We welcome ideas to improve these course materials. Please email suggestions to coursematerials@agsm.edu.au
### Course schedule

#### Session 3, 2015

**Systems for Change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week no</th>
<th>Week begins</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Assessment due (% weighting)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>31 August</td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-assessed introductory dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7 September</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assignment 3 – Dialogue 1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14 September</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teletutorials with facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21 September</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Assignment 3 – Dialogue 2 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>28 September</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Assignment 1 due on Friday 2 October – Report (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 October*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Assignment 3 – Dialogue 3 (4%)  Telecomference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12 October</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>19 October</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Assignment 3 – Dialogue 4 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>26 October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2 November</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Assignment 2 due on Monday 2 November – Reflective Report (20%) Telecomference Assignment 3 – Dialogue 5 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9 November</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>16 November</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>23 November</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment 4 due Friday 27 November – Report (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Monday 5 October is a public holiday in NSW
Course information

Course-level aims and learning outcomes

Contemporary organisations function in complex and turbulent environments. The demands of these environments necessitate change, both episodic and continual. *Systems for Change* analyses change within organisations using a systems perspective. It views the organisation as a system comprising interdependent units, processes, procedures, rules and events, which can be leveraged to enable successful change. Further, the organisation is an open system, positioned in and influenced by its external environment. The course highlights the uncertain and paradoxical nature of change and stresses the need for those involved in initiating and sustaining change to embrace complexity, and adopt an open-systems perspective in their work. The course also affirms the need for those involved in change management to continually assess their personal effectiveness and pursue improvement plans.

Three central themes are evident throughout *Systems for Change*. Firstly, we recognise that organisations are complex and that they are positioned in complex, turbulent environments. Secondly we propose that sustaining change in this context is critical. Thirdly, we argue that a ‘systems thinking’ perspective is essential for change agents. We offer a variety of approaches to sustain continuous change in this complex milieu, including individual perspectives (e.g. paradoxical thinking), structural perspectives (e.g. ambidexterity), cultural perspectives (e.g. broad-based diversity) and leveraging established organisational sub-systems (e.g. the employment relations sub-system).

An important point about this course is that when we talk about change we are concerned with sustainable change. In the course *Redesigning the Organisation* we explore how to redesign the organisation to support a new strategy or process. The focus there is more clearly on one-off innovations and change. In this course we would like you to think about ongoing, continuous change. In each Unit we will ask you to think about how systems increase the organisation’s ability to change constantly. Further, we will ask you to think about how self-sustainable the systems are. That is, to what extent do they need constant management? Can they operate independently of individual people? Do they include feedback loops in their design, which lead to modifications to the sub-system? Are they designed for self-renewal?

In summary, our approach in *Systems for Change* is based on the following propositions:

- effective organisational change depends on the degree to which systems support, motivate and enable change
- effective systems are those that are self-sustaining
- effective systems are those that adapt to and influence other systems, organisational strategies and the wider environment.
We explore the organisation as a whole. We focus on specific systems and how they can contribute to organisational change.

More specifically, this course aims to show how:

- effective organisational change depends on the degree to which systems support, motivate and enable change
- effective systems are those that respond to and positively influence other systems, organisational strategies and the wider environment
- effective change agents recognise the complexities of organisational change and how a systems perspective can help sustain both episodic and continual change in turbulent environments
- effective change agents critically review and learn from their experiences.

**Course learning outcomes**

After studying this course you should be able to:

1. describe and critically apply action research to a change intervention
2. recognise and illustrate the complexities of implementing/managing change in open, dynamic and interdependent systems
3. describe, integrate and critically apply different theoretical concepts of change to work environments
4. prepare written documents containing critical argument and perspectives about change management
5. analyse the role of diversity and the impact of the external environment on organisations in open systems
6. critically review personal effectiveness as a change agent.

**Structure**

**In Unit 1 our topic is action research (AR).** We introduce this material at this early stage because it is the methodology you will use for the major assessment item, the action research project (ARP). This is a substantial project, and we want you thinking about it as early as possible. Also the one-on-one teletutorials in week 2 will focus on your initial thinking about the ARP. In addition, this methodology is a powerful process for change, episodic or continuous, in complex environments. Finally, AR has a strong nexus with systems thinking, one of the themes that threads through each of our Units.
In Unit 2 we first turn to the topic at the heart of this course, sustaining change. We distinguish between episodic and continuous change and identify the factors that affect sustainability. Our second topic is the nature of systems thinking, which again is core to this course. We stress how important this approach is for change agents, particularly in complex environments. This builds on work done in earlier Change Management courses.

