

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

Rio Grande College of Business

MGTR 5307 2W1: Managing Organizational Change

Term: Summer 2026 (6-Week Accelerated, Online Asynchronous)

Faculty: Nanette Scarpellini Metz, MPA, PhD

Contact: Nanette.Metz@sulross.edu | **Office Hours:** By Request (Virtual)

Required Textbook

- **Title:** Managing Organizational Change: A Multiple Perspectives Approach
- **Edition:** 4th Edition (2021)
- **Authors:** Ian Palmer, Richard Dunford, and David A. Buchanan
- **Publisher:** McGraw-Hill International Edition
- **Note:** This text provides the foundational "Images of Change" and diagnostic frameworks we will use for our weekly Executive Memos and major Case Studies. It will be cheaper than the 2027 edition coming out now.

Official Communication:

All official communication by the University or me will be sent to your Sul Ross email account. As a result, you are required to activate your email account and check it from time to time for personal communication. I encourage you to email me if you have questions or comments, BUT PLEASE include your full name and the course for which you have questions. Even if you submit your email through the Blackboard site, I cannot tell which course you are in nor what your real name is (i.e., egar123) unless you put it in the body of your email.

I. Course Description

This graduate course explores the theoretical frameworks, operational strategies, and leadership competencies required to manage complex organizational transformations in dynamic, high-uncertainty global business environments. Through a multiple-perspectives lens, students will evaluate organizational diagnoses, change architecture, schedule compression, agile shifts, and systemic resistance. Moving beyond traditional testing, this course emphasizes active, data-driven decision-making and executive-level business reporting. You will be expected to diagnose failures, design operational rollouts, and audit strategic transformations exactly as you would in a corporate boardroom.

II. Course Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs)

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **CSLO 1:** Evaluate contemporary change management frameworks to diagnose structural deficiencies and formulate evidence-based strategic transformations.
2. **CSLO 2:** Design actionable, phased implementation plans that successfully account for operational bottlenecks, resource constraints, and fast-tracked schedule requirements.
3. **CSLO 3:** Synthesize risk assessment matrices to identify, assess, and choose optimal mitigation or retention strategies during organizational crises.
4. **CSLO 4:** Defend management decisions through professional, graduate-level business prose using strict academic integrity standards and formal APA documentation.

III. Grading Architecture & Canvas Assignment Groups

To reflect the realities of executive management, your grade is based entirely on your ability to analyze, collaborate, and write. There are no multiple-choice exams.

Canvas Assignment Group	Weight	Strategic Learning Purpose
Weekly Discussions (x6)	35%	Drives peer-to-peer collaboration and serves as the primary weekly reading accountability mechanism.
Executive Memos (x3)	15%	Short, 1-page application touchpoints in Weeks 1, 3, and 5 focusing on rapid problem-solving.
Assignment 1: Diagnosis	15%	Major milestone (Week 2): Deep-dive organizational diagnosis case study.
Assignment 2: Execution	20%	Major milestone (Week 4): Change architecture, Work Breakdown Structure (WBS), and Risk Matrix.
Assignment 3: Audit	15%	Major milestone (Week 6): Agile and cross-border project closure reflection.

IV. Course Schedule (6-Week Sequence)

Week	Textbook Chapters & Operational Focus	Graded Deliverables
Week 1	<p>Ch. 1: Stories and Paradoxes</p> <p>Ch. 2: Images of Change Management</p> <p>Ch. 3: Contemporary Pressures and Drivers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board 1 • Executive Memo 1
Week 2	<p>Ch. 4: What to Change? A Diagnostic Approach</p> <p>Ch. 5: What Changes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board 2 • Assignment 1: Diagnosis Report
Week 3	<p>Ch. 6: Purpose and Vision</p> <p>Ch. 7: Change Communication Strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board 3 • Executive Memo 2
Week 4	<p>Ch. 8: Resistance to Change</p> <p>Ch. 9: OD and Sense-Making Approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board 4 • Assignment 2: Friction & Execution Plan
Week 5	<p>Ch. 10: Change Management Perspectives</p> <p>Ch. 11: Sustaining Change versus Initiative Decay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board 5 • Executive Memo 3
Week 6	<p>Ch. 12: The Effective Change Manager: What Does It Take</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board 6 • Assignment 3: Capstone Brief

V. Discussion Board Guidelines & "Source-Anchor" Rule

Graduate discussions must mirror professional corporate debates.

- **Initial Post (Due Wednesdays, 11:59 PM CST):** Minimum 300 words.
- **Peer Replies (Due Sundays, 11:59 PM CST):** Two substantial replies, minimum 150 words each. "I agree" or "Great post" will earn zero credit. Push back, ask questions, or provide contradictory operational evidence.
- **The "Source-Anchor" Rule:** To earn full credit for your initial post, you **must** explicitly anchor your argument using at least **two distinct chapters or frameworks** from that week's reading, including the exact page numbers or section headings.

