

Welcome to ORG421L 741: Strategic Leadership & Innovation with Melissa Extein, Psy.D.

I look forward to engaging with you as we go on an 8-week learning journey together as a small group. I'm including course basics below, but please thoroughly review the course syllabus once it is published. This syllabus will be our road map and offers details about all of the course assignments and policies. Once you have reviewed the syllabus, please post your acknowledgement in the "Before We Get Started" discussion forum. Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions. My contact information is at the bottom of this letter.



Course Description

Understanding where to look for new ideas, how to nurture them, and how they can be used to maintain a strategic advantage, is vital to the success of an organization. This course examines the need for strategic leadership as well as the relationship between creativity and innovation in the context of modern organizations. Students will learn how to initiate creativity in their organizations and how to recognize and overcome obstacles to the creative process.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate a definition of strategic leadership and explain the process of strategic thinking.
2. Identify and explain the theoretical nature of creativity and its role in innovation.
3. Explain how strategic leaders can utilize creativity and innovation to create a strategic advantage for their organizations.

Required Textbook

Hughes, R. L. (2014.) *Becoming a Strategic Leader: Your Role in Your Organization's Enduring Success*, San Francisco: Jossey Bass. ISBN-10: 1118567234

Please be sure to rent, purchase, or otherwise gain access to this text prior to the beginning of the term, as the course requires weekly reading assignments from it.

Additional readings and videos will be assigned in Brightspace.

About the Instructor

For 25 years, I have mostly worked as an independent consultant to organizations, primarily in the fields of philanthropy and social justice. Guided by theory, I use an equity lens in my approach, considering organizational and group dynamics related to identity (e.g., gender, race, age), power, and authority. I work with clients and their stakeholders as partners, jointly participating in the creation of knowledge and the development of solutions. My clients have included start-ups, foundations and other grantmakers, government, schools and universities, networks, advocacy campaigns, and nonprofits inside and outside the US. I have taught organizational assessment and diagnosis, leadership, and group dynamics to graduate students and executives at Columbia University, The New School, and the University of Pennsylvania. I also served as Director of Strategic Learning, Research, and Evaluation for International Programs at American Jewish World Service. I hold a Psy.D. in Organizational Psychology from the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University and a B.A. in Psychology from Yale University.

I live in Brooklyn, NY, with my 6-year-old daughter and besides playing with her, I enjoy taking a weekly modern dance class and getting outside as much as possible.

I'm looking forward to meeting you all in the course soon!

Dr. Melissa Extein

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