

PSY 6520, Systems Analysis Practicum: CRN 15545
Spring 2016 Course Syllabus

Instructor Information

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Course Materials

Required: Course pack

Required (electronic only): Diener-Ludwig, L. H., & McGee H. M. (2012). *Behavioral Systems AnalysisToolset (BSAQ)*. Performance Blueprints.

Dr. McGee uses this in PSY 6510, thus most of you already have a copy of it. If you don't have it, it is available for download through E-learning.

Recommended:

1. E-learning. I have given you samples of all the major products you will be completing in this class in the course pack. However, I have also made them available for downloading in E-learning. Some sample products are only available through E-learning because the documents are too lengthy or “cumbersome” to piece apart and include them in the course pack. I am only going to use E-learning for the electronic products, by the way. In other words, you should use my wmich email address for all interactions with me.
2. Rummler, G. A. & Brache, A. P. (2012). *Improving performance: How to manage the white space on the organization chart (3rd ed.)*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass.

Dr. McGee also used this in PSY 6510 last semester. This book provides the foundation for all of the analyses and tools you will be conducting this semester. I do not have any assignments from this book, but if you have questions about the analyses and tools, this is an excellent source. If you have the earlier 1995 edition, that will be fine.

General Course Description

This practicum stresses the integration of behavior analysis and systems analysis applied to the design, creation, and management of human performance systems within organizations. Students are assigned to consulting teams of 3 members and apply analysis concepts/tools in organizations. Each team completes a systems analysis project in the organization that focuses on one of three levels of an organization: the organization level, the process level or the job/performer level. Course prerequisite: PSY 6510.

General Course Format

Students will meet with their organizational consulting team to complete analyses based on their interactions with the organization during the week. I will meet with each organizational team to discuss the details of the analyses, next steps, and any problems that may have arisen with the organization. I will develop a schedule for the class period indicating the time I will meet with each team.

Because I will be meeting with each individual team, when I am not meeting with your team, you will have time to work on your team project. It will also mean, however, that if you do not have any work to do in class, you will have “down-time” while I am interacting with the other teams. In the past, some teams have elected to do their work at other times and come to class only to hand in the required products for that week, meet with me, and give me their “action plan” for the next week. While that is fine with me (this is a very functionally-oriented class) **except when giving your final presentations to the class**, I suggest that you take advantage of the time that is scheduled to work with your team members on the assignments for the following week.

I will be handing out a detailed course calendar and for each week, I have designated the items that you should be working on in class.

Computer Software

Most of the analysis documents require diagrams. I expect you figured this out in PSY 6510. But if not, for Window users, the program most students use is Visio.

For Mac users, I prefer Lucid Chart, but some prefer Professional OmniGraffle.

For both Windows and Mac users: Some students have used PowerPoint for the Total Performance Diagram.

Yet another option for Windows and Mac users that is free and is compatible with most other software programs: Apache “Open Office” that is available at the following web site: www.openoffice.org. The “Draw” program mimics much of Visio’s functionality.

Course Calendar and Schedule

Tonight I will hand out a detailed course calendar and schedule for the semester. I put each week on a separate page so you can easily keep track of the assignments for each week. **You should review this schedule each week to make sure that you are on track with your client.** During the semester, I will develop separate schedules for each consulting team, as you will not be working on the same things at the same times - this “split” usually occurs after four weeks or so, around the second week in February.

Organizational Clients

I will hand out a list of the organizational clients and systems analysis projects tonight. I will describe the clients and then ask each of you to rank order the clients/projects in terms of your preferences. To the degree possible, I assign students to work with the clients they prefer, but clearly, I am not always able to do that. All of the clients and projects are great, so there won’t be any “losers” I assure you!

Team Assignments

Tonight, I will also ask you, in a questionnaire, to indicate what other student or students in the class you would like to work with. I will also ask you to indicate if there is a person you would not like to work with. I will not ask the reason why, nor do I want to know. I will keep this information strictly confidential. In the past, I have assigned students to teams, but over the years I have decided that my main objective in this class is to teach you how to conduct systems analyses in organizations and I have found that students find it more comfortable to work with individuals they choose to work with. Also, if there conflicts in the team, it affects the client. To

the degree possible, I will assign students to teams on the basis of their preferences, but I am not always able to do that.

