

TEACHING THE MODULE:

Understanding and Changing Organizational Culture¹

There are several ways to teach these materials in in-person, online and hybrid courses in one or more sessions. We recommend that the case "Understanding and Changing Organizational Culture" is the centerpiece of the module. Instructors should begin with the case and follow up with lectures/discussions of organizational culture. Beginning with the case invites students to wrestle with the issues themselves and to consider what they would do if they were a part of the WNYC organization.

Single Session Approach

If an instructor wants to cover the module in a single 50- to 75-minute session, the following materials could be assigned as pre-class work before class discussion focused on the Case Study. For information about leading the class discussion of the case study, see the "Case Study Teaching Note."

Advance Assignments:

- Video: "Understanding Organizational Culture"
- Video: "Shaping Organizational Culture"
- Case Study reading: Ben Smith, "It's the Media's 'Mean-Too' Moment. Stop Yelling and Go to Human Resources." New York Times, May 23, 2021

Three Session Approach

Another approach would be to cover the module in three 50- to 75-minute sessions. In the first session, the case "Understanding and Changing Organizational Culture" and elements of organizational culture would be discussed. In the second session, students would focus on analyzing elements of organizational culture using the activity "Identifying Elements of Organizational Culture" and the video "Debbie Hiott of KUT on Leading Organizational Change." In the third session, students would focus on ways to change organizational culture using the activity "Changing an Organization's Culture" and the video "What Works: From Good Intentions to Effective Action."

Advance Assignments for session 1 of 3:

- Video: "Understanding Organizational Culture"
- Video: "Shaping Organizational Culture"
- Case Study Reading: Ben Smith "It's the Media's 'Mean-Too' Moment. Stop Yelling and Go to Human Resources." New York Times, May 23, 2021

See the "Case Study Teaching Note" for guidance on leading a class discussion of the case study reading. Additionally, the videos "Understanding Organizational Culture" and "Shaping Organizational Culture" could be used in discussion about the case study reading to frame student's understanding of the case study.

Session 2 of 3:

- Activity: "Identifying Elements of Organizational Culture." Students would need to be prompted to turn in artifacts of organizational culture before this class session. See details on the activity to prepare for running the activity in session 2.
- Video: "Debbie Hiott of KUT on Leading Organizational Change"

Session 3 of 3:

Advance Assignments for session 3 of 3:

- Ask students to read the article by Jessica Nordell, “How Slack Got Ahead in Diversity,” The Atlantic, April 26, 2018.
- Video: “What Works: From Good Intentions to Effective Action.”

During session 3, use the activity “Changing an Organization’s Culture” for discussion. The video “What Works: From Good Intentions to Effective Action” describes the human resources policies and practices that can work to overcome barriers to diversity that happen in organizations.

See “Teaching Note: Understanding and Changing Organizational Culture,” “Activity: Identifying Elements of Organizational Culture” and “Activity: Changing an Organization’s Culture” for guidance for leading discussions of the case and related materials and the activities. See “Module Overview: Understanding and Changing Organizational Culture” for supporting material including background reading for instructors and additional readings for students to expand on any of the topics covered in this module. This module can be followed by other modules in the Leadership Skills curriculum, particularly “Creating Safe and Fair Newsrooms” and “Giving Voice to Values.”

¹ This teaching note was written by Jennifer L. Jones Barbour for the purposes of aiding instructors in teaching the module “Understanding and Changing Organizational Culture.”