submit short reactions (250–500 words) to readings 24 hours before class on

Google Drive,

2. Students will review materials submitted by fellow students.

3. Students will guide a part of the classroom discussion with mini-presentations based on readings, exercises, case studies, and individual/team assignments.

All assignments, and all rubrics, will be accessed via Moodle.

**NOTE:** All writing should be written in 12-point, Garamond font, single-spaced, and justified. All files submitted should have written in the top left part of the page the following:

*First Name Last Name*

*File type (e.g., Ticket #1, Podcast)*

*Book section name, article title or Podcast title*

## **Laptop/Smartphone Policy**

An ever-increasing body of research shows that open laptops and telephones in the classroom create a distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, so you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. For this reason, students are asked to keep computers and phones away and use a regular notebook. There are four exceptions: 1) if you have a vision or other accommodation; 2) if you are using a tablet to take notes, one which is not connected to the internet; 3) if we have an in-class tutorial about online research tools; or 4) if you make an office hours appointment with me to discuss the use of a computer.

## **Assessments**

Attendance	10%
One-to-One Professor Meetings	5%
Service Learning Project	20%
Community Engagement Presentation	5%
Tickets	20%
Podcast	15%
Peer Reviews	10%
Presentations	15%

## **Attendance (10%)**

The core work of this course involves reading and collectively making sense of the assigned readings. Being consistently prepared for class, asking questions, responding to questions, and attentively listening to others is essential. Successful participation has four prerequisites, and these can be considered the participation rubric, where each class you will be given a max score of 5, with 1 point given for each:

1. **Being there.** When a student is absent, the class cannot benefit from his/her comments and insights. Absences will therefore hurt his/her participation grade. If a student is absent, he/she should make arrangements with a classmate to take notes and pick up any assignments or handouts.
2. **Being on time.** If a student needs to be late for class, please notify the professor at least 24 hours in advance.
3. **Being prepared.** To contribute to class discussion, students must come to class having carefully prepared all assignments (i.e., readings, tickets, cases, exercises). If students are unsure of the assignments for an upcoming class session, please ask.
4. **Being brave.** Students are expected to participate fully in all class exercises, to voice personal views during discussions, and to ask questions about things that are not understood. Asking questions might be intimidating, but doing so also helps classmates by moving the discussion forward in new directions.
5. **Being courteous.** Listening carefully to the comments and questions that classmates voice will help one another to learn something new from their perspectives. Voicing disagreement is essential, as it often leads to thoughtful and informative class discussions. Disagreements should be kind and considerate.

**NOTE:** Some people are uncomfortable with presenting viewpoints in a large group setting. However, contributing to discussions is an important part of the student's career development. If there is anything that may interfere with their ability to contribute on an ongoing basis, students should discuss it with the professor sooner rather than later. The professor will work with students offline to develop a strategy or plan to increase their comfort level and performance in class participation.

### **One-to-One Professor Meetings (5%)**

During the semester, students will meet with the professor one-on-one for two 10-minute meetings. Those meetings can be online or in person. Use the [Calendly link](#) to reserve those meetings.

### **Service Learning Project (20%)**

Students will work as a team with La Gramigna using interviews, observations, and/or surveys to answer the following questions:

1. What is the nature of the area in need of improvement?
2. What are its causes?
3. How can organizational behavior concepts be applied and extended to solve the area in need of improvement?
4. What specific action steps should the organization take to solve the area in need of improvement?
5. What changes should be implemented?
6. What are the potential barriers, obstacles, and challenges you foresee?
7. What are the risks, costs, and possible unintended consequences of your recommendations?
8. How will you communicate your findings to the organization and overcome potential resistance?

Please see the *Service Learning Syllabus Appendix* at the end of the syllabus for more information. Grading for the *Service Learning Project* is ongoing. It is highly recommended to create a Notes pages within Google Drive that indicate that you are actively gathering information to learn more about the project. These notes can include article summaries, links to videos, images, interviews, etc. Active engagement in answering these above questions will occur regularly during the semester.

NOTE: The *Service Learning Project* will include 30 minutes of online work every week. Instructions on what that work will entail will be discussed every week in class as the project progresses.

### **End of Semester Community Engagement Presentations (5%)**

During Special Academic Events Week, the class will present a 15-minute summary of the project experience to the Umbra community during the Community Engagement Presentations on **TBA**. Students will receive the guidelines and presentation order after the mid-semester break. Participation in this event is MANDATORY and an integral part of the community engagement grade.

