COURSE DESCRIPTION

The primary objective of this doctoral seminar is to survey the major theoretical perspectives and issues studied in organization theory (OT) research. Organization theory is currently one of the liveliest areas in all of social science in part because of the importance of understanding organizations and in part because of the challenges to traditional theory that have emerged over the past 20 years. What is organization theory? Let me offer the following expansive definition (gratefully borrowed from Martin Kilduff): Organization theory is a set of approaches to the understanding of how organizations form, survive and grow, interact with each other, recruit and process members, gain and manage resources, and deal with problems both internal and external.

Organization theory is characterized by growing eclecticism. Some find the theoretical pluralism exhilarating whereas others find it frustrating. The field itself is divided between those who call for the establishment of an overall paradigm to guide research and those who champion a free – and somewhat chaotic – marketplace of ideas. Every member of the class should be prepared to develop their own framework of understanding the multiple strands of organization theory. The expectation in this class is that each of us will develop the critical skills necessary to evaluate many different kinds of research, and that each of us will leave the class able to contribute significantly to the on-going conversations among organization theorists.

In each class session we will examine both important historical contributions and more recent treatments of the topic for the day. Each session may contain both theoretical and empirical contributions. While sessions may differ somewhat in their execution, each session will generally begin with a more general discussion of the components and boundaries of the week's topic. This discussion will be followed by a more in-depth exploration of the articles assigned for the week, where we will explore not just what has been said but also how these theories have been tested. Two or three students will be assigned to lead each week's discussion, and will, in consultation with me, develop the questions that will guide and structure each week's class.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

An important part of this course will be your socialization into the journal review process. Therefore, about two-thirds of the way through the semester, your research paper for this class will be submitted for double-blind peer review, and you will serve as a reviewer for a classmate's paper. The review you write, along with your revised manuscript and your response letter to the review you receive will form the bulk of your grade. The remainder of your grade will be based on class contribution.

Class Preparation and Contribution (40% of grade) - Each participant is required to come prepared to class. Since class discussion is an integral part of the course, absences and lack of preparedness are unacceptable. Preparation will always involve reading all the weekly assignments. In addition, each article will be assigned to class member who will prepare a short (preferably a single page) written synopsis / critique of the article that they will e-mail to all class members by the day prior to our class meeting. While I will provide some lecture materials, much of the course will involve engaging in discussions about seminar topics. As noted above, 2-3 students will be tasked each week with leading the class discussions of the articles.

Individual Paper and Response Letter (50% of grade) - Participants will also need to write a research paper that relates one or more topics covered in class to their own research interests. I am flexible as to the format of the paper, because I want it to meet your needs. One option is the "front end" of a research paper that defines a research question, reviews and critiques the extant literature, develops a few testable hypotheses, and proposes a method for testing the proposed hypotheses. If you have data and want to do a full paper with analysis and results that's okay, but you are still subject to the page limit. A pure theory paper is also acceptable, as is the development of a dissertation proposal. The body of the manuscript (excluding title page, references, figures, etc.) should not exceed 25 PAGES, double spaced with one inch margins and 12 point times roman font. Each paper will undergo a “journal review process.” Papers spanning OT and other disciplines such as organizational behavior, accounting, finance, marketing, strategy, sociology, communications, etc. are also acceptable -- subject to prior approval of the subject matter by me. Your final grade will reflect your revised paper (incorporating your response to the reviewer's comments) and your written responses to the reviewer explaining how you responded to each comment, or why you elected not to adopt a particular suggestion.

Review (10% of grade): You are responsible for providing a quality review of a journal article submitted to the blind review process. Keep your review to two, single-spaced pages.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Materials


2. Articles and book selections available on the CD I provided you.
**Recommended Books**

I have decided not to require that you buy a lot of books. However, for those of you who see organization theory as your intellectual home, I highly recommend that you purchase new or used copies of the following books, and start to build your professional library.

Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978. The External Control of Organizations
Burt, 1992. Structural Holes
Kilduff & Tsai, 2003. Social Networks and Organizations
March & Simon, 1958 Organizations
Thompson, 1967, Organizations in Action
Smelser & Swedberg, 1994, Handbook of Economic Sociology
Pfeffer, 1997, New Directions for Organization Theory
Perrow, 1986, Complex Organizations.
Smith & Hitt, 2005, Great Minds in Management
Baum, 2002 Companion to Organizations
Greenwood, et al., 2008 The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism

**COURSE CALENDAR**

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<td>Final Paper*</td>
<td>Sociopolitical approaches to governance</td>
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*Incompletes will not be accepted.
READING LIST

Readings with an * are required, all other listed readings are optional

Session 1 Introduction and Overview of Organization Theory

*Scott. & Davis Chapter 1


Session 2 Rational System Approaches

*Scott & Davis Chapter 2

*Taylor, F.W. 1916. Principles of Scientific Management, 30-49; 58-97; 118-144


Session 3 Natural System Approaches

*Scott & Davis Chapter 3


Roy, 1952. "Banana Time: Job Satisfaction and Informal Interaction" AJS

Session 4 Open Systems and "Old" Institutional Theory

*Scott & Davis Book Chapter 4


Session 5 Contingency Theory

*Scott & Davis Chapter 5


Woodward, 1965 Industrial Organization Introduction, Chapters 4 and 5


Aldrich, "Technology and Organizational Structure: A Reexamination of the findings of the Aston Group" ASQ 1972


Session 6 Carnegie School - Behavioral Decision Making


Session 7 "New" Institutional Theory


**Session 8 Organizational Ecology**


**Session 9 Resource Dependence Theory**


**Session 10 Organizational Economics**


**Session 11 Sensemaking and Enactment**


**Session 12 - Status, Reputation and Celebrity**


Session 13 Social Capital


**Session 14 Social Movement Theory**


**Session 15 Sociopolitical Approaches to Corporate Governance**


