**MGSC12**

**Narrative and Management**

**Fall 2016**

**Professor Sandford Borins**

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**Wednesdays 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., IC 302**

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**Course website: see Blackboard portal**

The objective of this course is to use a variety of works of narrative as a basis for the discussion of issues of interest to managers. By narrative, I mean works, either fiction or non-fiction, that tell stories that appeal to both the mind and the emotions. These works were not necessarily written for students of management, yet they do provide valuable insights into management skills, organizational diagnosis, ethical choices, leadership, and the impact of factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, and social class on managers.

Communications is an essential management skill and the use of narratives (often referred to as story-telling) is an important type of communication. Stories often connect emotionally with people in ways that other types of communications do not. This class will also draw upon the techniques used in the narratives presented in class as a basis for skill in managerial story-telling.

Narratives provide a number of perspectives not found in more traditional forms of management instruction. While organizations are formed for select purposes, the human beings inhabiting them generally possess a much wider range of goals and desires which may conflict with, or at least are not always captured by, the organization's purposes. Organizations, moreover, are constituted largely by rules, structures, procedures and forms while human beings are characterized by qualities such as spontaneity, intuition, emotion, and irrationality. Any given organization, then, necessarily recognizes, reflects, and realizes only a part of the humanity of its members. Narratives deal with these extra dimensions.Narratives, whether explicitly fiction or docudramas that claim to be “based on a true story” aspire not simply to depict actions and events, but also to lay bare the inner psychology of those involved in them. They attempt to capture and convey the realities they analyze with a psychological depth that social scientists cannot always replicate. This contributes to the richness of narratives and the depth of learning based on narratives.

**Prerequisites: MGHB02H3 or [MGTB23H & MGTB29H] or MGTB27Y or ENGD94H3 or 2.0 credits at the C-level in POL courses or permission of the instructor**

**Office Hours: IC 276**, Wednesdays from 10:30 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 1:30 p.m. I am also available by e-mail, which I answer promptly, or by appointment.

**Evaluation**

Student evaluation will be based on the following:

1. Individual narrative assignment (week 5) 15 %

2. Organizational narrative assignment (week 9) 15

3. Class participation 20

4. Final exam 50

Total 100 %

**Narrative Assignments**

Each of the two narrative assignments involves a short written essay (5 pages maximum) and a short in-class presentation (2 or 3 minutes maximum), in the first instance about yourself, in the second instance about an organization and your involvement with it. Details of the assignments will be provided in the two weeks before they are due.

**Class Participation**

**You must participate in class discussion.** To participate in class discussion, you must prepare the material in advance. I will post discussion questions in advance on the course website. To share your thinking with others, I encourage you to form viewing/discussion groups.

The class will be located in IC302, a skills development room. The course will use in-class discussion groups (“table work”) and provide opportunities for student presentations in addition to comments made in plenary discussions. I will post three or four questions for student presentations (5 minute maximum) each week. The purpose of class discussion is to advance *as a group* toward insight and understanding. Class discussion is a cooperative, not a competitive, exercise. You will thus be assessed on your display of the qualities conducive to collective learning.

**Final Exam**

Students are responsible for the material covered in the entire course.

**Required Reading and Viewing**

Sandford Borins, *Governing Fables: Learning from Public Sector Narratives* (Information Age Publishing, 2011): at UTSC bookstore, online from the publisher at <http://infoagepub.com/products/Governing-Fables>, or online from other providers (e.g. amazon.ca).

I encourage you to visit every movie’s entry on the Internet Movie Data Base ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)) or at Rotten Tomatoes ([www.rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com)). The external reviews, many by professional critics, are particularly valuable and the discussion by users is at least interesting. However, visiting an IMDB entry about a movie is no substitute for watching it yourself and forming your own judgment. In addition, many weeks there are Wikipedia entries to visit.

**Availability of Movies.** The movies in this course are all reasonably recent or classics, and should be available on Netflix or YouTube other online providers. They may also be available in the public library system. Another rental alternative is Videoflicks, 1701 Avenue Rd. (north of Lawrence), tel. 416-782-1883, info@myvideoflicks.ca.

**Course Topics, Viewing and Reading Assignments**

**Sept. 7**

**Introduction to the Course, Conceptual Framework**

Required Reading:

Borins, *Governing Fables,* chapter 1

Robert McKee, *Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting*, pp. 135-54 (on portal)

Wikipedia entry: Erik Erikson

Optional Viewing:

Everyone Rides the Carousel (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m\_e17mS7VBY)

**Sept. 14**

**Entrepreneurship**

View: *The Social Network*

**Sept. 21**

**Corporate Strategy, Investigative Journalism**

View: *The Insider*

Wikipedia entries: Lowell Bergman, Jeffrey Wigand, Mike Wallace

**Sept. 28**

**Investigative Journalism**

View: *Spotlight*

Prof. Borins’s personal narrative

**Oct. 5**

Personal narrative assignment due in class and in-class presentations

**Oct. 12: Reading Week: no classes**

**Oct. 19**

**Financial Sector, System Failure, Management Ethics**

View: *Inside Job*

**Oct. 26**

**Financial Sector, System Failure**

View: *The Big Short*

**Nov. 2**

**Small-Group Decision-Making**

View: *Twelve Angry Men* (original 1957 black and white version)

Prof. Borins’s organizational narrative

Readings:

*Governing Fables*, chapter 7 (pp.213-227 and 235-238)

Asimow, *12 Angry Men: A Revisionist View* (5 pp.) on portal

**Nov. 9**

Organizational narrative assignment due in class and in-class presentations

**Nov. 16**

**Public Sector Entrepreneurship**

View: *Eye in the Sky*

Reading: Borins, chapter 5

**Nov. 23**

**Public Sector Crisis Management**

View: *Thirteen Days*

Reading: Borins, chapter 6

**Nov. 30**

**Robert McNamara: A Life Narrative in Business and Government**

View: *The Fog of War*

Reading: Borins, chapter 8

**Policy on Missed Assignments/Examinations:**

The university has created a new standardized form for students who are requesting special academic consideration based on illness or injury. The form focuses upon the degree of incapacitation that the illness or injury has upon the student’s academic functioning and the timeline of that incapacitation, rather than on diagnosis and /or details of the problem. All students must now have a health professional complete this new form:

<http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/getattachment/index/Verification-of-Illness-or-Injury-form-Jan-22-2013.pdf.aspx>

**Academic Support**

The Department of Management, in collaboration with the UTSC library, will be providing academic research support in the IC Building. To refine your research skills or to learn more about various scholarly resources, please contact the Librarian for Management and Economics students.

Lola Rudin, Subject Librarian, Management and Economics

Room IC375

Please email for a one-on-one research appointment.

Email: lrudin@utsc.utoronto.ca

Web:  <http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/utsc_mgmt>

The English Language Development Centre (ELDC) helps students develop the critical thinking, vocabulary and academic communication skills essential for achieving academic and professional success. Personalized support includes: RWE (for academic writing); Communication Cafés (oral); Discussion Skill-Building Cafés; Vocabulary Cafés; seminars/workshops; personal ELD consultations; drop-in sessions. <http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/eld/>

The Writing Centre (TWC) offers invaluable services to students (learn to become a better writer!) and offers many different kinds of help: drop-in sessions, individual consultations, workshops, clinics, and online writing handouts. <http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/>

**Academic Misconduct**

Students should note that copying, plagiarizing, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be subject to academic discipline ranging from a mark of zero on the assignment, test or examination to dismissal from the university as outlined in the academic handbook. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties.