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### PSCI 525.50: Strategic Planning and Leadership

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**Political Science 525**  
**Strategic Planning and Leadership**

Professor Nancy Gass

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Office Hours: by Appointment

Class Location: On-Line

### **Course Description**

For over a decade a movement has been underway to shift the focus of management from administering programs to achieving results. Strategic planning is an important tool in accomplishing this paradigm shift. Bryson defines it as a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it.

But, despite its importance, strategic planning is only a tool. This course is organized around the theme that strategic planning cannot realize its fullest potential unless it is put into the service of visionary, success-oriented leadership. Although strategic planning can help us align an organization's mission, internal capacities, and environmental realities, it is ultimately leadership, not planning, that makes organizational excellence possible and achievable.

### **Course Objectives**

1. To understand strategic planning as a decision-making process.
2. To understand the theory of organizational success that underlies the process.
3. To develop skill in conducting the forms of analysis that strategic planning requires.
4. To learn how strategic planning can contribute to the success of visionary leadership.

### **Required Text**

John M. Bryson, Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass).

Other required reading is available in Moodle within the appropriate Learning Unit.

### **Course Project: Simulated Strategic Plan (More Explanation Under Course Requirements)**

In completing this project, keep in mind that as you are writing your assignments that you are taking this course under the provisions set forth in The University of Montana Student Conduct Code. Remember plagiarism and its consequences. It is expected that your submitted assignments are your original work.

You are required to choose a public or nonprofit agency with which you are familiar and write a strategic plan for it (you will not actually submit it to the agency). You are to pretend that you are a staff person entrusted with facilitating the planning process. You lead your staff through the various steps of the process and write up the results of your group's analyses as follows:

- Introduction
- Agency Mission, Vision, and Values
- Strategic Issues, Goals, and Actions
- Appendix A: Mandate Analysis and Mission Clarification
- Appendix B: Stakeholder Analysis
- Appendix C: SWOT Analysis
- Appendix D: Theory of Success

### **Course Requirements:**

Learning Units must be completed each Tuesday night by 7 pm (MST). Students are required to read the mini-lectures, complete all required reading, participate in the Discussion Forum, and complete all writing assignments by the established times. Learning Units provide "*Learning Points*" based on what the instructor and authors are trying to emphasize as key elements for the student to learn and understand. These are not to be considered all-inclusive and the student is responsible for utilizing these "*Learning Points*" in conjunction with the readings in developing their understanding and competency. All time requirements for Discussion Forum responses, papers and projects are based on Mountain Standard Time and are considered due by 7:00 pm MST each Tuesday. *Late work will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.*

Students are required to read all required readings, participate in the Discussion Forums, and write a **simulated strategic plan** for a government or nonprofit agency. This plan will be submitted in six writing assignments (20 points each), then combined into the seventh final writing assignment being worth 80 points. The seven writing assignments are worth a combined 200 points and participation in the Discussion Forum is worth 40 points for a total of 240 points for the semester.

The Discussion Forum requires active student participation which means you must complete:

- Step 1)** Respond to the Discussion Forum questions presented; and
- Step 2)** Respond to other student responses (not all other student responses, but several for each Discussion Forum question, and
- Step 3)** You must complete Step 1 and Step 2 for each question to receive full credit for the Discussion Forum.

If you are curious as to how you are doing with your Discussion Forum responses during the semester, you may call or contact the instructor.

Your grade will be determined based on the following scale:

A =	223-240
A- =	216-222
B+ =	209-215
B =	199-208
B- =	192-198
C+ =	185-191
C =	175-184
C- =	168-174
D+ =	161-167
D =	151-160
D- =	144-150
F =	0-143

Refer to **Writing Assignments and Due Dates** under the **Course Information** toggle or in the appropriate Learning Units for complete Writing Assignment requirements. In your writing assignments, points will be subtracted for occurrences of the following: a) single sentence paragraph; 2) verb-subject disagreement; 3) run-on sentence; 4) sentence fragment (incomplete sentence); 5) use of contractions; and 6) misspellings.

Writing assignments shall be **submitted in Moodle** in a doc or docx format no later than the date due prior to 7:00 pm MST. If you are going to be late with an assignment, please let me know in advance of the due date and time. Failure to notify the instructor of a late assignment in advance of the due date may result in points being deducted.

**Sources for Writing Assignments:** Students are encouraged to utilize sources provided in and through the Mansfield Library.

### **Office Hours and Availability**

**Phone:** You may **contact me via phone at 406-493-7892 at any time**. This is my cell phone number and I have it on 24/7. If I do not answer, you may leave a message and I will call you back as soon as possible.

