

**PROPOSED COURSE TITLE:** A Survey of Organization Theory

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is a graduate level course on Organizational theory. Organization theory is a multidisciplinary field of research that draws on disciplines such as economics, political science, psychology, and sociology to answer questions about organizations such as why do they exist, what objectives do they pursue, how do they function, how do they survive and grow, whom do they interact with, how do they interact with each other and how do they deal with internal and external problems.

The goal of this course is to introduce students to some of the major theoretical perspectives and issues studied in organization theory. To achieve this, we will critically evaluate important academic articles that have shaped the way we think about organizations. These evaluations will be carried out over a number of sessions, each asking a particular question about organizations. I will start each session by offering a general overview of the fundamental question that is up for discussion. This will be followed by student-led discussions of the answers offered by the assigned articles.

## **GRADING COMPONENTS**

The grading of the course consists of a) class participation (10%), b) team assignments (30%) and c) a term paper (60%).

***Class participation.*** Class participation is extremely important and will be based on contributions in class and attendance. Students are expected to be well prepared – i.e., read all the assigned readings before the session in which they will be discussed. In each session, I will first offer a brief lecture on a particular topic. I will then open up the floor for discussion. Students are expected to engage in active debates on the topic and add value to it. Students who wish to obtain an above average or excellent participation grade must not only be fully prepared but must contribute regularly to the discussions and other course activities.

***Team assignments.*** For each session, every student is expected to prepare a memo based on an assigned article of their choice. In particular, students are expected to add value to an assigned article by a) critically evaluating the key assumptions and theoretical argument(s) of the assigned article, b) identifying a recent real world organizational phenomenon that either challenges or extends received wisdom (assumptions, arguments and findings) from the assigned article and c) discussing how this real world organizational phenomenon can be used to develop novel theoretical insights relevant to the assigned article. The suggested

length for each memo is 3 to 5 pages (12 point Times New Roman font and 2 line spacing in a Letter size paper with 1 inch margins on all sides).

To prepare well for the memo and in-class discussions, read each assigned article carefully and identify the following for each:

1. Problem statement and background (What puzzle does it aim to solve? Is it interesting? Why should we care about?).
2. The main theoretical argument (What is the theory about? What are the assumptions? Are these justified? Can there be an alternative theoretical perspective).
3. The research method (Did they use a case study, econometric approach, or pure theory).
4. The empirical results (Are they claiming to have found what they actually found? Are the results robust? Are they replicable? Are they believable?)
5. The implications for practitioners (What is the take away?).

Additionally, I expect you to:-

1. Determine the differences and overlap between the articles
2. Present questions that facilitate a discussion

***Term paper.*** The term paper for this course is essentially a research proposal. In a research proposal you develop one of your original research ideas and offer suitable means to test it. The idea could be from observation of real world phenomenon/anomalies or based on theoretical puzzles that you have encountered during in the course. As a starting point of converting an idea into a proposal, you conduct an extensive literature reviews. Based on this, you need to convince the reader that the idea is interesting and worth pursuing. You then formulate your idea into a research question and develop theoretical arguments to convincingly answer this question. Further, you need to identify suitable methodology for testing your arguments and thereby answering your research question. You may adopt either qualitative or quantitative methods to address your research question.

A quantitative based research proposal generally includes three sections.

1. The introduction presents the problem statement.
  - a. It should show that the problem statement is suitable for academic research
  - b. Establish that the research is motivated and based on relevant literature
  - c. Establish that the proposed research has added value
  - d. Identify specific research questions

2. The second section concerns the literature review and theory development.
  - a. Students should show that the proposed research is embedded in the most relevant studies on the subject
  - b. Specify hypotheses with arguments that are based on the literature
3. The final section concerns the research method that the students propose to apply. In this section, the students
  - a. Explain in detail why the proposed method (such as a case study or regression analysis) is the most appropriate method for the research
  - b. Indicate drawbacks and advantages of the proposed method
  - c. Indicate expected managerial implications from the research
  - d. Indicate expected problems (such as lack of data or access to case companies) for the research as well as solutions that may solve the expected problems

**You are urged to use the following format to write your research proposal.**

Overall, the research proposal could be of about 5000 words (approx. 10-15 pages, double-spacing, New Times Roman, 12 points font, not including references). The proposal should consist of the following.

A 1-2 page *problem statement* describing the nature, dimensions or attributes, and scope or boundary of an observable corporate political activity phenomenon that is of potential interest to scholars and/or practitioners.

A brief *research motivation*, discussing why the understanding this phenomenon is important for future advancement of corporate political activity research/practice.

A 3-4 page *theoretical background* indicating what is currently known and not known about the phenomenon that you proposed to study. Briefly identify any shortcomings or limitations in past research that has investigated this phenomenon.