In Unit 3 our three topics offer mechanisms for dealing with change in complex settings. Our initial focus is on managing the paradoxical demands often present in these types of settings. How can we harness paradox rather than be disabled by it. In our second topic we look at a structural response to complexity, and paradox in particular – the ambidextrous organisation. Thirdly, we identify organisational capabilities that can be leveraged to respond to complex contexts and to sustain change. Of particular interest are ‘dynamic’ capabilities that enhance an organisation’s agility.

Unit 4 uses the concept of the intelligent organisation to draw together research and ideas from two streams of thinking: organisational learning and knowledge management. We argue that together these two processes and attendant systems offer mechanisms that facilitate continuous change through learning and adaptation.

Unit 5, Diversity to generate and sustain change, is presented as a means of stimulating continuous and sustainable change. We take an inclusive and expanded view of diversity and explore the potential for such outcomes as innovation and creativity. We use diversity as an example of the need for systems thinking when generating continuous change.

Unit 6 proceeds on the assumption that innovation is a major force for change. Organisations must value innovation and use it as a driver for change. We are particularly interested in organising for sustained innovation and the associated change that implies.

In Unit 7 we turn to a structurally discrete sub-system with organisations, the employment relations (ER) sub-system. We demonstrate the central and pervasive nature of ER within organisations, and its potential to generate, support and embed change. Further, ER is an excellent example of the working of complex systems in organisations, and the need for an appropriate systems stance to capitalise on this potential.

In Unit 8 we delve into another well-recognised organisational sub-system, information technology (IT). A central concern is the use of IT as a vehicle for change. Again, we adopt a systems perspective, with particular emphasis on the boundaries between sub-systems and how these need to be negotiated.
In Unit 9 we use a case study as the vehicle to reflect on the materials and concepts offered in SfC. We also give you the opportunity to develop a personal action plan to continue your own learning journey.

Key features of Systems for Change

- **Systems for Change** is the integrative course for the Graduate Certificate in Change Management (GCCM). This means that in addition to introducing new materials, it provides the opportunity to integrate concepts from the GCCM courses you have undertaken to this point. Accordingly, in all your assessments for this course, you are expected to use and integrate course concepts from Systems for Change as well as from Approaches to Change, Change Skills and Redesigning the Organisation, as appropriate. This is your opportunity to integrate and synthesise your learning to date.

- To extract maximum benefit from this process, we recommend that this course be undertaken towards the end of your studies. However, in terms of assessments, you will not be disadvantaged if this is not your final course in the GCCM.

- You must undertake a major work-based research project. You are required to utilise action research methodology in a real-time change intervention in your own workplace or another environment. This research is an intellectually demanding and time intensive activity, which spans the entire teaching period. We provide extensive information about action research in the Assessment Details document and also in Unit 1. You will also engage in an online dialogue directed to action research, and will have the opportunity to participate in a teleconference to clarify your research.

- There is one teletutorial in week two of the course. This one-on-one discussion with your class facilitator provides an introduction to the course requirements and an opportunity to talk about your plans for the action research project.

- There are two teleconferences. The first, in week five, is a prescribed discussion of the ‘diversity’ topic. The second is in week nine and is optional. This is available to students who wish to further discuss their action research project with their class facilitator and a small group of colleagues. It is offered to support your research journey and is optional; there is no requirement to participate if you are comfortable with the progress of your research.
• There is a self-managed workshop to help you with your research. This will provide you the opportunity to share the results of your research and to help with the preparation of your final report. These workshops frequently provide useful insights for the final report of your research. These workshops are organised individually by students and must be completed by week 11.

• We have nine Units of course materials, rather than the more typical 12. This design is an acknowledgement of the demands of the action research project and provides time at the end of the session to concentrate on your research.

• There are five weeks of assessed online dialogue. This is intended to provide you with more opportunity to pursue your research. In each of the online dialogues you will have a number of questions to discuss. You will receive feedback and grades for the online work after all five online dialogues are complete.

• There is no final exam for this course. Your knowledge of course concepts, and those from other courses, is tested in the assignments. You should choose and use relevant concepts in ALL these assignments.

