Organization Theory Foundation of Strategy

Course No: 02804090
Credit: 1
Prerequisite:

Program: Graduate
Instructor: Zhong Weiguo
Semester: 2015 Fall

Instructor’s resume/brief introduction (Within 500 words):

Dr. Zhong graduated from City University of Hong Kong and joined GSM in 2014. His research focuses on the interorganizational relationships and governance mechanisms. In addition to the issue of governance in relationships, he is also interested in strategic networking and firm performance, the internationalization of firms from emerging markets, innovation strategies such as new product development, services innovation, and customer co-creation. His research in these areas has appeared in journals such as Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of Management, Journal of Business Research, Industrial Marketing Management, Academy of Management Best Paper Proceedings, Journal of Technology Management in China, Management World, Science Management, and Southern Economics.

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TA’s contact information:

Office hour:
By appointment

Program Learning Goals and Objectives

1 Learning Goal 1 Graduates will be thoroughly familiar with the specialized knowledge and theories required for the completion of academic research.
1.1 Objective 1 Graduates will have a deep understanding of basic knowledge and theories in their specialized area.
1.2 Objective 2 Graduates will be familiar with the latest academic findings in their specialized area and will be knowledgeable about related areas.
1.3 Objective 3 Graduates will be familiar with research methodologies in their specialized area, and will be able to apply them effectively.

2 Learning Goal 2 Graduates will be creative scholars, who are able to write and publish high-quality graduation dissertation and research papers.
2.1 Objective 1 Graduates will write and publish high-quality graduation dissertation and research papers
2.2 Objective 2 Graduates will be critical thinkers and innovative problems solvers.
Learning Goal 3 Graduates will have a broad vision of globalization and will be able to communicate and cooperate with international scholars

3.1 Objective 1 Graduates will have excellent oral and written communication skills
3.2 Objective 2 Graduates will be able to conduct efficient academic communication in at least one foreign language

Learning Goal 4 Graduates will be aware of academic ethics and will have a sense of social responsibility.

4.1 Objective 1 Graduates will have a sense of social responsibility.
4.2 Objective 2 Graduates will be aware of potential ethical issues in their academic career.
4.3 Objective 3 Graduates will demonstrate concern for social issues.

Course Overview
This course is designed to provide a strong foundation for critical thinking in the area of strategic management focusing on its foundation of Organization Theory. It will be run as a seminar examining theories and empirical studies of strategic management. The course will be inter-disciplinary. To avoid overlap with the Economics Foundation of Strategy seminar that will be taught by Professor Changqi Wu and Classics in Strategy Research by Professor Jiangyong Lu, this seminar will examine handful number of important theories of organizational theory in depth.

This course focuses generally on classics and more recent approaches of organization theory in economic organizations. Five topics will be addressed: 1) organizational theory and its integration with strategic management, 2) institutional theory, 3) social networks and IORs, 4) organizational categories and identities, and 5) social movements and institutional change.

Course Objectives
This course aims to

- Introduce the students with the important frameworks, concepts and methodological issues of organization theory to examine strategic management problems.
- Familiarize students with the current trends and advanced topics in organization theory.
- Provide students general knowledge about organization theory and guide them to integrate organization theory with strategic management research in a constructive manner.

To encourage learning, students are expected to actively participate in class discussions. You should read carefully all required readings before each class. You should be ready to talk about the main message, methodological sophistications, and possible extensions of the papers under required readings. Each week, papers in the reading list will be individually assigned. A one to two page (typed, single spaced) critical summary of the assigned paper will be required from each student, before class (Bring enough copies to the class to distribute to all the participants). In discussion, avoid simple summary. Rather focus on critique and possible extensions.

The summary should include:
1. What is the main research question of the paper? Is this an important question?
2. What are the assumptions in the paper? Are they valid? Why or why not?
3. How is the paper designed? Is the empirical method appropriate?
4. What are the conclusions of the paper? Does the paper answer the questions proposed?
5. What is the possible way of extension? How would you proceed?
6. How would you position the article among the assigned readings or in the field?

**Detailed Course Plan**

**Class 1 (Tuesday September 15, 13:00-16:00): Introduction and Theories of Organization**

The instructor will provide an introduction to the class; and will review the syllabus and assign the readings for the term.

- **Fundamental papers**

- **Critique papers**

**Class 2 (Tuesday September 22, 13:00-16:00): Institutional Theory**

- **Fundamental papers**
  *Sociological Institutionalism*


**Historical Institutionalism**


**Economic Institutionalism**


**General Papers**


**Critique papers**


**Class 3 (Tuesday September 29, 13:00-16:00): Social Networks and IORs**

**Fundamental papers**


**Critique papers**


**Class 4 (Tuesday October 6, 13:00-16:00): National Day Holiday, no class (self-reading)**

**Geography and Community as Institutional Environments**


Class 5 (Tuesday October 13, 13:00-16:00): Organizational Categories and Identities

- **Fundamental papers**

- **Critique papers**

Class 6 (Tuesday October 20, 13:00-16:00): Social Movements and Institutional Change

- **Fundamental papers**


- Critique papers


Final Exam:

Teaching Methods
The module is conducted in a seminar format including:

- Formal discussion
- Paper critiques and presentation
- Final proposal

For each session, one student will be assigned to be the integrator. The integrator will not be required to turn in a paper summary for that session. S/he, however, will prepare a 1-2 pages of tables or diagrams that summarize all the readings assigned for that session (Please tie together the session’s readings and place them in the context of the field). Then the integrator will facilitate discussions for each paper after the critique by assigned students.

IT tools to be used in the classroom
Computer, projector, and videos
Textbooks

References & Readings
Detailed references have been listed in the session Four.

Videos, CD-ROMs and other adjunct learning resources used
Newspaper reports

Rules students must follow
The class has the following general requirements:

• **Class Participation:** Because this course is a seminar, most of the action takes place during class discussion. Thus, all participants should show up prepared to discuss the assigned readings.

• **Final Paper:** There is not a final paper requirement for the class, but at the conclusion of the class, participants may submit a research paper or prospectus (on any topic) they are working on to the instructor for developmental feedback.

For each class:
• Class sessions will typically begin with the instructor providing a general overview of the session, highlighting relevant background and context of the assigned readings. Next will be a more focused discussion and critique of the individual papers that are assigned for that week, lead by the integrator. The final segment of the class will be a general discussion led by the instructor, which will focus on the questions that the students send in advance. The instructor will then wrap-up the discussion with some concluding comments.

• Discussion of Assigned Reading: Each student will provide a review and critique of the assigned readings during the class session. This 10-15 minute presentation should include 1) the 2-3 main contributions of the work and/or why you think the paper is interesting, and 2) the 2-3 areas of improvement for the paper.

Academic Integrity
DO NOT COPY, PARAPHRASE OR TRANSLATE ANYTHING FROM ANYWHERE WITHOUT STATING FROM WHERE YOU OBTAINED IT!

Course Assessment
Your final grade will be determined as follows:
Attendance and class participation: 35%
Critique summary: 50%
Class quizzes: 15%

Attendance and class participation:
This part of the grade include your attendance of the class (including timeliness), your role as a critique and as a session chair, as well as your contribution to class discussion of the assigned readings.

Class Quizzes:
Occasionally the instructor may give quizzes for the assigned readings at the beginning of the class. Not all the quizzes will be graded. However, some of them will be graded and will count toward course grade.