Leadership in Complex Organizations
MLS 5321

Instructor: Frank G. Pérez, Ph.D. Phone: (915) 747-6287
Office: Quinn Hall, Room 207 Mobile: (915) 313-1898
Email: fperez1@utep.edu (write to me here) Office Hours: M 12:00 – 1:30 p.m./by appt
Semester: Spring 2017 Class Sessions: T from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Course Overview:
This course examines the role of leadership in complex organizational circumstances that require solutions to different types of unique/multifaceted problems. We will explore a number of strategies to effectively lead using complexity theory. We will study how organizations operate (in)formally, focusing on how people shape organizations and vice versa. We will pay special attention to the power dynamics that foster or hinder a leader’s ability to have their followers, organizational unit, or organization flourish.

Course Objectives:
By the end of the course students will be able to:
• Understand the nature of and the complex problems and operating environments faced by organizations and their leaders
• Understand and apply theoretical constructs to solve problems within their organizations
• Identify the habits of mind and behaviors of successful leaders in organizational settings
• Develop integrative and collaborative leadership approaches to complex organizational challenges

Required Texts:


PDFs of other readings and/or links to additional required materials will be posted on our Blackboard.

Course Assignments: Points
• Online Quizzes (3 quizzes, 5 points each) 15
• Chapter presentation with supporting case study (Presentation 15 points/written summary, 3-pages, 15 points) 30
• Semester paper on leading complex organizations (9 – 10 pages) 30
• Presentation of final paper (in-class) 10
• Online participation (throughout entire course) 15
Assignment Instructions: Instructions for each assignment will be available in the Assignments Folder on Blackboard.

Grading Scale: All assignments and your final grade are based on a 100-point scale. The total points you receive for any assignment are calculated by multiplying your 100-point score into a corresponding percent. For example, if you earn a 90 on assignment worth 15 points, you will earn 13.5 points. Letter grades will be assigned using the following scale:

- A = 90 — 100
- B = 80 — 89
- C = 70 — 79
- D = 60 — 69
- F = 59 or lower

Disabilities: Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure that their needs are met in a timely manner. Please also register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). If you need any accommodation registration will protect you and will help to ensure you receive the accommodation(s) you need to excel in your studies. I am always glad to help in any way I can.

Readings:

Week 1  Topic: Introductions and Course Overview
Lecture: Diffusion of Innovations, Positive Deviance, and Complexity
Blackboard: Nicolas Perroni — “Puppies! Now that I have your attention, complexity Theory” and Eric Berlow: “Simplifying complexity.”

Week 2  Topic: Information Processing and Leadership Perspective – Mindsets, Perspectives, etc.
Readings: Dweck (2006): Chapters 1-4
Blackboard: Navi Radjou, “Creative problem solving in the face of extreme limits.”

Week 3  Topic: Mindsets continued
Readings: Dweck (2006): Chapters 5-8
Blackboard: Nick Marks, “The happy planet index.”

Week 4  Topic: New Science of Leadership – Complexity
Readings: Goldstein et al. (2010): Chapters 1-4
Blackboard: Robert Gordon (2013): The death of innovation, the end of growth
Bryn Jolfsson (2013). The key to growth? Race with machines
Week 5: **Topic:** Positive Deviance and Complexity  
Readings: Goldstein et al. (2010): Chapters 5-8  

Week 6: **Topic:** Complexity in Action: The Case of Honda  
Readings: Rothfeder (2014): Chapters 1-4  

Week 7: **Topic:** Complexity in Action: Honda Continued  
Readings: Rothfeder (2014): Chapters 6-10  
Blackboard: None.

Week 8: Student final presentations