



PBU 1605 ORGANIZATION THEORY

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<i>Class meets:</i> WED 10 AM – 1 PM	

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to review and evaluate different theories, perspectives and developments that relate to understanding organizations, including both macro and micro theories, beginning with the classical engineering perspectives and moving to more contemporary post-modern approaches.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Knowledge

- An appreciation of different organization theories and their application to real-world business issues
- An appreciation of current trends and controversies
- An understanding of the different research approaches that can be adopted and how they link to different organization theories

Skills

- The ability to critically review different perspectives and consider strengths and weaknesses
- The ability to present and communicate complex ideas in a classroom setting
- The ability to identify research gaps and build theoretical frameworks that synthesize different organization theory perspectives
- The ability to articulate a research agenda for future research based on analysis of current trends and controversies

Perspectives

- Modernist, symbolic and postmodern perspectives

CLASS STRUCTURE

The class will meet once per week. Many of the classes will be student-led. Readings will be assigned to particular students prior to each session and will be presented, discussed and debated and applied to different organizational contexts. For each of the different organization theories covered, students will be required to develop a research question that aligns with their interests that would be appropriate for that given perspective/theory and define what research methods would be appropriate. These will be discussed in class.

CLASS TEXTS

The anchor book for the class is:

Scott, W. R., and Davis, G. F. (2007). Organizations and Organizing: Rational, Natural, and Open System Perspectives. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

You may find that having one of the contemporary books listed below useful for some basic overviews.

Hatch, M.J. and Cunliffe, A. 2006. Organization Theory: Modern, symbolic and postmodern perspectives. Oxford University Press.

Shafritz, J., Ott, J., and Jang, Y. 2004. Classics of Organization Theory. Wadsworth Publishing.

Tsoukas, H. and Knudsen, C. 2003. The Oxford Handbook of Organization Theory: Meta-theoretical Perspectives.

Watson, T. 2006. Organizing and Managing Work. Financial Times Management

Miles, J.A. 2012. Management and Organization Theory. Jossey Bass

Some classic books include:

Burrell, G. and Morgan, G. (1979). Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis. London: Heinemann.

Cyert, R. and March, J. 1963. A Behavioral Theory of the Firm. Prentice Hall.

Galbraith, J. 1973. Designing Complex Organizations. Addison Wesley.

Silverman, D. 1970. The Theory of Organizations. London: Heinemann.

Perrow, C. 1986. Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay. McGraw Hill.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Bentley College requires that students adhere to the College's Academic Integrity System and its Academic Honor Code. Please see the Student Handbook for your rights and responsibilities regarding academic integrity or refer to the Bentley website:

<https://www.bentley.edu/files/2015/08/12/Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20Sept%20%202015%20Revision.pdf>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade will be comprised of the following components:

Class Participation: 10%

The key to a meaningful and interesting class experience is class participation. All participants are required to ***read the core readings and at least one of the "extension" readings*** before each class session. You will be expected to make a significant contribution to discussions in each of the sessions. Your grade for class participation will be based on the extent to which you have prepared for each class, including having read assigned materials prior to class, actively participated in class discussions, and answered questions posed. There will be no lectures, so it is imperative that each participant comes fully prepared to discuss the readings and other assignments for the week.

Paper Summaries: 20%

In addition to the general preparation, each participant will be assigned one or more articles from the week's discussion and will be expected to prepare a short summary (no more than 1 page single-spaced). Please ***email me the summary by 10 p.m. on the Tuesday*** preceding the respective session, so I can post it on the course Blackboard site. The goal is to have everyone prepared to participate and for each person to be able to take over the lead on the discussion for their particular article. At the end of the semester there will be a set of article summaries that everyone has access to. These will be helpful for the final OT exam as well for the OT qualifying exam at the end of your coursework.

The summary should be guided by the following questions:

- (a) What is the basic argument?
- (b) What are the argument's strengths and weaknesses? If you disagree with the argument, what would it take to convince you?
- (c) What differentiates this argument from others we have read?
- (d) What, if any, alternative explanation could account for the findings?
- (e) What is one interesting researchable question derived from the article/book chapter?

Final Exam: 20%

This be a 3-hour open-note exam that will cover all course material. The structure and format will mirror the final comprehensive that you will take at the end of your coursework. The exam is scheduled for **April 20**.

