COURSE DESCRIPTION:
The primary objective of this doctoral seminar is to survey the major theoretical perspectives and issues studied in organization theory (OT) research related to topics such as 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.

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. Students will be assigned to lead each week's discussion, and will, in consultation with me, develop questions that will guide and structure each week's class. 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 and draw from organization theories in our own research interests.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Participation (10%): As with most doctoral seminars, the quality of the course is directly related to the quality of class discussion. Consequently, class participation will be graded on each student’s degree of quality contribution toward class discussions. To ensure an informed discussion, students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss (not simply summarize) each article. Each week there will be a specified list of required readings (the required readings are marked with a ‘*’ in the readings list). A list of suggested/additional readings is provided each week for those students interested in pursuing a topic in more detail. Students are encouraged, although not required, to read beyond the assigned readings and to bring to the class’s attention research that informs and explores the day’s issues. In preparing for class discussion, you may want to ask yourself some of the following questions:

- What is interesting about this article?
- What are the underlying assumptions of this article? Of this theory?
- What are the interesting research questions in this area of research?
• What are the strengths and weaknesses of the conceptual arguments? And of this theory?
• What are the strengths and weaknesses of the methodological approach used to test the research questions in this article? (if applicable)
• How does this article fit in with other articles on the topic?
• If you were doing research in the same content area as the article, what would you do next or differently?

In addition, for each class session discussion leaders/class facilitators will be assigned to help clarify key concepts, identify controversial or interesting issues, point out additional articles of particular relevance, and so on. Though all students are strongly encouraged to come to class with questions and issues to discuss, it is the role of the facilitator to prepare 2 or 3 critical questions per article for discussion. However, it is NOT the role of the facilitator to lead the entire discussion -- all students are expected to participate equally. We will determine who will be the facilitators for each class during the first class session. Depending on class size, students will be expected to lead 2-3 class sessions.

Examination (45%): There will be one examination at the end of the course during the last scheduled class period that will emphasize the themes, trends, issues, and the like that are highlighted throughout the readings and class discussions. There will be two or three questions to be answered over a three-hour period. Answers will be graded on: (a) quality of insight brought to the question; (b) incorporation of relevant theory and research; and (c) integration across topic areas.

Research Paper (45%): Each student will investigate a topic of his/her choice and write a high quality research paper that integrates past research and theory with new ideas about an issue. Originality, thoroughness, and scholarly thinking are the most important criteria for the research paper. These papers may involve data analysis or a conceptual contribution to the literature. Whatever the nature of the research paper, it must be of top-notch quality; this is an opportunity to develop a paper that is of publishable quality. All papers should be written in a format and structure suitable for submission to the top management journals (Academy of Management Review, Academy of Management Journal, Administrative Science Quarterly, Journal of Management, Journal of Applied Psychology, Organization Science, Personnel Psychology, Strategic Management Journal etc.) and should not exceed 30 pages.

Required Materials:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/27</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/3</td>
<td>Overview of Theoretical Perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is Good Theory?</td>
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<td>4/10</td>
<td>Closed System Models</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Rational Closed</strong></td>
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<td>4/17</td>
<td>Contingency Theory</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Decision Making</td>
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<td>4/24</td>
<td>Economics Approaches: Transaction Cost Economics / Agency Theory</td>
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<td><strong>Rational Open</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>5/1</td>
<td>Power / Resource Dependency Theory</td>
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<td>5/8</td>
<td>Institutional Theory</td>
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<td>5/15</td>
<td>Sensemaking and Enactment</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/22</td>
<td><strong>Closed book examination</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TBD</strong></td>
<td>Final Draft of Research Paper</td>
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# Course Readings

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Overview of Theoretical Perspectives</th>
<th>What is Good Theory?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Overview of Theoretical Perspectives</td>
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<td>April 3</td>
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**Overview of Theoretical Perspectives**


**What is good theory**


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<tr>
<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Closed Systems Models</th>
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<td>April 10</td>
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Roy, 1952. Banana Time: Job Satisfaction and Informal Interaction. *AJS*


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<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Contingency Theory Decision Making</th>
<th>Pick 1 new papers</th>
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<td>April 17</td>
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**Continency Theory Required**

*RECENT PAPER TO BE FOUND*


**Decision Making Required**


**Contingency theory – additional readings**

Aldrich, 1972. Technology and Organizational Structure: A Reexamination of the findings of the Aston Group. *Administrative Science Quarterly*


Woodward, 1965 Industrial Organization Introduction, Chapters 4 and 5

Decision Making Additional Readings


Simon – Administrative Behavior


*RECENT PAPER TO BE FOUND


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<tr>
<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Power / Resource Dependency Theory</th>
<th>Pick 1 new papers</th>
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<td>May 1</td>
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*RECENT PAPER TO BE FOUND


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<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Institutional Theory</th>
<th>Pick 2 new papers</th>
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<td>May 8</td>
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*RECENT PAPERS TO BE FOUND


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<th>Week 12</th>
<th>Sensemaking and Enactment</th>
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<th>Week 9</th>
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<td>May 22</td>
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Recommended Books
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
Aldrich, 1999. Organizations Evolving
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

Additional Topics
Comparative Structure

Environment
*Hall Chapter 10
*Dess & Beard

Organizational Ecology

The Art of Reviewing and Writing Theory

Issues and Perspectives