### **Tickets (20%)**

Students will submit one ticket (250-500 words) per reading. Every other ticket will be submitted online to Google Drive at least 24 hours before class, while the other ticket will be completed in class. See the [ticket rubric](#) to better understand what is expected of you. For articles and book chapters, tickets must answer the following 4 W's, with each question being scored at 2.5 points, and a max score of 10.

1. What was the reading's main question in a single sentence?
2. What was done/discussed, and what did they find?
3. How does the reading relate to other readings, in-class discussions, and/or class projects?
4. Which part of the reading did you find useful/are you critical of?

The first two Ws will help students remember the positive points from what they have read first, while the last two Ws integrate their experiences/thoughts with what they have read.

**NOTE:** Given the fact that tickets must be between 250–500 words, students should not give a summary of the ENTIRE reading, rather they need to focus their attention on a part of it that they found to be the most interesting to you.

### **Podcast (15%)**

Students will submit one Podcast entry (about 500 words) to Google Drive based on classroom experiences during the semester. These Podcast posts can be based on tickets, the community research project, or any other exercise, discussion, etc. that happens inside the class or with classmates. Once the Podcast has been reviewed and approved, it will be submitted for publication on the Umbra Institute podcast channel.

### **Peer Reviews (10%)**

Student pairs will review presentations, and Podcast entries, and individually review tickets submitted by fellow students. Reviews should consist of helpful and constructive comments and provide “additive feedback”—

making suggestions about what the writer might add to or develop further. Students are responsible for completing one *Ticket* peer review per class. *Podcast* reviews and presentation reviews will be assigned during the semester. A signup sheet for all peer reviews will be shared on Google Drive. Reviews are due within 48 hours of when the document you are reviewing has been submitted to Google Drive or completed in class. Please use the [writing review rubric](#) and the [peer review guidelines](#). Please see Moodle for all assignments.

### **Presentations (15%)**

Students will lead a portion of the class via a short presentation of their ticket during the semester. Presentations and student-led discussion typically will occupy the first half of the class, while the professor will guide discussion during the remaining half of the class. Presentations should include an activity for the class and a discussion of the reading that connects to the reading. Activities for the class have included students filling out a questionnaire, watching a part of a TED talk video, doing an improvisation game, breaking into groups to answer specific questions, etc. You should not rely *solely* on Google Slide presentations. The presentation should include a summary of the reading—enough that anyone who has not done the reading would be able to follow what you are talking about, and then you should focus your attention on some particular part of the reading that you find most interesting. All presentations have a leader and a second. The leader is responsible for presenting the material, while the second is there to assist if the leader needs help. Please see Moodle for a detailed prompt.

### **Additional Notes**

#### *Feedback and Questions*

This course should be a valuable learning experience for all students. Their feedback regarding the class is appreciated at any time during the semester. It is easiest to reach the professor by email or right before or after class, or an appointment can be set up.

#### *Email*

Please understand that the professor responds to emails between the hours of **12:30-6:30 pm Monday to Thursday**.

#### *Broadcasting*

Students will significantly improve submitted materials during the semester, and, in the process, develop skills so that they are [so good they can't be ignored](#) (*So Good They Can't Ignore You* by Cal Newport). The result will be materials that will be so good that we will broadcast them online. For example, selected documents, videos, photos, etc., will be used as the basis for student Podcast posts, and, in the past, they have been shared on social networks such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Slideshare. The goal of broadcasting is to help students develop materials that will allow them to think about their careers – to think like they are a [start-up](#) (*The Start-Up of You* by Reid Hoffman and Ben Casnocha).

#### *Peer-Reviewed Research-based Article*

Every semester, this course does a project that, from time to time, resulted in a peer-reviewed article submission that will be completed in the ensuing months post-completion of this course. The writing of this article, while open to all students, will require a commitment of about an hour or so each week. Bi-weekly meetings (or as needed) will occur via Zoom at a time that will fit all co-writers. Student-authors, as per my practice, will always be first authors. You will learn how to read and summarize original research articles and organize what we've done with our Service Learning project using APA guidelines. Students who participate in this writing project will be encouraged and supported in submitting this research to their institution (if they so desire) for research projects—like honor's thesis, for example. In addition, if funding opportunities exist, I will again support you in gaining them so that you can present this project at international conferences that specialize in projects similar to what we do in this course.

