

Discipline: Business Studies

1. Language / Sprache

German or English (depending on participants)

2. Title / Titel

Advanced Topics in Organization Theory

3. Lecturer / Referent

Prof. Elke Schüßler (Leuphana University Lüneburg)

Prof. Jörg Sydow (FU Berlin)

4. Date and Location / Zeitraum und Veranstaltungsort

16.-19. September 2024

Harnack-Haus, Ihnestraße 16-20, 14195 Berlin

5. Course Description / Kursbeschreibung

5.1 Abstract and Learning Objectives / Zusammenfassung und Lernziele

This doctoral seminar exposes students to foundational and current research in organization theory. It is directed towards all business administration scholars interested in phenomena that involve organizations, which can be students of organization theory specifically, management and marketing more broadly, or even students of other areas of business research such as accounting, sustainability management or information systems for whom organizations, inter-organizational relationships and wider organizational and institutional fields might play a role in their research.

This course is not a basic course, however, but a course that focuses on current developments in organization theory. This does not necessarily mean that an in-depth prior knowledge of organization theory is required, but students should have a basic knowledge of the topic of organization and be familiar with some “classic” organization theories such as the theory of bureaucracy, contingency theory or institutional theory.

After this course, participants will be able to:

- Understand how classic organization theories have developed both theoretically and in terms of empirical research designs
- Apply recent advances in organization theory to understand current organizational and inter-organizational phenomena
- Develop relevant research questions that promise theoretical contributions to current (inter-) organizational thought

5.2 Content / Kursinhalt

This course mainly focuses on macro-organizational theories, derived largely from sociological and economic traditions and interested in the interaction of organizational structures and processes with their political, economic, societal, or natural environment. Among others, these theories try to explain the emergence of organizational forms and organizational survival, resource acquisition and utilization, interaction between organizations, and the role and responsibility of organizations in society.

Instead of giving a comprehensive historical introduction into the "classics" of organization theory, this course will focus on current advancements of core theoretical concepts such as communication, sensemaking, institutions, routines or networks as well as on more recent theoretical streams such as the 'strong' process view of organization, the debate on temporary organizing as well as questions of organizational actorhood, accountability and responsibility (for a detailed schedule, [see below](#) under 7).

5.3 Schedule (including start and end time / Zeitplan (inkl. Start- und Endzeit)

Day I (16.09.2024), 10-17: Organizations, History, Processes, Practices

Prof. Dr. Jörg Sydow

During the first workshop day, participants will be introduced to current debates about the role of organization theory in business administration and to current theoretical and empirical challenges in researching organizations. Among others, the participants will discuss the role of interdisciplinarity and historical approaches in organization theory and the practicability of current process- and practice-based theorizing.

Introduction

1. King, G.F., Fellin, T., & Whetten, D.A. 2010. Finding the organization in organizational theory: A meta-theory of the organization as a social actor. *Organization Science*, 21(1): 290-305.

11.00 Coffee

Historical approaches

2. Godfrey, P.C., Hassard, J., O'Connor, E.S., Rowlinson, M., & Ruef, M. 2016. What is organizational history? A creative synthesis of history and organization studies. *Academy of Management Review*, 41(4): 590-608.
3. Schreyögg, G., Sydow, J., & Holtmann, P. 2011. How history matters in organizations – The case of path dependence. *Management & Organizational History*, 6(1): 81-100.

12.30 Lunch

4. Jing, R., & Benner, M. 2016. Institutional regime, opportunity space and organizational path constitution: Case studies of the conversion of military firms in China. *Journal of Management Studies*, 53(4): 552-579.

Process and practice perspectives

5. Feldman, M., & Worline, M. 2016. The practicability of practice theory. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 15(2): 304-324.
6. Berends, H., & Sydow, J. (2019). Introduction: Process views on inter-organizational collaborations. *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, 64: 1-10.

15.00 Coffee

7. Fortwengel, J., Schüßler, E., & Sydow, J. 2017. Studying Organizational Creativity as Process: Fluidity or Duality? *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 28(1): 5-16.

Joint discussion: Structure, agency, process – How do you situate your thesis projects?

Day II (17.09.2024), 9-17: Interorganizational Relations and Temporary Organizations

Prof. Dr. Jörg Sydow

During the second day, participants will discuss advances in organization theory with a particular focus on interorganizational phenomena and on temporary forms of organizing. These concepts will be introduced based on an advanced textbook (Chapters 1,3, 5, 7 & 9):

Sydow, J., Schüßler, E., & Müller-Seitz, G. 2016. *Managing Inter-Organizational Relations: Debates and Cases*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Interorganizational relations, alliances, networks

8. Albers, S., Wohlgezogen, F., & Zajac, E.J. 2016. Strategic alliance structures – An organization design perspective. *Journal of Management*, 42(3): 582-614
9. Brattström, A., & Faems, D. (2020). Interorganizational relationships as political battlefields: How fragmentation within organizations shapes relational dynamics between organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 63(5): 1591-1620.
10. Jarvenpaa, S.I., & Mjachrzak, A. 2016. Interactive self-regulatory theory for sharing and protecting in interorganizational collaborations. *Academy of Management Review*, 41(1): 9-27.

10.30 Coffee

11. Van Burg, E., Berends, H., & van Raaij, E. M. (2014). Framing and interorganizational knowledge transfer: A process study of collaborative innovation in the aircraft industry. *Journal of Management Studies*, 51(3): 349-378.

12.30 Lunch

Temporary organizations

12. Manning, S., & Sydow, J. 2011. Projects, paths, practices: Sustaining and leveraging project-based relationships. *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 20: 1369-1402.
13. Ligthart, R., Oerlemans, L., & Noorderhaven, N. 2016. In the shadows of time: A case study of flexibility behaviors in an interorganizational project. *Organization Studies*, 37(12): 1721-1743.

15.00 Coffee

14. Tukiainen, S., & Granqvist, N. 2016. Temporary organizing and institutional change. *Organization Studies*, 37(12): 1819-1840.
15. Samimi, E., & Sydow, J. (2021). Human resource management in project-based organizations: Revisiting the permanency assumptions. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 32(1): 49-83.

Joint discussion: How do these studies relate to and expand classic organization theories and change our understanding of organization?

Day III (18.09.2024), 9-17: The Embeddedness of Organizations in Organizational Fields, Institutional Logics and Multiple Stakeholder Relationships

Prof. Dr. Elke Schüßler

During the third workshop day, participants will focus on macro-levels of organizational analysis, particularly organizational fields and institutional logics. The papers discussed during this day will shed light on different kinds of organizations such as trade unions, social and cultural enterprises or business associations that are often seen as “stakeholders”, but can also be studied as organizations in their own right.

Organizational and Institutional Fields

16. Davis, G. F., & Marquis, C. 2005. Prospects for organization theory in the early twenty-first century: Institutional fields and mechanisms. *Organization Science*, 16(4): 332-343.
17. Zietsma, C., Groenewegen, P., Logue, D., & Hinings, C. 2017. Field or fields? Building the scaffolding for cumulation of research on institutional fields. *Academy of Management Annals*, 11(1): 391-450.

10.30 Coffee

The Influence of Institutional Logics

18. Friedland R., Alford R. R. (1991). Bringing society back in: Symbols, practices and institutional contradictions. In Powell W. W., DiMaggio P. J. (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis* (pp. 232-263). Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.
19. Greenwood, R., Díaz, A. M., Li, S. X., & Lorente, J. C. (2010). The multiplicity of institutional logics and the heterogeneity of organizational responses. *Organization Science*, 21(2), 521-539.

12.30 Lunch

Contesting Dominant Logics

20. Yan, S., Ferraro, F., & Almandoz, J. (2019). The rise of socially responsible investment funds: The paradoxical role of the financial logic. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 64(2), 466-501.
21. Schuessler, E. S., Lohmeyer, N., & Ashwin, S. (2023). "We can't compete on human rights": Creating market-protected spaces to institutionalize the emerging logic of responsible management. *Academy of Management Journal*, 66(4), 1071-1101.

Managing the Complexities of Multi-Stakeholder Relationships

22. Cloutier, C., & Langley, A. (2017). Negotiating the moral aspects of purpose in single and cross-sectoral collaborations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 141(1): 103-131.

15.00 Coffee

23. Cloutier, C., & Langley, A. (2017). Negotiating the moral aspects of purpose in single and cross-sectoral collaborations. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 141(1): 103-131.

Joint discussion: Different types of organization – one organization theory?

Day IV (19.09.2024): 9-16: Organizational Actorhood, Accountability and Responsibility

Prof. Dr. Elke Schüßler

The final workshop day will focus on the topic of organizational actorhood, accountability and responsibility and the potential contributions of organization theory towards addressing society's "grand challenges", including the environmental crisis. A summary of course insights across all workshop days will also be provided.

Changing Organizational Actorhood, Changing Responsibilities

24. Djelic, M. L., & Bothello, J. (2013). Limited liability and its moral hazard implications: The systemic inscription of instability in contemporary capitalism. *Theory and Society*, 42, 589-615.
25. Dobusch, L., & Schoeneborn, D. 2015. Fluidity, identity, and organizationality: The communicative constitution of Anonymity. *Journal of Management Studies*, 52(8): 1005-1035.

10.30 Coffee

The Natural Environment as a Stakeholder of Organizations

26. Whiteman, G., Walker, B., & Perego, P. (2013). Planetary boundaries: Ecological foundations for corporate sustainability. *Journal of Management Studies*, 50(2), 307-336.
27. Starik, M., & Kanashiro, P. (2013). Toward a theory of sustainability management: Uncovering and integrating the nearly obvious. *Organization & Environment*, 26(1), 7-30.