I prefer that students who are, how shall I say it, “romantically involved” **not** work in the same team. I have encountered some problems with that in the past. If you want to work together and I do assign you to the same team, you have to be very aware of your professional responsibilities and how your interactions may affect another teammate and the client. If I feel that your relationship (whether it continues to be good or runs into trouble) is affecting your interaction with each other, with a teammate and/or the client, I will first talk to you about it, but if it is not resolved *immediately*, I will lower your final grade by 1/2 grade level and reserve the right to lower it more if the situation is not resolved to my satisfaction. I can’t change members of a team once they begin working with a client.

Course Grades/Assignments

You will earn individual points and group points. Your course grade will be based on the percentage of points that you earn on the required individual and group assignments, and on any additional assignments required by the clients. You will not be completing all of the analyses presented in the BSAQ Toolset. The clients and I have decided in advance what the project will be; thus circumventing many of the analyses, particularly the organizational level analyses you would do otherwise.

You will complete individual assignments (e.g., a client consulting contract, a Total Performance System diagram) that the group will then use to complete a team product that you will give to the client. I will give individual grades for the individual assignments; however, I will give each team member the same grade for the group assignment.

The individual product is important because a person cannot contribute to the group if he/she has not done the individual work. The team product is important because it represents the give and take, and (hopefully) the improvement that can occur as the result of the interaction of team members.

Student teams can determine whether they want to complete/continue the individual assignments or whether they want to drop those assignments in favor of only group assignments. **The teams may initiate this change with me at the beginning of the semester after I assign the teams, or at any time thereafter. Each individual in the team, however, must agree to this because it will affect the points that each individual receives.**

Because different teams will be working with different clients and doing different projects, I cannot in advance: (a) give you a list of all of the required assignments (they will vary depending upon the organization); (b) determine appropriate point values for all of the assignments (the complexity of even the required assignments will vary from one organization to the next); or (c) set firm deadlines for all assignments. We both have to be flexible.

Because there are specific analysis tools for each level of analysis (organizational, process, and individual), I have developed a list of potential assignments (all based on Rummler/Brache, 2012), which will help guide your activities. We will decide together as the course progresses which tools are relevant for your organizational client. With the exception of the job model tool in RB, these tools are the same tools that are presented in the BSAQ toolset so you should already be familiar with them.

Before I accept a final product and assign points to it, I will require it to be "signed off" (initialed) by the client. That permits me to know that the client finds the work acceptable.

At the end of the syllabus, I have provided a list of the required and potential assignments in the course. I have categorized the assignments according to the level of analysis (organization, process, job/performer). This document will help you see how everything "fits" together and will also help you to see what assignments may be required.

I have also included an "Individual Progress Plotter." I will keep individual progress plotters for each of you that will serve as grade sheets. As the course progresses I will add any additional assignments appropriate to your work with the organizations.

I have assigned point values for those assignments for which I felt comfortable doing so in advance (which is not many). With respect to point values that I have not yet determined, I will assign an appropriate number of points to each assignment after it has been completed. The main criteria will be the **quality** and **complexity** of the assignment, and the **presentation style**. I am including presentation style because you are working with actual organizational clients as consultants thus your documents should look professional and have a touch of pizzaz (but not too much!); that is, these are **not** "dry academic" papers.

The assignment and point procedure means that the total number of points that a student can earn in the course will be the same within each team but different across teams.

The grade that a student will get will be based on the percentage of the total points possible as follows:

	A	BA	B	CB	C	DC	D	E	
Percent		92	85	80	75	70	65	60	<60*

* "<" means less than

Psychology graduate students must obtain at least a "B" in order to receive credit for the course.

Weekly Time Requirements

You will generally have to spend 12 hours **a week outside** of class, with the time split between interacting with the organization, and preparing your analyses/assignments. Also, the class tends to get started slowly, but really picks up momentum about mid-semester once you are into your project work with the client.

