


International Summer University^{WU} 2024

WU (Vienna University of Economics and Business)

Course outline

Course title	Sense and purpose in leading people - the holistic approach
Instructors	<p>Harald POSCH focusonhumans@gmail.com</p> <p>HR / Change Management Expert, Consultant &</p> <p>Stephan KLINGER stephan.klinger@wu.ac.at</p> <p>WU (Vienna University of Economics and Business) Department of Human Resource Management</p> 
Language of instruction	English
Course level	Graduate
Contact hours	35 teaching hours (45 min. each)

Aim of the course
<p>“Change is the only constant in life” – from the early days of globalization onwards managers and consultants quoted this line of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus to demonstrate that change in people, organizations, markets or even the world is a natural part of life. Despite these dynamics, people strive for stable meanings in life and in work.</p> <p>Organizations state their meanings in documents like mission statements, code of conducts or sustainability reports. Shared meanings are not created via managerial decisions or said documents alone, but socially constructed. One way to shift the focus from decision making to meaning is to look more closely at sensemaking and purpose in organizations. Both can be triggered by events, new CEOs, threatened identities or crises for which the meaning is ambiguous, or the outcome is uncertain. Such occurrences, when noticed, interrupt people’s ongoing flow, disrupt their understanding of the world and create uncertainty about how to act. The basic idea of sensemaking is that reality is an ongoing accomplishment that emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs.</p> <p>“From vulnerability to resilience” - In this course we are going to take a deep dive into the mechanism and processes of sensemaking in organizations and what the purpose of management is or can be about. Furthermore we will examine how leadership can influence this process of “Negotiation of Strangeness”, via sense-giving or sense-breaking – with the aim to create meaningful enabling organizations.</p>

But not just theory will be in focus: students will have the opportunity to conduct interviews with leaders from (very) different organisations to find out, if there is some general underlying principle regarding sensemaking and in which ways purpose can be defined as a compass.

Learning objectives

- To gain knowledge how to create sense and purpose when leading people
- To know more about change management and cultural aspects
- Conducting interviews with extraordinary leaders
- Holistic thinking and liberating creativity

Application requirements

Application requirements for the Graduate Program are current enrollment in a master's or MBA program (or equivalent), with a focus on business administration/economics, and / or a bachelor degree in a business major by the time of participation in the ISU^{WU} program.

Applicants interested in participating in the International Summer University^{WU} need an excellent command of the English language. The English language requirements can be found at [ISU^{WU} Language Requirements](#).

Application requirements for WU students can be found on our [application website](#).

Teaching methods

Lectures, presentations, discussions, simulations, group work, interventions

Pre-course assignment

For the pre-course assignment students will deal with the course literature and prepare examples of sensemaking in organizations (Deadline: July 3, 2024). Students will receive the material and appropriate instructions by the end of May 2024.

Course contents

DAY 1	Introduction, presentations PCA - Task 1, leading into the topic
DAY 2	Creating one questionnaire for all interviews, preparation of the interviews (techniques, dos & don'ts,...)
DAY 3	Conducting interviews, analysis & documentation
DAY 4	Reports on the interviews, main findings, compilation; Change Management, Change of perspective, Cultural aspects
DAY 5	Simulation game
DAY 6	Presentations PCA - Task 3, preparation of the final presentations (includes PCA - Task 2)
DAY 7	Final presentations, preparation Poetry Slam
DAY 8	Conclusions on the topic of the course, Poetry Slam

Criteria for successful completion of the course

Grading Scale

- 100-90% excellent (1)
- 89-80% good (2)
- 79-70% satisfactory (3)
- 69-60% sufficient (4)
- 59-0% fail (5)

Assessment
Pre-course assignment: 25% Students project: 45% Active participation/contribution: 30% <i>Please note: students' attendance and punctuality are mandatory in all classes except in cases of illness.</i>

Course literature (cases, papers, online material...)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Busby, Joshua (2018). Warming World – Why Climate Change matters more than anything else – Foreign Affairs, July/August 2018. • Chua, Amy (2018). Tribal World – Group Identity is all! – Foreign Affairs, July/August 2018. • Drum, Kevin (2018). Tech World – Welcome to the Digital Revolution – Foreign Affairs, July/August 2018. • Maitlis, Sally; Christianson, Marlys (2014). Sensemaking in Organizations: Taking Stock and Moving Forward - The Academy of Management Annals, Vol 8, No 1, p. 57-125, 2014 • Wallace, David Foster (2009). This is Water: Some Thoughts, Delivered on a Significant Occasion, about living a compassionate Life (Commencement speech); YouTube (https://youtu.be/8CrOL-ydFMI) • Weick, Karl (1993). The Collapse of Sensemaking in Organizations: The Mann Gulch Disaster - Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol 38, No 4, p. 628-652, 1993

Please note the following information on the total workload of the respective course:

Course level	ECTS-credits	Pre-course workload	In-class activity	Outside of class workload during the program
Graduate	4	approx. 20 hours	27 hours (= 35 teaching hours)	approx. 33 hours