UC Davis GSM
MGV 490A-002
Causes of Organizational Wrongdoing
Residential

May 2025   Professor Gina Dokko
Fri 1-4pm   Gallagher Hall, 3211
Sat 9am-12pm and 1pm-4pm   gdokko@ucdavis.edu
Sun 8:30am-12:30pm

Learning Objectives
The Causes of Organizational Wrongdoing examines why people perpetrate and participate in unethical, socially irresponsible, and illegal behavior in organizations. Wrongdoing is pervasive in organizations, so it is important to ask why so many managers behave badly in organizations, even though the vast majority of managers are good people. The objective of this course is to develop knowledge about the many factors that lead to wrongful behavior, and skills to recognize and circumvent wrongful behavior in yourself and your co-workers. To do so, we study organizations from two perspectives: one where wrongdoing is aberrant, perpetrated by bad people, and one where wrongdoing is "normal" or just a small step from behavior that is not wrong, perpetrated by ordinary people like you and me.

Because we have very limited, and very compressed time together in the residential format, **you will be expected to read and digest virtually all of the material before we meet for the first time.** We will meet 4 times over 3 days, and our time together will be focused on analyzing cases together.

If you are on the fence about whether or not this course is right for you, please watch this short course introduction video (in Module 0 on Canvas), which will help you decide.

Course Materials
1. Causes of Organizational Wrongdoing syllabus. You are responsible for the information contained in this syllabus.
2. *Normal Organizational Wrongdoing*. Palmer, D. This is your textbook for the course, and it contains most of your theory readings. You are required to have it. There is only one edition, so you can feel free to buy a used copy. https://www.amazon.com/Normal-Organizational-Wrongdoing-Misconduct-Organizations/dp/0199677425
3. *Readings, Lectures, and Cases on Canvas*. Additional required readings, recorded lectures, and cases or links to buy the cases will be available on Canvas.

Requirements and Grading
This course is graded on a pass/no-pass basis. To pass the course, you must:
1) Attend and be engaged in all 4 in-person meetings
2) Complete all of the pre-course work and mark them as complete in Canvas
3) Score 100% on the knowledge check quizzes that are included in each topic area
4) Turn in your analytical paper assignment on time and earn a passing grade on it

Course Format and Administration
Learning occurs both through preparing readings and cases and through in-class interaction. Therefore, it is critical that you **come prepared to discuss the assigned material in class**. The course is divided into 4 broad topic areas to fit with the 4 times we meet, and material for each topic area is in a Canvas module. You should expect to spend about 7-8 hours going through the four Canvas modules required for this course, **in addition to** the time you spend reading and absorbing the assigned readings. Our in-class time together will be focused on discussing the cases.

Preparing for Case Discussions
In this course, we use cases to gain a deeper understanding of theoretical concepts. By applying the theory to real-life situations, you will be able to see how theory on organizational wrongdoing can help you to understand why it is happening, and how to address or prevent such situations.

To prepare for case discussions, **first read the assigned theory reading(s) for the subject and keep the key concepts in mind as you read the case**. The readings were selected to accompany the case, because they provide theoretical guidance for analyzing the case.

Your experience of this course is largely dependent on the quality of *your* collective discussion. Sections where the discussion is thoughtful and lively and where students engage with each other tend to have a better understanding of the course material than sections where students simply answer questions I ask. A high-quality discussion requires hard work on your part. Before coming to class, read the case carefully enough to be fully conversant with the facts and have an informed opinion about what's going on in the case. Become familiar with the main characters in the case: their roles, actions and problems. Learn their names – otherwise no one will understand what you're trying to say. In class, **pay attention to what others say.** A good case discussion is a guided conversation, and responding to a classmate's comment enhances the conversation. Repeating what others say or weighing in on a topic we have already left is not productive and shows that you are not following the discussion.

