



**Boston University** Questrom School of Business

**OB 844 MANAGING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE  
SYLLABUS Fall 2016**

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Instructor: Professor Karen Golden-Biddle  
Day/Time: Wednesdays: 6:00-9:00 pm  
Room: HAR 224  
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Office Hours: Room 647A, by appointment

**Required Course Materials**

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- OB 844 Course Readings are compiled in a packet available for purchase through the Questrom Copy Center. Please purchase this in time to prepare for the first class.
- *How to Be a Positive Leader*, Jane Dutton and Gretchen Spreitzer (Editors) 2014. Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Available at the BU Barnes and Noble Bookstore. Identified on syllabus as *HBPL*.
- Other materials will be distributed during the semester.

**Course Mission**

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To build our capacities in change and understand how to encourage the development of others' capacities. This course mission is grounded in two principles: that *leading change* requires developing self-awareness about our strengths and areas to improve, and that *learning about change* is most effectively accomplished by doing change and reflecting upon our action.

**Course Description and Objectives**

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In this course, we will explore the theory and practice of creating change, with an emphasis on how insiders can create desired organizational change through micro-level, every day action. By the end of the course, you should be more capable facilitators of change, sensitive to the nuances of change, and more knowledgeable and wise about its enactment. To cultivate this capacity building, we will examine how people access new lines of sight that prompt change, imagine new possibilities for making a positive difference, and deliberate best pathways using an experimental attitude and open heart. When successful, these collective initiatives foster the meaningful and productive contribution of all involved, support human development, and generate significant personal and organizational outcomes.

## **General Design**

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The course sessions will be highly experiential, oriented to learning about key dynamics of change. They will connect real situations of change with theories of change, especially those drawing attention to how small actions can cultivate important and positive impact. During the semester we will conduct simulations, exercises, and live personal and organizational change projects. To the extent that you engage the materials by reading and reflecting on them in advance of class, you are more likely to enhance your learning and to strengthen your contribution to class and project group conversations.

## **Course Approach and Expectations**

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### ***Class Attendance and Participation***

Classes will begin and end on time. Preparation and participation in class discussion are vital to everyone's learning. It is important that you prepare for and attend every class. Since so much of the learning takes place during class, your course grade will directly reflect absences beyond one session missed. If you must miss a class, advise me *in advance*.

### ***Written Assignments***

Written work is due on the assigned date and time (hard copy brought to class, soft copy submitted to Questromtools). Late papers will be penalized by a reduction of one full grade per day of lateness.

## **Course Requirements and Grading**

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Grades in this course will be based on the following components: class participation and attendance, a “Developing Professional Change Capacity” portfolio, and a field-based team organizational change project. *Please note that your final grade will be available approximately one week after the deadline for the organizational change project paper. If your employer organization requires you to submit your grades, please set expectations accordingly.*

### **I. Class Participation and Attendance 25%**

This requirement consists of a Pre-Semester assignment and class/team contribution.

#### Pre-Semester Work

**DUE:** By no later than noon, **Thursday September 1 2016**, please submit via Questromtools “Assignment” tab the following information:

- What are your hopes and concerns for this course?
- Describe your best and worst experiences of organizational change. What made them so? Reflecting on these experiences, what change capacities would you like to develop?
- A copy of your resume/CV.
- Do you have a change initiative underway in your organization that would benefit from a team studying it? We might be able to use it! Please describe it briefly.

**I. Class Participation and Attendance** *(continued)*

This requirement consists of a Pre-Semester assignment and class/team contribution.

Contribution to Class

**DUE:** Continuous

In order to foster the goal of learning from each other, this course relies on your quality participation. Your assessment in this area will depend on contribution during class, and on the extent to which others, especially your project team, perceive you as contributing substantially to their learning.

**II. Portfolio: Developing Professional Change Capacity 25%**

The requirement provides you a space to create a resource that helps you build your capacity in change. Your portfolio consists of: (1) The mapping and exploration of your ‘immunity to change’ system, and (2) Completion of three professional capacity development assignments.

