

**Skills for Change Agents**  
**An Introduction to Organizational Development**  
**TESC MPA Program Winter 2025 as of 12 3 24**

Mondays, 6 pm to 9:30 pm. (Except Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>; Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>). Location: Tacoma Campus Room 105  
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In this era, we are learning to adapt to constant change—in our personal lives, in technology, the organizations we work and volunteer for, and in society. But not all changes are for the better. When a public agency or nonprofit is not producing its expected results....when attempts at improvement haven't paid off...or their people and/or environment are out of sync ...demands for further change begin to multiply. But how do we really know what is not “working” in an organization? How can we distinguish between superficial and deeper causes of serious problems? How can we advise leaders of public and nonprofit organizations on how to go about change, in ways that will be effective, lasting, and consider the interests of all relevant stakeholders?

This course will survey the literature on organizational change and the field of organizational development, which seeks to provide the answers to these questions. We will explore in depth the specific skills, traits and knowledge needed to lead an organizational change effort, as well as consider how to craft approaches to several knotty organizational challenges, including culture change, strategic planning, and how to advance ESD (environmental, sustainability, diversity) and DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion). And we will consider what it takes to step up from the organizational level to igniting and supporting a social movement.

Consulting, and particularly organizational development consulting, is not for the faint-hearted. Intervening in an organization's conflicts, traumas and sore spots is often taxing both physically and emotionally. It is helpful to understand your own strengths, areas for improvement, and reasons for engaging in this work. That can help you gain confidence and be present but not judgmental even when managing conflict.

By the completion of the course I expect students to:

1. Have a strong foundation in the literature on organizational change and development (OD) and a grasp of key OD concepts, including the ambiguous nature of organizational problems and the collaborative role of the OD consultant as a process facilitator;
2. Develop analytical and critical thinking skills relevant to change processes in organizations and society;
3. Have a basic understanding of how to develop, implement and evaluate OD interventions that improve an organization's effectiveness;
4. Grasp the differences between public, nonprofit and business organizations, and how change processes and interventions suitable for each may differ;
5. Develop improved interpersonal and other skills and knowledge that will begin to prepare them for work as an internal or external change consultant, as well as improve their ability to lead and to engage in effective communication and teamwork with diverse groups.

## **II. Required texts**

Burke, W. Warner (2017). *Organization Change: Theory and Practice, 5<sup>th</sup> . Edition*. Los Angeles: Sage. ISBN 1506357997. Paperback.

Stulberg, B. (2023). *Master of Change: How to Excel When Everything Is Changing – Including You*. New York: HarperOne. ISBN: 9780063253162. Hardcover.

**Optional:** Block, Peter (2023). *Flawless Consulting, 4<sup>th</sup>Ed.* San Francisco: Pfeiffer. ISBN 1394177305. Block's classic text is the consultant's "Bible." I will cover some of the material, but it is worth adding to your collection if you intend to work as an internal or external consultant.

### **On Personal Growth**

One of the themes we will explore in this course is what it takes on a personal and individual level to intervene in human systems and organizations. Business literature in particular is filled with case studies of newly minted MBA's from prestigious universities who are hired by consulting firms, think they know everything, and crash and burn during their initial encounters with real organizations. They typically start out supremely confident with a tool kit full of sophisticated analysis tools...that turn out to be unhelpful.

An option during this class is to use some of the literature below (in addition to Stulberg's text *Master of Change*) to undertake some self-exploration. How prepared are you to deal with conflict between others? To have boundaries around what you are willing to do with or for an organization...not just carry out the requests of a (possibly incompetent or conniving) leader or manager? And to know what you're good at, and how to take care of yourself? Here are some possible texts that can help with such a journey

And as noted in the assignment section, a course requirement will be to keep a journal during the class about what you think about this process, how you have engaged with possible approaches to change.

Alter, Adam (2023). *Anatomy of a Breakthrough.* New York: Simon and Schuster.

Braun, Adam (2014). *Promise of A Pencil: How an Ordinary Person Can Create Extraordinary Change.* New York: Scribner.

Heath, C. and D. Heath (2010). *Switch: How to change things when change is hard.* New York: Broadway Books.

Quinn, Robert (2012). *The Deep Change Field Guide: A Personal Course to Discovering the Leader Within.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ISBN-13: 978-0470902165. Paperback.

### **Articles (all on Canvas)**

Bennett, J. and M.W. Bush (2009). "Coaching in Organizations: Current Trends and Future Opportunities." *OD PRACTITIONER* Vol. 41 No. 1.

Block, P. (2006). "Flawless Consulting." In Gallos, Ed. *Org Development: A Jossey-Bass Reader.*

Bridges, W. and S. Bridges. (2009). *Managing Transitions, 3rd Ed.* Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, Ch. 1 & 3

Bryson, J. M. (2010). "The future of public and nonprofit strategic planning in the United States." *Public Administration Review*, 70(Supplement Issue), S255-S267.