The quality of your participation is more important than the quantity. Positive contributions are those that advance the discussion by presenting new ideas or insights, or building on others' comments, or presenting a counterpoint to others' comments in a respectful way. Talking without contributing to the discussion wastes time. However, I want to stress that positive contributions are not necessarily "right" answers. I encourage you to experiment and take risks. "Wrong" answers can also be instructive, and debate is often a good way to learn and a good use of time.

Knowledge check quizzes – due before class begins
Objective: Check your understanding of the theory and details in the week's readings.
Each Canvas module will contain a short multiple choice quiz that is **due before we meet as a class**. Each quiz consists of 10 multiple choice questions about major points about the theory reading(s) or the case. You must complete all quizzes with a perfect score in order to get credit and pass the course. You may take the quizzes as many times as you want. The quizzes are meant to be developmental – to check your own understanding of the material and help you see which topics from the reading are most important. There will be time during our in-person meetings for asking questions about the material on the quizzes.

Analytical Paper – due one week after class ends
Objective: Demonstrate you understand course theory well enough to apply to a real-life situation

There are many instances of organizational wrongdoing that you will encounter. For this assignment, you will find an article in a newspaper or magazine that describes an instance of wrongdoing (past or current) in a business organization. You will write a short (about 1 page) analysis on the situation. You must turn in both the article and your short analysis.

Your paper must describe the situation succinctly, **analyzing the cause of the wrongdoing using one or more concepts from the course**. The primary criterion for a passing grade on this assignment is using what you learned in the course to analyze the situation. If you could have written the paper without taking the course, you will not get credit for it and **might not pass the course**. This should never happen: if you need help, you should contact me directly.

Note on Digital Devices and the use of AI
Digital devices (laptop, tablets, smartphone) should only be used for class purposes, such as note-taking. You should know that recent research provides evidence that use of digital devices interferes with learning: students who use digital devices for non-class purposes tend to score lower on exams than those who do not use these devices. Interestingly, students who do not use these devices, but have direct view of others' devices, also scored lower. Online content is designed to be distracting, and the less competition there is for your attention, the better you will learn. It's wonderful when some point of discussion in class makes you want to investigate further, but don't do it in class – you will lose the thread of the conversation or de-rail others' learning. There is increasing evidence that **multi-tasking degrades efficiency and is bad for the quality of cognitive work**. Instead, consider sharing your thought with the rest of us. It might lead to an interesting detour in the conversation.

Many students have considered the use of generative AI, such as ChatGPT, as a way of completing written assignments. Though generative AI can be helpful for many things, it can impede learning new things, so I discourage its use. Submitting AI-generated content as your own or failing to disclose use of AI is considered cheating and will be heavily penalized. **In fact, being caught cheating is virtually the only way to fail this course.** Our mutual interest is in your learning about how to think about organizational wrongdoing in an analytical way. If you fear failing the course, talk to me BEFORE resorting to cheating; I will help you. Understand that cheating is a theft of my time, as grading an illegitimate assignment is worthless activity. You will fail the course, at minimum, and could be expelled from the University. Also see my AI policy below.

Statement on Accommodation
UC Davis is committed to educational equity in the academic setting, and in serving a diverse student body. All students who are interested in learning about how disabilities are accommodated can visit the Student Disability Center (SDC). If you are a student who requires academic accommodations, please contact the SDC directly at sdc@ucdavis.edu or 530-752-3184. If you receive an SDC Letter of Accommodation, submit it to your instructor for each course as soon as possible, at least within the first two weeks of a course.

Rights and Responsibilities
All participants in the course, instructor and students, are expected to follow the UC Davis Principles of Community, which includes affirmation of the right of freedom of expression, and rejection of discrimination. The right to express points-of-view without fear of retaliation or censorship is a cornerstone of academic freedom. A diversity of opinions with respectful disagreement and informed debate enriches learning. However, in this course, any expression or disagreement should

adhere to the obligations we have toward each other to build and maintain a climate of mutual respect and caring.

