Instructor information

Gordy Pace
Email: gordy.pace@umontana.edu (If you email me I will usually respond promptly, but please allow for a 24-hour response time)
Phone: (406) 243-2371 (office); (406) 370-3075 (cell) - Please call M-F between 8-5
Office: Law School 151
Office hours: Variable. Please make an appointment

Course information

This course is online, meaning we do not meet in person. You will need to access the course through Moodle. Understanding the Moodle course site is essential to completing this class successfully so if you have questions please ask for help early.

Course materials are organized by week. Weeks run from Monday through Sunday. Each week will include a combination of a short video lecture, required readings, other online media, and discussion forums or other written assignments when applicable. I will make reading material available for future weeks, but weekly lectures will not be available until the beginning of each week.

The course will include interactive discussions that will take place in Moodle. There will also be opportunities for video conferencing either as a group or one-on-one. We will use Zoom as our conferencing tool.

Course description

This course is about strategy and leadership. In Good Strategy Bad Strategy, Richard Rumelt writes: "The core of strategy work is always the same: discovering the critical factors in a situation and designing a way of coordinating and focusing actions to deal with those factors. A leader’s most important responsibility is identifying the biggest challenges to forward progress and devising a coherent approach to overcoming them."

Our exploration of strategy will consider traditional strategic planning approaches used by government and non-profit organizations juxtaposed with emerging adaptive approaches to strategy required in the "age of acceleration." You will learn to approach strategy as a design challenge. As Rumelt says, "When someone says 'Managers are decision makers,' they are not talking about master strategists, for a master strategist is a
designer." We will delve into strategic process design and explore facilitation techniques that engage stakeholders and form habits of creative and continuous strategic thinking and agility.

Our leadership examination will extend beyond the formulation of strategy and into focused and disciplined execution of organizational change. We will examine issues around organizational values, culture, structure, coordination, and communication with the goal of moving the organizations we lead from good to great.

**Student learning objectives**

- Understand the purpose of strategic planning in the public and nonprofit sector
- Develop knowledge of various theories and approaches to developing and executing organizational strategy
- Understand societal forces that are accelerating the pace of change and thus impacting approaches to strategy
- Advance critical and creative thinking skills and techniques
- Develop knowledge and skills for facilitating groups engaged in creative and strategic thinking
- Understand approaches to strategy execution and effective organizational change
- Apply learning through design of a strategic planning process

**Course readings**

- Collins, Jim. *Good To Great And The Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great*
- Additional supplemental materials provided in Moodle

**Course expectations**

**Using Moodle**

Since this is an online course you should check the course site once per day. If you’re new to Moodle, you should enroll in the Moodle 101 tutorial.

**Guidelines for written work**

Strong writing skills are essential in public service work. All written assignments should meet the following criteria unless otherwise noted in the assignment instructions or the
1. All work must be typed, double-spaced, utilize 12 point font, and have one inch margins.
2. Citations should follow a proper style guidelines such as, MLA, Chicago, or APA (in-text citations and a reference page are necessary)
3. Assignments are due on the date listed in the course schedule; late assignments will not be accepted. If a student is absent on the day an assignment is due, he/she should make arrangements to turn in the assignment ahead of time.
4. All assignments must be turned in electronically (unless otherwise noted in the course syllabus) via Microsoft Word to the designated Moodle assignment dropbox. If the instructor cannot open the document, the student will not receive a grade. Submission of assignments via e-mail will not be accepted unless specific arrangements have been made.
5. Written work will be evaluated both in terms of content, following instructions, organization, and writing/grammar.
6. Student collusion is not allowed for individual assignments and will be treated as an act of plagiarism.

The University of Montana Writing and Public Speaking Center is a great resource to review written assignments and readily available to meet the needs of students. Please set up an appointment in advance for staff to review your work before assignments are due.

Help with technology

Please make sure that your Internet browser settings meet the requirements to be Moodle compatible. Call UM Online by phone, (406) 243-4999 or email umonline-help@umontana.edu if technological problems arise. There is no on-call assistance during nights and weekends. For a total Moodle system failure, students will be sent an email by the University of Montana.

MPA portfolio

You should set aside work from MPA classes and the grade you received for the final portfolio required for completion of the MPA degree. Your portfolio must include three public administration-related research papers that are individual (not group) projects that demonstrate you ability to design, conduct, and analyze research; and evidence of your ability to work cooperatively in a team setting, which may stem from an independent study, internship, or traditional course.