### **Grading**

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Range	Grade	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A		93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-		90% - 92%	Excellent
B+		87% - 89%	Superior
B		83% - 86%	
B-		80% - 82%	
C+		77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C		73% - 76%	
C-		70% - 72%	
D+		67% - 69%	Low Pass
D		63% - 66%	
D-		60% - 62%	
F		59% or less	Fail (no credit)

**Please note:** decimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.

### Extension & Submitting Late Work

Work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, not partial credit. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. This can be used for any assignment but the final project. Students need to email the instructor before the deadline and inform the instructor of their use of the extension. Any work submitted after the 24-hour extension will be marked zero. As for all policies, exceptions can be made by the Director for students with special accommodations or in case of medical emergencies, etc.

### Attendance & Lateness Policy

Attendance is expected and mandatory for classroom times and co-curricular activities. All students are allowed 2 unexcused absences, which do not need to be justified. It is the student's responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity, i.e., sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class. More than 2 absences will affect your final grade by 2% per absence up to a maximum of 10%. Excessive unexcused absences (8 or more) may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of absences or late arrivals for each course, and to ask the instructor when in doubt.

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important. Missing a mandatory field trip for a course, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will lower the students' grade by half a letter grade (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Legitimate reasons for an excused absence or tardiness include: death in immediate family, religious observances, illness or injury, local inclement weather, medical appointments that cannot be rescheduled.

Absences relating to illness may be excused by the Director but only if a medical certification is provided.

Students who request an approved absence to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Institute's Director within one week after the add/drop period when course schedules, including any field trips, are

finalized. No exceptions will be made after this deadline.

Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

### **Tardiness Policy**

Students are expected to attend all classes punctually. Any student arriving up to 15 minutes late or leaving up to 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled class end time will be marked as tardy. Each incident of tardiness (late arrivals to or early departures from class) is 0.5% off the final grade. However, should a student arrive more than 15 minutes late or depart more than 15 minutes before the conclusion of the class, it will be recorded as an absence.

Students are also expected to remain in class during the time of instruction except for a reasonable amount of time to use the restroom. Students who leave class and do not return during the class session will receive an unexcused absence or late penalty.

### **Academic Integrity**

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during an exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

Utilizing ChatGPT or other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the generation of content submitted by a student as their own as part of any assignment for academic credit at the Institute constitutes a form of plagiarism. Should the Institute become aware of a student's use of such platforms and services, the student will be subject to the same consequences and judicial proceedings as are in place for plagiarism (defined above).

### **Classroom Policy**

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be set to silent mode before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices cannot be used during class lectures and discussions for anything other than note-taking, unless there has been specific academic accommodation.

## Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

### WEEK 1

DAY 1 *Introduction and Course Overview*

DAY 2 *Coyle, Chapters 1-3*  
Ticket 1 - In class

### WEEK 2

DAY 1 *Service Learning Project Development*  
Present current project: brief overview

DAY 2 *Collins, Chapter 1-2*  
Ticket 2 - GoogleDrive  
*Podcast*  
Concepts discussed and initial notes due on GoogleDrive

### WEEK 3

DAY 1 *Clear, The Fundamentals, Chapters 1-2*  
Ticket 3 - In class  
*Service Learning Project Development*  
Present current project: In-depth overview

DAY 2 *Edmondson, Chapter 1*  
Ticket 4 - GoogleDrive  
*Service Learning Project Development*

### WEEK 4

DAY 1 *Coyle, Chapters 7-9*  
Ticket 5 - In class

DAY 2 *Collins, Chapter 3-4*  
Ticket 6 - GoogleDrive  
*Service Learning Project Development*  
Prepare for Field Trip

### WEEK 5

DAY 1 *Service Learning Project Development*  
Work through project.  
*Clear, The 1st Lam, Chapters 5-6*  
Ticket 7 - In class

DAY 2 *Podcasts*  
Concepts discussed and 1<sup>st</sup> draft due on GoogleDrive  
*Service Learning Project Development*  
Work through project.

Feb 23 "La Gramigna" visit partner - Service Learning Project Field Trip

### WEEK 6

DAY 1 *Service Learning Project Development*  
Debriefing from Field Trip



*Podcasts*  
Concepts discussed

DAY 2      *Edmondson, Chapter 3*  
Ticket 8 - GoogleDrive  
*Service Learning Project Development*  
Work through project.

## SEMESTER BREAK

### WEEK 7

DAY 1      *Coyle, Chapters 13-14*  
Ticket 9 - In class  
*Service Learning Project Development*  
Work through the project.

