



**DALHOUSIE  
UNIVERSITY**

**MBA Leadership Program  
Dalhousie University  
School of Business Administration  
Faculty of Management**

**BUSI 6994 – LEADING IN COMPLEXITY**

**Term/Year: Fall 2021**

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Rowe 2302**

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I am readily available to you as required, just contact me via email, text, MS Teams, Zoom arrange a time to talk.

**Course Description:**

BUSI 6994 introduces you to the key theories and practices of Organizational Complexity and gives you an understanding of the principles used to develop and move forward leadership initiatives in today's complex organizations. The course unfolds across three modules with a number of lessons within each module. Module 1 introduces complexity theory to students and quickly moves them into seeing how complexity becomes real in an organization via our sense making about risk in real time. Complexity theory in organizations requires that the students understand movement and change in an organization especially in terms of day-to-day change and fluidity.

Module 2 moves the students toward understanding the role that an organization's stakeholders play in collective sense making and understanding how a complex initiative will 'move' strategically through groups of stakeholders over time. Students review basic stakeholder theory and then engage how multiple stakeholder groups make sense of the fluid movement of strategic initiatives as 'change.' This block will also include work with analytical frameworks for planning and implementing complex change initiatives.

Module 3 is a tools-focused block that introduces students to a set of planning tactics and implementation methods for moving complex initiatives forward in an organization. This block also builds the students persuasive skills as they must identify issues among stakeholder groups and then plan tactics for persuading those stakeholders to engage the initiative.

The Intensive sessions for BUSI 6994 focus on developing the student's capacity to manage common organizational complexity challenges effectively and on integrating the course learning outcomes into the students' everyday managerial practice. The intensive sessions emphasize peer learning via a variety of group analytical exercise and development of persuasive initiatives.

**Prerequisites: NONE**

## Learning Objectives:

- Understand organizations as complex entities that require carefully considered methods of stakeholder engagement.
- Understand contemporary theories and models of organizational complexity and the role of leadership in fostering appropriate organizational adaptation.
- Describe and apply organizational complexity theory to analyze and assess the consequences of complex organizational change and to determine effective adaptation.
- Diagnose the need for complex change in an organization and persuade stakeholders to support and implement appropriate change initiatives.
- Identify how to apply strategies to lead complex initiatives at the individual, team and organizational levels.

## Course Texts:

- Lewis, L. K. (2019). *Organizational Change: Creating Change through Strategic Communication*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Clappitt, P. G. & DeKoch, R. J. (2011). *Transforming Leaders into Progress Makers*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Progress Makers Web Site: <http://www.progressmakers.net/index.php>

## Ground rules:

Students are expected to read and participate in online discussions, attend the Intensive session, and submit assignments on time.

## Grading Scale for Masters Students

Grading Scale as per Dalhousie Faculty of Graduate Studies Calendar  
Regulation 6.6.2 Grading Policy

Letter Grade	Numerical % equivalent
A+	90 - 100
A	85 - 89
A-	80 - 84
B+	77 - 79
B	73 - 76
B-	70 - 72
F	0 - 69

The practice of the School of Graduate Studies is to NOT round up; for example, 84.5 is considered A-

**Assessments and Weighting:**

Assignment #1	15%
Assignment #2	20%
Assignment #3	30%
Group Assignment	25%
Course Contribution	10%

**NOTE:**

As per FGS regulations students must obtain a final course grade of 70% (B-) or higher to pass the course.

**GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:**

Assignments #1, #2, and #3

Toward the end of Module 1, students will begin developing an analytical project designed to move a complex initiative moving through their own organization. Students answer a set of developmental questions for the assessments that require them to engage a complex leadership initiative in terms of the course material, essentially creating their own case study. This analytical case study assignment enables students to interrogate how complexity perspectives on organizational leadership and change reflect real activity in an organization and to envision methods for integrating complexity processes into their own managerial practices.

Each assignment is developmental and additive, building from one assignment to the next as students apply relevant course concepts to explore and refine their intended project:

Assignment #1: Identifying an initiative and understanding the dynamics of complexity consequent to the initiative.

Assignment #2: Identifying and engaging issues consequent to the stakeholders affected by the in initiative.

Assignment #3: Planning implementation strategies and tactics that move the initiative forward effectively.

Together, the three assignments require students to apply the complexity leadership strategic and tactical planning frameworks discussed during the course to the implementation of a complex change initiative in their own organization. The assignments enable students to apply material from all three modules to engage a complex problem in their own work and to identify and prepare a mechanism for effectively moving the issues forward in a positive direction.

## Group Assignment

During the Intensive Sessions, students will complete a peer-learning focused group assignment that both enhances and assesses their ability for collaborative problem solving of complex organizational issues. The assignment will unfold entirely during the intensive sessions and will be introduced by the instructor at that time.

## Course Contribution

Course contribution includes students' active engagement with and responses to class discussion questions as well as their contributions to the course intensive sessions. The structure of the intensive sessions requires high levels of student contribution and peer collaboration/support. Students will also engage three discussion questions during the course.

