

TO Seminar MPA 699 Arrivals

July 27th 2009

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RE: At Last!

Happy Last Semester! They said it couldn't be done and we—well you—made it. Glad to see that we are still in one piece, although the world around us has changed a bit since we last got together. We will endure and exceed our challenges.

The seminar, unlike all the other e-courses, runs for a full semester to accommodate preparing and writing of a project paper that focuses on creating an organizational innovation. And, yes, *actually* doing an innovation application in the last month of the seminar. In many ways, however, the conduct of the seminar is fairly traditional, although engaging it on-line may be considered innovative.

We have offered the online seminar a number of times that results in comments like the following: "I found it to be a very rewarding project, and a great way to wrap up the entire MPA Program. It tied together concepts and ideas from many of the prior courses. By applying these concepts to real issues in a real organization, the project brought home the real world value of all that I have learned in this program." If you don't have a similar experience, then please say so in our discussions.

The seminar divides itself in half. The first half presents the intellectual groundwork for developing a "best practices" innovation—we spend about six weeks discussing various organizational and managerial perspectives, which lead to creating our projects. These perspectives embrace themes that are reminiscent of the "organizational frames" discussed in the MPA 530 course. In fact, we will include those frames along with related perspectives developed during the seminar. In our first half, we prepare three-to-five page (single-spaced) weekly papers that apply each perspective to the organization adopting the innovation. Cumulatively, as the weekly write-ups unfold, their content forms the body of the final seminar paper that also accounts for making the implementation of the innovation tangible, which represents the second half of the seminar.

Regular postings on the perspectives occur in the Discussion Forum (DF) prior to people writing their weekly papers. The DF question is the same as the write-up, so all should be amply prepped. An important characteristic of all seminars is that they more openly involve sharing of everyone's output. In days of yore, this was done through oral communications and chalkboards, then the copy machine added the duplication dimension, and now the electronic medium

facilitates sharing each other's weekly output without anyone sitting next to another person. Underlying the sharing idea is enjoying the contributions of others both to insure understanding and to benefit from someone else's knowledge. As in prior courses, we always emphasize the usefulness of the Discussion Forums (DF), as a public space. We avoid using e-mail, so that anyone can interact with posted communications. Instead, we use a "*What's Going On?*" topic in the DF to ask any question, or whatever. In all, our objective is to simulate the face-to-face (F2F) world as much as possible. Keeping communications public allows people to know what's going on, which is a weekly topic in the DG. When needed, weekly chats will be announced.

Course Notes can be found by clicking Lessons and then each week will appear on Thursdays at 5PM for the following week's material. The DF question also is released on Thursdays at 5PM. The first week's Lesson and DF question, however, will be open on the Friday, August 28th. We begin on August 31st 2009, which is when I will sign-in officially. Over that weekend I will pop in to see if anyone has a question to be asked in the Week One DF in "What's Going On?"—and not e-mail.

As the weekly papers progress, they increasingly narrow the focal point of the innovation. This process makes it easier to plan and to complete the seminar project. Thus, the second half of the seminar redirects and utilizes the results of those papers to purposeful ends. During these latter weeks people are off *really* applying their innovations—the details of the approach to be laid out in due time. Everyone creates an innovation and reports results in those final weeks in the DF. Various chat meetings augment those implementation status reports.

A few weeks prior to the end of the seminar, a first draft will be submitted publicly in the DF and to be commented on privately by me. Classmates will also be teamed up comment on each other's drafts. These remarks bring insight to another's work. The drafts include as much of the innovation application as possible. The final paper projects the durability of the implemented innovation in the future. Passing the Seminar is contingent upon engaging in an innovation application process in the latter half of the semester,

When you sign on to the course, the first thing you will be asked to do is to provide a personal profile. Your profile should include: where you live (village, city, state and/or country); an alternative e-mail address, in case someone needs to contact you in a hurry; something about your current and prior work experiences, and whatever else you want to share with the rest of us—short of what you might confess on *American Idol* or *MySpace*. "Who Are We?" is located in the DF in Week I.