Final Paper: 50%

The final paper will consist of an original research paper that draws upon organizational theories to explore an issue that relates to the research area that you are interested in. This will involve identifying a specific research question; developing a conceptual framework that helps you to identify gaps in the existing literature that relate to this issue that can be empirically studied in the future; and setting out how that research gap can be filled by future research. The objective is to produce a paper of the style of a published journal article. Papers will likely be approximately 5000-6000 words in length.

To make sure you have enough time to think through the paper and incorporate feedback, the final paper components must be produced by the following deadlines:

- Introduction – identification of the selected topic for the paper and a preliminary research question. **Due Feb 10**
- Literature review – outline of the papers that you will draw on in the paper and a first draft of the literature review. **Due Mar 9**
- Theoretical framework – development of the theoretical framework that you have developed; this might be in the form of a figure, a set of propositions or a set of hypotheses depending on the type of theoretical approaches that you have decided to use. **Due Mar 30**
- Research agenda – specification of the research agenda/gap that arises from the development of your theoretical framework along with a detailed outline of the appropriate methodology. **Due Apr 13**
- Final paper – this will use the various sections that have been submitted but amended as you see fit to produce the final version (writing a paper is a very iterative process and does not follow the logic of the linear paper that you finally read; hence considerable rework of the various sections may be needed to produce the final version). The final paper will likely include an abstract, background section, theoretical framework section, methodology section, discussion section, conclusion sections and references section – but this structure can be modified to fit the particular needs of the paper that you are writing. **Due May 10**

Journals of Importance

Academy of Management Perspectives	Academy of Management Journal
Academy of Management Review	Administrative Sciences Quarterly
Academy of Management Annals	California Management Review
Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	Harvard Business Review
Journal of Business Venturing	British Journal of Management
Journal of International Business Studies	Organization Studies
Journal of Management	Journal of Management Studies
Long Range Planning	Management Science
Journal of Management Inquiry	Organizational Science
Sloan Management Review	Strategic Management Journal
Strategic Organization	Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal

Conferences to Consider (for paper submission or doctoral consortia*)

Academy of Management (paper due early Jan.; conference in August)*
Eastern Academy of Management (paper due in Nov.; conference in May)*
European Group for Organizational Studies (short paper due early Jan, conference in July)
Strategic Management Society (abstract due in February/March, conference in Sep/October)
Academy of International Business (paper due early Jan; conference end of June)*
Babson Entrepreneurship Research Conference (abstract due in Oct., conference in June)*
International Association for Business and Society (summary due in Fall, conference in March)

DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

(subject to change to accommodate guest speakers' schedules and other contingencies)

Week 1: Jan 20

A Map of the Territory

Core readings:

Scott and Davis, Chapters 1-5

Astley, G., & Van de Ven, A.H. 1983. Central debates in organization theory, 28: 245-273

Week 2: Jan 27

Rational and Natural Models

Core readings:

Weber, M. 1978 [1968]. Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology. Edited by Roth, G., & Wittich, C., Chapter 11.

March, J.G., & Simon, H.A. 1993[1958]. Organizations, Chapters 1-4.

Cyert, R.M., & March, J.G. 1963. A Behavioral Theory of the Firm, Chapters 1-3, 5, 7, and 9.

Extensions:

Perrow, C. 1986. Complex Organizations, Chapters 1-3

Gouldner, A.W. 1954. Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy, Chapters 1-3

- Roy, Donald. 1952. Quota restriction and goldbricking in a machine shop. *American Journal of Sociology*, 57(5): 427-442.
- Cohen, M. D., March, J.G., & Olsen, J.P. 1972. A garbage can model of organizational choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17: 1-25.
- Levinthal, D. A., & March, J. G. 1992. The myopia of learning. *Strategic Management Journal*, 14(2): 95-112.
- Ocasio, W. 1997. Towards an attention-based view of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*, 18 (S1): 187-206.
- Feldman, M. S., & Pentland, B.T. 2003. Reconceptualizing organizational routines as a source of flexibility and change. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 48(1): 94-118.

Week 3: Feb 3
Technology, Contingency, Configurations

Core readings:

- Scott and Davis, Chapters 6-7
- Thompson, J.D. 1967. *Organizations in Action*, Chapters 1-2 and 4-5.
- Donaldson, L. 1987. Strategy and structural adjustment to regain fit and performance: In defense of contingency theory. *Journal of Management Studies*, 24(1): 1-24.

