

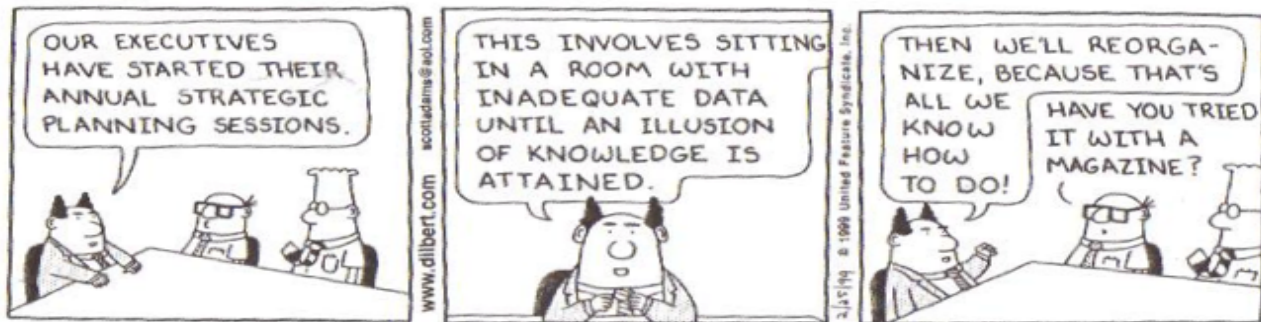
MPA - 20:834:524.01 Strategic Planning

Rutgers University – Newark
School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA)

Spring 2015

Instructor: Lindsey M. McDougale, PhD
Class Meeting Location: CPS TBD
Class Meeting Day/Time: Tuesdays/5:30 – 8:10 pm
Office Hours: By appointment
Office: School of Public Affairs and Administration – Room #329
E-mail: lindsey.mcdougale@rutgers.edu

DILBERT by Scott Adams



"...plans are useless, but planning is everything."

– Dwight D. Eisenhower

Course Description

Can strategic planning be used to build public organizations that function more creatively and effectively? This course focuses on the theory and practice of strategic planning and introduces basic concepts of the planning process to those working (or, planning to work) in public or nonprofit organizations. Specifically, we will explore strategic planning as a tool that can be used for organizational management and effective governance. To do so, we will examine all facets of the strategic planning process, including: development of a guiding mission, recognition of emerging trends and issues, identification of strategic options, implementation of appropriate strategies, and evaluation of organizational performance. To this end, the purpose of this course is to help you understand the nature of strategic planning, its component parts, and ultimately how to construct a strategic plan.

In this course, student learning will be facilitated through: text and journal article readings, lectures and student presentations, case studies, and other relevant course assignments. The readings are a combination of conceptual pieces drawn from research in strategic management and organizational theory, and applied pieces on how to employ strategic management techniques. Bryson's strategic planning process ("The Strategy Change Cycle") will be used to structure our work. The lectures and student presentations are designed to elaborate on, and extend, key points in the conceptual material, and are also intended to clarify processes and steps described in the applied material. The case analyses are designed to help you examine how different management tools have been, or could be, employed in practice. Finally, the course assignments are designed to provide you with preliminary experience with some of the most commonly used strategy tools in public and nonprofit organizations.

Please note: Due to the nature of the subject material as well as the size of the class, this is a very hands-on and participatory course. Everyone's participation is required to make it work! There will be several opportunities for you to work in groups and discuss ideas amongst your peers. In many instances, I will serve more of a facilitator role than lecturer. If you experience difficulty speaking up in class or in group settings, please see me early in the semester so that we can find ways to help you participate.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course students who have fully participated and read all course material should have:

1. An understanding of the fundamentals of strategy and strategic planning in public and nonprofit organizations.
2. Knowledge of the skills needed to conduct a basic strategic plan for a public or nonprofit organization.
3. Familiarity with pertinent historical, contemporary, and emerging literature relating to strategic planning and management.
4. A working competence in the analytical, process, writing, presentation, and reflective skills required for effective practice in the core tasks associated with strategic planning and management.

