Fall 2006
PhD Seminar in Organization Theory, Monday 1-3:50 ENG 213

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This seminar is for PhD students, and is required for OM students. The intent of the seminar is to survey the very large literature on organization theory so that all students grasp the key issues and ideas in this literature, and can develop a way to apply them to their research. The reading load is therefore heavy, but still only scratches the surface!

My emphasis is on organization theory in the various management areas rather than from a sociological or political science/public policy perspective. Most OTers are sociologists by orientation, and many hold Phds in sociology, although many hold Phds in management too. The management perspective relates more directly to managerial issues such as organizing and organizational design (for anything from small start-ups to huge multi-nationals), structuring work and work relations (in many ways), organizational learning, absorptive capacity, and knowledge management, culture, networking (external and distributed collaborative work with other organizations as well as internally), institutional pressures and behaviors, innovation and technology management (the ability to develop technologies exceeds our ability to organize to exploit those developments), and strategy development, decision making, implementation, and practice. The "organization" is often pushed into the background in OB (even though they note that the context is so important), and often severely under conceptualized in strategy (as transactions or incentive systems, not to mention all the other disciplines in a business school). This seminar should offer a good beginning for anyone whose research will concern or take place in organizations, and will concern anything like innovation, adaptation, configuring diverse activities, etc. Most of the work published in ASQ, Organization Science, and Organization Studies is OT or based on OT; some work in SMJ, Management Science, and AMR is OT; AMJ is struggling to include more OT.

The PhD Seminar on Organization Theory will be based on the following three books:


3. Clegg, Stewart R., Cynthia Hardy, Thomas B. Lawrence, and Walter R. Nord (2006) The Sage Handbook of Organization Studies (second edition) ISBN 0-7619-4996-8, cost is $130.00. Note that we will skip the more OB chapters and the methods chapters for our course, but I strongly encourage you to read them too!

I expect every student to read every assignment carefully, and to use all as appropriate in the assigned papers. However, those who are not majoring in OT or planning to use it in strategy
may choose to share the books or find library copies. These books should be part of your library if you plan to use OT in any way.

**Many other books should also be read**, not to mention classic articles. The first two books for this course are “lite” and fun (relatively speaking), to lighten the load for those who are being forced to be here. **I recommend the following at least:**


Baum, Joel editor (2002) *The Blackwell Companion to Organizations*, Blackwell Publishers isbn: 0-631-21694-4; about 100 bucks; Almost 1000 pages, 38 chapters divided into three levels; intra-organizational, organizational, and inter-organizational; and 10 topics at each level (institutions, networks, ecology, evolution, cognition and interpretation, power and dependence, technology, learning, and economics). The chapters are short summaries of the current thinking of organization theorists in each of the topics, by level.


**Assignments and Grading:**

1. **35%**: Weekly attendance and preparation for the seminar; **handing in a one page outline** (single spaced) of 2 or 3 key themes you found in the readings for that week; no descriptions!! You must analyze to think of 2-3 **themes** that you argue capture the gist of the readings. One page! Get right to the point, state your theme and briefly justify it. We will discuss these in class. We will begin and end on time, so being on time is required. Missed classes are unacceptable as a rule, but contact me if you have an emergency. A missed class must be made up with a 6 page essay on the readings, which will be graded. I generally do not give course grades to people who miss classes, so please plan accordingly.

2. **15%**: **Each person to be assigned to present your themes in a class**, 25 minutes max, and hand in a 4-5 page paper (double spaced, essay format) on that week’s work. We may double up the assignments if the class is small, and so adjust the

3. **50%**: **three (3!!) papers that synthesize the ideas read, see details below, due by:**
   - **Sept 25**: your integration of ideas from first book, up to 8 pages, plus charts etc. Develop your theory of organization, or of a core topic in OT based on the first book, that you will or can use in your own research. Focus on your own research area and build an organization theory or perspective that will help you do your work --- (10%)
   - **Oct 23**: Your integration of ideas from second book, now going to around 15 pages, carrying forward ideas from the first; now develop either a new theory or an elaboration of your first theory (and explain what you have learned or otherwise have changed your thinking about since the first book (15%)
   - **Dec 11 (or following week)**: Your final synthesis of ideas from all three books, what is your theory of OT? Or what chapter would you write for organization studies 2016? This paper should be substantial, 20-30 pages, focused on a clear theory of organization (have a big theme and then supporting arguments) that extends, synthesizes, re-conceives, or otherwise makes a serious contribution to OT (and explain why and how this is a
contribution). This is YOUR theory, so it is fine if it is new, weird, etc. Just make an excellent case for it! (25%)

NOTE: I expect good, scholarly papers all three times: follow 1 inch around margin conventions, 12 pt double spaced; have headers as appropriate, lots of references in the text with proper bibliographies.

Class assignments:

1. Sept 11: Organization structure, in its environment: 20th century
   Pugh et al: chap 1 and 2 (p. 1-83)
   Assignment: let’s develop our own model of organization structure from first chapter: what is structure? What are its core elements? How are these conceived? How has this conceptualization transformed, if at all? Same for environment.

2. Sept 18: Management and Decision-making
   Read Chap 3, 4, 5 Pugh et al
   Assignment: same as above: develop a model or framework for what constitutes better management and better decision-making and better approaches to people (first, decide if they can be combined and if so how, if not why not): its core thrusts and themes, try to think of properties for each theme, and dimensions for each property).

Student leader____________________

3. Sept 25: People and Change FIRST PAPERS DUE
   Read: chaps 6 Pugh et al.
   No one pagers this week, just your papers. We will all summarize our key ideas (be sure to include the last chapter in your thinking)

4. Oct 2: mechanization, nature ....
   Read Chapters 1-3 in Images
   Now what? What is new here that you did not think about before, and why is that interesting? Compare and contrast with writers. Also develop any new or refined themes.

Student leader____________________

5. Oct 9:
   Read: chapters 4-6 in Images
   Think about what is new, what is old or reconfirming,

Student leader____________________

6. Oct 16:
   Read: chapters 7-9
   questions same as above – what is new from perspective of schools of thought and their interconnections
7. **Oct 23: SECOND PAPER DUE**
   Create a new integration of ideas, either as add-ons to your model from before, the class’s discussion of an overview, or a reformulation of organization theory that fits your scholarly needs or plans. We will all share our ideas.

8. **Oct 30: First jump into the big book**
   Read Clegg et al intro, pp. 1-16, and chaps 1.1, 1.9, 1.12, 1.13
   Assignment: new overview, so what is new here? Any conflicts with our first two syntheses? Any old hat stuff being presented as new, and why?

9. **Nov 6 handbook** (ecology, economics, institutions – mostly outside in)
   read chaps: 1.2 (55-110), 1.3 (111-148), 1.6 (215-254)

10. **Nov 13 Handbook** (feminist, critical, diversity, compassion more inside out)
    Read chaps: 1.7 (255-283), 1.8 (284-346), 2.4 (520-540), and 2.17 (843-866)

11. **Nov 20 handbook** (complexity, structures, change)
    Read chaps: 1.5 (165-215--skim), 2.6 (577-597), 2.7 (598-617), 2.16 (814-842)

12. **Nov 27 Handbook** (power, culture, rhetoric, emotions)
    Read chaps 2.13 (754-776), 2.12 (725-753), 2.10 675-700), 2.15 (800-813)

13. **Dec 4 handbook** leftovers: networks, aesthetics, globalization, green, communication
    Read chaps: 2.14 (776-799), 2.11 (701-724), 2.9 (skim 651-700), 2.8 618-650), 2.5 (541-676)

14. **Dec 11 final paper due by Dec 20th**