

**THE HELLER SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT
BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY**

HS258a
Operations Management in Service Organizations
Spring 2008

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Wednesday 2:10-5:00
Location: TBA
Office Hours: Please email to arrange!

Course Description: In Operations Management, we explore how organizations deliver high quality services while using resources efficiently. You will develop skills including quality assessment, process mapping, improving work processes through IT, productivity analysis, wait time analysis, customization versus standardization of work processes, project management and scheduling. We will use a textbook and a series of cases illustrating both successes and failures. Prior to each class, you will receive a set of study questions to help focus your reading.

You will do a process design project in this course. You will be assigned to a team of students, and will be asked to choose an organization together and a work process within it. Through interviews and observations, you and your teammates will map out the process. You will then analyze the process, assessing how efficiently resources are used, and how effectively the process works for customers.

Class participation is central for this class so that we can take advantage of the experience and insights of class members. We want to explore how, why, and under what circumstances various approaches to process design are effective or ineffective. Your previous experience, both positive and negative, is a valuable source of data for this learning. Class participation also gives you the opportunity to develop an important management skill – articulating your views to a group for the purpose of learning and decision-making.

Management Discipline Skills and Competencies: Please see above.

MBA Program Distinctive Themes: In Operations Management, we will address four of the MBA Program Distinctive Themes – “Measuring and Managing Outcomes,” “Engaging People to Achieve Mission,” “Managing Diversity” and “Information Systems.”

Measuring and Managing Outcomes. This is the central theme of Operations Management. We focus on the challenges of measuring and improving quality in service settings, as well as measuring and improving the efficiency of resource utilization. In particular, we identify strategies to improve efficiency without sacrificing quality. (All sessions)

Engaging People to Achieve Mission. In service settings, staff are often the most costly and critical resource that organizations have available for achieving their missions. It is therefore worthwhile for organizations to pay attention to how staff are scheduled, avoiding both idle

time and over-utilization of staff time. Idle time is a source of inefficiency, and can lead to low morale. Over-utilization can ultimately lead to burnout and to poor quality outcomes for clients. In addition to staff, clients can also be engaged to achieve mission. Clients are not necessarily passive recipients of services, but rather are potential co-producers of outcomes, particularly when those outcomes include their own health and well-being. (All sessions)

Managing Diversity. One decision to be made in operations management is the degree to which work processes will be customized to meet the diverse needs of clients, as opposed to offering a standardized work process for all clients regardless of their individual needs. We will explore ways to achieve a mix of both customization and standardization. (Session 2)

Information Systems. One strategy we explore for improving efficiency without sacrificing quality is to automate parts of the work process using information systems. Information systems can reduce the need for staff time, freeing up staff to focus on activities that cannot be automated. Information systems can also enable clients to perform some of the work by themselves. (Session 4)

Course Requirements:

Case Analyses	25%
Class Participation	25%
Process Design Analysis	25%
Midterm Exam	10%
Final Exam	15%

Case Analyses. You will be asked to prepare written analyses of two cases during the semester. You may choose any two cases you wish. You may only write up cases for classes that you attend. Case analyses are due at the beginning of the class in which the case will be discussed. You will be given a set of questions for each case to guide your analysis. Case analyses will be evaluated based on 1) how well they answer the questions that have been posed, and 2) how well they draw upon insights from other class readings and previous class discussions. Case analyses should be 3 to 5 pages in length, not including exhibits.

Class Participation. Class participation grades reflect my assessment of your total contribution to the learning environment. This reflects not only the frequency of your contributions in class, but also their quality (ability to draw on course materials and your own experience productively, ability to advance or sharpen in-class discussion and debate, willingness to take risky or unpopular points of view, use of logic, precision and evidence in making arguments), and the professionalism of your conduct (attendance, punctuality, preparedness, and showing respect to all class members and their class contributions).

Attendance. You cannot pass this course if you miss more than two classes. For an excused absence, you must write all of the study questions for the missed class. This write-up does not count as one of your case write-ups. For an unexcused absence, you will get a zero for class participation for that class.