DAY 2      *Collins, Chapter 5-6*  
Ticket 10 – GoogleDrive  
*Podcast*  
Concepts discussed and 2<sup>nd</sup> draft due on GoogleDrive

### WEEK 8

DAY 1      *Clear, The 2nd Law, Chapters 8-9*  
Ticket 11 - In class

DAY 2      *Service Learning Project Development*  
Conversation with partner - TBA

### WEEK 9

DAY 1      *Edmondson, Chapter 4*  
Ticket 12 - GoogleDrive  
*Service Learning Project Development.*  
Resolve areas in need of improvement

DAY 2      *Collins, Chapter 7-8*  
Ticket 13 - In class  
*Podcasts*  
Concepts discussed and 3<sup>rd</sup> draft due on GoogleDrive

### WEEK 10

DAY 1      *Service Learning Project Development.*  
Practice presentation for partner.

DAY 2      *Clear, The 3rd Law, Chapters 13-14*  
Ticket 14 - GoogleDrive

### WEEK 11

DAY 1      *Edmondson, Chapter 5*  
Ticket 15 - In class

DAY 2      *Service Learning Project Development.*  
Presentation with partner.

**WEEK 12**

DAY 1      *Service Learning Project Development.*  
Work on the presentation for Community Engagement Presentations.  
*Podcast*  
Final versions are due.

DAY 2      *Service Learning Project Development.*  
Practice Community Engagement Presentation  
*Ticket*  
Final versions with all revisions due.

**WEEK 13**

The Special Academic Events Calendar will be provided later in the semester



## **BUS/PSYC 460 - Organizational Behavior: An Evidence-Based Approach Service Learning Project Syllabus Appendix**

### **What is service learning?**

Service learning is a type of experiential education integrated into a course, in which:

- students engage in an organized activity or project aimed to address a community need that is identified in collaboration with the community partner;
- students critically reflect on the link between the experience in the community, course content, and the learning goals; and
- there is reciprocal learning, both by the students and by the community partners.

Students will need a certain degree of flexibility, creativity, and self-initiative to realize a service learning project. Organization and open communication in class with the professor and team members will be key to student success.

### **Service Learning Project Overview**

#### **Community Partner**

La Gramigna brewery was founded in 2016 in Casa del Diavolo, a small village in a rural area, just outside of Perugia. Everything that Gramigna makes is from organically locally cultivated primary ingredients – and never are pesticides used on those ingredients. La Gramigna also opened a tap room in the city center of Perugia, another location that specializes in gin, and started a new hospitality project called “Bed&Beer” located near the brewery.

#### **Project Description and Goals**

This course is an introduction to the basic concepts and topics in organizational behavior that include three main areas of focus: the individual, the interpersonal, and group levels. At the individual level, the class will analyze the process of our partner’s decision-making practices and gain a better understanding of their motivations, which will, in turn, help students better understand their role in the project. At the interpersonal level, the class will gain a better understanding of the power, influence, and negotiations needed to organize these various events and divisions within the company. At the group level, the class will gain a better understanding of Alberto Castaldo’s (co-owner of the brewery) leadership and organizational skills to help students better locate weaknesses, thus informing student interventions.

Based on the visit to Birrificio La Gramigna and online research, students will help inform and improve the company’s approach to marketing and communicating the Birrificio La Gramigna experience to local and international clients. Furthermore, students’ work may eventually be used to support Birrificio

#### **Team Organization, Expectations, and Roles**

Student teams will be organized around personal, interpersonal, and group levels and will be chosen by the professor. An important amount of time will be dedicated to the service learning project's progress in class. When needed, teams will meet outside of class.

Teams will be responsible for deciding how to divide the various tasks to ensure members contribute equally

throughout the project. After the project, team members will be asked to complete a Peer- and Self-Evaluation Form.

### **Method**

Students will work as a team using methods, including best practices, interviews, observations, and/or surveys to answer the following questions:

1. What is the nature of the area in need of improvement?
2. What are its causes?
3. How can organizational behavior concepts be applied and extended to solve the area in need of improvement?
4. What specific steps should the organization take to improve the area in need?
5. What changes should be implemented?
6. What are the potential barriers, obstacles, and challenges you foresee?
7. What are the risks, costs, and possible unintended consequences of your recommendations? 8. How will you communicate your findings to the organization and overcome potential resistance?

### **Community Engagement Presentation**

During Special Academic Events Week, the class will present a 15-minute summary of the project experience to the Umbra community during the Community Engagement Presentations on **TBA**. Students will receive the guidelines and presentation order after the mid-semester break.

### **Grading Rubric**

The service learning project (including the final presentation) is worth a total of 25% of the final course grade, which will be divided into three categories, each worth 8.33% of the final course grade:

1. Project materials necessary for rendering the project a success
2. Participation in team and peer- and self-evaluations
3. Community Engagement Presentation