Class Attendance

Due to the group work that will occur during the scheduled class meeting time and the fact that the class only meets once a week, attendance is critical. If you miss class you are responsible for any announcements regarding changes in the weekly assignment, schedule, etc. **In addition you are responsible for contacting your team leader** (or if you are the team leader another team member) to determine the action plan for your team for the upcoming week and your assigned role in that plan. If you fail to do so or do so too late to contribute to your team's activities, I reserve the right to deduct points from the grade you receive for the team product, and from any relevant individual assignment, including awarding no points for a particular assignment (for example, if you fail to complete an individual product on time, then you will not be prepared to contribute to the team product, and you will be penalized accordingly for "sponging" off your team members).

You may miss **one** class without penalty as long as you make up the work. If an individual assignment is due during the class period you miss, you may turn that assignment into me the

following class period; **however if you turn it in later than that you will receive a zero for the assignment.** To make up for the missed group work, the team, the student and I will negotiate a work assignment that will contribute to the team's activities.

Additional absences will lead to point losses unless otherwise approved by me.

Individual and Team Products

You will not be able to rewrite individual products for remediation purposes. Your individual product/deliverable should be your best work: not a draft. This is because you need to move forward with the client and your team will be using your individual work as a basis for the team work. Also, you will not receive any credit for a late individual product except for your one allowed absence. If you do not do the work, or do sloppy work, your team members have to pick up the slack.

Most of the team products will go through several revisions based on consultation with the client and these revisions are indeed acceptable (and necessary). **I want to see a product before it is given to the client, however, because of the MLK day recess, I may not have the opportunity to do that with all of the products early in the course.** I will not assign a grade to the product **until the client has signed off on it by initialing it, indicating approval.** However, if the team hands in something that is of low quality, either due to its content or **presentation style** (including grammar and spelling), then I will deduct points that will be subtracted from the final point score I award **even if the client signs off on it.**

A warning: I will consequence grammar and spelling errors heavily in *any* individual and team product you hand into me and certainly the products you give the client. In recent years, I have found that some students have seen me as "their first line of defense." That is, they give me a document that is a *rough* draft and expect me to edit it. **I do not find this acceptable.** Any document you hand into me should be a *final* document. I will not be there in the future when you are interacting with clients and when you hand in something to me that you intend to give a client, I must assume it is your *best* work.

A Nit-picky Logistical Issue

The individual assignments that are related to the team product will be due the day that the team begins working on the group product. Therefore, you should always bring **two** copies of your individual assignment: one to hand in to me, and one to give to your team.

Final Report

Your final report is due on Monday, April 25 during final exam week. The report that you give to me will be the same one that you give your client. You will be completing many assignments during the semester, and the report is a way to organize the work that you completed for the semester. It will also serve you well to have a portfolio of the whole experience (for job interviews).

The report should contain: (1) all of the documents that you completed for the client during the course; (2) any final analyses or recommendations about future work that the client would find useful, and (3) a USB flash drive with all of the material on it. You may hand the report in earlier should you wish to do so.

When you get to this point, please read the instructions in the course pack carefully. In the past, some teams misinterpreted what I wanted and did much more work and wrote much longer reports than I wanted. I have instructions and examples in the course pack that will help you determine what the final report should look like.

Client Evaluation

A client evaluation of your work is due on Monday, April 25 of final exam week. I have given you some forms in the course pack that you can use or you can design your own. The client will be given the opportunity to return the evaluation directly to me or return it to you and discuss it with you. I have attached a high point value to this evaluation - 150 points.

Note that a primary consideration when I assign the grade to this evaluation will be the **extent to which the client was satisfied with your work**. One of the main concepts in this course is the customer-focus. Therefore, I want the point values for the course aligned with that concept. Please keep that in mind throughout the course in all of your interactions with the client organization.

