Organizational behavior focuses on enhancing the performance of organizations through organizations’ most valuable resource: employees. This means that this class focuses on people, and we will do so in two different ways, breaking the class into two halves. For the first half of the class, we focus on how we can be better employees. For the second half of the class, we focus on how we can manage and improve others. Throughout these two halves, our primary focus is on employee performance and improving employee performance. But, in order for people to perform at high levels, we/they need to be in an environment that is conducive to such performance. Thus, the secondary focus of this class is on creating that environment by exploring employee perceptions and attitudes (e.g., motivation, satisfaction, commitment, fairness, trust, etc.).

Go to Amazon.com and you will find thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of books on these topics associated with organizational behavior. Unfortunately, many of these books are prone to fads and bad ideas. Despite this, we actually know a great deal about how to improve ourselves and manage others. Thus, in this course we will explore the factors, identified through research, that separate great employees and managers from those who are just average or worse. In doing so, you will be introduced to the skills organizations are so desperately seeking. Although managing people in the real world is complex, you can improve your ability to manage by focusing on what evidence from scientific research tells us, and mastering these skills now will significantly increase your career potential, no matter your chosen profession. By the end of this semester you should be able to (these outcomes correspond to the learning goals in the appendix):

- Understand various research methods and how they apply to making business decisions based upon research results
- Identify and overcome threats to your own personal effectiveness
- Identify the causes of and solutions to low levels of employee motivation
- Recognize individual strengths and learn how to leverage these strengths to become successful in class and in the work environment
- Evaluate the context in which specific communication events occur in organizations and determine the appropriate communication method for the context
- Define vague problems and avoid common mental biases when making critical decisions
- Employ social tactics to build positive relationships and influence people in the workplace
- Accurately evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, and performance of others and give useful feedback
- Given a variety of leadership situations, determine what the best course of action for a leader is
- Diagnose and fix problems with team functioning
- Identify the causes of, and recommend solutions to, conflict between employees in organizations