In addition to course material, we will concentrate on three other essential skills for those working (or, planning to work) in public or nonprofit organizations: **teamwork**, **oral presentation skills**, and **written presentation skills**.

Textbook and Course Readings

There is one textbook required for this course:

- Bryson, John M. (2011). *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations: A guide to strengthening and sustaining organizational achievement*. 4th edition. San Francisco: Revised Edition, Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 978-0-470-39251-5 [**Referred to as "TEXT" in the Course Schedule, below**]

Additional required reading material(s) are indicated in the Course Outline and in the Course Schedule (below). All required reading material (with the exception of the course textbook reading material) is available on the course Blackboard site. **Please note: This is a reading intensive course.**

Assignments

Group Case Reports

15 points

3 Case Reports @ 5 points each.

In order to learn skills for problem solving around common issues and dilemmas that arise in the strategic planning process, in groups you will work through a series of case studies. Case studies are commonly used in management courses to provide insights into real-world challenges. Cases are generally written to contain background information and a series of administrative difficulties. The purpose of a case is to present relevant facts that were known (or available) to parties involved in the case situation(s) at the time. Case problem(s) may or may not be clearly defined. As a result, students are frequently asked to define the problem as a part of their analysis. If a decision *has* been described in the case, case analyses more often focus on the validity of the decision. In this course, we will treat case situations as opportunities to diagnose managerial and organizational problems relating to strategic planning processes. Working through the cases should allow you an opportunity to strategically select meaningful ways of addressing these problems.

Each group will write 3 case reports, which synthesizes their analysis of various case studies. Considering that group work often requires individuals to accommodate the schedules of others, when case studies are assigned you will be given time **during class** (at least 20 - 30 minutes) to meet with your group mates. In-class time should be spent organizing, strategizing, and asking questions in order to develop an outline from which to complete your group's final case report. Case reports should demonstrate excellent understanding of the case study along with accurate application of appropriate frameworks and tools that have been discussed in class and highlighted in the readings. Case reports should also offer a clear, direct analysis as well as a well-argued position (again, supported by course material). You should acknowledge in the case report(s) when you are making assumptions and/or predictions. Ultimately case reports should demonstrate your ability to assess a situation and develop strategies on how to improve the situation and avoid future problems. Case reports should be **no more than 5 pages** of single-spaced text, and no smaller than one-inch margins and 12-point, non-condensed font.

Group Lead and Facilitated Discussion

10 points

In groups, you will be required to lead one section of a class session (as indicated in the Course Outline and in the Course Schedule, below). Leading a class session consists of several tasks. The first is to create a presentation of the materials for that topic (highlighted in yellow in the Course Outline and in the Course Schedule, below). Presentation of the material should be **no longer than 20 minutes**.

In addition to presenting a twenty-minute synthesis of the selected required readings for the week, your group will also be responsible for facilitating a constructive and energetic discussion about the topic. Therefore, at least **ten minutes** following the presentation should be devoted to class discussion and/or activities. Part of this responsibility includes keeping the discussion/activity on track, connecting disparate contributions, and providing critical perspectives/feedback to your peers.

Your group's grade will be determined by the extent to which your questions and leadership result in a robust discussion of the readings and issues for the week and your presentation helps to synthesize the required materials. Groups that adequately prepare and develop thoughtful discussion questions/activities should receive full points. The goal of "Group Lead and Facilitated Discussion" sessions is to provide you with an opportunity to practice your leadership skills while working in a team setting.

Group Final Assignment: TBD

30 points

TBD

Individual Strategy Practice “Notebook”

20 points

The strategy practice notebook is your individual written exploration and assessment of how course concepts relate to an organization that you are familiar with (or would like to be familiar with). You are to develop your strategy practice “notes” for your notebook **throughout the semester** by selecting and summarizing readings, frameworks, concepts, and theories from this course that are most influential for your thinking about the strategic planning process. In your notes, identify how the material(s) correlate (or, do not correlate) with your professional experience and your present work environment (or your past or future professional experience and work environment). During finals week, you are to submit your final strategy practice notebook as evidence of your cumulative learning in this course. The final document should be **no more than 10 pages** of single-spaced text—not including appendices, if applicable—and, no smaller than one-inch margins and 12-point, non-condensed font. Aside from these basic requirements on structure, your “Notebook” should be as creative as possible.