Assignments

There will be three types of assignments for the course. One is a semester-long project that will entail developing strategy for an organization of your choosing. The second is
participation in discussion forums. The third is a self-evaluation of what you learned in the course.

**PROJECT: Develop a kernel of good strategy**

This project will challenge you to develop what Richard Rumelt describes as the “kernel of good strategy” for a government or nonprofit organization of your choice. The kernel contains three elements: 1) a diagnosis that defines or explains the nature of the challenge; 2) a guiding policy for dealing with the challenge, and 3) a set of coherent actions designed to carry out the guiding policy (see Good Strategy Bad Strategy, chapter 5)

You can complete the project individually or with a partner. We will explore collaborative options in the first couple weeks of the course.

The project will be divided into four segments starting with a design brief and followed by the three elements of the kernel listed above. For each section there will be a deadline to submit a draft so you can get feedback and stay on track with the project. Your final paper will be a compilation of all four parts of the process.

1. **Design brief**

Assignment: Draft a 2-3 page double-spaced paper describing your organization and how you will approach the strategy process. The brief should address how you will engage with the organization and its stakeholders to adequately understand and address the three elements below:

- **Diagnosis:** What are the most pressing strategic challenges facing the organization?
- **Guiding policy:** What approach should the organization take to overcome obstacles identified in the diagnosis?
- **Coherent actions:** What coordinated steps should the organization take to accomplish the guiding policy?

**Draft due:** Sunday, September 22 by 11:59 p.m.

2. **Diagnosis**

Step one of strategy is to gain an understanding of what’s going on in the organization. Engage with your organization to gather information. You don’t have to do a comprehensive analysis, but you should actively engage in some activity of data gathering, analysis and synthesis. In this critical step of planning, you’re seeking to develop meaning out of facts and data. As Rumelt says, the diagnosis “should replace the overwhelming
complexity of reality with a simpler story, a story that calls attention to its crucial aspects. This simplified model of reality allows one to make sense of the situation and engage in further problem solving.”

Assignment: Draft a 4-5 page double-spaced diagnosis of the most pressing strategic challenges facing the organization? Your goal is to produce a simpler story about crucial aspects of what is currently going on in your organization and the environment in which it operates.

Draft due: Sunday, October 6 by 11:59 p.m.

3. Guiding policy

As Rumelt says, “The guiding policy outlines an overall approach for overcoming the obstacles highlighted by the diagnosis. It is “guiding” because it channels action in certain directions without defining exactly what shall be done.”

This stage will require you to engage in critical and creative thinking, ideally in collaboration with stakeholders from your organization.

Assignment: Draft a 2-3 page double-spaced guiding policy for your organization.

Draft due: Sunday, November 3 by 11:59 p.m.

4. Coherent actions

Strategy requires action. You will need to address how your organization will execute desired change. As Rumelt says, “The actions within the kernel of strategy should be coherent. That is, the resource deployments, policies, and maneuvers that are undertaken should be consistent and coordinated. The coordination of action provides the most basic source of leverage or advantage available in strategy.”

Assignment: Draft a 2-3 page plan of coherent actions.

Draft due: Sunday, November 24 by 11:59 p.m.

Putting it all together

Assignment: Combine the four segments of your project into a final, well-edited plan.

Final due: Sunday, December 8 by 11:59 p.m.

Assignment: Prepare a 7-10 minute presentation summarizing your strategy process and outcomes to be delivered in real-time via Zoom during the final week of class.
**Participate in discussion forums**

You will be divided into small discussion groups for the semester. There will be six discussion forums during the semester using the Moodle discussion board. The discussions will focus on material covered during a two-week period.

There will be three discussion topics in each forum. You will be expected to post a response to at least two topics and engage with classmates during the week. The discussions should be ongoing and not occur all on one day. The goal is for you to post at least 5-6 total times during the week.

**Self-evaluation**

You will write a 2-3 page double-spaced self-evaluation reflecting on the work you did for the class and what you learned.

**Grading**

You can earn one of three grades in this class: A, B or C. There are no pluses or minuses for the final grades in this class.