Cameron, E. and M.Green, (2015). *Making Sense of Change Management*, Ch. 5

- Cheung-Judge, Mee-Yan (2001). "The Self as an Instrument—A Cornerstone for the Future of OD." *OD Practitioner*, Vol. 33 No. 3, p 11-16.
- Cheung-Judge, M. (2017). "Future of Organizations and Implications for OD Practitioners, Summary." *OD Practitioner*, Vol. 49, No. 3, p. 7-13.
- Church, A. and W.W. Burke (2017). "Four Trends Shaping the Future of Organizations and OD." *OD Practitioner*, Vol. 49, No. 3., 14-22.
- Cooperrider, David and Diana Whitney (2011). "Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change."
- EBSCO (2009). "The Four Stages of Social Movements"
- Kotter, J. (2006). "Why Transformations Fail" in Gallos, J. *OD: a Jossey-Bass reader*.
- Maurer, R. (2006). "Resistance and Change in Organizations." In *NTL Handbook of OD and Change*.
- Merron, K. (2006). "Masterful Consulting." In Gallos, Ed. *Org Development: A Jossey-Bass Reader*.
- Noolan, J. (2006). "Organization Diagnosis Phase." In *NTL Handbook of OD and Change*.
- Sminia, H.; van Nistelrooij, A.T.M. (2006). "Strategic management and organization development: Planned change in a public sector organization." *Journal of Change Management*.
- Weick, Karl (1993). "The collapse of sensemaking in organizations: The Mann Gulch disaster." *Administrative Science Quarterly*; Dec 1993; 38, 4; ABI/INFORM Global.

**III. Assignments. Please post each assignment to Canvas class on its due date. Note when I would like you to bring paper copies to class, when you will read each other's papers and discuss them. And some assignments noted "Class Prep" don't need to be turned in but will be the basis for in-class workshops.**

**Ongoing Assignment: Journaling.** Keeping an ongoing journal is a powerful practice. Work on establishing a new habit. Buy a cheap notebook, or splurge on a LEUCHTTURM1917 or similar hardcover. Aim to make an entry daily, even if it's only a brief one. Keep a pen and your journal nearby so you can jot down your thoughts and feelings about anything at all, including this course. Draw if that feels right. You won't need to turn this in at the end of the course; it will be the basis for Assignment #6.

**Class Prep #1 for January 6<sup>th</sup>.** Think of a time when you helped to facilitate positive change. The setting may have been a school, workplace, club or nonprofit where you volunteered. What motivated you? What was challenging about the process? Did the changes stick? How did you feel about your role afterward? Jot down some notes and bring them to class.

**Assignment 1.** Practicing organization development is difficult under the best of circumstances. What in your view are the particular challenges of performing OD within *public* organizations? How might it be more (or less) difficult than working with firms or nonprofits? 2-3 pages, double-spaced. **Due January 6<sup>th</sup>.**

**Assignment 2.** Reflective assignment on OD skills. After reading the articles by Cheung-Judge, Tolbert and Hanafin, and the chapter by Cameron and Green, write a short paper (2-3 pages, double-spaced) in which you reflect on your readiness to take on the role of an organizational change consultant. What are your strengths? Where might you need to improve before you truly would be ready to do this work? **Due January 13<sup>th</sup>.**

**Class Prep #2 for Jan. 27<sup>th</sup>.** Read Weick's classic article on the Mann Gulch fire. What lessons on teamwork do you draw from the fire itself, and Weick's analysis of it?

**Assignment 3.** Reflect on a time in your life when you had in-depth exposure to an unfamiliar culture. This could be in a school, a work or organizational setting, or another country. Briefly describe how the culture that you entered felt "foreign," and what happened. Did you become comfortable with that culture or remain separate from it? Did you notice changes in that culture over time? **Due February 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

**Class Prep #3 for February 3<sup>rd</sup>.** Read the instructions for Assignment #5 below. What organization do you plan to focus your Intervention Plan on? Bring one or two options to class.

