MAN 390.5: Seminar in Organizational Theory and Design  
Spring 2013  
Wednesday 2p – 5p CBA 4.204

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Course Description
The primary objective of this doctoral seminar is to survey the major theoretical perspectives and issues studied in organizational theory (OT) research. Formal organizations and organizing processes are ubiquitous in modern society. They dominate most facets of modern social life; education, employment, family, recreation, religion, and politics. Organization theory provides a set of theoretical approaches that explain how organizations form, survive, grow, change, compete, interact, influence, and generally manage problems internal and external to their boundaries. The field of organizational theory has a rich history and tradition but is also constantly changing as new developments in markets and societies challenge our understanding about how organizations work. Each session in this course provides students with an introductory exposure to classical, neoclassical, and modern theories of organizational theory covering both theoretical and empirical work.

The course is organized as a seminar. Students will be responsible for completing all of the assigned readings and being prepared for general discussions about the session topic as well as in-depth discussion about assigned articles. Students will be required to submit summarized discussion questions in advance of each class. To facilitate adequate preparation, the number of readings for each session has purposely been kept small.

Course Schedule

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<td>Economic Action and Social Structure</td>
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Course Prerequisites
This course is open to Ph.D. students from all departments in the University. Master’s students who want to take the course must obtain the instructor’s permission.

Course Materials
Articles and book selections not available online through the University Library will be included in the course packet.

Assignments
A central aspect of this course will be to socialize students to the journal submission and review process. Each student will submit a research manuscript for double-blind peer review where each student serves as a reviewer for a fellow classmate’s paper. Students will be graded on the quality of the review they write as well as the quality of their own revised manuscript with accompanied response letter. Each student will also be required to hand in one short (2 page single-spaced) article critique on or before the 7th class session. All assignments should be uploaded to the Blackboard site.

The overall course grade will be based on the following rubric:

Article Critique (10%) Due: Feb 27th - One short critique of an empirical article from the class syllabus. Two page single-space maximum. The critique should:
   (1) Summarize the question the author is trying to answer
   (2) Briefly describe the model the author uses to answer the research question
   (3) Discuss appropriateness of author’s methodology
   (4) Evaluate author’s conclusions
   (5) Provide suggestions for improvement of manuscript

Individual Paper and Response Letter (40%) Initial paper due in class on April 3rd; Revised paper and Response letter due 5pm May 3rd – Students will be required to write a research paper related to one or more of the topics covered in class. Students are encouraged to tailor this assignment to their own research interests. To this end, I am flexible regarding the format of this paper. It can be the “front end” of a full research paper (i.e. introduction, literature review, hypothesis development, proposed methodology), it can be a full research paper with analysis and conclusions, or it can be a theory paper. Regardless of format, the paper should not exceed 20 pages double-spaced (excluding title page, references, tables, and figures), and should be formatted based on the Academy of Management Journal style guidelines1. The initial paper submission is due in class on April 3rd and will not be graded. Students will be graded on the quality of the revised version, which should incorporate reviewer comments, and the accompanying response letter detailing how you responded to each comment and/or why you elected not to adopt a particular suggestion. The final revised paper is due by 5pm on Friday, May 3rd.

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1 For details see: [http://www.aom.pace.edu/amj/style_guide.pdf](http://www.aom.pace.edu/amj/style_guide.pdf)
Manuscript Review (20%) Due April 17th – Each student is responsible for providing the quality review of a term paper submitted to the blind review process. Each review is limited to three single-spaced pages. A guide to writing a good manuscript review will be posted to Blackboard site.

Class preparation and participation (30%) – Since class discussion is a vital component to this course, each student is required to come prepared to class. Unexcused absences and unpreparedness are unacceptable. Preparation involves reading all of the assignments and preparing discussion questions for class. Discussion questions must be posted to Blackboard twenty-four hours before class begins.

A “discussion leader” will be assigned to each class reading. The discussion leader’s role will be to: (1) summarize the key concepts of the paper during class. Whether you choose to distribute this summary in writing during class is your choice but doing so will be of a significant benefit to your classmates and will aid in discussion. The summaries don’t need to be overly long, but they should highlight the major points of the paper; and (2) comment and lead discussion based on the questions regarding that particular reading that have been posted to Blackboard.

Course Reading Content

Students are responsible for getting hold of the required reading journal articles. They should be available via online databases (e.g. JStor) through the UT library. All the required readings that come from books are available as part of the course packet at the Co-op.

There are no required books for the course but there are two that I would suggest for any serious students of organizational theory. Several of the course readings come from these books:


I also recommend the following two blogs written by academics who like to spend their leisure time discussing the contemporary issues of organizational theory:

1. orgtheory.net: http://orgtheory.wordpress.com/

2. Organizations and Markets: http://organizationsandmarkets.com/
Course Reading List

Readings with an * are required, all others are optional

1. Introduction to Organizational Theory


2. Rational Systems Perspective


3. Natural Systems Perspective


4. Open Systems Perspective


5. Contingency Theory


6. Carnegie School Approach


7. Neo-Institutional Theory


8. Institutional Change & Social Movements


9. Ecological and Evolutionary Perspectives


10. Power and Politics in Organizations


11. Organizational economics and market exchange


12. Economic Action and Social Structure


14. Organizational Legitimacy, Status & Reputation


15. Organizational Learning


