1. **Course background**

The concept of teams' effectiveness in traditional organizations generated extensive research in order to understand and explore the extrinsic and intrinsic factors and conditions that affect team performance. Research in organizational behavior developed several models that provided managers and supervisors with the tools they needed in order to manage teams, understand teams' dynamics and improve teams' performance. Recent technological breakthroughs provided organizational leadership with another type of teams that meets through the bandwidth of the company and operates across time and space. While this type of teams helped organizations to manage their costs and be more responsive to marketplace changes, it added more complexity to the understanding of teams' performance. The traditional model of teambuilding (Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, Adjourning) built on the notion of team's identity, central to team's performance and cohesiveness, does not seem to help managers understand the behavior of teams that transcend the notion of time, space and structure. What type of knowledge and skills do managers need to acquire in order to manage teams? What emotional support do supervisors need to
provide to teams in order to create a team identity? What type of infrastructure and organizational support IT managers need to create in order to provide teams with optimum conditions of success?

These are some of the questions that this course will address. In addition to building a theoretical foundation to understand the behavior of teams, students will acquire a set of communication and training skills that allow them to manage and function in teams.

2. Course description

In its most elementary sense the concept of teams refers to groups of two or more people who interact and influence each other, are mutually accountable for achieving common objectives, and perceive themselves as a social entity within an organization. From this perspective, all teams are groups because they consist of people with a unifying relationship but not all groups are teams, as some groups do not have purposive interaction. In its business application sense, the concept of teams refers to a business process in modern organization that relies on self-directness among group members rather than functional departments as the core work units. Unlike traditional departments, team-based organizations tend to rely on cross-functional, autonomous teams with less need for supervision.

3. Course objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will

- Build a theoretical base to understand the functioning of teams
- Acquire a set of management skills to manage teams
- Develop a set of “Best Practices” skills that allow managers to improve teams' effectiveness
- Gain insights on how to manage and support virtual teams
4. Course requirements

This course requires completion of three assignments

4.1. Weekly Online Participation: 28 Points

At the beginning of each week, the instructor posts few discussion questions. You will be required to post ONE thoughtful comment to each discussion question. Your post must meet the minimum length specified in each question. You also need to post ONE comment in response to a classmate’s post. Classmates’ posts need to be elaborated and need to address a substantial issue but do not have to have the minimum wording required for thoughtful comments. See point 4 in "How to Use Technology" section of this syllabus for a definition of a Thoughtful Comment.

Remember that online learning takes place only if there is participation. Participation is the most important aspect of online instruction. For this course, it is roughly the third of your final grade. To help your classmates read better your posts, answer ALL the questions in ONE post. You may find it more practical to compose your post offline in a word document so you can save it and return to it later when you need it. Once you finish with ALL the questions copy and paste your post on the site.

Grading your weekly online posting

Please note that feedback for online courses is different from feedback in face to face courses. In online courses, I provide only quantitative score for your postings. Because of the nature of online education, course enrollment and other constraints you will not get a qualitative feedback on your participation. Qualitative feedback means a narrative discussion of your analytical skills, writing style and your weakness and strengths. If you need a qualitative feedback, you will need to schedule a conference call with me.

Every two weeks or so, I submit a score that evaluates your online posting for the previous two modules. I read your postings when you submit them, as I am in the course room three to four times a week. I prefer to submit a score when everyone is done with the module in case I need to do some curving or grade adjustment. Below is what the numbers mean:

- If you get 4 this means that your post is Excellent
If you get 3 this means that your post is Good
If you get 2 this means that you post either Needs Improvement OR Late Submission
If you get 1 this means that your post is Fail

Your strategy is to get 4 on all your postings so you are able to get the full points for the weekly online participation. If you miss one or two 4s it is not a big deal provided that you do well in your online quiz.

4.2. Written Research Paper: 32 Points
Using the list of topic provided by the instructor choose a topic of interest to you and analyze it. Relate the topic to course concepts, theories, and materials covered in the course. Use examples or supporting evidence to support your views. The paper must be written in an academic format using APA style and will have 6 to 8 pages double spaced.
The list of topics is posted on the website so choose any topic you want. Please make sure that you use proper citations, references and quotes. Plagiarized work will lead to an F for the whole class. The instructor will be using a software (mydropbox.com) to check for plagiarized work and the authenticity of the paper.

Where to post the final reflection paper?
Upload your final paper to the website. See week 7 module.
Due Date: Last Sunday of the term.

4.3. Online Quiz: 40 Points
During week 7 you will take a quiz that will include MCQ only and covers the textbook. Course room discussion, handouts and video will not be included. Please refer to the Final Quiz Study Guide document posted on the website for detailed information. Please note that the quiz is a standardized test and therefore it can not be viewed after taking it. You will see only your score. Refer to the study guide for more information.
## 5. Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading: Read the following chapters from your textbook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module 1</td>
<td>• Course Introductions</td>
<td>• Review of the syllabus, course policy and Moodle platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 2</td>
<td>• Teams in Organizations: Background, Facts and Myths</td>
<td>• Ch. 1: Types of Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 3</td>
<td>• Teams Performance</td>
<td>• Ch. 5: Performance and Productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 4</td>
<td>• Building a Team: What Managers Need to Know About Tasks, Team members and Relationships</td>
<td>• Ch. 2: Designing the Team, Ch. 4. Cohesion and Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 5</td>
<td>• Dealing With Teams Challenges: Decision Making, Problems and Opportunities</td>
<td>• Ch. 7: Team Decision Making, Ch. 8: Conflicts in Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 6</td>
<td>• Creativity, Innovation and Social Capital in Leading Teams</td>
<td>• Ch. 9: Creativity &amp; Innovation, Ch. 11. Team Networking and Social Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 7</td>
<td>• Leadership in Teams</td>
<td>• Ch. 3: Leading Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Online quiz. Read the Study Guide document for information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Topics for your paper**
The following is a list of topics for your individual papers. No need to run the choice by the instructor.