• We hope this helps you to understand a little more about how this course works.
Assessment summary

Assignment 1 – Action research project plan
Due: Friday 2 October 2015
Description: a written plan detailing the approach to be taken to the action research project.
Weighting: 20%
Maximum length: 1500 words

Assignment 2 – Learning review
Due: Monday 2 November 2015
Description: a written personal reflection on aspects of current practice.
Weighting: 20%
Maximum length: 1500 words

Assignment 3 – Online dialogues 1–5
Description: consisting of five online dialogue periods, each of one week’s duration.
Weighting: 20%
Maximum length per posting: 200 words

Assignment 4 – Action research project
Due: Friday 27 November 2015
Description: a written report detailing the action research intervention, outcomes and reflections.
Weighting: 40%
Maximum length: 4000 words

Further details of each assessment are in the document entitled Systems for Change Assessment Details.
A number of international standards are embedded in the program to ensure the courses you study are high quality. At present this includes specific design to meet AACSB accreditation standards (through measurement of students' program-level learning outcomes), and the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (UNPRME). EQUIS accreditation is also held by UNSW Business School.

Program-level learning goals and outcomes assessed for AACSB accreditation

The Course Learning Outcomes are what you should be able to do by the end of this course if you participate fully in learning activities and successfully complete the assessment items.

The Course Learning Outcomes will also help you to achieve at least some of the overall Program Learning Goals that are set for all postgraduate coursework students in AGSM programs.

However, course-level learning outcomes are not sufficient to fully describe a student’s skills as they complete the qualification, and so we add an additional set of Program Learning Goals. These specify what we want you to have achieved by the time you successfully complete your degree. As an example, for the Teamwork learning goal we specify: ‘Our graduates will be effective team participants’.

You demonstrate that you have met these Program Learning Goals by achieving specific Program Learning Outcomes that are directly related to each goal. These indicate what you are able to do by the end of your degree. In the case of the Teamwork goal, the related outcome includes: ‘participate collaboratively and responsibly in teams’. Note that the ability to meet these program-level learning goals and outcomes will be measured in each capstone course for your degree program.

The Program Learning Goals (and related outcomes) used across the three streams of Change, Social Impact and Technology are as follows.

1. Knowledge:
   - Our graduates will have current disciplinary or interdisciplinary knowledge applicable in local and global contexts.
   - Learning outcome: Students should be able to identify and apply current knowledge disciplinary or interdisciplinary theory and professional practice to business in local and global environments.
2. Critical thinking and problem-solving:
   Our graduates will have critical thinking and problem-solving skills applicable to business and management practice or issues.
   Learning outcome: Students should be able to identify, research and analyse complex issues and problems in business and/or management, and propose appropriate and well-justified solutions.

3. Communication:
   Our graduates will be effective communicators in professional contexts.
   Learning outcome for 3a – Written Communication: Students should be able to produce written documents that communicate complex disciplinary ideas and information effectively for the intended audience and purpose.
   Learning outcome for 3b – Oral Communication: Students should be able to produce oral presentations that communicate complex disciplinary ideas and information effectively for the intended audience and purpose.

4. Teamwork:
   Our graduates will be effective team participants.
   Learning outcome: Students should be able to participate collaboratively and responsibly in teams, and to reflect on their own teamwork, and on the team’s processes and ability to achieve outcomes.

5. Ethical, social and environmental responsibility:
   Our graduates will be aware of ethical, social, cultural and environmental implications of business issues and practice.
   Learning outcome for 5a – Ethical, social and environmental responsibility: Students should be able to identify and assess ethical, environmental and/or sustainability considerations in business decision-making and practice.
   Learning outcome for 5b – Social and cultural awareness: Students should be able to consider social and cultural implications of business.

6. Leadership:
   Our graduates will have an understanding of effective leadership.
   Learning outcome: Students should be able to reflect upon their own personal leadership style and on the leadership needs of business and of team.
Associated standards committees and accreditation agencies

AACSB: http://www.aacsb.edu
Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business

EQUIS: https://www.efmd.org/accreditation-main/equis
European Quality Improvement System

UNPRME: http://www.unprme.org
UN Principles of Responsible Management Education
Learning resources

In *Systems for Change*, the following resources are available to you:

- course materials
- your class facilitator
- your learning partner
- your mentor
- online dialogues
- administrative support.

Course materials

The *Systems for Change* materials are presented in Units, as outlined above. They contain essential readings, activities and the assessment items you will need to complete the course. Each Unit presents the objectives for the week, the activities you will need to complete, the instructions for contacting your class facilitator, mentor and learning partner, and the instructions for participating in the online dialogues. The activities are particularly important because they encourage you to reflect on and apply the course concepts. You will do much of your learning outside the classroom by working through the course materials, and by completing the exercises as they arise.

Specific readings are prescribed throughout the Units and are available via active hyperlinks or URLs. Please note that you may be required to enter your UNSW zID and zPass in order to access hyperlinked readings.