Client Confidentiality

It is VERY important that you do not violate client confidentiality. In fact, you have an **ethical obligation** to protect the confidentiality of your client organization and the consumers served by that organization. When working in the organizations you may encounter some individuals who are difficult to work with, resist cooperating with you for political reasons, etc. You may also discover "skeletons in the closet," "cans of worms," sensitive information about people in the organization, "unseemly" politics, etc. Some of these things may be interesting and fun to talk about to others outside of your organizational consulting team and outside of the class. **RESIST THAT TEMPTATION.**

Sometimes even seemingly innocent or innocuous information can lead to very serious political consequences. Further, it is impossible to know "who knows who" in a relatively small town like Kalamazoo - and certainly within the halls of Western. Your client must be able to trust you and you must keep that trust. In addition, because we may discuss problems in the class for educational purposes, **all members of the class must keep the confidence of all client organizations.**

Of course, there may be times when you need to discuss a problem and/or a particular person in an organization who, for one reason or another, is difficult to work with. You certainly may discuss the problem and/or the person with the members of your organizational consulting team and with me in order to solve the problem.

The general rules are:

1. **What gets said in this class about an organization and its members stays in the room.**
2. **NEVER say anything bad about the organization or any individual in the organization to anyone outside of the class.**
3. **You may say general positive things about the client outside of class.**

Due to the importance of client confidentiality, I will consequence violations of it. Violations of confidentiality will result in a **failing grade in the course**. Minor violations will result in a decrease in your grade by either one full letter grade or a half a letter grade (from A to a B or a BA). The client and I will determine the seriousness of the violation and, hence, the penalty.

If you are in doubt about what you can and cannot talk about, ask me.

Dress for Success!

A word (or two) about dress. You need to dress appropriately for the organization in which you work. This varies from organization to organization. Also, the tolerance of "student" dress will vary from organization to organization. When I work with organizations, I do think about what style of dress is appropriate and dress accordingly. **I never wear jeans when I work in organizations, and I do not want you to.**

Some organizations have dress codes for their employees. **You should ask whether your organization has a dress code and comply with that dress code.** For example, in some organizations employees cannot wear any visible body rings or studs because of potential safety hazards. Even though you may not be exposed to those safety hazards, you still must conform to the dress code. Also, you should know that executives at some organizations have talked to me about the fact that some of our students, even on interviews, have dressed in what they consider to be an inappropriate manner.

If your organization has a dress code and you do not comply with it, or if clients complain to me about the way you dress, I will deduct points from your total point score. Depending upon the seriousness of the violation, I may decrease your grade by 1/2 letter grade or 1 full letter grade if I talk to you about it and it is not immediately resolved to my satisfaction.

Whether you like it or not, whether you believe it or not, people's reactions to you are influenced by what you wear. If you dress like a student, employees in the organization may well react to you as a student rather than as a professional who really does have something of value to offer the organization. Interestingly, sometimes you can overpower clients and make them feel uncomfortable if you wear clothes that are too formal; on the other hand, clients (particularly those not used to working with students) may, in subtle contingency-shaped ways (in other words, without their awareness), dismiss your credibility if you dress too informally. Also, one style of dress may be appropriate if you are meeting with the executives of an organization; another style of dress may be appropriate if you are working with the staff in that same organization. However, you never know when you may run into executives when you are at the organization. Again, **if in doubt, ask your organizational client what is appropriate – he/she is here to help with your professional training.**

Some "don'ts:"

1. No visible body rings or studs, unless the client approves them. That means, you cannot wear them to your first client meeting. This includes tongue studs, nose rings/studs, eyebrow rings, and lip rings.
2. Men: No earrings unless expressly OK'd by the client – which again means you should not wear them at your first meeting with the client.
3. Women: No long dangling earrings
4. Men: No tight-fitting shirts or pants
5. Women: No tight-fitting or low cut blouses and tops; no tight-fitting pants or skirts
6. Women: No spike heels (regardless of height) or heels over ~2 ½ inches (watch the platform shoes as well!). Save all of these for graduation and social events.

How to Win Friends and Influence Enemies

Last year, when I was interacting with a potential client, the client expressed the view that WMU psychology graduate students are often very arrogant and discourteous. **And, the individual was talking about graduate students from our department.** Clearly this is not good, and it does not promote effective interactions with organizational employees and staff. I am in close contact with the clients, and if something like this happens, I will be on top of it. We are behavioral psychologists – if an organizational member that you are working with does not have the same skills as you do or does not appear to you to be very “sophisticated,” it is because they have been exposed to a different set of contingencies than you have. Also remember, that many staff in organizations have skills that we do not have and finally, remember that you have not walked in their shoes in the organization. There are excellent business executives and employees who have never taken a class in behavior analysis and you can learn a lot from them if you allow yourselves to do so.