1. Communication competence in teams
2. Teams development
3. Role and leadership in teams
4. Developing effective teams
5. Power in teams
6. Conflict management in teams
7. Strategy for virtual teams
8. Teams performance
9. Decision making in teams
10. Rewarding teams
11. Designing teams
12. Teams identity, emotion and development
13. Strategies in managing global teams
14. Managing multicultural teams
Online Courses Policy

Welcome to your eLearning space! I hope you will enjoy your virtual class while exploring the opportunities and the contradictions of learning in virtual space. In this section, I would like to walk you through the different steps you need for your online course, and provide you with tips on how to maximize your learning.

1. **Use of technology**
   This is an asynchronic course that is delivered entirely via the Internet. This means that you can have access to the course, participate in the discussion and complete your assignments anytime you want from anywhere you want. The course website provides all the tools required for the completion of the course. The learning platform is the new innovative version of Moodle2 which has all the features you need for this course.

2. **Online learning philosophy: Learner-centered approach**
   Online education is an education that shifts the learning responsibility from the instructor to the student. Concepts such as "self-directness," "time management" and "learner-centered philosophy" are crucial online learning because they provide the philosophical foundation of online education. The role of instructor in this philosophy of teaching is that of a facilitator rather than a teacher. The implication of this is that students are expected to have a major responsibility in organizing and defining their learning.

3. **How to connect to the web site?**
   Click on the link provided by your instructor and enter your ID and password. At the beginning of each week (Monday), I post the main topic, the objective of the session and the discussion questions that will guide your learning. Your answer is expected at the end of the week (Sunday 11:30 PM of your time zone)

4. **What is a thoughtful comment?**
   Thoughtful comments are comments that tell the reader that you have read the assigned article, understood the question, and thought about your response before posting it. Thoughtful comments must have 200 words as a minimum and address the question asked by the instructor. Statement such as I "agree with.." or "I disagree with.." are not thoughtful comments. Remember that in the online word, the interface (your postings that is) is the product; people know you only through your comments and what you say says a lot about your seriousness, your professionalism, your intellectual ability, and your approach to work. It is important that you keep a well-maintained interface (postings) so you can give a professional image about yourself.
5. **Misuse of the virtual space**

To be able to enjoy the eLearning experience we need to be very careful with the use of our language. Remember that written words are more powerful than spoken words, and may say things that you did not mean to say. Please make sure to use a language that observes appropriateness and inclusiveness. Language inclusiveness refers to the use of language that assumes equality of gender and the equal importance of members of all cultural groups. Gender inclusiveness means that usage such as "he" and "man" as generic references to humanity or people in general are not appropriate. While avoiding such use is sometimes awkward or may differ from your writing habits, it is possible to do so. Therefore, I suggest that you use plurals (e.g. "workers…they," rather than "worker…he"), some combination of pronouns (e.g., (s)he, s/he, he/she or alternative words (e.g., "people" rather than "mankind")). Cultural inclusiveness, on the other hand, means that virtual discussions and written materials will not assume that class members come from the same cultural group. Respect for the diversity of the class and the multicultural world in which we operate will be expected. If you feel that a comment was not appropriate, please do NOT respond to that comment. Send me an email expressing your concern.

6. **Tips on how to use the e-learning space**

I have used online learning as a student and as a teacher, and found it to be very exciting. Here are few tips that may help you maximize your eLearning

- Check your web site at the beginning of each week. Always be ahead of the discussion.
- Read the questions and read your assigned reading.
- Write and edit your comments on a word document, then post them.
- Save your comments on your own hard drive disk because you will need them for your exam.
- If you find some comments of interest to you, you may copy and paste them into your own word document. Moodle does not archive all the comments.

7. **How to contact me?**

The best way to contact me is via email at benra001@umn.edu. I am sitting next to my computer between 8:00 and 17:00 Central Standard Time Monday through Friday. I respond to emails as soon as I get them, but a 72 hour reply-time is the conventional rule of the online world.

8. **My Expectations**

The following expectations are part of the syllabus

- Students will be active participants in the online learning community created within the course.
- Students are to stay engaged in the course through constructive participation and thoughtful comments.
- Students will communicate with the instructor on time, and according to the policy of the course.
• Students will have a minimum of technology knowledge that allows participation in online discussions.
• Students will reflect on their past experiences, utilize knowledge acquired in the course and dialogue with their peers for professional growth.
• Students are expected to exemplify competence and quality in their assignments.
• Students will establish at least one realistic objective against which they can measure their progress at the end of the course.

University Grading Standards

• A) Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirement.
• B) Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirement.
• C) Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
• D) Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
• S) Achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better. (achievement required for an S is at the discretion of the instructor but may be no lower than a C-)
• F) Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be marked as an incomplete.
• I) Incomplete assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances, e.g., hospitalization, a student is prevented from completing the work of the course on time. Requires a written agreement between the instructor and student.