**Email:** You may **email me at any time** at [Nancy.Gass@umontana.edu](mailto:Nancy.Gass@umontana.edu). I will make every effort to respond within 24 hours of receiving your email. The only time it may take me longer to respond is if you email me on a weekend. It may be Monday before I respond to you.

Again, I want to reiterate...**do not hesitate to call or email**. I am here to enhance your learning experience.

### **Other Student Resources**

There are other resources available on the course homepage in Moodle. Here are some other sites that may be valuable to you. If you need ADA assistance in taking this course, you may contact the University of Montana Disability Services for Students at their website <http://life.umt.edu/dss> or email them at [dss@umontana.edu](mailto:dss@umontana.edu). Students taking this course are expected to do so under the provisions set forth in the UM Student Conduct Code. If you go to <http://life.umt.edu/VPSA/name/StudentConductCode> you can review the Student Conduct Code. There is one other service available to you through **The Writing Center** - they offer free one-on-one online tutoring "to all students seeking to become more effective writers. You can email them at [onlinetutoring@umontana.edu](mailto:onlinetutoring@umontana.edu) or point your browser to <http://www.umt.edu/writingcenter>.

### **University Email Address:**

University policy requires that all papers be returned to your University email address. Make sure you check that address for returned papers.

### **Weekly Assignments**

#### **Learning Unit 1 (31 August – 01 September 2015)**

##### **Introduction to Strategic Planning**

Read the mini-lecture and participate in the Discussion Forum.

#### **Learning Unit 2 (02 September – 08 September 2015)**

##### **Strategic Plans**

Read the mini-lecture, complete the required reading and participate in the Discussion Forum.

##### **Required Reading:**

Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, John Bryson, Chapters 1 and 2; 4<sup>th</sup> Edition pages 3-81

##### ***Reading 1 – (Moodle)***

##### **Special Instructions:**

As you read, consider the following:

- 1) What is a strategic plan?
- 2) What is the process by which one is developed?
- 3) What are the reasons for engaging in strategic planning?

#### **Learning Unit 3 (09 September – 15 September 2015)**

##### **Underlying Theory of Organizational Success**

Read the mini-lecture, complete the required reading and participate in the Discussion Forum.

Required Reading:

Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, John Bryson, Chapter 3; 4<sup>th</sup> Edition pages 83-116

U.S Forest Service Strategic Plan, [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us) (Skim this plan, under the Forest Service “Search” section, search for “Strategic Plan”) **Reading 2, 3 and 4 – (Moodle)** (Skim the strategic plans by former students Jardine, Hofmann, Aguilera, and Roberts).

Special Instructions:

The Forest Service Plan will give you an idea of what is required of federal agencies under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, whereas the student papers will give you an idea of what is required for this course.

#### **Learning Unit 4 (16 September – 22 September 2015)**

##### **Strategic Planning in Political Environments**

Read the mini-lecture, complete the required reading and participate in the Discussion Forum.

Required Reading:

**Reading 5 – (Moodle)**

Special Instructions:

As you read, ask yourself:

- 1) Generally speaking, what political factors may influence an agency’s choice of strategy?
- 2) Does the strategy of an organization necessarily aim at achieving a state of excellence?
- 3) What macro-level strategy has your agency adopted?

Look ahead to the mini-lecture for Lesson 6 and begin researching your formal mandates, those things that you are formally charged with doing or prohibited from doing, as required for Writing Assignment 1 (See also Bryson; 4<sup>th</sup> Edition pages 121-127).

#### **Learning Unit 5 (23 September - 29 September 2015)**

##### **Creating Public Value**

Read the mini-lecture, complete the required reading and participate in the Discussion Forum.

Required Reading:

Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, John Bryson, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition pages 117-121 only.

**Reading 6 and 7 – (Moodle)**

Special Instructions:

As you read, ask yourself:

- 1) How does your agency make the world a better place; what net public value does it exist to create for society?
- 2) What if your agency didn't exist? As Clarence the Angel asked Jimmy Stewart in the movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, would the world be a lesser place if you had never been created?

Continue researching your formal mandates.

### **Learning Unit 6 (30 September – 06 October 2015)**

#### **Mandate Analysis and Mission Clarification**

Read the mini-lecture, complete the required reading, participate in the Discussion Forum and submit Writing Assignment 1.

