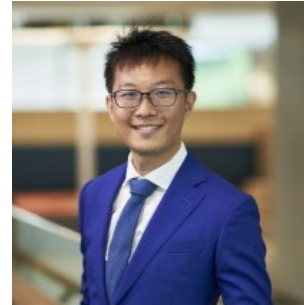




GLOBAL SUMMER PROGRAMME 2026

OBHR301 GROUP DYNAMICS IN ORGANISATIONS

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Organizations are increasingly relying on teams to generate solutions required for sustained business success. However, it can be extremely challenging for leaders to manage teams effectively in today's diverse, digital and dynamic times. This course examines the design, management, and leadership of teams in organizational settings. The focus is on the interpersonal processes and structural characteristics that influence the effectiveness of teams, the dynamics of intra-team relationships, and sharing of knowledge and information in teams. This course is designed to provide you with perspectives and skills that will help you to develop and manage high impact teams. Topics include understanding the foundations of high performing teams, decision-making in teams, managing team conflict; team creativity and innovation; leading diverse and virtual teams, among others.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After taking this course, students will:

- Apply their understanding of group dynamics, and the behaviours that create a collaborative and supportive team environment, to diagnose a team and recommend interventions for improvement.
- Leverage diversity and translate into high-quality team decisions and creative solutions.
- Develop a toolkit of practical skills to build and manage effective teams

PRE-REQUISITES / REQUIREMENTS / MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE COURSE(S)

None.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation	30%
Case Analysis	30%
Take-Home Exam	40%
Total	100%

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND EXPECTATIONS

Class Participation and Experiential Team Learning: This course is a blend of theory and practice where it is designed with an emphasis on interactive team experiential learning, including exercises, cases, videos, and simulations, that afford the opportunity to apply the concepts concretely. You will participate in these activities that simulate the challenges and problems encountered by real world teams and their leaders. These activities are designed to illustrate the challenges of managing teams and to provide a forum in which to hone your team skills and management abilities. You will also analyse written and video cases that reflect the structural characteristics and dynamic social interaction processes that facilitate and impede team effectiveness. In addition, we will cover and discuss implications of leading teams on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues in our classes (Classes 6 and 7).

Numerous identical team simulations/discussions will take place simultaneously in each class session. Although the team roles given to students are the same, the team exercises often result in vastly different outcomes. Thus, class participation in the team exercises and discussions is important for providing students with an understanding of the different issues and dynamics that emerge differently for each team. You should come to class fully prepared for each team activity, and also prepared to contribute to the class discussions that precede and follow each exercise. It is very important to try to attend all class sessions, and actively participate in the team activities, as this will allow you to benefit the most from the class. If for some reason you cannot attend class, let me know as soon as possible so that we can ensure that team activities can still run smoothly.

During the course of the team activities, you will likely grapple with the key decision points, as you and your classmates present various potentially diverging views on the issues and questions at hand. This process allows you to become aware of the different perspectives, which will help inform your opinion on the matter in the future. As a wrap-up, I will present the key findings from social science research that inform the decision under question, as well as structured frameworks which will allow you to be better prepared to face similar situations in the future. Finally, readings will be used as a source of more detailed exposition regarding the topics that were introduced in the preceding class.

Case Analysis: The real value of this class will be determined by the degree to which you can put its lessons to use. This assignment is designed to bring the knowledge you gain in class to bear on real issues in real teams in organizations. In your teams, you will prepare a case-analysis of a real-world team. Each team's task is to interview at least one member of a non-SMU team (e.g., non-profit leadership group, business group to which you do not belong to etc.). You may have to interview multiple members or the same member more than once to gain a better understanding of the team's dynamics. The team can be from organizations with which you previously worked in, or from your friend and family members' current teams. If you need assistance in identifying a team to study, please let me know. The goal is for you to identify challenges faced by this team and devise a plan to address the challenges in question.

You must email me a brief (one to two paragraphs) description of your project plan before the start of the 5th class session. Your team will then write an 6-8 page group report and analysis (Times New Roman, double-spaced with 12 point font and 1" margins all around, excluding supplementary materials and/or appendices) of your case. The group assignment is due by the start of the last day of class.

If you need help with your case analysis, you can schedule one-on-one meetings to discuss (1) methods of problem diagnosis, (2) appropriate strategies/plans for the case team, and (3) any other issues and concerns.

Groupings and group size

Students will form their own teams comprising of 3 to 4 members. You are encouraged to find your own group members. The group-member list should be submitted to the TA no later than the start of the 2nd class session.

Take-Home Exam: The take-home exam will comprise of essay questions that provide you with the opportunity to demonstrate and apply the concepts learnt in the course. Exam questions will cover material from lectures, team activities, and class discussion. The take-home exam is open book, open laptop, and open internet. More details will be released in class.

CONSULTATIONS

If you need to see me for consultation, please contact me to make an appointment. My office and contact information are listed at the top of this course outline. I am readily available by email.

RECOMMENDED TEXT AND READINGS

The recommended readings will primarily be from academic and practitioner journals and are selected to provide scientifically valid and practically useful insights into specific aspects of teams relevant to this course. Please read the required readings after each class.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity

All acts of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of exam questions, or tampering with the academic work of other students) are serious offences.

All work (whether oral or written) submitted for purposes of assessment must be the student's own work. Penalties for violation of the policy range from zero marks for the component assessment to expulsion, depending on the nature of the offense.

When in doubt, students should consult the instructors of the course. Details on the SMU Code of Academic Integrity may be accessed at <https://smu.sharepoint.com/sites/oasis/SitePages/DOS-WKLSWC/UCSC.aspx>.

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Accessibility

SMU strives to make learning experiences accessible for all. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers due to disability, please let me know immediately. You are also welcome to contact the university's accessibility services team if you have questions or concerns about academic provisions: accessibility@smu.edu.sg. Please be aware that the accessible tables in our seminar room should remain available for students who require them.

LESSON PLAN			
LESSONS	TOPICS	CLASS EXERCISES/ACTIVITIES COVERED REQUIRED READING	ADDITIONAL READINGS
LESSON 1	Introduction and Understanding Yourself as a Leader	Leadership Self Introspection (Exercise)	
LESSON 2	Designing and Structuring the Team	Belbin Team Roles Leslie Brinkman at Versutia Capital (Case Study)	
LESSON 3	Evaluating and Rewarding Teams	Growing Managers: Moving from Team Member to Team Leader (Case Study) Performance Feedback (Exercise)	Buckingham, M., & Goodall, A. (2015). Reinventing performance management. Harvard Business Review, 93(4), 40-50.
LESSON 4	Processes of Teamwork	Murder Mystery (Exercise) LiveCase Simulation: Move – Leadership Performance (Simulation)	Bernstein, E. (2013). Leadership and teaming. Harvard Business School. Mesmer-Magnus, J. R., & DeChurch, L. A. (2009). Information sharing and team performance: A meta-analysis. Journal of applied psychology, 94(2), 535-546
LESSON 5	Cooperation and Competition in Teams	Galbraith & Company (Exercise)	
LESSON 6	Communication and Conflict Management in Teams	Communication Exercise Conflict Management Mode Ron Ventura at Mitchell Memorial Hospital (Case Study)	
LESSON 7	Power and Influence in Teams	Movie Influence Principles (Exercise)	
LESSON 8	Decision-Making in Teams (Guest Lecture)	- Stranded (Exercise)	
LESSON 9	Team Creativity and Innovation	- Team Creativity (Exercise) - SCAMPER (Exercise)	Kelley, T., & Kelley, D. (2012). Reclaim your creative confidence. Harvard business review, 90(12), 115-118 Amabile, T. M., Hadley, C.

			N., & Kramer, S. J. (2002). Creativity under the gun. Harvard business review, 80, 52-63
LESSON 10	Managing Diverse Teams	Bafa Bafa (Simulation) Team Conflict: The “Chatty” Accusation at the Customer Support Call Center (Case Study)	Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2016). Why diversity programs fail. Harvard Business Review, 94(7),
LESSON 11	Leading Virtual Teams	Managing Virtual Teams (A) (Case Study)	Watkins, M. (2013). Making virtual teams work: Ten basic principles. Harvard Business Review, (JUNE), 27. Raffoni, M. (2020). “5 Questions That (Newly) Virtual Leaders Should Ask Themselves “. Harvard Business Review vom, 1, 2020.
LESSON 12	Group Presentations		