Extensions:

- Lawrence, P., & Lorsch, J. 1967. Differentiation and integration in complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 12: 1-47.
- Schoonhoven, C. 1981. Problems with contingency theory: Testing assumptions hidden within the language of contingency theory. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 26: 349-377.
- Barley, S.R. 1986. Technology as an occasion for structuring: Evidence from observations of CT scanners and the social order of radiology departments. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 31: 78-108.
- Siggelkow, N. 2002. Evolution toward fit. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47: 125-159.
- Kingshuk, S., & Van de Ven, A. 2005. Designing work within and between organizations. *Organization Science*, 16: 389-408.

Week 4: Feb 10
Strategic Contingency, Power and Politics

Core readings:

- Scott and Davis, Chapter 8
- Thompson, J.D. 1967. *Organizations in Action*, Chapter 3.
- Perrow, C. 2002. *Organizing America: Wealth, Power, and the Origins of Corporate Capitalism*, Chap. 1-4 and Conclusion.

Extensions:

- Emerson, R.M. 1962. Power-dependence relations. *American Sociological Review*, 27: 31-40.
- March, J.G. 1962. The business firm as a political coalition. *Journal of Politics*, 24: 662-678.
- Pfeffer, J. & Salancik, G.R. 1977. Who gets power—and how they hold onto it: A strategic-contingency model of power. *Organizational Dynamics* (winter):70-77.
- Gargiulo, Martin. 1993. Two step leverage: Managing constraint in organizational politics. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38: 1-19.

Week 5: Feb 17

Resource Dependency and Social Networks

Core readings:

Scott and Davis, Chapter 9 (pp. 233-243) and Chapter 11

Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G.R. 1978. The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective, Chapter 3.

Granovetter, M. S. 1973. The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78 (6): 1360-1380.

Burt, R. S. 1992. Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition, Chapter 1.

Extensions:

Granovetter, Mark S. 1985. Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology*, 91: 481-510.

Uzzi, B. 1997. Social structure and competition in interfirm networks: The paradox of embeddedness. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42:35-67.

Hayagreeva, R., & Drazin, R. 2002. Overcoming resource constraints on product innovation by recruiting talent from rivals: A study of the mutual fund industry. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45: 491-507.

Tiziana, C., & Milkolaj, P. 2005. Power imbalance, mutual dependence and constraint absorption: A closer look at resource dependence theory. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50: 167-199.

Aven, B. L. 2015. The paradox of corrupt networks: An analysis of organizational crime at Enron. *Organization Science*, 26(4): 980-996.

Week 6: Feb 24

Organizational Ecology

Core readings:

Scott and Davis, Chapter 10 (pp. 246-257)

Aldrich, Howard E. 1999. Organizations Evolving, Chapter 10 (pp. 265-297).

Hannan, M. and Freeman, J. 1977. The population ecology of organizations. *American Journal of Sociology*, 82: 929-964.

Extensions:

Stinchcombe, A. 1965. Social structure and organizations. In James G. March (Ed.), *Handbook of Organizations*: pp. 142-169.

Amburgey T. L. & Rao, H. 1996. Organization ecology: Past, present and future directions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39: 1265-1286.

Baum, J. A.C. & Powell, W. W. 1995. Cultivating an institutional ecology of organizations. *American Sociological Review*, 60: 529-538.

Hannan, M. T. & Carroll, G.R. 1995. Theory building and cheap talk about legitimation: Reply to Baum and Powell. *American Sociological Review*, 60: 539-544.

Week 7: Mar 2

Institutional Theory. Institutional Change

Core readings:

Scott and Davis, Chapter 10 (pp. 258-277)

Selznick, Phillip. 1948. Foundations of the theory of organizations. *American Sociological Review*, 13: 25-35.

Extensions:

Zald, M. N. & Denton, P. 1963. From evangelism to general service: The transformation of the YMCA. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 8: 214-234.

Clark, B. R. 1972. The organizational saga in higher education. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17: 178-183.

Zucker, L. 1977. The role of institutionalization in cultural persistence. *American Sociological Review*, 42: 726-743.

Selznick, P. 1996. Institutionalism "old" and "new". *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41: 270-277.

Seo, M.G. & Creed, W.E.D. 2002. Institutional contradictions, praxis and institutional change: A dialectical perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 27: 222-247.