You are expected to take UC Davis's Code of Academic Conduct as seriously as we do. You are responsible for understanding what constitutes a violation (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, etc.). It would be an unpleasant irony if you violate the code in this course. Academic conduct violations will not be tolerated; violators will fail the course (receive no credit) and be turned over to Student Judicial Affairs, where penalties may include expulsion from the program. If you are uncertain about what constitutes an academic conduct violation, please refer to the code linked above, contact your instructor, or refer to the Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs.

All material in the course that is not otherwise subject to copyright is the copyright of the course instructor and should be considered the instructor's intellectual property.

AI policy: Any written work in which students do not explicitly identify writing, text, or media generated by AI will be assumed as original to the student. Any AI use must be tracked and acknowledged through means such as highlighting the text and explaining what parts have been AI-generated. If violations to this policy are detected, students will receive a "0" for their submission and the violation will be reported to the Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs for further action up to and including expulsion from the program. If you are unsure about how to adhere to this policy, you should ask me for guidance.

Safety and Emergency Preparedness
UC Davis has many resources to help in case of emergency or crisis. While reviewing campus Emergency Information, you may want to register for UC Davis Warn Me and Aggie Alert, which will give you timely information and instructions about emergencies and situations on campus that affect your safety.

If there is an emergency in the classroom or in non-Davis locations, follow the instructions of your instructor.

Student Wellness
You deserve respect and are encouraged to practice self-care so that you can remain focused and engaged; that might mean getting a drink of water, leaving to use the restroom, taking a moment to stretch, or doing something else you need to do to take care of yourself. Please be respectful of others by minimizing distractions when practicing self-care. If your needs conflict with expected classroom behavior, discuss with me as early as possible.

You can visit Virtual UC Davis to find resources related to health and well-being, academics, basic needs (food and housing) and more.

Disclaimer
Unexpected events might require elements of this syllabus to change. I will keep you informed of any changes.

Because the residential format is so compressed, you should expect to spend a good deal of time reading and preparing for class before we meet for the first time. **Note that the lecture videos, exercises, and knowledge check quizzes will take a total of about 7 hours of time on top of the time spent on the readings.** Make sure to complete all of this work before we meet in person. Our time together will be spent discussing the cases, and very little time will be spent reviewing the content from the lecture videos.

Readings and cases are found in the book *Normal Organizational Wrongdoing* or on Canvas. For the cases, I will provide questions to guide your reading of the case, and help you get started with analysis (see relevant Canvas module). We'll finish the case analysis together in class.

Cl	Topic	Readings	Case Reading/Preparation	Due before class meets for the first time
1	Power	• Ch. 9 in *Normal Organizational Wrongdoing*.	• Twohey, M., J. Kantor, S. Dominus, J.Rutenberg, and S. Eder, "Weinstein's Complicity Machine" • Andy Fastow at Enron (case embedded within Ch.9)	For each class, you should do all of the items in the Canvas modules, including lecture videos, exercises, and quizzes. Your final project for this course is due one week after our last meeting.
2	Culture	• Ch. 5 in *Normal Organizational Wrongdoing* (you can stop when you get to the section: "Integrating the rational choice and culture explanations")	• Roberto, M.A. "Boeing 737 MAX Company Culture and Product Failure" (WDI Publishing case) • Prison experiment (no prep, in-class case)	
3	Ethical Decision-making and Commitment	• Ch. 6 in *Normal Organizational Wrongdoing* • (optional) "Commitment" (pp. 162-171) in Ch. 8 in *Normal Organizational Wrongdoing*	• Walter Pavlo at MCI (case embedded within Ch. 6) • Quiz Show (no prep, in-class case)	
4	Wrongdoing in Startups	• Palmer, Donald and Tim Weiss, 2021. "The unique vulnerabilities of entrepreneurial ventures to misconduct." (you can stop when you get to the "Addendum" on p. 19)	• Carreyrou, J., 2019. "Prologue," *Bad Blood*, Alfred Knopf, pp. 3-8. • The Inventor: Out for Blood in Silicon Valley (no prep, in-class case)	