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

If you are going to buy any texts then the best ones may be Hatch and Cunliffe and Shafritz et al. However, there is no single text that we will follow per se; each text organizes the many organization theories in different ways so that we will draw upon all of these texts, plus the many papers that we will look at to help us ‘make sense’ of organization theory.


*pre-course reading – you don’t necessarily have to read these cover-to-cover but they will give you an excellent feel for organization theory that will allow us to then explore detailed perspectives.

** core texts

These texts provide some of the foundational knowledge that will be supplemented by journal papers for classes throughout the semester.

In addition, students will be expected to identify each week an article from a journal (e.g., Administrative Science Quarterly, Academy of Management Journal, Organization Science, Organization Studies, Journal of Management Studies, Organization) that adopts the particular organizational theory/perspective under discussion. Students will be expected to discuss the approach adopted in this paper (both theoretical and methodological) and identify the strengths and limitations.
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: http://www.bentley.edu/ugcatalogue/honesty/student_responsibilities_under_the_honor_code.cfm

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You will be graded on the following components:

Entry Exam: 10%

The first class will be devoted to an exam to test your understanding of the pre-course reading text that has been assigned.

Class Participation: 10 percent

The key to a meaningful and interesting class experience is class participation. You will be expected to make a significant contribution to discussions of 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. In addition, students will periodically be asked to present, in a critical way, papers that they have been assigned.

Examination: 30 percent

This be a conventional exam that will cover all the material reviewed prior to the exam. The structure and format will mirror the final comprehensive that you will take at the end of your coursework.

Final Paper: 50 percent

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 that links to the research issue that you are interested in; 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 5-6000 words in length. All paper topics must be approved by the instructor.

The following components of the paper must be produced by the following deadlines:
• Introduction – identification of the selected topic for the paper and a preliminary research question. DUE BY SEPT 24TH
• Literature review – outline of the papers that you will draw on in the paper and a first draft of the literature review. DUE BY OCT 22ND
• 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 BY NOV 12TH
• Research agenda – specification of the research agenda/gap that arises from the development of your theoretical framework along with a detailed outline of the methodology that would be required to take this research agenda further. DUE BY NOV 28TH
• Final paper – this will use the various sections that have been submitted but amended as you see fit to produce the final version of the paper (and remember 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 BY DEC 17TH

Paper presentation: 10%

You will present your research paper to the class in a 20 minute presentation towards the end of the semester.
SCHEDULE

**Week 1**
Entry test.

**Week 2** **Organization Theory as Science**
Chapters 1-2 of Shafritz et al.
Chapters 1-3 of Hatch
Bartunek, J. (2002). The proper place of organizational scholarship: A comment on Hinings and Greenwood. ASQ, 47, 422-427

**Week 3** **Contingency and Configurational Perspectives**
Sharfritz et al., (2005). Chapter 4

**Week 4** **Resource Dependency and Population Ecology Perspectives**

**Population Ecology Perspectives**

**Week 5  Institutional Perspectives**


**Week 6  Institutional Change**


**Week 7  Network Perspectives**


Week 8 Learning and Innovation

Week 9 Knowledge Perspectives

Week 10 Action/Interpretive Perspectives

Week 11 Examination

Week 12 Culture and change Perspectives
Sharitz et al., (2005) chapters 7 and 8 and readings

Week 13 Power, Conflict and Control Perspectives
Chapters 8 of Hatch
Sharitz et al., (2005). Chapter 6 and readings

Week 14 Paper presentations – students will each have 10 minutes plus a few minutes for questions to present their papers
Please note the course schedule may change at the professor’s discretion.

Additional readings that you may find useful:

Classic books: