EXPERIENTIAL APPROACHES TO MANAGEMENT

I hear and I forget

I see and I remember

I do and I understand

-- Confucius

Course Description

Experiential Approaches to Management will explore current problems and issues in the workplace that are not covered, or only quickly reviewed, in Organizational Behavior and Organization Theory. There will be time to consider and discuss in some depth matters such as cross-cultural communication, group dynamics, decision-making strategies, person/work issues, and workforce diversity.

The class will examine these issues using a number of non-traditional learning techniques including experiential exercises, self-diagnostic instruments, role plays, and case analyses. The exercises are designed to stimulate your experience of an issue in an immediate and, hopefully, challenging fashion. An important premise of this class is that learning comes about in a number of ways besides listening, including feeling, doing, observing, reflecting, and reacting, and that multiple approaches to learning are often useful. In this class I will also assume that there are a number of objectives to learning, including factual knowledge, theoretical knowledge, skills, self-awareness and values. I intend to take the role of facilitator in helping the class to learn, but students are expected to be responsible for their own and others' learning by their full participation in exercises, discussion, and out-of-class assignments.
Course Requirements and Grading

Class participation in the spirit of learning is crucial to the success of this class and attendance at all meetings is important; learning will be highly interdependent. **Please do not sign up for this class if you will miss more than one 3-hour meeting – no exceptions!** The class will be divided into groups, each of which will be responsible for a learning experience in the classroom, or in some other place to which we all agree. The nature of the experience will be up to the group, with the permission of the instructor, but can include lecture, conducting role plays or other exercises, organizing a trip, inviting a speaker, showing a film, or some other learning experience. I require that learning experiences involve the class in an active, rather than passive manner for at least part of the class session. Please let me know if you need special equipment or anything else to make the experience a success. The class will give each group feedback on the experience they stimulate.

The learning experience assignment, which will be a group grade, will count for one-fourth of the course grade.

A series of homework assignments, "Pre-Meeting Preparation," are intended to have you reflect on the subject of the upcoming class. They will be turned in **before** each class and will count for one-fourth of the grade. These assignments are designed to get you ready for class by giving you information and encouraging you to apply the information to your own experience.

*After* each class I require that you reflect on the topics we discuss in a journal. The topics listed below in the syllabus are only suggestions, however; I encourage you to write about issues of concern to you. Use this assignment to develop the skills of learning from experience. The journal may be kept in a handwritten diary, or in an electronic file and will be turned in to me at the end of the course. The journal represents one-fourth of the grade.

One quarter of the grade will be based on a "Personal Application Assignment." This is a 3-4 page written exercise in which you discuss a significant experience that you have had. You will thoughtfully reflect on this experience, abstract from the situation using concepts or theories (your own or ones you have read about), and finally, suggest how you will modify your behavior or in some other way learn from this experience. The best work experiences for this exercise should have had some emotional impact on you - surprise, disappointment, pride, frustration, humiliation, satisfaction - or any other emotion that suggests that this experience was an important one for you. I'll give you further guidance in class.

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This class came about several years ago at the request of students who felt that there was no place in the curriculum to deal with issues of personal concern or emotional and ethical significance. With my assistance the students created a “safe” environment in
which to discuss emotionally charged and difficult issues such as communication problems with superiors, work-family conflicts, and career planning issues. The topics have varied over time, and the group dynamics have differed, but I believe that there have been many meaningful discussions provoked by our class experiences. An important part of the curriculum is to learn how to learn from experience.

**Required reading**

Organizational Behavior: An Experiential Approach, Seventh Edition, Osland and Mann, Prentice-Hall. Bring this workbook to class each week. Class assignments and page numbers are from this book.

Prentice Hall’s Self Assessment Library 2.0 CD-ROM

Other assigned readings.

**Class Schedule** All classes are Monday evening 6-9pm, unless otherwise agreed by the class.

**CLASS ONE  April 1: FORMING A PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT**

Before first class: Chapter One pp. 2-10, 13-17.

Diary: What I hope, expect, and fear from this class.

**CLASS TWO  April 8: INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING**

Chapter Three pp. 37-58. Complete the learning style inventory and bring to class. Have a copy or original to turn in.

Diary: What my self-analysis revealed to me, and what I’m going to do about it.

**CLASS THREE  April 15: INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTION AND ATTRIBUTION**

Chapter Eight pp. 171-186. Turn in exercise on pp. 177-178.

Special Assignment: Make a Ya-Ya Box, and reflect upon its construction.

Diary: Discuss a misperception you had - why you had it, what its consequences were or Discuss how the Ya-Ya Box assignment affirmed or changed your perceptions.
CLASS FOUR  April 22: VALUES AND ETHICS

Chapter Five pp. 95-112. Complete Rokeach Values Survey before class and turn in completed Moral Judgment Interview.

After Class Diary: Discuss a moral dilemma you faced at work.

CLASS FIVE  April 29: MANAGERIAL PROBLEM SOLVING

Chapter Ten pp. 213-225, 234-238. Assignment: Use the form on pages 239-240 to begin to review the process of a problem-solving situation you experienced. Turn this in.

Diary: My reflections on a tough problem I had, how I solved it, how I might have solved it differently.

CLASS SIX  May 6: MANAGING DIVERSITY


Special Assignment: Become a minority.

Diary: What it was like when I was a minority.

MAY 13 – NO CLASS

CLASS SEVEN  May 20: LEADERSHIP


Diary: The best leader I ever had and why he or she was best.

MAY 27 – MEMORIAL DAY – NO CLASS

CLASS EIGHT  June 3: POWER AND INFLUENCE


Diary: An abuse of power I experienced.

CLASS NINE  June 6: PERSONAL GROWTH/CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Chapter Six pp. 116-131, 135-139. Turn in a copy of pp. 120-125.

Diary and Personal Application Assignments: Hand in today.
PERSONAL APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT AND JOURNALS

These assignments are designed to have you practice experiential learning outside the classroom, that is, to encourage you to develop the skill of learning from your own day-to-day experiences. I would like you to model this written assignment after the five-step learning sequence that we will use in class. Your P.A.A. is due by the last class and should be about 4-5 pages in length.

1. **Concrete Experience.** Write a clear and objective description of the facts about your personal experience. Describe your subjective feelings, thoughts, and perceptions about the experience, providing enough detail so that the reader will understand the situation, but keeping the detail relevant.

2. **Reflective Observation.** Examine the experience from the different points of view of all the major actors. Attempt to figure out why everyone, including you, behaved or felt as they did.

3. **Abstract Conceptualization.** Explain at least one concept or theory from your readings or understandings and apply them to the situation. You can use ideas from the book, or other courses you have taken, but be sure to explain the abstraction that you are applying. How does it help to make sense of the situation?

4. **Active Experimentation.** Summarize the practical learning that came from analyzing this experience (e.g. “If I had to do it over again,” “When I am the boss”). Search for as many lessons as you can reasonably derive from analyzing the experience.

5. **Integration, Synthesis and Writing.** Does your paper clearly elaborate a learning theme throughout its exposition? Is it grammatically correct, error-free, and well written?

Journal Assignments: It is important that you write the journal very shortly after the class in which the topic was discussed. This will assure that you get the most learning out of using the classroom experience to reflect on your own experience. You can use the above learning sequence steps in your journal when that is helpful.

All written material must be submitted in typed, easy-to-read format. I am happy to give feedback on your drafts of these assignments if you give them to me before they are due. An easy way for me to give feedback is to have you e-mail me a journal entry.