Colyvas, J. A., & Powell, W. W. 2006. Roads to institutionalization: The re-making of boundaries between public and private science. *Research in Organisational Behaviour*, 27: 305-353.

Lounsbury, M. 2007. A tale of two cities: Competing logics and practice variation in the professionalizing of mutual funds. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(2): 280-307.

Hardy, C., & Maguire, S. 2010. Discourse, field-configuring events, and change in organizations and institutional fields. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53(6): 1365-1392.

Week 8: Mar 9

Neo-Institutional Theory

Core readings:

Meyer, J. & Rowan, B. 1977. Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83: 340-363.

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

Oliver, C. 1991. Strategic responses to institutional processes. *Academy of Management Review*, 16: 145-179.

Suchman, M. C. 1995. Managing legitimacy: Strategic and institutional approaches. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(3): 571-610.

Extensions:

Tolbert, P. & Zucker, L.G. 1988. Institutional sources of change in the formal structure of organizations: The diffusion of civil service reform, 1880-1935. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28: 22-40.

Leblebici, H., Salancik, G.R., Copay, A., & King, T. 1991. Institutional change and the transformation of interorganizational fields: An organizational history of the U.S. radio broadcasting industry. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36: 333-363.

Mizruchi, M. & Fein, L.C. 1999. The social construction of organizational knowledge: A study of the uses of coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44: 653-683.

- Hirsch, P. M. & Lounsbury, M. 1997. Ending the family quarrel: Toward a reconciliation of "old" and "new" institutionalisms. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 40: 406-418.
- Hirsch, P. M. 1997. Sociology without structure: Neoinstitutional theory meets brave new world. *American Journal of Sociology*, 102: 1702-1723.
- Heugens, P., & Lander, M. 2009. Structure! Agency! (and other quarrels): A meta-analysis of institutional theories of organization. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52: 61-85.
- Tilcsik, Andras. 2010. From ritual to reality: Demography, ideology, and decoupling in a post-communist government agency. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53(6): 1474-1498.

SPRING BREAK: ENJOY ☺

Week 9: Mar 23

Transaction Cost Economics

Core readings:

- Scott and Davis, Chapter 9 (pp. 220-232)
- Coase, R. H. 1937. The nature of the firm. *Economica*, 4(16): 386-405.
- Williamson, O.E. 1981. The economics of organization: The transaction cost approach. *American Journal of Sociology*, 87: 543-577.

Extensions:

- Walker, G. & Weber, D. 1984. A transaction cost approach to make or buy decisions. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 29: 373-391.
- Walker, G. & Weber, D. 1984. Errata: A transaction cost approach to make or buy decisions. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 29: 627.
- Dyer, J. H. 1997. Effective interfirm collaboration: How firms minimize transaction costs and maximize transaction value. *Strategic Management Journal*, 18: 535-556.
- Zajac, E. J. & Olsen, C.P. 1993. From transaction cost to transaction value analysis: Implications for the study of interorganizational strategies. *Journal of Management Studies*, 30 (1): 131-145.
- Ghoshal, S. & Moran, P. 1996. Bad for practice: A critique of transaction cost theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 21:13-47.
- Williamson, O. E. 1996. Economic organization: The case for candor. *Academy of Management Review*, 21:48-57.
- Moran, P. & Ghoshal, S. 1996. Theories of economic organization: The case for realism and balance. *Academy of Management Review*, 21:58-72.

Week 10: Mar 30

Agency Theory

Guest Speaker: Prof. Jill Brown, Bentley University

Core readings:

- Alchian, A. A., & Demsetz, H. 1972. Production, information costs, and economic organization. *The American Economic Review*, 777-795.
- Jensen, M. C., & Meckling, W. H. 1976. Theory of the firm: Managerial behavior, agency costs and ownership structure. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 3(4): 305-360.
- Fama, E., & Jensen, M.C.1983. Separation of ownership and control. *Journal of Law and Economics*, 26: 301-325.

Eisenhardt, K. M. 1989. Agency theory: An assessment and review. *Academy of Management Review*, 14:57-74.

Extensions:

Eisenhardt, K. M. 1988. Agency and institutional theory explanations: The case of retail sales compensation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 488-511.

Abrahamson, E. & Park, C. 1994. Concealment of negative outcomes: An agency theory perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37: 1302-1334.

Davis, G. F. 1991. Agents without principals? The spread of the poison pill through the intercorporate network. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36: 583-614.