Cell phones, tablets, computers: **Use of all gadgets is restricted to your work with the client.** That means, no texting, no unrelated cell calls, no surfing the net while interacting with your client. It is unprofessional and rude. **Once again, I have had business executives complain to me about graduate students from our department who have done this.** Again, I will decrease your letter grade by ½ or 1 letter grade if you do this and, of course, I find out about it.

Also, be VERY careful with your professional communications with clients. Emails have become increasingly informal over the past couple of years and texting has been creeping in email text. Be careful! You are not social networking: You are interacting with a business client. You should capitalize all letters that should be capitalized (no “i” instead of “I”, for example). Also, do not start emails with “Hey,” unless your client does it.

That said, recognize that in business and industry people do not use titles – it is very different than in academic settings and human service settings. Thus, while I may be “Dr. Dickinson” to you, the clients will expect you to call them by their first names and will find it odd if you do not do so. I will refer to myself as “Alyce” in any interactions with your clients. Typically, clients consider it arrogant for a person to use “Dr.” in a business setting, and when an individual uses his/her title, it usually has the effect of inhibiting their interactions with you. People respect formal degrees, but can consider it arrogant and disrespectful of *their* skills if you actually use the title in every day interactions.

I also expect you to interact with your student team members in a professional manner. If there are problems in a team due to a particular team member, I will consequence that as well, decreasing the student’s grade by ½ letter grade, or more, depending upon the severity of the infraction.

Cheating

Cheating consists of turning in another student's work as you own. However, *I do not at all mind if you work together on any of the individual assignments.* In fact, if you want to work with another member of your team and submit a joint product, that is fine. Just let me know if you decide to do that so I am not surprised when two or three students hand in exactly the same work. Cheating also consists of “double dipping” – that is, using material in two different classes for credit in both, unless the instructors give you permission to do so.

If I have evidence of any form of academic dishonesty, I will charge the student with violating the Academic Honesty Policy of the University in a report to the Office of Student Conduct. The

student will be given an opportunity for a hearing. If a student is found responsible for an act of academic dishonesty, I will fail the student in the class.

Incompletes

According to the University's policy, Incompletes can be given only when the student is doing well in the course and can make up any missed work in a reasonably short period of time. In keeping with the university's policy on incompletes, I will not give an incomplete as a substitute for a failing grade (or for any grade below a B) - the failing grade stands.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and need reasonable accommodations, please contact me during the first week of classes so that I have time to ensure that your needs are met in a timely manner. In order for me to provide accommodations, students must contact the University's Disability Services for Students at the beginning of the semester to inform them of the disability and obtain a document from them indicating the type of accommodation that is appropriate. For additional information, please see their web page: wmich.edu/disabilityservices/ These offices provide very useful services. According to University policy: "Any student with a documented disability who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the professor and the appropriate disability services office at the beginning of the semester."

Religious Holidays and Religious Observance

I will excuse students from class for the purpose of observing major religious holidays provided they make a request to me two weeks in advance so that I can make alternative arrangements for them to make up the work.

Emergency Class Cancellation

In the event that classes are officially canceled (due to a snow storm, for example), any individual assignment, group assignment that was due that class will be due the next class. *However, you should keep working with your client that week.* Therefore, you should not hold up your work, even if you have to give a product to a client before I review it and approve it. We can, of course, interact electronically as well.

Class Calendar and Assignments

I will give you a detailed calendar for each class meeting tonight. The schedule may change depending upon how the work goes with the client. Do NOT worry about that – I expect changes. I cannot anticipate how the work with each client is going to go. But do read the next page about what I expect you to do for each class meeting and for each client meeting.

General Instructions Related to Each Class and Each Client Meeting

NOTE: I will deduct points from your total point score if the following instructions are not followed each week. These are basic “project management” skills that are very important for consulting projects. And, I need them as the project manager to keep on top of what each team is doing. What I do with you each week is very similar to what a project manager does with consultants in a consulting firm to keep up to date on how various consulting projects are going.