Immunity to Change Developmental Work

**DUE November 9**

This part of the portfolio increases your understanding about the ‘immunity to change’ system. During the second class, facilitated by Dr. Mark Biddle, you will learn about this system and have an opportunity to practice mapping your own ‘immunity to change’ grid. As follow-up, you will participate in an hour-long conference call with Dr. Biddle and three other students to further hone your grid. A schedule will be distributed for sign-up during class. After taking part in this call, you will complete the first three steps outlined on page 90 of the article by Kegan and Lahey (notice and record current behavior; look for contrary evidence; explore the history). As a final step, you will write a reflective memo on the insights and learnings that emerged in your work. In particular, what did you learn about yourself that will be most helpful in building your capacity to create change and encourage others’ development?

Please submit: your grid, a description of action in each of the three steps, and reflective memo.

Professional Capacity Development Assignments

**DUE: 1<sup>st</sup> one by October 12; remaining two as completed, no later than November 9**

There are six professional capacity development assignments spread throughout the syllabus, located with a closely related class session. You are to **choose three of the six to complete** for this requirement. For each, you will complete the readings, videos and/or exercises assigned and write a two - three page reflective memo in which you describe: what most resonated with you and why; and how you will use the learnings from this assignment to strengthen your capacity in change and to encourage the development of others’ capacities.

### III. **Field-Based, Team Organizational Change Project 50%**

This requirement involves undertaking a field-based team project in which you will study the creation of an organizational change effort. It consists of the following elements:

- Early presentation of focus and issues for class input **October 19**
- Team meetings on issues/focus with Prof Golden-Biddle **Weeks of October 24/31**
- Team Reflective Memo **November 2<sup>nd</sup>**
- Final Presentation **Weeks of Nov 16/30**
- Final paper **December 9<sup>th</sup>**

This is a live, field-based project that will combine interview/archival data to examine a real-life organizational change effort that seeks to make a positive difference.

1. You will come to *really know* the change effort based on collected data and deliberation.
2. Articulating focus and issues. The October 19 project class session and individual meeting with me are designed to help you strengthen your project's focus and articulation of key issues in the project's change initiative. *Send in advance short memo to guide discussion.*
3. Team Reflective Memo. (3-4 pages including signatures of all team members). This memo is a reflective learning tool for the purpose of building and growing individual members' and collective team strengths in collaboratively leading this change project.
4. Final Presentation. Your presentation should engage while educating. To that end, focus on what is intriguing from your project rather than sharing a recap of it, and consider how best to design your presentation so that you reach and impact your audience. You are encouraged to consider alternative modes of delivery. This should not be a traditional power-point presentation! Each team will have 20 minutes for presentation, followed by 10 minutes of questions. After all teams have presented for that session, we will have a conversation reflecting on the presentations, and in particular on how they enhance our understanding about change, and help us build our own and encourage others' change capacity.
5. Final paper. No more than 20 pages of written text (double spaced except for interview comments, which are to be indented, single-spaced and italicized). Maximum additional 10 pages of appendices. Your paper should incorporate consideration of the following questions:
  - How do people access the new lines of sight that prompt consideration of change?
  - What new possibilities for taking action did they consider? Try to implement?
  - What challenges – opportunities do they face with this change initiative?
  - What course ideas, lessons, concepts enrich your understanding of how this particular change is evolving?
  - What *three to four additional publications* (not identified on this syllabus) further enrich your understanding of how the change is evolving?
  - What might be done to yield more of the promise that prompted this change?
  - What 3 – 4 *relevant and thoughtful* recommendations will you propose to positively enhance their effort to create this change? These high quality recommendations will be oriented to implementing the best change possible, building their change capacity, and enriching their understanding of how to create significant change though leading, together.

