PS/MG 322 ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR: PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES IN A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE
IES Abroad Barcelona

DESCRIPTION:
Organizations consist of individuals in relationships that together form a complex system that functions in a particular socio-cultural context. Organizational effectiveness requires much more than technical skills and knowledge. Effectiveness requires that individuals are motivated and work well together. Good management means attention to individual well-being and group dynamics.

With its base in contemporary organizational behavior, this course takes a relational and systemic approach, thematising cultural difference in a European context. The course is specifically intended to focus on the role of individual, relational, and group functioning in the success and failure of organizations. Although innovative product ideas, good financing and marketing plans are important, business success begins and ends with the effective performance of individual employees at all levels, working effectively together as a well-functioning unit. With an eye to relational individual functioning in groups and organizations, this course takes a psychological approach in the context of contemporary organizational theory and research. Business success requires the effective application of theory to real-life situations, the capacity to diagnose and to develop an action plan, as well as effective leadership and team-building. To that end, the course will adopt a practical approach, applying theory to practice. Through the readings, discussions, assignments, and experiential activities, the course is designed to help to develop a relational and socially embedded account of individual behavior in organizations.

CREDITS: 3 credits

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:
Course-related trips: These are classes on site in which the student has the opportunity to observe and learn about the organizational behavior of businesses in Spain.

Lectures: Lectures provide the students with an opportunity to gain an overview of the course content and to clarify issues.

Class discussion: The aim of class discussions is to facilitate the students’ ability to apply the theoretical material to lived experience. They also offer the student the opportunity to argue their views and hear the perspective of other students on selected topics.

Group process activities: Participation in group process activities allows for experiential learning of the “reality” of organizational behavior.

Class leader: Each student co-directs one class during the course. This further allows the student the opportunity to actively engage with theoretical material in order to apply it to specific, concrete situations, as well as to observer group and relational dynamics.

Reader: The reader is compiled of a selection of key academic readings, chosen with the aim of providing a general understanding of the subject matter.

Reading guides: These are provided, where appropriate, to aid the student in focusing on the most relevant information.

Learning logs: Students keep “learning logs” in which they describe and analyze key experiences relevant to the course material. Because we are constantly in contact with organizations (in the broadest sense of the word), the individual, relational, and group aspects of organizational life are part and parcel of our daily life. Students will reflect upon their organizational experiences in the context of the course material.
REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Midterm exam (20%);
- Final exam (25%);
- Class participation (10%);
- Class presentation (5%);
- Group presentation (20%);
- Group presentation write-up (10%);
- Learning log (10%).

- Class participation (10%)
  Students will be expected to participate in class discussions of course material and application of concepts to their observations and experiences.

- Class presentation (5%)
  Students will present the day’s topic alone or in pairs with the objective of illustrating and “bringing alive” the topic at hand.

- Learning log (10%)
  Students will write a weekly journal in which they reflect upon the issues discussed in class as applied to their own experience.

- Group project (20%)
  The group presentation will describe innovative models for organizations such as Holacracy, specific approaches such as Agile, and/or innovative organizations such as Morning Star or Patagonia.

- Group presentation write-up (10%)
  Students will, individually, analyze the group process involved in the development of the project, applying the relevant concepts from the course.

- Midterm and final exam (20% & 25%)
  The exams will be based on case-studies, in which a case will be presented and the student will be required to analyze the situation applying the material studied in class and then develop recommendations for further action.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Apply the concepts of organizational behavior to the functioning of organizations;
- Describe how individual psychological dynamics such as emotion, motivation, and perception impact an employee’s or manager’s functioning;
- Analyze how relational processes influence leadership as well as individual and group dynamics
- Outline key components that impact organizational effectiveness
- Compare and contrast organizational behavior in different cultural contexts
- Analyze group processes from experiential and theoretical perspectives
- Explain the impact of both innate and learned individual characteristics (e.g., personality, emotional intelligence), and how these factors do and do not shape behavior
- Analyze and improve the motivation of subordinates and team members
- Diagnose and improve organizational functioning from individual, relational, and group perspectives
- Anticipate and manage dysfunctional interpersonal conflict

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Attendance is mandatory for all IES Abroad classes, including course-related trips. Any exams, tests, presentations, or other work missed due to student absences can only be rescheduled in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. If a student misses more than three classes in any course 3 percentage points will be deducted from the final grade for every additional absence. Seven absences in any course will result in a failing grade.
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Final Exam

REQUIRED READINGS:


RECOMMENDED READINGS:


