

**Project Management in the Public Sector:  
Challenges, Methods, Tools, and Skills**

**PUBAFRS 7555, 3 credits**

**CRPLAN 6620, 3 credits**

**Mendenhall 185**

**Monday 5:30pm – 8:30pm**

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**Office Hours:** To be arranged

**Suggested Textbooks (not required):**

*The Project Management Memory Jogger*, Second Edition, 2010, GOAL/QPC, ISBN 978-1576811221

Taylor, James, *A Survival Guide for Project Managers*, Second Edition, 2006, ISBN 978-0814408773

HBR Guide to Project Management, Harvard Business Review, 2013, ISBN 978-1422187296

Students can access textbook information via the Barnes & Noble bookstore website: [www.shopOhioState.com](http://www.shopOhioState.com) as well as from their BuckeyeLink Student Center. This information is disseminated by B&N to all area bookstores. You may buy from a store of your choice and/or shop for books (always use ISBN# for searches) on line.

**Overview**

In an environment of rapid change and constrained resources, public- and private-sector organizations are often engaged in high-risk, high-visibility projects. As a result, organizations are recognizing the linkage between solid project management and organizational success and survival, and managers at all levels are being challenged to manage complex projects. Project management is an increasingly desirable skill set for those aspiring to senior management roles and a necessary skill for almost all in today's world.

Project management is a discipline that has matured and grown rapidly in the early years of the 21st century. Project management as currently defined includes:

- Project management methods built on established standards, most notably in the United States those established by the Project Management Institute (PMI<sup>(R)</sup>)
- Project management maturity models that allow organizations to benchmark their project management improvement against other organizations
- Certification of project managers, either using national programs (e.g., the Project Management Professional (PMP<sup>(R)</sup>) established by PMI or locally created programs designed to match specific organizational project management processes
- Use of a variety of project management software at the desktop, enterprise, and cloud-based level
- Broad application of project management training for project managers, team members and those responsible for identifying the project's business requirements
- Creation of management structures, like project management offices, to coordinate and govern projects

Project management can be argued to be the perfect management tool for organizations seeking to pursue rational-goals, and there is evidence to support the capability of project management to increase the ability of organizations to identify goals, build projects designed to accomplish those goals, optimize the use of resources, and create organizational value. It has been put to increasing use by public- and private-sector organizations in order to focus the attention of the organization on short-term, achievable deliverables and objectives, make optimal use of scarce resources, reduce project risk in high-value, strategic projects, clearly assign responsibility for task performance, and identify the tradeoffs created by alternative decision paths.

Managing projects is always a challenge, especially when those projects involve multiple stakeholders, new or unproven technology, shifting or unclear project requirements, and constrained resources. Those project challenges multiply in the public sector.

Managing public-sector projects can be more difficult than many private-sector projects because public-sector organizations:

- Operate in an environment of often-conflicting goals and outcomes
- Involve many layers of stakeholders with varied interests
- Must placate political interests and operate under media scrutiny
- Are allowed little tolerance for failure
- Require projects to be performed under constraints imposed by administrative rules and often-cumbersome policies and processes

- Require the cooperation and performance of agencies outside the project team for purchasing, hiring, and other functions
- Must make do with existing staff resources to manage and complete projects more often than private-sector projects

**Student Learning Objectives**

This course exposes students to requirements for effective project management and the many challenges it presents. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify standards, methods and approaches for project management;
- Apply the basic, ancillary, and “soft” skills necessary for successful project management by doing a team project during the semester;
- Describe the challenges of project management in the public sector; and
- Discuss and appreciate the strengths and limitations of project management in a complex organizational environment.

This course requires “hands-on” application of project management methods as well as an understanding of project management concepts.

**Grading and Course Requirements:**

The requirements for this course consist of class contribution, two research papers, a final exam, and a team project that will consist of a detailed project plan from each project team and a presentation of that plan to selected audience.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

Class Contribution and Attendance:	5%
Research Papers and Presentations (2 - 15% each – 10% paper, 5% presentation)	30%
Team Project Plan and Presentation (30% written material, 5% presentation)	35%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team Charter <span style="float: right;">5%</span></li> <li>• WBS, task list, Gantt chart, PERT chart <span style="float: right;">10%</span></li> <li>• Communication Plan <span style="float: right;">5%</span></li> <li>• Risk Management Plan <span style="float: right;">5%</span></li> <li>• Project Evaluation Plan <span style="float: right;">5%</span></li> <li>• Team Presentation <span style="float: right;">5%</span></li> </ul>	
Final	30%

Transformation of numerical grade to a letter grade will be according to the schedule below (OSU standard grade scheme):

A 93-100	B+ 87-89.9	C+ 77-79.9	D+ 67-69.9
A- 90-92.9	B 83-86.9	C 73-76.9	D 60-66.9
B- 80-82.9	C- 70-72.9	E < 60	

### Class Contribution and Attendance

Class contribution is one of the best and most reliable ways that you can demonstrate your understanding of the ideas and techniques presented in class, as well as your ability to apply them to real public sector situations. What you take away from this course will be a direct function of the effort you put forth inside and outside of class.

Class attendance is expected and attendance is taken each week. It is recognized that there will be conflicts at times and absences for reasonable cause will be taken into consideration if notice is given by email or other means. Missing class with no notice to the instructor will result in a loss of Class Contribution points at a rate of 1% for each 2 classes missed.

Effective class contribution entails providing good answers to questions. Good answers to questions indicate that you are actively listening to others and are providing comments relevant to the ongoing discussion. Relevant comments add to our understanding of the underlying conceptual material, challenge and clarify the ideas expressed by others, integrate material from past classes or other courses, and show evidence of analysis rather than mere opinion or “gut feeling”. Excellent responses demonstrate that you have thought deeply about the material and can develop creative and innovative insights through this analytic effort. Excellent answers to questions can be the basis of significant class discussion. Class Contribution and Attendance represents 5% of your final grade.

It is important to make every effort to attend those classes when research papers and team presentations are scheduled if at all possible.

### Research Papers

The research papers will allow an expanded number of ideas and concepts to be shared in class through the use of individual research and the preparation of research papers on selected topic. Each of these assignments will require the student to obtain a journal article that discusses project management or a specific element of project management and write a thoughtful summary of the article outlining its key points and providing a discussion of its usefulness in the student’s opinion. As general guidance each paper should be at least 3 pages and not more than 5 pages (1.5 line space).

Each student will provide a short summary presentation for class and prepare 6-8 PowerPoint slides with the high points of their summary and discussion.

Each of the two research papers will focus on a particular project management topic.

- Research Paper #1 should be focused on an aspect or case study of public sector related project management.
- Research Paper #2 should be prepared by selecting a recent (last 10 years) journal article that explores new or enhanced thoughts and ideas on project management as a skill or profession.

The following are some points of guidance (not rigid standards) that you might find useful:

- Your paper should briefly summarize the research and highlight its main points with respect to project management.
- What is the context for the project management article? Is it public sector or private sector? What industry or field is the article most relevant to?
- How do the author(s) present the material? What are their sources?
- Why do the authors believe that this topic is important to project management?
- If the article describes a particular method, how did the author(s) determine that this was an effective method?

Additionally,

- Do you agree with the author(s) conclusions? Why or why not?
- What could the author(s) have done differently?
- What can you incorporate into your work with project management as a result of this article?

Finally,

- How does this article contribute to the field of project management? Does it add something new to the field?

Each paper will count for 15% of the total grade, 10% for the written paper and 5% for the summary presentation.

The summary presentation will be given in class and should be prepared in PowerPoint and consist of no more than 8 slides.

### Team Project Plan and Presentation

Early in the course, each student will be required to identify a small team of students with whom they will work to create the final report. Groups are limited to 3-4 students. If students have problem identifying a group, the instructor will assist in group formation.

Each team must select a real-life project that has not been completed. (It may be in process or not yet started.) The project does not need to be work-related but it does need to be substantial enough to allow the team to consider all the elements of project management. The group's choice of a project must be submitted to the instructor for approval along with a roster of team members. Team should select a team leader as soon as possible.

For the selected project, the group must create a detailed project plan. That plan must include:

- A project charter
- A work breakdown structure
- A task list, Gantt chart, and project network diagram that indicates the critical path
- A communications plan, including identification of stakeholders and their interests as well as planned internal communication
- A risk management plan, including identified risks, risk prioritization, and risk response strategies
- A project evaluation plan

Teams will present their project and its plan to the class during the last two scheduled classes, and the presentation will form part of the grade. Teams must involve all members of the group in the presentation and should consider the time available and the best form of presentation to make. A PowerPoint presentation should be used and a particular target audience selected as a focus for the teams presentation.

Additional details concerning the presentations and format of the project plan will be provided as the semester goes on.

### Final

There will a final exam date of the class final. It will be take-home and will require thoughtful answers covering the basic framework of the course. The format and content of the exam will be discussed in more detail in class and detailed instructions will be provided later in the semester by the instructor.

## COURSE POLICIES

Academic and personal misconduct are defined and dealt with according to the procedures in the Code of Student Conduct (<https://studentlife.osu.edu/resources/>). Your work should be original. Excessive quotation and paraphrasing of other's work with or without citation will not be accepted.

The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct may constitute "Academic Misconduct. Sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

In the Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct, Section 3335-23-04 defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination.

Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct. If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me..

Assignments should be uploaded to Carmen by the date they are due as noted in the class schedule at the end of this syllabus. If you cannot deliver an assignment in that manner for some reason, you are responsible for submitting the assigned material to me through some other means, preferably by emailing a Microsoft Word attachment to [dcnjim2005@gmail.com](mailto:dcnjim2005@gmail.com). Informing the instructor of your intention to be absent does not waive your obligation to submit assigned work on time. **Late work will be accepted with a one-third-letter grade penalty each day that it is late (e.g. A- to B+).**

### Grade Appeals

Grades on assignments are intended to reflect the overall quality of performance of the student. You may appeal your grade on an assignment if you think the grade does not reflect the quality of your performance on the assignment. To appeal a grade, submit a clear written explanation describing why you believe the assigned grade is inappropriate within one week after your work is returned. The instructor will carefully consider all such appeals. The instructor will not re-grade an individual component of an assignment; instead the instructor will re-grade the entire assignment. As a result, the

final grade for the re-graded assignment may be greater than, less than, or equal to the original grade.

## **Accommodation Policy**

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

## **Glenn College Diversity Values Statement**

The Glenn College is committed to nurturing a diverse and inclusive environment for our students, faculty, staff, and guests that celebrates the fundamental value and dignity of everyone by recognizing differences and supporting individuality. We are dedicated to creating a safe space and promoting civil discourse that acknowledges and embraces diverse perspectives on issues and challenges that affect our community.”

## **Office of Student Life Counseling and Consultation Services**

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the **Office of Student Life Counseling and Consultation Services (CCS)** by visiting <https://ccs.osu.edu/> or calling 614-292- 5766. **CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 4th Floor of the PAES Building. 24 hour emergency**

help is also available through the National 24/7 Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

**Outline of Class Schedule, Topics, and Assignments:**

<b>Session</b>	<b>Topics Covered</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments</b>
Session 1: Jan 8	Course overview, the challenges of public-sector projects, distinguishing characteristics of public-sector projects, why projects fail, overview of project roadmap, the definition of projects	PM Memory Jogger (1, 2) Taylor (9) HBR Chapters (1, 2)  <b>Organize project teams</b>
Jan 15 Martin Luther King Holiday	NO CLASS	
Session 2: Jan 22	Project initiation and integration, the role of the project charter	PM Memory Jogger (3) HBR (3)
Session 3: Jan 28	Project team, working as a team, managing a team	PM Memory Jogger (3) HBR (12)  <b>Team Project Charters due</b>
Session 4: Feb 5	Development of the project plan, project scope management, the creation of the WBS, detailed project planning, tools	PM Memory Jogger (4) Taylor (5 and 6) HBR (3-11)  <b>Research Paper #1 and slides are due</b>
Session 5: Feb 12	Research paper #1 - presentation and class discussion	
Session 6: Feb 19	Development of the project plan, project scope management, the creation of the WBS, detailed project planning, tools - continued	PM Memory Jogger (4) Taylor (5 and 6) HBR (3-11)
Session 7: Feb 26	Project execution, project time and cost management, communications	PM Memory Jogger (5) Taylor (13) HBR (13-19)

		<b>Research Paper #2 and slides are due</b>
Session 8: Mar 5	Research paper #2 - presentation and class discussion	
Mar 12 – Spring Break	NO CLASS	
Session 10: Mar 19	Project closeout and evaluation	PM Memory Jogger (6) Taylor (14) HBR (20, 21)
Session 11: Mar 26	Project Communications - Expanded Discussion	
Session 12: April 2	Project Risk Management - Expanded Discussion	
Session 13: April 9	Group project presentations	
Session 14: April 23	Group project presentations	<b>Final project reports due</b>
April 30	Final	<b>Final due</b>