During the semester I will not assign grades or scores to individual assignments; instead I will provide written or verbal feedback on the assignments that you turn in. In my feedback I will identify the strong aspects of the assignment, point out information or concepts that were missing from your assignment, and/or suggest additional work (thinking, writing, reading, etc.) that you need to do in order to improve your understanding of the topic. Ideally this feedback will help you deepen your understanding of the material and concepts.

This class employs something called contract grading. One of the goals of contract grading is to reduce the anxiety about grades that students often experience. Another goal is to encourage students to develop their own motivations for excellence. A key aspect of contract grading is to emphasize qualitative evaluative feedback over quantitative assessments of students’ written work.

In courses with contract grading, the instructor sets a clear and unambiguous bar for earning a B in the course. If students meet this bar, they are guaranteed a B in the course. Students must go above and beyond this bar in order to earn an A in the course, and they must fall below the bar in order to earn a C in the course.

**Grading contract**

You are guaranteed a final grade of B in this class if you:

1. Meet the stated criteria for all assignments;
2. Meet due dates for all assignments;
3. Actively participate in all class discussions and exercises;
4. Give thoughtful feedback during peer exercises; and
5. Meet guidelines for written work

The grade of B does not derive from my judgment about the quality of your writing, the uniqueness of your ideas, or your enthusiasm for qualitative research methods. Instead, you will earn a B in this course entirely on the basis of what you do (not on how well you do it). If you meet the conditions above, you will earn a B in this class. However, your final grade will fall rapidly below a B if you do not meet these conditions. I will let you know via email or in person if you are in danger of falling below a B in the course.

A grade of A in this course does rest on my judgment about the quality of your writing, the uniqueness of your ideas and the depth of your understanding of qualitative research methods. To earn an A in the course, you must do everything that you must do to earn a B as well as:

1. Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the material and concepts presented in class
2. Produce creative, unique, thoughtful assignments;
3. Receive critiques during peer exercises and workshops in a professional and non-defensive manner;
4. Turn in papers that are concise, carefully edited and easy to read

To earn an A, your performance in all aspects of this class must be exceptionally high quality. I will let you know via email or in person if you are in the running for an A in the course.

You are welcome to discuss this grading contract, your performance in the course or your concerns about your final grade with me during my office hours. Grade questions and concerns are always best addressed earlier rather than later.

**Course schedule**

This schedule may be modified as the semester progresses.