**OB844: Managing Organizational Change  
Class Schedule and Assignments**

**SESSION 1 September 7**

**Leading Change, Together**

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**Preparation:**

1. JE Dutton & G. Spreitzer, 2014. Introduction and invitation, in *HBPL*
2. K Golden-Biddle. 2013. How to change your organization without blowing it up. *Sloan Management Review*, Winter, 54(2): 35-41.
3. A Weinzwieg, 2012. We're all leaders. In *Being a Better Leader*. Zingerman's Press.
4. B Zander & R Zander, 2000 Leading from any chair. In *The Art of Possibility*.

**SESSION 2 September 14**

**Fostering Personal Change**

Facilitated by Dr. Mark Biddle

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**Preparation:**

1. R Kegan & L Lahey, The real reason people won't change, *Harvard Business Review* 2001
2. Imaginary 360 Assessment. Imagine you are at dinner with 3-4 people whom you trust. If you were to ask them to suggest ways that you could improve at work, what would they suggest? Write these down. Then reflecting upon the suggestions, select one improvement that you think is most relevant for you. *Bring two written copies of the suggestions and your selection to class.*

**#1 Professional Capacity Development: Mindsets**

- Watch:  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/carol\\_dweck\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_believing\\_that\\_you\\_can\\_improve?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve?language=en)
- Read: At least two chapters in Carol Dweck's 2006 book, *Mindset*, Ballantine Books. Consider its use in strengthening your capacity for creating change
- Take the mindset test on the following website, <http://www.mindsetonline.com/index.html> and explore insights for creating change and working with others in creating change.

**SESSION 3 September 21**

**Implementing Organizational Change**

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**Simulation**

**Preparation:**

1. Read simulation manual.

**#2 Professional Capacity Development: Connection and Vulnerability**

- Watch: [https://www.ted.com/talks/brene\\_brown\\_on\\_vulnerability?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability?language=en)
- Read at least two chapters from Brene Brown's books (*Gifts of Imperfection*, *Daring Greatly*, *Rising Strong*) and consider how what you read could strengthen your capacity for creating personal change and perhaps for others in organizational change.

**SESSION 4 September 28**

**Understanding Relational Dynamics in Change**

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**Exercise: Positive Leader**

**Preparation:**

1. JE Dutton, 2014. Build high quality connections, Chapter 1 in *HBPL*
2. S Sonenshein, 2014. Treat employees as resources, not resistors. Chapter 12 in *HBPL*
3. K Golden-Biddle and J Mao, What makes an organizational change process positive? Chapter 58 In: K.S. Cameron and G. Spreitzer (Eds.). *Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship*. Oxford University Press

**#3 Professional Capacity Development: How to have difficult conversations**

- Read at least two chapters from Stone, Patton and Heen 2000. *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*. Consider various ways you might use this resource to strengthen your capacity for relating with others in change.
- Watch the Ted Talk by Margaret Heffernan. Reflect on the insights generated for you about disagreement. [https://www.ted.com/talks/margaret\\_heffernan\\_dare\\_to\\_disagree?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/margaret_heffernan_dare_to_disagree?language=en)

**SESSION 5 October 5**

**Understanding Cultural Dynamics in Change**

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**Simulation**

**Preparation:**

1. Review K Golden-Biddle and J Mao, What makes an organizational change process positive? Chapter 58. Focus especially on the cluster of acts for cultural continuity.

**#4 Professional Capacity Development: Implicit - Unconscious Bias**

As you engage in the following activities, reflect on the insights you gain about unconscious bias, its manifestation, and how it can be addressed in organizations and organizational change.