**Assignment 4.** Appreciative Inquiry is a change model that seeks to avoid several of the tripwires and problems associated with other approaches to organizational change. Are you convinced by the authors' arguments? How would you imagine an "AI" approach to change working out in your current (or a past) organization? **Due February 10<sup>th</sup>.**

**Assignment 5: Intervention Plan.** This is an individual assignment. Your task is to complete a plan for an intervention in an organization. Select an organization with which you are familiar, or you want to learn more about. Describe what you would do to diagnose/discover what is happening; assess the organization's readiness for change and its culture; describe the intervention you believe is appropriate and how you would work with the organization to bring it about and evaluate your efforts. **Avoid doing interviews with members of the organization unless you have my approval.** Additional details on this assignment will be provided in class. Be prepared to share the organization you wish to examine in class on **February 3<sup>rd</sup>.** Prepare a maximum **5-page (double-spaced) paper** summarizing your findings. *Be prepared to give a presentation on your paper of 5 minutes (with five minutes for questions) on **March 3<sup>rd</sup>.*** **DUE: March 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

**Assignment 6. Self-Reflection.** Write a short paper in which you re-read your journal and reflect on what you've learned about yourself over the past two months and whether it has changed your thinking about yourself and your readiness to be a change agent. **Due: March 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

**Assignment 7. Teach to Learn Project.** Burke's text, *Organizational Change: Theory and Practice*, provides substantial coverage of the many intervention models that aim to improve organizational design or performance. There are more topics than we can cover. This assignment will enable each student, working with a team, to study a topic of particular interest in depth. Your team will research and prepare a presentation of about 30 minutes on that topic, to be delivered in class on **March 10<sup>th</sup>.** Your team may include a class exercise or workshop if appropriate to the topic. Each person in the team is expected to participate in the presentation.

During class on **February 10<sup>th</sup>,** form a team with one or two other students. Your initial task is to select a topic or workshop to focus on and prepare a Teamwork Plan. A short proposal for the project will be due **February 24<sup>th</sup>.**

**Your presentation, using presentation software of your choice, will be due (posted to Canvas) at Noon on March 10<sup>th</sup>.** The group should also complete and submit a bibliography or reference list for the items in your presentation. This is **also due March 10<sup>th</sup>.** **Plus a short reflection paper on working with your group.**

**IV. Credit and Evaluation.** Students will receive four graduate or undergraduate credits based upon satisfactory and on-time completion of all course requirements and assignments. Plagiarism, failing to complete one or more assignments, or two non-excused absences, may lead to automatic denial of credit.

Students will receive 4 credits at the completion of the course if all course requirements have been successfully completed. Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own), failing to complete one or more assignments, completing one or more assignments late (without having made arrangements before the due date), or multiple absences may be grounds for denial of credit. Partial credit or incompletes will be awarded only under unusual circumstances. If you believe you will have difficulty submitting the final paper by its due date, contact me immediately.

Students are expected to attend each class meeting and to be on time. If an absence from class is unavoidable, contact me prior to class. Because of the intensive nature of this course, missing one day of class will necessitate a make-up assignment. Missing a second day of class will result in a no credit. Any makeup work must be completed by the end of the quarter in question to ensure full receipt of course credit. Consistent with MPA program requirements, a self evaluation will be required for credit.

**V. Canvas.** The syllabus and assignments, and lecture notes after each class session, plus course readings will be posted to the course Canvas site. Course assignments will be submitted on Canvas.

**Tentative Class Schedule (subject to change)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
<b>Jan. 6</b>	Course introduction. A Brief History of Org Development. "Reform" and OD in public agencies. The "James Stockdale" Questions: "Who Am I? Why Am I Here?"	Burke, Ch. 1,2,3, Stulberg, Part I; Sminia & van Nistelrooij	Assignment 1 Class Prep #1
<b>Jan 13</b>	Consulting I: Skills and Competencies, The "Use of Self" and how to "enter" an organization. Types of Interventions People, Organizations, Problems, Change; What Level? Why Many Attempts at Change Fail	Cheung-Judge; Cameron & Green; Kotter; Burke, Ch. 4,5,6	Assignment 2
<b>Jan 20</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>		
<b>Jan 27</b>	Discovery: WIGO? Nonprofits and Change. Film: <i>Moneyball</i>	Stulberg, Part II; Noolan; Burke, Ch.7 & 8; Weick	Class Prep #2
<b>Feb. 3</b>	Cultures and Change Barriers and Resistance Consulting II	Burke, Ch. 9, 10, 11 Block; Merron; Maurer	Assignment 3 Class Prep #3
<b>Feb 10</b>	"Leadership" Appreciative Inquiry ESD & DEI	Stulberg, Part III Burke, Ch. 12, 14, 15 Cooperrider & Whitney	Assignment 4 Form teams for A. #7
<b>Feb 17</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>		
<b>Feb 24</b>	Strategic Change and Strategic Planning Artificial Intelligence and Organizations	Burke, Ch. 16, 17 Bryson;	Class Prep #4
<b>Mar 3</b>	Coaching Skills Managing Transitions Mobilizing Social Movements "Energy" in Organizations and movements	Bridges, Ch. 1, 3 Bennett and Bush; EBSCO summary; Optional: Spoth on Energy	Assignment 5 Assignment 6
<b>Mar 10</b>	Final Presentations The Future of OD	Stulberg, Conclusion Church and Burke Cheung-Judge 2017	Assignment 7