PhD Seminar, Spring 2016

Macro Org Science II

Professor: Dr. Justin Webb

Course: OSCI-8621-001    Time: Thursday, 9:30a-12:15p    Room: Fretwell 407

Office: 209A Friday
Office Hours: Please contact me in advance to schedule an appointment. I will be available before and after class.

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The doctoral seminar seeks to provide students with a broad overview of the major macro theories and theoretical extensions in organization research. The seminar encompasses classic research in the discipline and an in-depth look at the major debates ongoing today. As such, the objectives of the seminar are extremely ambitious, and students must make a conscientious effort to keep up with all of the readings and come prepared to discuss these readings in class.

The aim throughout the seminar will be to debate the utility of the major theoretical perspectives, their respective strengths and weaknesses, and their comparative ability to explain relevant phenomena. As Gareth Jones, an important transaction cost economics theorist notes, “Research is not ‘value free’, in the sense that the reality they explain is somehow neutral with regard to the phenomena in question being studied. Research is always colored by one’s own perspective and it is up to the discerning reader to decide what is good analysis and bad analysis. You should keep a critical perspective on all your reading in the course. Never simply treat what an author says as objective fact – always remember there is a contrary view somewhere, even if it is not yet written. Also, ask the question, is this view necessary? Is it perhaps subsumed by another theory or saying the same thing in a different way?”

To publish interesting, original research, an author must understand the research process. To be different and to get interest in your work, an author must understand the foundations of others’ ideas and their strengths and weaknesses. From this basis, the author can then identify ways to improve or add to existing knowledge in meaningful ways. The goal of this seminar is to build your knowledge base to support your ability to generate a future research stream of original, interesting research.

Grades

Grading will be based on the following components:

Active participation in class discussions: 50%
Discussion leader sessions: 25%
Final exam: 25%
Participation will involve the following requirements:

1. Reading assigned articles, chapters, and other materials
2. Active participation in class discussion of all articles, chapters, and materials
3. Regular attendance

Discussion leader sessions will involve the following requirements:

Each of you will be assigned responsibility to lead the discussion on at least 2 topic areas and for providing the class with an in-depth analysis of the perspective/topic under study in the form of a written handout to be distributed to class members. This analysis should provide structure to organize the individual articles. Within this structure, key theoretical arguments and findings should be discussed, integrated, and critically evaluated. The overview should also address the question “Where do we go from here?” in terms of future theorizing and research. While there are no page limitations, the overviews should average approximately 15 pages.

The final exam will be an essay exam in which you will be asked to respond to 3 out of 5 questions.

List of General Reference Books


**Week 1: What is theory, and what is a theoretical contribution?**


**Week 2: Institutional Theory**


**Week 3: Transaction Cost Economics**


**Week 4: Resource-Based View**


**Week 5: Capabilities**


**Week 6: Network Theory**


**Week 7: Social Capital**


**Week 8: Life Cycle**


**Week 9: Organizational Change**


**Week 10: Resource Dependence**


**Week 11: Agency Theory**


**Week 12: Behavioral Theories/Organizational Learning**


**Week 13: Upper Echelons**


**Week 14: Communication**


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