If you experience any problems in accessing the readings, please try the following:

- Search directly for the **article** on the UNSW Library home page ([https://library.unsw.edu.au/](https://library.unsw.edu.au/)) by placing the name of the article in the Search box.
- Search directly for the **book excerpt** on the UNSW Library home page ([https://library.unsw.edu.au/](https://library.unsw.edu.au/)) by placing your course code into the Search box. When you do this all the course readings that are excerpts from books will appear.

In addition to course-based resources, please also refer to the *AGSM Learning Guide* (available in Moodle) for tutorials and guides that will help you learn more about effective study practices and techniques.

All the course materials are posted in Moodle, your online learning platform, along with additional readings for each Unit. While these readings have been classified as ‘optional’, students are strongly encouraged to consider them in depth. Some will be valuable for your ARP and the online dialogues. In Moodle you will also find other important resources such as marking rubrics, sample ARPs, Moodle guidelines and referencing guidelines.
Class facilitator

Your class facilitator will:

- facilitate the five designated online dialogues
- facilitate two teleconferences with small groups of students. One is compulsory (week five) and the other is optional (week nine).
- conduct a teletutorial with each student individually. This is held in week two of the course and designed to help you move quickly into your action research project. It will be conducted by telephone.
- grade, and provide feedback on your assignments
- respond to your academic enquiries, and offer assistance where appropriate.

Your class facilitator can be contacted by email or via Moodle, and can assist you with any educational issues – for example, in understanding the course material. Class facilitators are not expert in technical aspects relating to the online learning system. Details for assistance in these matters are set out below.

Learning partner

During this course you will be asked to contact a learning partner, someone who, like you, is a participant in this course. You may wish to select someone you already know and who works in the same office or you may prefer to use a different person at different times during the course. It is up to you to make the necessary arrangements and contact them. You might also consider having more than one learning partner. Some previous course participants have found it valuable to work in a learning group.

You will need to make initial contact with your learning partner in week one and establish the best time to contact him/her in future weeks. Perhaps you could organise a time each week to phone, or to talk face to face. But do set aside some uninterrupted time, about 30 minutes, for your dialogue. Your learning partner is doing the course with you, and together you can explore some of the issues that will arise.

All participants will post a personal introduction in Moodle in the Participant Profiles section. These might be helpful when considering who you might like to engage as a learning partner. Details on accessing this forum are part of our introductory activities for the course.

You may be asked to discuss your reactions to an article or reading, you may need to do some collaborative work together, or you may need to exchange information with each other. The tasks will vary from Unit to Unit. Your learning partner will also be an invaluable source of support for your ARP.
Mentor

You will need to identify a mentor, someone who has greater change experience than you, to assist you with the course. Depending on your circumstances and preferences, you might opt to have more than one.

You will need to decide in conjunction with your mentor when to meet and talk about the work you are doing. Mentors are not doing the course themselves, but will be able to discuss the practice of the change agent and the application of the material you are covering.

Below is a schedule of suggested contact points with your mentor, although you may want to meet more often.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week beginning</th>
<th>Purpose of contact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory week</td>
<td>Identify your mentor, and agree your roles. Discuss the course requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>You may wish to discuss your project proposal with your mentor and/or relevant people in your organisation (Unit 1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Discuss the topics of sustaining change and systems thinking with your mentor (Unit 2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Discuss the change capabilities in your organisation (Unit 3) and how diversity is utilised for change (Unit 5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Discuss the ER sub-system in your organisation. What is its role in sustaining change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Discuss with your mentor, your learning goals (Unit 9) and also the outcomes (at this stage) of your project.</td>
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Online dialogues

*Systems for Change* has a number of introductory activities before week one, including an ‘opening dialogue’. There are also five assessed online dialogues throughout the course. These follow a similar pattern to other Change Management courses you have undertaken.

You will engage in dialogue to explore course concepts and their application, as well as to share personal reflections about your role as a change agent. You will be required to consider several questions during each dialogue. Your class facilitator will post these questions in Moodle prior to the commencement of the online dialogue period.
You will be assigned to an online dialogue syndicate during the introductory week. Details will be posted in Moodle in the Course News space. You will also have access to, and are free to participate in, other syndicate dialogues. However, only your contribution to your assigned dialogue syndicate will be graded. Collectively these dialogues account for 20% of the marks for the course.

**eLearning**

To access Moodle, go to: https://moodle.telt.unsw.edu.au/login/index.php
Login with your student zID (username) and zPass (password).

