

Fall 2020 Online Tutorial
ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR & INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION
BUAD 202 WA C

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Course Description: Focuses on critical aspects of organizational behavior and interpersonal communication. Covers topics such as systems theory, organizational culture and learning, motivation, leadership, individual, team & group dynamics, as well as other vital areas such as conscious & unconscious communication, listening, assertion, conflict resolution and negotiation. Understanding of the centrality of communication in person-to-person relationships and recognition and acceptance of diversity are critical elements on a micro and macro level. Organizational leadership and change management are explored as elements of healthy and sustainable organizational cultures.

Note: course also counts toward the Peace-building and Conflict Resolution minor

Course Objectives:

- 1) To gain a solid foundation in theory and concepts in the field of organizational behavior and understand the significance of interpersonal communication in the organizational framework and beyond
- 2) To become aware of and be able to discuss emerging issues in the organizational environment within the context of the global economy
- 3) To link theory with reality by examining real-life examples and relating them to OB concepts and elements of interpersonal communication
- 4) To explore issues related to cultural diversity and gender within the framework of the organizational environment as well as the broader context of society
- 5) To explore key topic areas such as communication habits, need for both connection and independence, emotional responsibility and healthy boundaries, supportive listening, and collaborative negotiation
- 6) To explore what it means to establish and maintain a sustainable organizational culture and healthy interpersonal relationships

Required Resource Materials:

1) Main text authors: Bauer, Talya, and Berrin Erdogan. Organizational Behavior v.2.0. Flat World Knowledge. 2015

(We will be using the 2.0 version of the book; you may purchase a print copy **or** pay a very reasonable fee to view electronically; print copies will take much longer lead time to print and ship. Order early!!)

Course Information—needed for the site

- **Book:** Organizational Behavior v.2.0
- **1st Author:** Talya Bauer

Note from the Publisher: We offer students four format options to choose from. The Digital All Access Pass is our bestseller and is a great value that offers multiple formats for both on-line and off-line access to their textbook and study aids such as flashcards and quizzes. All of these product options are listed once you reach the site and enter the book, course number, and/or instructor who adopted the text.

2) Required Supplementary book #1, authors: Sue Annis Hammond and Andrea B. Mayfield, The Thin Book of Naming Elephants: How to Surface Undiscussables for Greater Organizational Effectiveness, 2004, ISBN: 0-9665373-51. <https://www.thinbook.com/the-thin-book-of-naming-elephants>

3) Required Supplementary book #2, author: Miles Sherts, Conscious Communication: How to Establish Healthy Relationships and Resolve Conflict Peacefully while Maintaining Independence, 2009, ISBN: 978-1-934938-60-7 (also listed as 1-934938-60-2) Or 978-0-9854359-1-2, 2014 edition

Grading Components:

Weekly Chapter Assignments—uploaded/completed assignments to be submitted via the online portal (40 pts max per week X 8 weeks) 320 points

OB Toolbox exercises--via the online discussion feature (20 pts max per exercise X 13 exercises) 260 points

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The Thin Book of Naming Elephants: How to Surface Undiscussables for Greater Organizational Success

(Short Reaction Paper)

180 points

Final Paper based on *Conscious Communication* and your reflection on course material in its entirety (3-5 pages in length)

240 points

Total possible points = 1000

GRADING SCALE:

A	930-1000	C+	770-790
A-	900-920	C	730-760
B+	870-890	C-	700-720
B	830-860	D+	670-690
B-	800-820	D	600-660
		F	below 600

Chapter Questions & Responses to Exercises: Students should plan to read approximately two (2) text chapters per week and complete the questions and short exercises as specified in the module or assignment area. Responses should be submitted via the online portal. **All chapter responses should be clearly labeled and submitted using the designated space.**

OB Toolbox Assignments & Responses: Practical OB Toolbox assignments will be made for most chapters. Please refer to your **assignment sheet (To be posted online at the beginning of the semester)** and make every effort to stay current with the chapters in the text as you complete the written exercises/responses as specified above, along with the OB Toolbox assignments. **We will use the Discussion feature to exchange ideas and information related to the OB Toolbox exercises. These exercises are not difficult or time consuming but can be of tremendous benefit! Your participation is important to the group learning experience in this course. Please plan to respond in some fashion to at least two posts per week made by fellow students.**

Short Reaction Paper associated with *The Thin Book of Naming Elephants: How to Surface Undiscussables for Greater Organizational Success.* (Paper to be 2-3 pages in length)

This is a very unusual but extremely useful “thin” book. It discusses what many now routinely refer to as “the elephant in the room.” The following excerpt appears in the opening pages of the book.