- Select and Take: One Implicit Association Test at the Harvard Project site: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>
- Watch: Googles Venture video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLjFTHTgEVU>
- Take: FaceBook's online training program in Unconscious Bias: <https://managingbias.fb.com/>

**SESSION 6 October 12**

**Accessing New Lines of Sight for Change**

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**DUE: 1<sup>st</sup> Professional Capacity Development**

**Preparation:**

1. Case: Collaborative Care in Health Care Delivery
  - K. Golden-Biddle and Kathryn Correia, 2012. Hope as generative dynamic in transforming change: Creating and sustaining collaborative care in the ThedaCare health system. In Karen Golden-Biddle and Jane Dutton (Eds). *Using a Positive Lens to Explore Social Change and Organizations*.
  - K. Golden-Biddle, October 2, 2013. How micro-moves can drive major health care change. *Harvard Business Review Blog Network*.
  - Review first practice in Golden-Biddle 2013 *SMR* article from Session 1
2. Adam Grant, 2014, Outsource Inspiration, Chapter 2 in *HBPL*
3. Oana Branzei, 2014, Cultivate hope: Found, not lost. Chapter 10 in *HBPL*.

**#5 Professional Capacity Development: Resourcing New Lines of Sight**

- Read the two cases (p 313-319) in the 2016 article by M Feldman and M Worline, published in the *Academy of Management Learning*, Vol 16 (5). Reflect on how a new line of sight was resourced in each case.
- Using the slides from class discussion, apply the idea of resourcing a new line of sight to your group's organizational change project. How does the application enrich your understanding about how people collectively come to see the need for change?

**SESSION 7 October 19**

**Project Work**

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**Preparation:**

1. In writing: Describe the specific context and focus of your team's project as currently conceived. Identify 2-3 key questions, challenges or conundrums about your project for class input and guidance. **Post on Questromtools by Monday, October 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:00.**
2. Read the other groups' statements in advance of class.
3. Bring to class your questions about the individual and organizational projects.

**Mid-course Feedback – Course and Teamwork**

**#6 Professional Capacity Development: Unlocking Our Internal Resources**

- Read two of the three chapters in *HBPL 2014* by LM Roberts, G Spreitzer and C Porath, and A Wrzesniewski. How will you “unlock” the internal resources discussed for building change capacity?
- Watch the Google re:Work talk by A Wrzesniewski. Reflect on job crafting and its relevance in your work and in building capacity for change. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C\\_igfnctYjA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_igfnctYjA)

**Week of October 24: 30-45 Minute Project Team Meetings with Prof Golden-Biddle**

**SESSION 8 October 26**

**Imagining New Possibilities**

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**Preparation:**

1. K.Golden-Biddle, 2014. Create micro-moves for organizational change, Chapter 11 in *HBPL*
2. KE Weick, 2001 (1984) The attitude of wisdom: Ambivalence as the optimal compromise. Chapter 16 in *Making Sense of the Organization*, pages 361 - 379. Blackwell Publishing.

**Week of October 31: 30-45 Minute Team Meetings with Prof Golden-Biddle**

**SESSION 9 November 2**

**Deliberating Best Pathways**

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**DUE: Team Reflective Memo**

**Preparation:**

1. KE Weick, 2001 (1984) Small wins: Redefining the scale of social problems. Chapter 19 in *Making Sense of the Organization*, pages 426 – 443.
2. D Meyerson, 2001. Radical change, the quite way. *Harvard Business Review*
3. Revisit from the OB core course: C Argyris, 1991. Teaching smart people how to learn. *Harvard Business Review*.

**SESSION 10 November 9 Project Work**

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**DUE: Portfolio: Developing Professional Change Capacity** (ITC and Prof Capacity assgts)

**Preparation:**

1. Bring questions about the individual and organizational projects for discussion.

**SESSION 11 November 16 Presentations/ Learnings about Leading Change**

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**Preparation:**

1. Team Presentations of Organizational Change Project.
2. Review of Project Takeaways on Leading Change, Together

**SESSION 12 November 30 Presentations/Learnings about Leading Change**

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**Preparation:**

1. Team Presentations of Organizational Change Project.
2. Review of Project and Course Takeaways on Leading Change, Together

**SESSION 13 December 7 Organizational Change Projects**

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**Preparation:**

1. Assemble written projects into final form. **Due no later than noon, Friday December 9<sup>th</sup>**, a hard copy delivered to Professor Golden-Biddle, OB Department and soft copy submitted to Questromtools.