Davis, G. F. 2005. New directions in corporate governance. *Annual Review of Sociology* 31: 143-162.

Week 11: Apr 6

Social Construction and Enactment

Core readings:

Berger, P.L., & Luckman, T. 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality*, Introduction.

Weick, K.E. 1969. *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, Chapter 1.

Weick, K.E. 1977. Enactment processes in organizations. In Staw, B., & Salancik, G.R. (Editors), *New Directions in Organizational Behavior*, pp. 267-333.

Extensions:

Child, J. 1972. Organizational structure, environment and performance: The role of strategic choice. *Sociology*, 6: 1-22.

Child, J. 1997. Strategic choice in the analysis of action: Structure, organization and environment. *Organization Studies*, 18(1): 43-76.

Weick, K., & Roberts, K. 1993. Collective mind in organizing: Heedful interrelating on flight decks. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38: 357-381.

Barley, S., & Tolbert, P.S. 1997. Institutionalization and structuration: Studying the links between action and institution. *Organization Studies*, 18(1): 93-117.

Jarzabkowski, P. 2008. Shaping strategy as a structuration process. *Academy of Management Journal*, 51(4): 621-650

Orlikowski, W. 2000. Using technology and constituting structures: A practice lens for studying technology in organizations. *Organization Science*, 11(4): 404-428.

Week 12: Apr 13

Career Development in a Weak Paradigm Field

Guest Speaker: Prof. Samina Karim, NEU

Core readings:

Aldrich, H.E. 2015. Fifty years in the making: My career as a scholar of organizations and entrepreneurship. Forthcoming in Lehmann and Audretsch (Editors) *Companion to Makers of Modern Entrepreneurship*. London, UK: Routledge.

Glick, W.H., Miller, C.C., & Cardinal, L.B. 2007. Making a life in the field of organization science. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28: 817-835.

Karim, S., & Kaul, A. 2015. Structural recombination and innovation: Unlocking intraorganizational knowledge synergy through structural change. *Organization Science*, 26(2): 439-455.

Week 13: Apr 20
Take-Home Exam

Week 14: Apr 27
Culture and Change. Where Are the New Theories of Organization?
Guest Speaker: Prof. Jeff Furman, BU

Core readings:

- Aldrich, H.E. 1999. Organizations Evolving, Chapters 2-4 and 11.
Van de Ven, A. and Poole, M.S. 1995. Explaining development and change in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 20, 3, 510-540.
Suddaby, R., Hardy, C., & Huy, Q. 2011. Introduction to special topic forum: Where are the new theories of organization? *Academy of Management Review*, 36(2): 236-246.

Extensions:

- Brown, S. and Eisenhardt, E. (1997). The art of continuous change: Linking complexity theory and time-paced evolution in relentlessly shifting organizations. *ASQ*, 42, 1-34.
Meyer, A., Vibba, G. and Colwell, K. (2005). Organizing far from equilibrium: Nonlinear change in organizational fields. *Organization Science*, 16, 456-473.
Meyerson, D. and Martin, J. (1987). Cultural change: An integration of 3 different views. *Journal of Management Studies*, 24, 623-647.
Romanelli, E. and Tushman, M. (1994). Organizational transformation as punctuated equilibrium: An empirical test. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37, 1141-1166.
Gioia, D., & Pitre, E. 1990. Multi-paradigm perspectives on theory building. *Academy of Management Review*, 15(4): 584-602.
Lewis, M., & Grimes, A. 1999. Metatriangulation: Building theory from multiple paradigms. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4): 672-690.
Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. 2011. Generating research questions through problematization. *Academy of Management Review*, 36(2): 247-271.
Hinings, C.R. and Greenwood, R. 2002. Disconnects and consequences in Organization Theory. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47: 411-421.
Bartunek, J. 2002. The proper place of organizational scholarship: A comment on Hinings and Greenwood. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47: 422-427.

Week 15: May 3

Week 16: May 10

Paper Presentations

Please budget 20 min for the presentation + 10 min for Q&A

THE END! HAVE A GREAT SUMMER ☺

This syllabus is based on Professor Susan Newell's 2009/2012/2014 syllabi, with additional input from the reading lists for the doctoral seminars in OT at Boston University and Boston College. Comments and suggestions for further development of the syllabus are welcome and highly appreciated.