- A. Every class period the team leader of the group should provide me with an **Action Plan** that contains:
1. A list of the **products/deliverables** you completed and are handing in to me that night
 2. A list of any **products/deliverables** you had planned to complete but did not (in other words, compare the products you told me you were going to give me – see D below – and tell me which ones you were not able to complete)
 3. A list of **activities** that you did that did not result in a product/deliverable
 4. A list of **activities** that you plan to complete in the upcoming week.
 5. A list of the **products** that you are going to give me the following week

I have provided two sample Action Plans on the following page.

- B. Every class period the team leader of the group should also give me an agenda for your upcoming meeting with your client.
You, not the client, are responsible for developing an agenda for each meeting and giving it to the client at the beginning of each meeting.
- C. For each client meeting, you should first provide the client with an agenda, indicating what should be accomplished during the meeting. You should provide enough copies of the agenda for each member of the client team and your team.
- D. The **FIRST** item on the agenda with your client will be a report re your activities for the preceding week (similar to the items 1&2 in the Action plan that you hand in to me each week) and a discussion of any barriers that occurred/prevented you from achieving your objectives for that week.
- E. If you develop a timetable with deadlines and milestones for each step/major activity/product for the client, you should review that with the client to determine whether you are “on target” or need to adjust and/or realign your timeline. This should be done as part of your report of your activities.
- F. You should end each client meeting with an agreement of what you are going to do the next week (similar to items 3&4 in the Action Plan that you are going to give me each week), and what the client team is going to do. Obviously, this then becomes part of your productivity/activity review at your next client meeting.
- G. Whenever you are doing an analysis or ask the client to respond to something, i.e., the consulting contract, the TPS, the timetable, etc., you should **ALWAYS** have a document ready to give the client with as much information filled in as possible based on your knowledge to date. You should prepare questions to ask the client based on the information **that is missing**. Then you ask the client to review the document and ask your additional questions. It is much easier for clients to respond to that type of document/tool than it is for you to simply ask questions related to the analysis or tool and then create the document later. It is also much more efficient. And, for consultants, time IS money.

SAMPLE ACTION PLANS

Team Leader Name: _____

Date: Week 1

1. Products/Deliverables Tonight

- A. Individual resumes
- B. Individual consulting contracts

(Note that in class, the team would (a) critique each other's resume and (b) develop the team contract questions to ask at your first client meeting, and (c) if you haven't done so, look at the web site for the organization in order to prepare for your client meeting)

2. Products/Deliverables not being handed in: None

3. Activities completed, if they did not result in a final product/deliverable

4. Activities Next Week

- A. Contact client and set up weekly meeting day and time

5. Products/Deliverables Next Week

- A. Final individual resumes
- B. Team consulting contract questions

Team Leader Name: _____

Date: Week 2

1. Products/Deliverables Tonight (Notice items in #1 should match items in #4 from last week)

- A. Final individual resumes
- B. Team consulting contract questions

2. Products/Deliverables not being handed in

3. Activities completed, if they did not result in a final product/deliverable

4. Activities Next Week

- A. Meet with client, give client individual resumes
- B. Review consulting contract

5. Products/Deliverables Next Week

- A. Team consulting contract or sign-off by client
- B. Initial individual TPS/Function Diagrams based on meeting with client

PSY 6520 Systems Analysis Practicum, Spring 2014: Required and Potential Products

Organizational Level Analysis

Individual Required

1. Consulting Project Proposal
2. TPS Diagram for unit or project

Group Required

1. Consulting Project Proposal
2. TPS Diagram

Process Level Analysis

Individual Required

1. An "Is" process map
2. Identification/analysis of disconnects
3. A "Should" process map

Group Required

1. An "Is" process map
2. Identification/analysis of disconnects
3. A "Should" process map

Job/Performer Level Analysis

Individual Potential

1. One Job Model
2. Additional Job Models
3. Job aids and performance checklists
4. Performance Measurement system
5. Performance Management System

Group Potential

1. One Job Model
2. Additional Job Models
3. Job Aids and performance checklists
4. Performance Measurement System
5. Performance Management System

General

Individual Required (none)

Group Required

1. Class presentation: Summary of project and learnings
2. Evaluation of work by client
3. Final project report and CD with all documents and comparison of initial project with final project.