Everyone talks around the elephant and thinks that everyone else knows about the elephant, but until the elephant’s presence is made explicit, the level of dialogue—and therefore the quality of decision-making—is limited. The elephant stands for all the things no one talks about in an open forum. Make no mistake, people do talk about the elephant, but they do so at the proverbial water cooler, which is now electronic. The elephant is discussed in an unmanaged and potentially destructive, rather than constructive manner. People are fearful of naming the elephant because they are afraid they will lose their jobs or “face.” However, not naming elephants can eat away at a person and at an organization. Unnamed elephants can pull the pillars away from your organization’s foundational strengths, bringing down the entire structure. The real challenge is to decide which is more destructive: acknowledging the elephant to deal with it or ignoring it at your organization’s peril. (pg. 4)

Your **assignment** is to complete a “reaction paper” based on the information in this brief but insightful book. It discusses mistakes that have been made in some of our most significant and prestigious companies when “elephants in the room” were ignored (sometimes for extended periods of time). You may choose to “journal” as you read through this short text, and then use your journal or notes to create a reaction paper that summarizes your major “take-aways.” **It will also be beneficial to share some of your thoughts along the way with classmates via the online discussion option.** (Please see the option for discussion entries, along with corresponding dates.)

Please conclude your “Naming Elephants” paper by responding to the following question: In today’s environment, can you think of organizations (profit, not-for-profit, or governmental organizations) that you think have ignored “the elephant in the room”? Please discuss and explain why you think this has happened. What were the results? **An additional or alternative approach you may want to take with the final part** of this paper is to briefly explain the content of this book to someone outside of our class (friend, colleague, perhaps even your boss!) and then discuss their reaction to the material. Then, you can share highlights of the conversation in your paper. **Try to have fun w/this assignment!!!! (Again, paper is to be 2-3 pages in length)**

Final Paper based on *Conscious Communication* and your reflection on course material in its entirety

Write a 3-5 page **reflective paper utilizing the first five major “sections” of the book, *Conscious Communication*.** Under each of the text/section headings (Communication Habits, Establishing Healthy Boundaries, Supportive Listening, Assertion, and Conflict Resolution), **select material from at least two of the short chapters within each of**

these five major sections of the book. Then, for each section, apply the material to your life experiences. The process of applying the material will allow you to “frame” information in a different way. Move through the text material in a very deliberate way. Consider the learning that may be taking place. Whenever possible, think about strategies regarding how you may wish to move ahead in your career and your life, given any new insights you may have. **(Note: You are not required to read and reflect on the last two sections of the book, including chapters 19-23; however, you may wish to do so.)**

As you write your paper, also consider how this material relates to the other content we’ve studied in this course. Can you see the connection between the study of organizational behavior and a very intentional focus on interpersonal communication concepts and practices? Does this approach serve to enhance your understanding of the organizational environment? Please comment.

Last Section of the paper: How can you use this information as you move ahead in your career? What are your primary take-aways from this text and the course in its entirety?

Conferences: I will be available for conferences by phone appointment. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you are having difficulty or are unsure of an assignment.

Penalty for Late Work: There will be a penalty for late work. Penalty for late work will be built into the rubric for grading assignments.

Purchase of texts: Please use the instructions provided in the resource section of the syllabus. I **will not** be placing a specific order through the MBU bookstore for these books. It will be your responsibility to secure the books/information.

Plagiarism: Please refer to Mary Baldwin University Policy. **It is imperative that you submit your own work!** Appropriately cite material that is not your own as you work through assignments.