Weekly Prompts:

- **Week 1 (Paradoxes & Images):** Reflecting on the text's stories of change, why does an executive's chosen "Image of Change" (Ch. 2) directly dictate how they interpret external market pressures (Ch. 3)? Identify a company that misread an external pressure because its leader acted as a reactive *Caretaker* instead of a proactive *Navigator*.
- **Week 2 (The Diagnostic Matrix):** Look at your current or past workplace. Apply a diagnostic framework from Chapter 4 to map its layout. Based on Chapter 5, categorize whether the organization needs *revolutionary transformation* or *evolutionary adaptation*. Where do the primary structural friction points lie?
- **Week 3 (Vision vs. Communication Cadence):** Chapter 6 argues that vision statements fail when they are empty platitudes. Draft an operationally dense, 3-sentence transformation vision for a company. Then, utilizing Chapter 7, explain how your communication strategy shifts when delivering this vision to resistant mid-level managers versus anxious frontline employees.
- **Week 4 (The Power of Friction):** Using Chapter 8, analyze a time you witnessed active or passive resistance. Instead of viewing it as compliance insubordination, explain how a leader using a **Chapter 9 Sense-Making approach** could reframe that resistance as a highly valuable feedback loop to fix a flawed rollout design.
- **Week 5 (The Decay Challenge):** Most change initiatives experience "initiative decay" (Ch. 11) within 12 months. Review the management perspectives in Chapter 10. Which perspective (e.g., Contingency or Institutional) provides the most practical levers a manager can pull to ensure a new workflow becomes permanently institutionalized?
- **Week 6 (The Political Manager):** Chapter 12 details the core competencies of a change leader, including political skill and emotional resilience. Debrief your experience: which specific competency is most critical when a change manager has no formal authority over the cross-functional teams they are tasked with transforming?

VI. Executive Memos (Weeks 1, 3, 5)

During non-assignment weeks, you will submit a 1-page Executive Memo. These are rapid-fire, real-world application exercises graded on a **Complete (100) / Progressing (50) / Incomplete (0)** scale. They must be formatted professionally (To, From, Date, Subject).

- **Memo 1 (Week 1 - Chapters 1-3):** Write a 1-page memo to a CEO analyzing a contemporary market pressure (Ch. 3) hitting their sector. Argue why their current internal "Image of Change" (Ch. 2) will lead to strategic failure, and recommend an alternative image.
- **Memo 2 (Week 3 - Chapters 6-7):** Isolate a highly generic, real-world corporate vision statement. Critique its deficiencies using Chapter 6 metrics, rewrite a robust alternative, and outline a 3-step communication strategy (Ch. 7) to launch it.
- **Memo 3 (Week 5 - Chapters 10-11):** You are a Chief Transformation Officer. A newly implemented software system is suffering from immediate user abandonment. Draft a 1-page emergency memo using Chapter 11 frameworks outlining 3 structural actions to combat initiative decay.

VII. Major Assignments & Rubrics (Weeks 2, 4, 6)

All major assignments must represent original work, utilizing an objective, third-person executive tone. **Academic Integrity Mandate:** Every external data point, corporate history detail, or textbook framework utilized must be explicitly documented via formal parenthetical inline citations linked directly to a dedicated reference list.

Assignment 1: Strategic Organizational Diagnosis (Due Week 2)

- **Format:** Formal Business Report (4–5 Pages, Double-Spaced, APA 7th Edition)
- **Objective:** Students evaluate an organization in crisis. Using **Chapter 4 diagnostic tools** (e.g., Star Model, 7S, or Congruence Model), they pinpoint systemic failures. Then, applying **Chapter 5**, they classify exactly *what* is changing (e.g., second-order transformative shifts vs. first-order incremental adjustments).
- **Rubric Weight:** 30% Diagnostic Framework Accuracy, 30% Chapter 5 Depth of Content Typology, 20% Academic Rigor (min. 3 inline citations), 20% Executive Tone.

Assignment 2: The Communication & Resistance Roadmap (Due Week 4)

- **Format:** Strategic Operational Memo with a Communications Architecture Grid (5–6 Pages)
- **Objective:** Students design a deployment strategy for a volatile transformation. They must apply **Chapter 7** to construct a communication layout tailored to opposing stakeholders. Concurrently, using **Chapter 8**, they must isolate hidden pockets of resistance, categorizing them via the resistance matrix, and match them to **Chapter 9 OD or Sense-making** interventions.

- **Rubric Weight:** 30% Communication Grid Rigor, 30% Resistance/OD Theoretical Alignment, 20% Textual Consistency (No contradictions between charts and prose), 20% Academic Documentation.

Assignment 3: Sustainability Audit & Leadership Blueprint (Due Week 6)

- **Format:** Retrospective Executive Brief (4 Pages)
- **Objective:** Students audit a past or case-based initiative. Using **Chapter 10**, they defend which perspective (e.g., processual, contingency) best explains the rollout's outcome. Using **Ch. 11**, they analyze why the initiative either sustained or suffered "initiative decay." Finally, using **Ch. 12**, they build a competency framework for the change manager required to lead this specific type of environment.
- **Rubric Weight:** 30% Perspective Analysis, 30% Sustainability/Decay Diagnostics, 20% Ch. 12 Competency Mapping, 20% Academic Rigor.

Note: It is my expectation that satisfactory work in this course is at the B level or above. Thus, unless you receive notification from me or your grade average reflects lower than this level (80%), you can be assured that you are doing as expected in the course.

Technology Help:

Obtain your RGC email account name and password directly from the **Central Help Desk at 1-888-837-2882**. For most technology problems, first go to the Lobo Technology Assistance Center (LTAC). The quick link to this site is available from our home page under the "My SRSU" tab. For specific help with any aspect of Blackboard, including problems with online exams, contact our Blackboard administrators in Alpine. **BLACKBOARD HELP: 432-837-6055.**

SRSU Distance Education Statement:

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

ADA Statement: SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartze Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

Counseling: Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/356 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](https://www.timelycare.com/srsu). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

Libraries: The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu/. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LobolD and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu.

Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL) and ScanIt to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.

Academic Integrity: Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

Classroom Climate of Respect: Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.