**Moodle eLearning support**

Should you have any difficulties accessing your course online, please contact the eLearning support below:

For **login** issues:

**UNSW IT Service Centre**

Hours: Monday to Friday: 8am – 8pm  
Saturday and Sunday: 11am – 2pm

Email: ITServiceCentre@unsw.edu.au

Phone: Internal: x51333  
External: 02 9385 1333  
International: +61 2 9385 1333
For help with technical issues and problems:

**External TELT Support**

Hours: Monday to Friday: 7.30am – 9.30pm  
Saturdays and Sundays: 8.30am – 4.30pm  
Email: externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au  
Phone: Internal: x53331  
          External: 02 9385 3331  
          International: +61 2 9385 3331

**Administrative and eLearning support**

**Student Experience**

If you have administrative queries, they should be addressed to Student Experience.

Student Experience  
AGSM MBA Programs  
UNSW Business School  
SYDNEY NSW 2052  
Phone: +61 2 9931 9400  
Email: studentexperience@agsm.edu.au

**Additional student resources and support**

The University and the UNSW Business School provide a wide range of support services for students, including:

- **Business School Education Development Unit (EDU)**  
  https://www.business.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/learning-support  
  The EDU provides academic writing, study skills and maths support specifically for Business students. Services include workshops, online resources, and individual consultations.  
  EDU Office: Level 1, Room 1033, Quadrangle Building.  
  Phone: +61 2 9385 5584; Email: edu@unsw.edu.au
• **UNSW Learning Centre**  
  [http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au)  
  Provides academic skills support services, including workshops and resources, for all UNSW students. See website for details.

• **Library training and search support services**  
  [http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/web/services/services.html](http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/web/services/services.html)

• **UNSW Counselling and Psychological Services**  
  Provides support and services if you need help with your personal life, getting your academic life back on track or just want to know how to stay safe, including free, confidential counselling.  
  Office: Level 2, East Wing, Quadrangle Building;  
  Phone: +61 2 9385 5418.

• **Student Equity & Disabilities Unit**  
  [http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au](http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au)  
  Provides advice regarding equity and diversity issues, and support for students who have a disability or disadvantage that interferes with their learning.  
  Office: Ground Floor, John Goodsell Building;  
  Phone: +61 2 9385 4734; Email: seadu@unsw.edu.au
Continual course improvement

Our courses are revised each time they run, with updated course overviews and assessment tasks. All courses are reviewed and revised every three years and significant course updates are carried out in line with industry developments.

The AGSM surveys students via the UNSW CATEI system each time a course is offered. The data collected provides anonymous feedback from students on the quality of course content and materials, class facilitation, student support services and the program in general. This student feedback is taken into account in all course revisions.
Course staff

Course coordinator

Each course has a Course Coordinator who is responsible for the academic leadership and overall academic integrity of the course. The Course Coordinator selects content and sets assessment tasks, and takes responsibility for specific academic and administrative issues related to the course when it is being offered. Course Coordinators oversee Class Facilitators and ensure that the ongoing standard of facilitation in the course is consistent with the quality requirements of the program.

The Course Coordinator is:

Dr Greg Cartan
PhD, DipLaw, Bed, BA
Email: greg.cartan@agsm.edu.au

Greg Cartan has 30 years’ experience in tertiary education and management consultancy. His academic career has involved curriculum design and program delivery for AGSM MBA Programs, the faculty of Veterinary Science University of Sydney, the International Graduate School of Management (University of South Australia), the Graduate School of Management (University of Adelaide), and the Department of Law, University of Newcastle. He has published in numerous academic and professional journals, and has written several book chapters.

Postgraduate subjects taught include Managing People and Organisations, Managerial Skills, Approaches to Change, Change Skills, Systems for Change, Leadership, People and Organisations, Managing Change, Leadership, Management, Business Law and Interpersonal Skills.

Class facilitator

The role of your Class Facilitator is to support and enhance the learning process by encouraging interaction among participants, providing direction in understanding the course content, assessing participant progress through the course and providing feedback on work submitted. Class Facilitators comprise academics and industry practitioners with relevant backgrounds.

You will be notified of your Class Facilitator’s name and contact details in your class confirmation email sent by AGSM Student Experience. Details will also be available in the gallery section of your online class for face-to-face and distance classes.
Course authors

Since the initial offering of *Systems for Change*, a number of individuals have made contributed to course revisions:

- Paul Atkins PhD
- Steve Frenkel PhD, MA, BA
- Sarah Gregson PhD BA Hons
- Peter Heslin BA(Hons), MA
- Loretta O’Donnell BA (Hons), Dip Ed, MBA, PhD
- Gary Peacock MBA, MSc, B.Eng, GCCM
- Carol Royal PhD, MCom, BA
- Rose Trevelyan PhD, BA
- Ann Wilson MA, PGCE, BA(Hons)