Required Reading:

Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, John Bryson, Chapter 4, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition pages 117-131 and 138-149

**Reading 20 – (Moodle)**

Special Instructions:

In Bryson Chapter 4 [leave pages 107-112 for next week]

As you read, ask yourself:

- 1) What am I hoping to accomplish by conducting Mandate Analysis?
- 2) If your agency is a government agency, what have you been charged with doing, authorized to do, and/or prohibited from doing? If your agency is a nonprofit, what were you created to accomplish and are there any organizational or governmental regulations that constrain your pursuit of excellence?
- 3) To what extent do your formal mandates limit your “unconstrained field of action”?
- 4) What is your essential purpose (mission), i.e., your *raison d’être*?

Writing Assignment:

Writing Assignment 1 – Mandate Analysis and Mission Clarification – **Due 06 October 2015**

### **Learning Unit 7 (07 October – 13 October 2015)**

#### **Stakeholder Analysis**

Read the mini-lecture, complete the required reading, participate in the Discussion Forum and submit Writing Assignment 2.

Required Reading:

Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, John Bryson, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition 132-137

Special Instructions:

As you read, think about who your primary stakeholders are, what they expect from you, and what it will take for them to view you as an excellent agency.

Writing Assignment:

Writing Assignment 2 – Stakeholder Analysis – **Due 13 October 2015**

### **Learning Unit 8 (14 October - 20 October 2015)**

#### **SWOT Analysis**

Read the mini-lecture, complete the required reading, participate in the Discussion Forum and submit Writing Assignment 3.

Required Reading:

Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, John Bryson, Chapter 5, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition pages 150-184

Writing Assignment:

Writing Assignment 3 – SWOT Analysis – **Due 20 October 2015**

### **Learning Unit 9 (21 October - 27 October 2015)**

#### **Developing a Vision of Excellence**

Read the mini-lecture, complete the required reading, participate in the Discussion Forum and submit Writing Assignment 4.

Required Reading:

Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, John Bryson, Chapter 8, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition 271-285

***Reading 8, 9, and 10 – (Moodle)***

Special Instructions:

***Reading 10*** is a Vision Statement offered by former student Kristina Swanson

Writing Assignment:

Writing Assignment 4 – Vision of Excellence – **Due 27 October 2015**

### **Learning Unit 10 (28 October - 03 November 2015)**

#### **Developing a Theory of Success**

Read the mini-lecture, complete the required reading, participate in the Discussion Forum and submit Writing Assignment 5.

Required Reading:

***Reading 11 – (Moodle)***

Special Instructions:

As you read Wilson, ask yourself:

- 1) What was Principal Hogan's social and organizational vision of excellence?
- 2) What did he see as the school's "critical environmental problem"?
- 3) What did he see as the school's "critical task"?
- 4) What was his implicit "success strategy"?

Regarding your own agency, think about what 3-5 things you need to be absolutely successful at in order to bring your vision of excellence into being, i.e., the 3-5 things that will enable your agency to be the very best of its kind in the nation.

Writing Assignment:

Writing Assignment 5 – Theory of Success – **Due 03 November 2015**

**Learning Unit 11 (04 November – 10 November 2015)**

**Strategic Issues**

Read the mini-lecture, complete the required reading and participate in the Discussion Forum.

Required Reading:

Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, John Bryson, Chapter 6, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition  
pages 185-218

**Reading 12 – (Moodle)**

Special Instructions:

Analyze your previous writing assignments in order to identify your 3-5 most pressing strategic issues.

**Learning Unit 12 (11 November – 17 November 2015)**

**Strategic Goals and Actions**

Read the mini-lecture, complete the required reading, participate in the Discussion Forum and submit Writing Assignment 6.

Required Reading:

Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, John Bryson, Chapter 7, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition  
pages 219-270

Writing Assignment:

Writing Assignment 6 – Strategic Goals and Actions – **Due 17 November 2015**

**Learning Unit 13 (18 November – 24 November 2015)**

### **Implementing and Revising Strategic Plans**

Read the mini-lecture, complete the required reading, participate in the Discussion Forum and begin working Writing Assignment 7.

Required Reading:

Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations, John Bryson, Chapters 9 and 10, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition pages 286-352

Writing Assignment:

Begin working on Writing Assignment 7 – Strategic Plan with Appendices – **Due 08 December 2015**

### **Learning Unit 14 (25 November - 01 December 2015)**

#### **No course work – Thanksgiving Break**

Continue to work on Writing Assignment 7 – Strategic Plan with Appendices – Due 08 December 2015

### **Learning Unit 15 (02 December – 08 December)**

#### **Course Conclusion**

Participate in the Discussion Forum and submit Writing assignment 7.

Writing Assignment:

Writing Assignment 7 – Strategic Plan With Appendices – **Due 08 December 2015**