

**HDDR 6320**  
**The Role of an Ombuds in Organizational Conflict**  
Southern Methodist University  
Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management  
**Spring Term Class Meetings**  
August 23-25, 2013 and September 6-8, 2013

**Instructor Information**

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Office Hours: By appointment only  
Credit: 3 hours

**Course Description**

Organizations are increasingly implementing Ombuds programs to assist in addressing workplace conflict and concerns. This course will engage students in an exploration of the efficacy of utilizing an Ombuds program as an essential component of an integrated dispute resolution system. The course will cover history and development of the Ombuds profession, theoretical and practical concepts of the Ombuds function, professional standards of practice, ethical standards, legal and regulatory considerations, the need for an awareness of individual, group, and systemic issues that contribute to conflict and its potential impact on organizations. Students will learn practical skills and strategies that are unique to the Ombuds practice and review conflict management skills that are transferable to the Ombuds profession. Through lecture, discussion, interactive exercises, role plays, and case studies, participants will gain a functional knowledge of the Ombuds practice and profession.

**Prerequisite**

None

**Learning Objectives**

The students will be able to –

- describe the distinguishing characteristics among the various types of Ombuds in terms of function.
- describe the essential characteristics of an Ombuds program.
- describe how an Ombuds program is an essential and distinct component of an integrated conflict resolution system.
- identify the major elements of the code of ethics and standards of practice and explain their significance to a successful Ombuds program.
- explain why confidentiality is the defining characteristic of organizational Ombuds programs and how confidentiality and notice concepts are interdependent.
- demonstrate an awareness of organizational fairness and politics issues and their impact on organizations and individuals in the workplace
- demonstrate skills associated with the Ombuds practice such as conflict coaching, reflective questioning, etc. through the use of case studies and interactive exercises.

**Class Days and Times**

Friday, August 23, 4:00–9:00pm; Saturday, August 24, 8:30am-5:30pm; Sunday, August 25, 8:30am-5:30pm  
Friday, September 6, 4:00–9:00pm; Saturday, September 7, 8:30am-5:30pm; Sunday, September 8, 8:30am-5:30pm

**Required Books and Materials**

- (1) James T. Ziegefuss, Jr., and Patricia O'Rourke, *The Ombudsman Handbook: Designing and Managing an Effective Problem-Solving Program* (McFarland & Company, Inc, 2011)
- (2) HDDR 6320 Course Pack (binder of reading materials)

## Grading and Evaluation

**Class participation and attendance** - 20% (the class participation grade consists of attendance, contribution to class discussion and productive participation in interactive exercises, role plays, and case studies)

**Essay** – 20% (effectiveness of presentation as evaluated in message, content, clarity)

Essay will be a 5-6 pages persuasive piece written to formally present information or defend a position, and to demonstrate knowledge and expertise on the topic of the Ombuds profession. Paper is due by 12pm on the stated due date. Late papers will receive an automatic letter grade deduction.

**Final Exam** - 60%

## Grading Scale

93-100 = A Exceptional	A superior / outstanding performance. Has mastered the concepts and adds unique contributes to class discussions.
90-92 = A- Excellent	A very good / admirable performance. Displays understanding in all areas of the class, and contributes successfully to class discussions.
87-89 = B+ Outstanding	Above average performance. A few insignificant flaws may appear, but overall has great application of the field.
83-86 = B Good	A generally satisfactory, intellectually adequate performance. Few significant flaws in performance.
80-82 = B- Adequate	A barely satisfactory performance. Contributes little to class discussions and lacks a clear understanding of concepts.
77-79 = C+ Not sufficient	An unacceptable performance. Unable to engage in class discussions and has little comprehension of theories.