Individual Written Assignment

10 points

1 written assignment.

There is one individual written assignment in this course—**no more than 4 pages** in length (of single-spaced text, and no smaller than one-inch margins and 12-point, non-condensed font). Details of the assignment are provided in the Course Outline and in the Course Schedule (below).

Individual Active Participation

15 points

Active participation is one of the best and most reliable ways to demonstrate your understanding of ideas and concepts discussed in the readings and presented in class. My role (as the instructor for this course) is to provide you with a conceptual framework and to facilitate your learning. My role is **not** merely to deliver factual material to passive learners. The exercises and discussions in this course are intended to provide you with an opportunity to test your knowledge, formulate ideas and strategies, respond to strategic management dilemmas, and get feedback from peers. **Therefore, weekly class attendance is necessary, but not sufficient for an excellent class participation grade.**

Summary of Grades and Assignments

The following summarizes the point breakdown for the assignments in this class:

Outcome/Deliverable	Type	Description (if applicable)	Points
Active Participation	Individual		15
Written Assignment	Individual	1 Written Assignment	10
Strategy Practice “Notebook”	Individual		20
Case Reports	Group	3 Case Reports @ 5 points each	15
Reading Presentation and Facilitated Discussion	Group		10
Final Project	Group		30

A Few Notes

Attendance: While I expect all students to attend each class period, I understand that life sometimes intervenes in our plans. Please speak with me if you must miss a class for professional or personal reasons. Any absences without prior approval will be reflected in your final participation grade (except, of course, in extenuating circumstances). The same policy applies for arriving late/leaving early. Absences are not an adequate excuse for failure to complete assignments or stay up-to-date with course readings.

Course Communications: Appointments are strongly preferred over “drop-ins.” However, I am willing to with meet with “drop-in students” if I am in the office and available when you stop by. Please email me for appointments: lindsey.mcdougle@rutgers.edu. *When sending e-mail, please include the course title (i.e., MPA – Strategic Planning) in the subject line.*

Grade Appeals: Grades are intended to reflect your overall quality of performance on assignments. You may appeal a grade that you receive if you think that the grade does not reflect the quality of your performance on a particular assignment. To appeal a grade, within one week after your graded assignment is returned, submit a clear written explanation describing why you believe the assigned grade is inappropriate. I will carefully consider all appeals. I will not, however, re-grade an individual component of an assignment. Instead I will re-grade the assignment in its entirety. As a result, your final grade for the re-graded assignment may be greater than, less than, or equal to the original grade.

Laptops and Cellular Devices: I *welcome and encourage* the use of laptops in class for taking notes or for completing group tasks. However, I kindly ask that you use these devices only for relevant activities pertaining to MPA - 20:834:524.01. If students are observed engaging in outside activities, I will need to strictly limit the use of electronic devices in the classroom. Cell phones should be turned off or transferred to voice mail during class time.

Late Assignments: No late assignments will be accepted. All assignments are due when they are scheduled to be submitted, as indicated in the Course Outline and in the Course Schedule (below).

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty: When writing about, paraphrasing, or quoting the work of others, you *must* give proper attribution in the form of parenthetical citations and quotation marks around directly quoted phrases or sentences. Using work in this class that you have completed for another class *is* plagiarism. Ignorance is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. If you are found in violation of academic dishonesty, you will be subject to the full enforcement of the applicable policies and procedures of Rutgers University.

URLs in the Syllabus: Links to some of the required readings in the syllabus have been included for ease of access to course material. Many of these links are not direct sources, but have been tested. If a link does not work, there is a copy of each reading in the associated week’s folder on the course Blackboard site.

Written Work: Proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling are expected—as is a writing style befitting someone earning a masters degree. All writing assignments should be: typed, 12-point font, one-inch margins, and should follow an accepted, consistent, and complete citation scheme.