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td>Getting started</td>
<td></td>
<td>• View video lecture</td>
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<td>August 26-</td>
<td>• Getting to know</td>
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<td>• Review course syllabus</td>
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<td>September 1</td>
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<td>• Introduce yourself to the class in the discussion forum by Wednesday at 11</td>
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<td>• Sign up for a Zoom conference time</td>
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| Week 2 | September 2-8 | Introduction to strategy | • View video lecture  
• Read Rumelt Introduction: Overwhelming Obstacles  
• Read *The Fall and Rise of Strategic Planning* (Mintzberg) |
|--------|---------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Week 3 | September 9-15| Good strategy bad strategy | • View video lecture  
• Read Rumelt chapters 1-3  
• DISCUSSION FORUM #1 (weeks 2-3 material) |
| Week 4 | September 16-22| Traditional strategic planning frameworks | • View video lecture  
• Read Rumelt chapters 4-5  
• ASSIGNMENT DUE 9/22 by 11:59 p.m.: Design brief draft |
| Week 5 | September 23-29| Thinking like a strategist | • View video lecture  
• Read Rumelt Chapters 16-18  
• Read *The Strategic Plan is Dead. Long Live Strategy.*  
• DISCUSSION FORUM #2 (weeks 4-5 material) |
| Week 6 | September 30-October 6| Introduction to adaptive strategy | • View video lecture  
• Read Rumelt Chapter 15  
• Read Friedman: *What the Hell Happened in 2007?*  
• Read Green: *Shifting from Strategic Planning to Strategic Agility*  
• ASSIGNMENT DUE 10/6 by 11:59 p.m.: Diagnosis draft |
| Week 7 | October 7-13| Design thinking approach to strategy | • View video lecture  
• Read Liedtka and Ogilvie: Designing for Growth chapters 1-2  
• Read *An Introduction to Design Thinking Process Guide*  
• Optional read: Dam and Siang: *What is Design Thinking and Why Is It So Popular?*  
• Optional video: *Introduction to Design Thinking*  
• Schedule 1:1 conference  
• DISCUSSION FORUM #3 (weeks 6-7 material) |
| Week 8 | October 14-20| Co-creation and experimentation | • View video lecture  
• Read *Co-Creation in Government* |
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<th>Readings</th>
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| **Week 9**<br>October 21-27 | Facilitating creative processes | • Read Prahalad and Ramaswamy: *The Co-Creation Connection*  
• View video lecture  
• Read Amiable: How to Kill Creativity  
• Read Lipmanowicz and McCandless: *The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures* chapter 2 Why Microstructures Matter  
• DISCUSSION FORUM #4 (weeks 8-9 material) |
| **Week 10**<br>October 28-November 3 | Leading change | • View video lecture  
• Read Collins: Good to Great article  
• ASSIGNMENT DUE 11/3 by 11:59 p.m.: Guiding policy draft |
| **Week 11**<br>November 4-10 | Good to great and the social sectors | • View video lecture  
• Read Collins: *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*  
• DISCUSSION FORUM #5 (weeks 10-11 material) |
| **Week 12**<br>November 11-17 | Organizational culture and structure as strategy | • View video lecture  
• Read Kotter: *Accelerate*  
• View Teams of Teams video |
| **Week 13**<br>November 18-24 | Purpose-driven organizations: Moonshots and 10x thinking | • View video lecture  
• Reading TBD  
• DISCUSSION FORUM #6 (weeks 12-13 material)  
• ASSIGNMENT DUE 11/24 by 11:59 p.m.: Coherent actions draft |
| **Week 14**<br>November 25-December 1 Thanksgiving week | The greatest leader on Earth: a case study | • View video lecture  
• Read Verducci: *The Cubs Way* chapter 6: That's Cub |
| **Week 15**<br>December 2-8 | Wrapping up | • Presentations (schedule to be determined)  
• ASSIGNMENT DUE 12/8 by 11:59 p.m.: Final paper |
| **Week 16**<br>December 9-13 | Finals week | • Presentations (schedule to be determined)  
• ASSIGNMENT DUE 12/13 by 11:59 |
Academic and class policies

Extra Credit: Not available for this course.

Classroom Etiquette: A driving component of our MPA program is professionalism and your ability to work well with teams/groups. Thus, the expectation is that students will maintain a high level of professionalism in their classroom conduct with me, and with their fellow students. This means being respectful during class discussions, and in all communications with the professor and others.

E-mail Etiquette: E-mail is a wonderful tool for you to contact me with questions, but it does not replace office hours. If you have involved questions about course material, you should set up a time to come see me or set up a phone conversation.

Incompletes or Withdrawals “W” for the Course: If for some reason the course is not working out for you please adhere to the University’s policies for the last day to drop a class.

Late Assignments: Students are expected to submit all work on the date specified in the course calendar. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the instructor 72 hours before the date in question. Students must complete all assignments to receive a grade for the course.

University Attendance Policy: (please make sure to follow the participation course policies listed above too) Students who are registered for a course but do not attend the first two class meetings may be required by the instructor to drop the course. This rule allows for early identification of class vacancies and to permit other students to add classes. Students not allowed to remain must complete a drop form or drop the course on the Internet (http://cyberbear.umt.edu) to avoid receiving a failing grade. Students who know they will be absent should contact the instructor in advance.

Wikipedia: This online source is not reliable and should not be cited in any course assignment. The goal is to become accustomed to using scholarly sources for all work in any of your courses at the University of Montana.

Academic Dishonesty (Plagiarism): Students must follow the University’s policies for academic dishonesty. For detailed information, please view. As such, all work submitted must be your own; no duplicate work (work completed for another class) will not be accepted. Acts of cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of zero (0) for the assignment. Moreover, acts of plagiarism will also be reported to the Academic Court. To
avoid acts of plagiarism, cite each reference or source you use and give proper credit for the ideas, opinions, and findings of others. When you are using the exact words of others, you must use quotation marks and include the page number where you found the quote in your citation.

**Sensitive Course Materials:** College education aims to expand student understanding and awareness. Thus, it involves engagement with a wide range of information, ideas, and creative representations. In college courses, students can expect to encounter—and critically appraise—materials that may differ from and perhaps challenge familiar understandings, ideas, and beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss these matters with the professor.

**Disability Assistance:** The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors. The link for this is information: Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.