RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE BUSINESS SCHOOL

SPECIAL TOPICS: ADVANCED OB (26:620:685)
Dr. Chao C. Chen, 1097 Washington Park; (Tel): 973-353-5425; (Fax): 973-353-1664;
Email: chaochen@business.rutgers.edu

CLASS HOURS: Tuesday 2:00-4:50pm, Room 502 1 WP
OFFICE HOUR: Tuesday: 1:00-2:00pm or by appointment
FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER: NW: 973-353-1766; NB: 732-932-1766

Objectives

This doctoral seminar is designed to focus on special topics of interest to those students who have a reasonable level of familiarity with the basic areas of organizational behavior. Drawing on theory and research in psychology, social psychology, and organizational behavior, we shall explore in greater depth current topics of organization and management identified as most interesting to the participating students. The emphasis will be on theoretical model development on the basis of literature review of previous theories and empirical research. Students will also identify the appropriate research design to test all or some of the hypotheses that they have developed. The theory and method thus make up a research proposal that is ready for research execution and is competitive for an AOM Conference submission.

Students will read current and foundational theories and research surrounding selected topics of their own and of their peers. The readings are grouped under required and recommended readings. For the development of one’s own individual research proposal, the reading list usually includes both the required and the recommended and even more. For class discussion, it is important that everyone read the required readings for every topic before class and spend time reflecting so as to come up with research ideas on the topic. The effectiveness of this class depends heavily on not only independent work on one’s own topic but also providing critical and constructive comments on fellow students’ topics.

Course Requirements

Class Participation 20%
Weekly submission 20%
Review for colleagues 20%
Research proposal (term paper) 40%

Class participation (20%)

Class participation is based on: (1) active engagement in classroom discussion and (2) acting as a session leader.

1. **Active engagement in class discussion.** Each student must be prepared to discuss all the required readings for each class session. As you review each reading, you might want to consider the following issues:
• What is the basic formulation of the theory (constructs and relationships among them), and what drives the theory?
• What are the underlying assumptions?
• What is the main contribution of this paper? What are the interesting ideas?
• Do you agree with the argument made? What would it take to convince you?
• What are the boundary spanning conditions of the argument; in other words, under what circumstances does the argument apply and not apply?
• What are the critical differences between this author’s argument and others you have read? Can these differences be resolved through an empirical test? What would that study look like?

And, for empirical papers, you might also consider:

• How are the variables operationalized? Is this consistent with the theory?
• Are the data analyzed and interpreted effectively?

2. **Session leader.** Each student will lead a session once during the semester. The session consists of two major parts: 1) commenting and discussing the readings, 2) identifying new research ideas, and 3) presenting a theoretical model for guiding future research in a specific area. For leading the discussion, the session leader provides an organizing framework summarizing the week’s readings and exploring similarities, differences, contributions, and gaps in the readings. For identifying new research ideas, the session leader solicits and encourages class participants for different and novel research topics. And finally present the theoretical model with hypotheses and a figure that illustrates the hypothesized relationships.

**Weekly submissions (20%)**

Except for the week when you serve as the session leader, each student submits a one single spaced page to summarize new ideas inspired by the readings. A new idea is usually made up of a few inter-related hypotheses that are defensible from theory, logic, and previous empirical research if any. The new idea should, in your judgment, contribute to the existing literature in some way, whether it further refines and clarifies some conceptual and theoretical ambiguity, fills some gap, solves some tension or conflict, or challenges some convention.

**Peer Reviews (20%)**

One of the duties of a scholar is to review research from colleagues. To hone your critical reviewing skills and get you in the practice of thinking and writing as though you are a reviewer of your own work, you will be asked to serve as a reviewer for two classmates. Your job will be to read the papers and provide a constructive, critical review of each paper (approximately 3 pages). Two copies of each review will be submitted on the day of the presentation after the proposal is presented: one for the author, the other one for me.

**Research proposal (40%)**
The research proposal is due in two weeks after the student’s initially presented his or her research model. The research proposal provides each student the opportunity to conceive and plan a study on the topic of the student’s choice. In the proposal, you should provide a literature review of the related work to-date, a theoretical framework consisting of hypotheses, and methodology to be used for testing the hypotheses (for the format, use AMJ publications as examples). The paper should be in no more than 15 double-spaced pages of text. Each student will give a 20 minutes presentation of his or her proposal on the day of the submission. The final proposal will be submitted on the last day of the class and should be accompanied with a point by point response that details how you address the issues raised by the peer reviews. You do not have to always agree with the reviewers’ comments but no point should be left unaddressed.

It is important that you appropriately cite all references within the text of your proposal, as well as including a reference list at the conclusion of your paper (for the format of referencing, see AMJ publication guides). Sentences that are paraphrased and ideas that are adopted from another work must be appropriately cited. If you are including a sentence or passage verbatim from another work (published or unpublished), you must indicate this with the appropriate quotation marks and citation.

OUTLINE OF CLASSES

Overview

1 – Sept 7  Class Introduction
2 – Sept 14  Multilevel theory and research
3 – Sept 21  Peer reviews
4 – Sept 28  Culture and cognition
5 – Oct 05  Faultlines and subgroup formation
6 – Oct 12  Ethical leadership
7 – Oct 19  Organizational justice
8 – Oct 26  Leadership and motivation
9 – Nov 02  Presentations
10 – Nov 09  Work and family
11 – Nov 16  Presentations
12 – Nov 23  Topic to be arranged
13 – Nov 30  Topic to be arranged
14 – Dec. 07  Presentation and final submissions
Class 1 – Introduction and Planning

Each student identify one topic of research to be focused in this course, report prior work on this topic, assess familiarity with the literature and an action plan for completing a research proposal within the course of this class. We will also schedule the sequence of the topics to be covered in this class. Following is a tentative schedule.

Class 2 Multilevel Theory Building


Recommended Readings


Class 3 Conducting Peer Review

Class 4. Culture and Cognition


**Recommended Readings**


**Class 5 Faultlines and Subgroup Formation (Jamie)**


**Recommended Readings**


Class 6. Ethical Leadership (Ali)

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


Class 7. Organizational Justice (Aparna)

1. Choi J. (2008); Event Justice Perceptions and Employees’ Reactions: Perceptions of Social Entity Justice as a Moderator; Journal of Applied Psychology; 93,3,513-528

Recommended:


**Class 8. Motivation (Vincent)**

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


Class 9. Submission and presentation by Jamie and Ali

Class 10. Work and Family (Mohammed)

Class 11. Submission and presentation by Aparna and Vincent

Class 12. Organizational Justice (Marina)


Class 13. Leadership (Akwasi)

Required Readings

1. The ambiguity of leadership, Pfeffer, J., Academy of Management Review, 1977
5. The bright and dark sides of leader traits: A review and theoretical extension of the leader trait paradigm, Judge, T.A., Piccolo, R.F., & Kosalka, T., The Leadership Quarterly, 2009

Recommended Readings


Class 14. Presentation by Mohammed and final submissions by all

Author Reviewer Match (To be arranged in Class 1)

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