

COURSE SYLLABUS

Organizational Behavior

Course code: MGT355

Term and year: Spring 2025

Day and time: Wednesday, 11:15h – 14h

Instructor: Gabriele Meissner, MBA

Instructor contact: gabriele.meissner@aauni.edu; email via NEO

Consultation hours: 14h – 14:30h, or make appointment

Credits US/ECTS	3/6	Level	Bachelor
Length	15 weeks	Pre-requisite	MGT245, MKT248
Contact hours	42 hours	Grading	Letter Grade

1. Course Description

The course of Organizational Behavior (OB) addresses the systematic study of actions and attitudes that people demonstrate within organizations. The goal is to prepare students for their careers by helping them understand and apply the OB principles in the real-life situations to increase work productivity, leadership effectiveness and employee satisfaction and motivation.

The course focuses on OB at three levels: individual, interpersonal, and collective. We will start at the individual level, covering decision-making, motivation, and personality. We will then turn to the interpersonal level, covering communication, power, influence, and negotiations. Finally, we will move up to the collective level, covering leadership and organizational context.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Have increased their knowledge of OB concepts so that they can understand and analyze how organizations and the people within them work.
- Be able to identify and analyze the key managerial and organizational processes and issues from the Organizational Behavior (OB) perspective
- Understand the basic OB theories and apply the theoretical concepts to the real life situations.
- Apply obtained knowledge to the organizations, e.g. utilize tools for effective communication, provide and receive input and feedback on performance, support career development, apply motivation concepts in the organizations, identify and address workplace diversity/gender issues etc.

3. Reading Material

Required Materials

- **Textbook:**
R.W. Griffin, J.M. Phillips, Organizational Behavior, 13. Ed.
A Link for the e-book will be provided for students from the library
- **List of required articles and case studies will be provided for each class on the course website on NEO**

- **Students need to sign up at the library for online access of literature databases immediately at term start.**

Recommended Materials

- Robbins, S. P., Judge, T. A., Campbell, T. T. Organizational behaviour. 1st ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ : Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009.
- Mullins, L. J. Management and Organizational Behavior. 4th ed. London : Pitman Publishing, 1996.
- David, S. (2018). Emotional agility. Penguin USA.
- Anderson, N., et al. Handbook of industrial, work and organizational psychology: Volume 1 : personnel psychology. London, GB : SAGE Publications, 2006.
- Deci, E. L., Gilmer, B. von H., Karn, H. W. Readings in industrial and organizational psychology. New York, NY : McGraw-Hill, 1972.
- Lowman, R. L. The California school of organizational consulting psychology : a comprehensive guide to theory, skills, and techniques. San Francisco, CA : Jossey-Bass, 2002.
- Jewell, L. N. Contemporary industrial/organizational psychology. St. Paul, MN : West Publishing Company, 1985.
- Cascio, W. F. Applied psychology in personnel management. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ : Prentice-Hall, 1987.
- George, Bill, and Peter Sims. True North: Discover Your Authentic Leadership. Jossey-Bass, 2007.
- Janis, I.L., Groupthink, 2nd Ed., 1982
- Prassl, Jeremias. *Humans as a Service: The Promise and Perils of Work in the Gig Economy*, 2019.
- Kühl, Stefan. *Influencing Organizational Culture: A Very Brief Introduction*. 1st edition. Organizational Dialogue Press, 2018.
- . *Ordinary Organisations: Why Normal Men Carried Out the Holocaust*. 1st edition. Polity, 2017.
- . *Organizations: A Systems Approach*. 1st edition. Routledge, 2017.
- . *When the Monkeys Run the Zoo: The Pitfalls of Flat Hierarchies*. Organizational Dialogue Press, 2017.
- Kühl, Stefan, and Judith Muster. *Designing Organizations: A Very Brief Introduction*. 1st edition. Organizational Dialogue Press, 2018.

4. Teaching methodology

In this subject, you will participate in the following activities designed to enhance your learning throughout the subject:

In-class discussions related to the lecture, cases and videos; debates; other experiential exercises.

- a) Readings, lectures and case studies
- b) A team paper/project on OB issues and presentation
- c) Class discussions, individual and team exercises

We will be taking an active learning approach in this class. This means that you should do the readings before class each week, think about the issues, and be prepared to contribute to class discussions.

My goal is to engage your interest and facilitate your learning through highly varied classroom activities. I think it is important to provide expert, logically structured input via lectures, and to orchestrate frequent opportunities for you to participate, think, apply, test your understanding, and build skills via in-class activities. I intend to develop your skills beyond merely learning the material to becoming able to critically and selectively apply and adapt your knowledge to specific contexts and problems in the real world.