The following rubric will be employed to assess the discussion portion of the course contribution mark<sup>1</sup>:

Excellent (A / A+)	Good (B+ / A-)	Acceptable (B- / B)	Unacceptable (F)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely posts and peer collaborative input that spark or inspire further discussion.</li> <li>• Posts and peer input are well developed and show careful thought and reflection.</li> <li>• Demonstrates analysis of others' posts; extends meaningful discussion by building on previous posts.</li> <li>• Posts factually correct, reflective and substantive contributions;</li> <li>• Shows clear and definitive evidence of familiarity with course readings, and of additional self-identified readings and research.</li> <li>• Contributes to discussion with clear, concise comments formatted in an easy to read style that is free of grammatical or spelling errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts and peer collaborative input is well-developed statement, but doesn't follow development to its natural conclusion.</li> <li>• Elaborates on an existing posting with further comment or observation.</li> <li>• Posts information that is factually correct, but which falls short of being reflective or substantive and does not sufficiently advance the conversation.</li> <li>• Demonstrates familiarity with course readings.</li> <li>• Contributes valuable information to discussion with minor clarity or mechanics errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posts adequate statement with superficial thought and preparation. Peer collaborative input reflects similar qualities.</li> <li>• Posts shallow contribution to discussion (e.g., agrees or disagrees); does not enrich discussion.</li> <li>• Repeats but does not add substantive information to the discussion.</li> <li>• Posts based on valuable personal experience, but show little familiarity with course readings.</li> <li>• Communicates in friendly, courteous and helpful manner with some errors in clarity or mechanics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not participate; and/or</li> <li>• Does not post follow-up responses to others; and/or</li> <li>• Does not make initial posts; and/or</li> <li>• Posts information that is off-topic, incorrect, or irrelevant to discussion; and/or</li> <li>• Posts long, unorganized or rude content that may contain multiple errors or may be inappropriate; and/or</li> <li>• Demonstrates little or no familiarity with course readings; and/or</li> <li>• Posts too late to contribute to class discussion &amp; understanding</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>Modified from <https://sites.google.com/site/k12portfolios/resources/rubrics#TOC-Grading-matrix-for-Discussion-Board-postings>

**Certificates of illness:**

Medical notes must be submitted to the MBA Program office or Professor, whichever you prefer. Please note that it is a university regulation that medical notes will not normally be accepted after a lapse of more than one week from the examination date.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic under the human rights legislation.

Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams should make their request to the Advising and Access Services Center (AASC) prior to or at the outset of the regular academic year. Please visit [www.dal.ca/access](http://www.dal.ca/access) for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation form.

A note taker may be required as part of a student's accommodation. There is an honorarium of \$75/course/term (with some exceptions). If you are interested, please contact AASC at 494-2836 for more information or send an email to [notetaking@dal.ca](mailto:notetaking@dal.ca)

Please note that your classroom may contain specialized accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom, untouched, so that students who require their usage will be able to fully participate in the class.

**Academic Integrity in the Faculty of Management:*****In general:***

The commitment of the Faculty of Management is to graduate future leaders of business, government and civil society who manage with integrity and get things done. This is non-negotiable in our community and it starts with your first class at Dalhousie University. So when you submit any work for evaluation in this course or any other, please ensure that you are familiar with your obligations under the Faculty of Management's Academic Integrity Policies and that you understand where to go for help and advice in living up to our standards. You should be familiar with the Faculty of Management Professor and Student Contract on Academic Integrity, and it is your responsibility to ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

Dalhousie offers many ways to learn about academic writing and presentations so that all members of the University community may acknowledge the intellectual property of others. Knowing how to find, evaluate, select, synthesize and cite information for use in assignments is called being "information literate." Information literacy is taught by Dalhousie University Librarians in classes and through Dalhousie Libraries' online [Citing & Writing](#) tutorials.

Do not plagiarize any materials for this course. For further guidance on what constitutes plagiarism, how to avoid it, and proper methods for attributing sources, please consult the University Secretariat's [Academic Integrity](#) page.

Please note that Dalhousie now subscribes to SafeAssign.com, a computer-based service that checks for originality in submitted papers. Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a very serious academic offence that may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie, there are University Regulations, which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course; students should read the Policy on [Intellectual Dishonesty](#) contained in the Calendar.

Furthermore, the University's Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student assignments be submitted in both written and computer readable format, e.g.: a text file or as an email attachment, and to submit any paper to a check such as that performed by the SafeAssign anti-plagiarism software. As a student in this class, you are to keep an electronic copy of any paper you submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy on demand. Use of third-party originality checking software does not preclude instructor use of alternate means to identify lapses in originality and attribution. The result of such assessment may be used as evidence in any disciplinary action taken by the Senate.

Finally:

If you suspect cheating by colleagues or lapses in standards by a professor, you may use the confidential email: [managementintegrity@dal.ca](mailto:managementintegrity@dal.ca), which is read only by the Assistant Academic Integrity Officer.

### **Faculty of Management clarification on plagiarism versus collaboration:**

There are many forms of plagiarism, for instance, copying on exams and assignments. There is a clear line between group work on assignments when explicitly authorised by the professor and copying solutions from others. It is permissible to work on assignments with your friends but only when the professor gives you permission in the specific context of the assignment. University rules clearly stipulate that all assignments should be undertaken individually unless specifically authorised.

Specific examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Copying a computer file from another student, and using it as a template for your own solution
- Copying text written by another student
- Submitting the work of someone else, including that of a tutor as your own

An example of acceptable collaboration includes the following:

- When authorised by the professor, discussing the issues and underlying factors of a case with fellow students, and then each of the students writing up their submissions individually, from start to finish.

## **STATEMENT ON THE USE OF SCENTED PRODUCTS**

Dalhousie University and the organizations, which represent students, faculty and other employees, support the efforts of the Dalhousie University Environmental Health and Safety Committee to create a scent-free University. In consideration of the difficulties that exposures to these products cause sensitive individuals, the University encourages faculty, staff, students and visitors to avoid the use of scented personal care products. Thank you for helping us all breathe easier!

## **ROWE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ACCREDITATION**

As an AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) accredited university, Dalhousie University's business programs are subject to Assurance of Learning (AOL) standards. During the semester anonymous data may be collected to assess if AOL goals and objectives are being met. The data collected will be used for program improvement purposes only and will not impact nor be associated with student grades.