Process Design Analysis. You will be asked to form a team of 3 or 4 students in the second week of the term. Your team will choose one particular work process in an organization you have access to, then map it out using a work flow diagram, analyze it, and provide recommendations for improving it. A class handout will give specific questions to answer in your analysis. Your proposal is due February 28 and your presentation and report are due April 25. Your project will be evaluated based on how well you analyze the work process and how insightful are your recommendations for improving it.

Midterm Exam. The midterm exam will be given in class near the middle of the semester. It is a short, closed book exam focused on process analysis.

Final Exam. The final exam will be posted on Moodle at the end of the semester, to be completed and returned within a specific time frame. Please use your own class notes and readings, but do not get help from other people in the class or outside the class. You will be to answer 10 operations management questions in 10 pages or less. Your exam will be evaluated based on 1) how well you answer the questions, and 2) how well you draw upon course readings and class discussions.

Course Reading: For this course, we will use a textbook called *Service Management: Operations, Strategy and Information Technology*, by James A. and Mona J. Fitzsimmons, New York: Irwin McGraw-Hill, 4th or 5th Edition. This text can be purchased online, or from the Brandeis bookstore. All other readings are available on LATTE and Harvard Business Online.

Software for Process Maps: For some case analyses, and for your process design analysis, you will be asked to draw process maps. You are welcome to draw these by hand, or using the graphical symbols available in Word or Powerpoint. Alternatively, you can download free trial software from the web, called SmartDraw.

Provisions for Feedback: Case analyses will be returned one week after they are submitted to me. Midterm exam grades will be given in the middle of the semester. Class participation grades will be given at the end of the semester. Process design projects and final exams will be graded at the end of the semester.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person - be it a world-class philosopher or your lab partner – without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the sources of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, or created by another student. Violations of university policies on academic integrity, described in Section 3 of *Rights and Responsibilities*, may result in failure in the course or on the assignment, and could end in suspension from the University. If you are in doubt about the instructions for any assignment in this course, you must ask for clarification.

Notice: If you have a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and require accommodations, bring it to the instructor's attention prior to the second class.

Course Schedule

Class	Date	Topic	Readings
1	1/16	Service Quality and Efficiency	“Service Quality,” Fitzsimmons Case: “Madison Academy: Competing on Quality”
2	1/23	Standardization versus Customization	“New Service Development,” Fitzsimmons “Making Mass Customization Work,” Pine Case: “Massachusetts General Hospital: CABG”
3	1/30	Process Mapping	“Process Fundamentals” “New Service Development,” Fitzsimmons Case: “Benihana of Tokyo”
4	2/6	Information Technology	“Service Strategy,” Fitzsimmons “Technology in Services,” Fitzsimmons “Human Centered Design,” Kessler Case: “Alaska Airlines” Case: Community Health Access Network
5	2/13	Facility Design	“The Supporting Facility,” Fitzsimmons Case: Shouldice Hospital Process design proposals are due.
	2/20	WINTER BREAK!!!	
6	2/27	Balancing Supply and Demand	“Managing Supply and Demand,” Fitzsimmons Case: “Families First Health and Support Center”
7	3/5	Balancing Supply and Demand	“Managing Waiting Lines,” Fitzsimmons “The Psychology of Waiting Lines,” Maister Case: “Reading Rehabilitation Hospital”
8	3/12	Balancing Supply and Demand	“Queuing Models/Capacity Planning,” Fitzsimmons Case: “National Cranberry Cooperative”
9	3/19	Project Management	“Managing Projects,” Fitzsimmons Case: “People’s Light and Theatre”
10	3/26	Supply Relations	“Managing Service Supply Relations,” Fitzsimmons “Build Relationships with your Suppliers,” Gittel Case: “Transitional Infant Care Specialty Hospital”
11	4/2	Growth and Globalization	“Growth, Globalization of Services,” Fitzsimmons Case: “City Year: National Expansion Strategy”
12	4/9	Process Design Team Presentations	Process design reports are due.
13	4/16	Final Exam	