The course will be open for view on the Friday before classes officially begin on August 31st. Reminder: Use the *What's Going On?* in the DFs for any communications—and not e-mail or messages. Keep communications public.

Two confessions: one is that when we first began this e-MPA program I expressed to colleagues that when the seminar arrived, the technology would be innovative enough to employ full motion voice and video. That prediction was made during the euphoria of the dot.com era. So much for crystal balls. The ubiquity of broad bandwidth just has not happened, but it soon will.

The other confession is that this semester is my first in using iLearn. Errors will be made here and there about which I trust we can have a good laugh. For example, for the same functionality, the nomenclature changed—what was a Discussion Group (DG) is now a Discussion Forum (DF), as noted. So, let us know when things go awry in the weekly “What’s Going On?”

The text reading materials for the course are:

Books

Required::

D.F. Kettl, *The Transformation of Governance* (Johns Hopkins, 2002) ISBN0-0818-7049-6.

L.G. Bolman & T.E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations* (Jossey-Bass, 2008, 4rd ed.). ISBN 978-0-7879-8799—some people may have *purchased it in MPA 530—if not, it is to be purchased*. (Although it is now in the *fourth* edition, the third is just fine.)

Read them in Kindle at your own risk.

Suggested:

(We will read one chapter copied and scanned from each of these books.)

B.A. Radin, *Challenging the Performance Movement: Accountability, Complexity and Democratic Values*. (Georgetown University Press, 2006) ISBN # 1-58901-091-4.

J. Bryson, *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Managers*, Third Edition. (Jossey-Bass, 2004, 3rd ed.). ISBN # 0-7879-6755-6.

These books can be purchased from the Marist Bookstore. Arrangements have made with the Marist College Bookstore to purchase these materials. You may telephone the Bookstore at 845-575-3620 or contact the Bookstore online at: marist@bkstore.com. To do the latter, you will need to give your credit card number and expiration date; your phone number in case any difficulties arise; and the name and number of this course, but not the color of your eyes.

Also included below are the names of scanned articles and chapters from selected books to be downloaded, as part of the seminar material—just in case some hearty souls want to go out and buy the books. Individual arrangements can be made with the Bookstore, or from anyone else, but their purchase is entirely voluntary.

Scanned Chapters and Articles Included with Weekly Lessons:

*D. Osborne and P. Plastrik, *Banishing Bureaucracy* (Penguin/Plume, 1997)
—chapter scanned in and to be downloaded.

*C.Handy, *Gods of Management* (Oxford, 1995)—chapter scanned in and to
be downloaded.

*M.Hammer and J. Champy, *Reengineering the Corporation* (Prentice-Hall,
1992)—chapter on “Reengineering” scanned in and to be downloaded.

[These three books may seem dated, but each time I ask for student reactions they say keep
them on the reading list.]

*P.M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* chapter on “The Language of Systems
Thinking” (Doubleday, 1994)—chapter scanned in and to be downloaded

*R.M. Linden, *Seamless Government* chapter on “Designing from a Clean
Slate” Jossey-Bass, 1994)—chapter scanned in and to be downloaded

W.L. Balk & D.J. Calista, “A Framework for Professional Action,” (*Public
Management & Performance Review*, September 2001)—article scanned in
and to be downloaded

*S. Goldsmith and W.D. Eggers, *Governing By Network: The New Shape of
the Public Sector* (Brookings Institution Press, 2004) chapter scanned on
“The New Shape of Government” to be downloaded.

*S. Cohen and William Eimicke. *The Effective Public Manager*, Third Edition
(Jossey-Bass, 2002) chapter scanned on “Defining Effective Public
Management” to be downloaded.

Two articles from the *Harvard Business Review*, one by Michael Porter and
the other by Henry Mintzberg.

*One chapter from a book can be copied (scanned) for a course in compliance
with copyright laws. The material will be located in weekly Lessons as—
Scanned Chapters.

Well that’s about it, folks. Best wishes. See you soon.