## **Written Assignment Guidelines**

	<b>100-90</b>	<b>89-83</b>	<b>82- Below</b>
<b>Depth of Thought and Analysis</b>  40%	Paper is constructed in a logical and coherent fashion. Conclusions flow from a well-executed plan, in succinct and meaningful statements.	Topic is started clearly. Remarks show a degree of analysis. Some areas of the paper lack supporting and rational support.	Topic is vague and under developed. Paper lacks the level of effort for original graduate work.
<b>Synthesis and Congruency</b>  20%	Paper is well integrated and flows as one complete narrative. Paper flows from general ideas to specific conclusions.	Sections of the paper connect, however, not all sections or paragraphs fall in a natural or logical order.	The paper appears to have no direction, with subtopics appearing disjointed.
<b>Thoroughness</b>  20%	The appropriate content is covered in depth without being redundant.	Essential material is not covered to the degree to explain the topic thoroughly.	Major sections are omitted, glossed over, or unnecessarily repeated.
<b>Clarity of Writing and Mechanics</b>  20%	Writing is crisp, clear, and succinct. No spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors are made.	Unnecessary words and ambiguous statements are made. Meaning is unclear in parts of the paper. Some spelling and grammar errors	It is hard to know what the writer is trying to express. Writing is convoluted. Misspelling words, incorrect grammar, and improper

		are made.	punctuation are frequent.
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## **GRADE OF INCOMPLETE**

A student may receive a grade of I (Incomplete) if at least 50 percent of the course requirements have been completed with passing grades, but for some justifiable reason, acceptable to the instructor, the student has been unable to complete the full requirements of the course. At the time a grade of I is given, the instructor must stipulate in writing to the student and to the University registrar the requirements and completion date that are to be met and the grade that will be given if the requirements are not met by the completion date. The maximum period of time allowed to clear the Incomplete grade normally is 12 months. If the Incomplete grade is not cleared by the date set by the instructor or by the end of the 12-month Policies and Procedures 25 deadline, the grade of I will be changed to the grade provided by the instructor at the time the Incomplete grade was assigned or to a grade of F if no alternate grade was provided. The grade of I is not given in lieu of a grade of F or W, or other grade, each of which is prescribed for other specific circumstances.

If the student's work is incomplete, poor quality and not acceptable, a grade of F will be given. The grade of I does not authorize a student to attend the course during a later term. Graduation candidates must clear all Incomplete grades prior to the deadline in the Official University Calendar, which may allow less time than 12 months. Failure to do so can result in removal from the degree candidacy list and/or conversion of the grade of I to the grade indicated by the instructor at the time the grade of I was given.

For graduate students, a maximum of two (six hours) concurrently held grades of Incomplete in courses other than thesis is allowed. If this maximum is reached, the student will be allowed to take only one three-hour course per term until the Incomplete total is reduced. Students who accumulate a total of three grades of Incomplete in courses other than thesis will be put on probation and not allowed to enroll further until the total is reduced.

### **Class Policies**

***Class Attendance:*** Regular and punctual attendance is required. Missed classes will affect a student's participation grade. Missing more than e classes may result in an incomplete or significant reduction in a student's grade. The instructor should be advised by e-mail in advance of any missed class or if the student anticipates the need to be late for class.

***Religious Observance:*** Students who must miss a class because of their religious observance must notify the instructor at least 24 hours in advance of such class.

***Disability Accommodations:*** Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.

***Class Decorum:*** Please arrive on time for each class session. Turn off all cell phones or pagers. Do not read newspapers, books for other classes, or other outside reading material during class. Laptops are to be used solely for classroom purposes. Please avoid the temptation to read or send text or email messages during class time. If you need to leave early, please make sure the instructor knows before class begins, and take your leave quietly.

***Honor Code:*** Students are reminded of the SMU Honor Code as referenced in the *Student Handbook*. Intellectual integrity and academic honesty are both the foundation and the goals for this program. Please reference and review the university policies on the responsibilities, policies and penalties regarding academic honesty. For a full text of the policy, see the following link: [http://www.smu.edu/studentlife/PCL\\_05\\_HC.asp](http://www.smu.edu/studentlife/PCL_05_HC.asp)

### **ADD/DROP POLICY**

If you are unable to complete this course, you must officially withdraw by the university deadline; the last day to Add/Drop regular courses without a grade record or Billing. Withdrawing is a formal procedure which you must initiate; your instructor cannot do it for you.

### **SMU EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

As part of the federal government response to the H1N1 (Swine Flu) virus, the Department of Health and Human Services issued a nationwide public health emergency preparedness declaration on April 26, 2009. The declaration was renewed on July 23, 2009 and is currently in force. For the semester ahead, there is concern that the level and intensity of flu cases could increase substantially.

- 1) For updates on the campus-wide status of flu conditions at SMU, please visit <http://www.smu.edu>.
- 2) If flu conditions require cancellation of a class session or other changes for this course, an email will be sent to all class members.
- 3) In the event of a major campus emergency at SMU, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control.