5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
Session 1 5.2.2025	Topic: Course Overview, Syllabus review
Session 2 12.2.2025	Topic: Decision Making Description: Choices at work, heuristics and biases
Session 3 19.2.2025	Topic: Motivation and Values Description: Expectations, needs, goal setting, values Assignment Details
Session 4 26.2.2025	Topic: Personality Description: The Big Five, Feedback
Session 5 5.3.2025	Topic: Communication Description: communication, conflict management In-class Presentations
Session 6 12.3.2025	Topic: Influence / Power Description: Acquiring and using power, Networks, Give and Take In-class Presentations
Session 7 19.3.2025	Topic: Social and Group Processes in Organizations Description: Teamwork - pros and cons / the drive for consensus at any cost In-class Presentations Deadline Mid-term Essay
24.3. – 28.3.2025	Mid-term break
Session 8 2.4.2025	Topic: Case Studies Group Think Description: The Challenger Disaster / Wirecard / The UK Post Office Scandal In-class Presentations
Session 9 9.4.2025	Topic: Culture Change Description: the process of changing toxic cultures in organisations In-class Presentations
Session 10 16.4.2025	Topic: Leadership Description: theory, styles, contemporary issues In-class Presentations
Session 11 23.4.2025	Topic: Structure follows strategy Description: How does organizational structure influence individual behavior In-class Presentations

Session 12 30.4.2025	Topic: Change Management Description: How the introduction of changes influences behavior in organizations / how to implement change In-class Presentations
Session 13 7.5.2025	Topic: Organizations in the Digital Age Description: Special impact of decentralized project oriented organizations on employee and manager behavior In-class Presentations
Session 14 14.5.2025	Final Group Project Deadline: Final Group Project Presentations and Reports

The sequence of topics might change due to possible guest lectures.

6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assignment	Workload (hours)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Class Participation	42	10 %	Pro-active participation in class discussions and exercises; professional behavior in class; critical thinking	1,2,3
Team Presentation	38	30%	Analyzing and researching a case study / academic text and translating the conclusions from the case/topic to current business practice; developing presentation skills concerning focus, critical thinking, communication	1,2,3
Mid-term Home Essay	30	30%	Explain, discuss and apply theoretical concepts, tools and methods; give appropriate examples	1,2
Final Group Project	40	30%	Analyzing a real-life problem of a client company; applying basic OB concepts, tools and methods to give improvement recommendations to the client; writing a professional consulting report; preparing and giving a professional presentation	1,2,3
TOTAL	150	100%		

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

Deadlines:

Deadlines in business are critical. All deadlines are posted on NEO. Each student is responsible for checking the class course space and their AAU Student e-mail box regularly, attending every class on time, and completing the assignment on time.

No papers are accepted after the final class and group presentation.

Meeting all requirements:

The formal requirements are clearly stated in all assignment descriptions. It is

your duty to read and follow them. If you don't meet the requirements your grade will drop down at least 2 levels.

7. Detailed description of the assignments

Assignment 1: Participation

Participation is evaluated on the quality of your contribution to the learning experience of the class. Participating by actively responding to questions, asking questions yourself, and engaging in class discussions will help you earn your participation grade. Simply attending every class is not participation. If you are not sure, please ask your course leader what you can do to increase your participation.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Quality contributions to class discussions	35%
Focus – paying attention to class activities	30%
Quantity of contributions to class discussions	35%
Total	100%

Assignment 2: In-class Presentations

1. You need to write an abstract about your presentation focus of appr. 1/3 of an A4-page.
2. If you present in a team each team member also needs to write a meaningful peer evaluation using the template on the course website.
3. All sources you might use must be valid academic/professional sources (four is the minimum) and named in the usual scientific form as an appendix. This is also valid for Internet sources (don't base your presentation on Wikipedia!)
4. Please format the presentation professionally, that means title, page numbers and your name on each page.
5. You need to cover and structure your topic along with certain research questions, which you will develop on your own. Please note, that just presenting facts and figures will not meet the learning objectives and will only earn mediocre grades. I expect you to see your topic in a holistic context and also to critically evaluate the different ethical concepts involved.

Please prepare a set of open questions and facilitate the class discussion on your topic, and also hand in a copy of these questions. You are responsible for keeping within the time limit!

You need to submit your slides, the abstract and peer evaluations on the NEO course site as pdf-files.

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Correct summary of the article (theory, models, methods, conclusions) / abstract of presentation (there should be a difference!)	20%
Impact on business practice	20%
Recommendations for organizations	20%

Critical evaluation of article on the background of additional background research	20%
Meeting all requirements, especially meaningful peer evaluations, abstract, meeting the deadline, uploading all required document in time in required format (pdf) on NEO	20%
Total	100%

Assignment 3: Mid-term Home Assignment

Students will write an academic essay about topics referring to chapters in asking for theoretical and conceptual knowledge. A list of possible topics is given but they may also choose their own topic. Students do need to do additional research in academic databases and academic and professional literature.

Deadline: March 19, 2025

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Analysis, coherence, conclusions	25%
Reference to concepts, tools and methods outlined in the relevant 25% chapters of the textbook and/or in other chosen references	25%
Application of concepts, tools and methods to relevant examples; meeting the requirements, especially citation rules	25%
Outline of relevance to current business practice	25%
Total	100%

Assignment 4: Final Group Project

The final exam is a group project consisting of a group presentation and a report. The details will be communicated at the beginning of the course. Collaborating in teams is normal practice in today's organisations, and the practice experience is part of the learning outcome.

Deadline: May 14, 2025

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Critical analysis; application of concepts, tools and methods; 25% coherence; conclusions; recommendations	25%
Structure of the report; validity of sources and references; 25% bibliography; professional editing and formatting	25%
Quality of presentation (focus, analysis, critical application of concepts and methods, time management)	25%
Meeting all formal requirements, especially meaningful peer evaluations, keeping relevant deadlines, uploading all documents on NEO (report, slides, peer evaluations in pdf-format)	25%
Total	100%

8. General Requirements and School Policies

General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the

highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work. Please see the AAU intranet for a [summary of key policies](#) regarding coursework.

Course specific requirements

There are no special requirements or deviations from AAU policies for this course.