A 2-3 page *investigative statement* specifying what you plan to do in your proposed study that would help advance understanding about the phenomenon being examined. Be specific about the theoretical perspective(s) that you plan to use as guides for this investigation and why they are selected. Also, indicate how your proposed study may avoid the shortcomings or correct the limitations associated with past research.

A 3-4 page *hypotheses development* presenting your theoretical story in terms of testable hypothesis (this might not be suitable for case studies, as they use an inductive approach). Make a clear and careful distinction between the dependent and independent variables and be certain they are clear to the reader. Be extremely

consistent in your use of terms. If appropriate, use the same pattern of wording and word order in all hypotheses

A 1 -2 page *research methodology* focusing on sampling, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis. In particular, identify a suitable research context, list the variables you would want to study, list available data source for these variables, present an appropriate research design (survey, archival, experimental, case study, etc.), mention how you will operationalize the variables and in case of regression models identify the kind of models you will use and justify why they are appropriate.

Students are allowed to add an *appendix*. In the appendix the students can provide detailed information. However, students need to be sparse in the information that they provide in the appendix. It is not an opportunity to specify many tables or much additional text.

STRICTLY FOLLOW the AMJ Style Guide

Of course, doing a research proposal is a challenge. It is something you have to learn during the course. For this reason the learning process is carefully structured during the course. I will provide you feedback on your proposal from time-to-time. I will discuss with you feasible themes, suitable literature and methodological choices. I will also offer you feedback on your early draft.

## TOPICS AND READING LIST

### 1. What is organization theory? (27-Dec-17)

Davis, G. F., & Marquis, C. 2005. Prospects for organization theory in the early twenty-first century: Institutional fields and mechanisms. *Organization Science*, 16(4): 332-343.

Priem, R. L., & Rosenstein, J. 2000. Is organization theory obvious to practitioners? A test of one established theory. *Organization Science*, 11(5): 509-524.

### 2. What are organizations and why do they exist? (29-Dec-17)

Marx, K. 1867. Co-operation. Ch. XIII in *CAPITAL*. New York: International Publishers.

Coase, R. 1937. The nature of the firm. *Economica*, 4(16): 386–405.

### 3. Why are there so many different types of organizations? (01-Jan-18)

Hannan, M. T., & Freeman, J. 1977. The population ecology of organizations. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(5): 929-964.

Hsu, G., & Hannan, M. T. 2005. Identities, genres, and organizational forms. *Organization Science*, 16(5): 474-490.

**4. Do organizations always act similarly? (03-Jan-18)**

DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. 1983. The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2): 147-160.

Phillips, D. J., & Zuckerman, E. W. 2001. Middle status conformity: theoretical restatement and Empirical Demonstration in Two Markets. *American Journal of Sociology*, 107(2): 379-429.

**5. What are the consequences of acting differently? (05-Jan-18)**

Hsu, G. 2006. Jacks of all trades and masters of none: Audiences' reactions to spanning genres in feature film production. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 51(3): 420-450.

Kraatz, M. S., & Zajac, E. J. 1996. Exploring the limits of the new institutionalism: The causes and consequences of illegitimate organizational change. *American Sociological Review*, 61(5): 812-836.

**6. How do organizations adapt? (08-Jan-18)**

Kozhikode, R. K. 2016. Dormancy as a Strategic Response to Detrimental Public Policy. *Organization Science*, 27(1), 189-206.

Barnett, W. P., & Hansen, M. T. 1996. The red queen in organizational evolution. *Strategic Management Journal*, 17(S1): 139-157.

**7. How do organizations interact with each other? (10-Jan-18)**

Krishnan, R., Martin, X., & Noorderhaven, N. G. 2006. When does trust matter to alliance performance?. *Academy of Management journal*, 49(5), 894-917.

Haveman, H. A., & Nonnemaker, L. 2000. Competition in multiple geographic markets: The impact on growth and market entry. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 45(2): 232-267.

**8. How do organizations interact with other powerful actors? (12-Jan-18)**

King, B. G. 2008. A political mediation model of corporate response to social movement activism. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 53(3): 395-421.

Kozhikode, R. K., & Li, J. 2012. Political pluralism, public policies, and organizational choices: banking branch expansion in India, 1948–2003. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(2): 339-359.

**9. How are organizations evaluated? (15-Jan-18)**

Benjamin, B. A., & Podolny, J. M. 1999. Status, quality, and social order in the California wine industry. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(3): 563-589.

Jensen, M., & Roy, A. 2008. Staging exchange partner choices: When do status and reputation matter?. *Academy of Management Journal*, 51(3): 495-516.

**10. How do organizations respond to failure? (17-Jan-18)**

Krishnan, K., & Kozhikode, R. K. 2015. Status and corporate illegality: Illegal loan recovery practices of commercial banks in India. *Academy of Management Journal*.

Haunschild, P. R., & Sullivan, B. N. 2002. Learning from complexity: Effects of prior accidents and incidents on airlines' learning. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47(4): 609-643.

**11. Student term paper presentation (19-Jan-18)**