12.30 Lunch

Corporate Accountability for Nature and Human Rights

28. Quattrone, P. (2022). Seeking transparency makes one blind: how to rethink disclosure, account for nature and make corporations sustainable. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, 35(2), 547-566.
29. Schilling-Vacaflor, A., & Gustafsson, M. T. (2023). Towards more sustainable global supply chains? Company compliance with new human rights and environmental due diligence laws. *Environmental Politics*, 1-22.

14.30 Coffee

Joint discussion: Designing relevant organizational research in a changing organizational and environmental landscape.

5.4 Course format

The course will mainly be driven by interactive student presentations on different topics which are complemented by inputs from the instructors. Students will have to prepare for this course through reading a set of core articles and completing individual reading assignments. We expect active participation by all students. The focus of our discussions will be on highlighting the contributions made by different authors and theoretical approaches and less on critiquing individual studies.

6 Preparation and Literature / Vorbereitung und Literaturhinweise

6.1 Prerequisites / Voraussetzungen

As this course is an advanced course, we expect students to have a basic knowledge of the topic of organization and be familiar with some "classic" organization theories. Students should be familiar with one of the following or similar books:

Kieser, A., & Ebers, M. (2013) (Eds.) *Organisationstheorien*, 7th edition. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Ortmann, G., Sydow, J., & Türk, K. (2000) (Eds.) *Theorien der Organisation: Die Rückkehr der Gesellschaft*, 2nd edition. Wiesbaden: Springer.

Scott, W. R., & Davis, G.F. (2015) *Organizations and Organizing: Rational, Natural and Open Systems Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

6.2 Essential Reading Material / Pflichtlektüre

Individual reading assignments can be seen below under 7.

6.3 Additional Reading Material / Zusatzlektüre

Davis, G.F. (2010). Do theories of organizations progress? *Organizational Research Methods*, 13: 690-709.

Lounsbury, M., & Beckman, C. (2015). Celebrating organization theory. *Journal of Management Studies*, 52(2): 288-308.

Suddaby, R., Hardy, C., & Huy, Q. N. (2011). Introduction to special topic forum: Where are the new theories of organization? *Academy of Management Review*, 36(2): 236-246.

Hassard, J., Cox, J. W., & Rowlinson, M. (2013). Where are the old theories of organization? Prospects for Retrospection in Organization Theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 38(2): 309-313.

Schoonhoven, C. B., & Dobbin, F. (2010) (Eds.). Stanford's organization theory renaissance, 1970–2000. *Research in the Sociology of Organizations* 28.

Sydow, J., Schüßler, E., & Müller-Seitz, G. (2016). *Managing Inter-Organizational Relations: Debates and Cases*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

6.4 To prepare / Vorarbeiten

Students will have to prepare some individual and group reading assignments, presentations and a poster outlining their dissertation topic (see below under 7.2). More concrete instructions will be communicated to students via email in due time before the course. Course preparatory assignments will be issued no later than **August 19, 2024**.

7 Administration

7.1 Max. number of participants / Maximale Teilnehmerzahl

20 students

7.2 Assignments / Aufgaben

1. For the first sessions, students will have to prepare a poster presentation of their thesis project for the introduction. Please state your: research question, theoretical framework, methods, and where you stand (timeline, supervisors). You can print your poster on two A4 or one A3 paper. Please bring your poster with you to class.

2. Students will have to prepare individual reading assignments. If your name is marked in **bold type** after a reference (below), this means you have to present the respective article (10 minutes). Please comment on the following: *What are the central research questions or puzzles the authors deal with? What are the basic assumptions and tenants of the theory? What core concepts are utilized? What are interesting ideas and how does the theory extend our knowledge about organizations? What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the proposed perspective?* No PowerPoint slides are required, but a one-page handout to be distributed in the class would be useful.
3. Students are expected to come prepared and read several core readings. First, if your name is written in regular type after a reference (below), this means you have to read this article and be prepared to comment on it. Second, all students have to read the texts where it says “all” in brackets (tbd).
4. At the end of the course students will have to submit a short theory essay (1.500 words) in which they draw on the contents of this course. The title of the essay should be of the form “Which insights can advanced organizational theories contribute to _____”, with the blank filled in by students in line with their own thesis projects and interests.

7.3 Exam / Prüfungsleistung

Actively participating in the course and completing the assignments above.

7.4 Credits / Punkte

The course corresponds to a scope of 6 LP/ECTS by actively participating in this course and completing the assignments.

8 Arbeitszeitaufwand / Working Hours

Aufteilung der Arbeitsstunden / Working Hours	Stunden
<i>(z. B. Vorarbeiten / preparations: 30 h, aktive Mitarbeit / active participation: 100 h, Prüfungsvorbereitung / preparation for exam: 30 h, Prüfung / exam: 20 h ...)</i>	
Vorarbeiten/preparations	110 h
Aktive Mitarbeit/active participation (4 Tage/4 days)	30 h
Nachbereitung: Essay	40 h
SUMME	180 h