



MGMT 731: Organizations & the Environment

Prof. Olav Sorenson - Fall 2018

Course overview

This course provides a Ph.D.-level introduction to research on organizational and economic sociology. It aims to fulfill two objectives. First, it seeks to provide students with an understanding of some of the main perspectives used in current research on organizations. The course does not attempt, however, to cover every facet of the literature – a broad field – or to provide a complete intellectual history of the subject. Instead, it will give students the analytical tools needed to pursue these topics on their own. Second, it aspires to teach students how to organize a literature and to develop research questions. Although graduate courses often focus on critiquing others' research, the academic profession requires proficiency in consuming and building new theory.

Assessment

This course consists of five components: class discussion and four kinds of assignments—logical decompositions, research ideas, a career history, and a literature analysis.

Component	Weight
Class participation	30%
Logical decompositions	25%
Research ideas	10%
Career history	15%
Literature analysis	20%

Discussion: Each week, we will discuss three papers. In most cases, the trio includes one “classic” of organization theory, one modern application of the perspective, and one very recent empirical piece building on the same intellectual framework. This light reading load presumes that students will read carefully and think about each paper prior to class. Since every student will have read every paper prior to class, discussions will focus on understanding the papers and on thinking about potential research areas that the paper appears to open.

Logical decompositions: Good papers have clear logical structures, even if they state them in natural language. In these exercises, you should identify the assumptions, lemmas, and propositions in a paper, delineating the chain of argumentation necessary

to generate the propositions or hypotheses. Note any unnecessary assumptions and any unstated (implicit) assumptions. Choose one article for at least five of the sessions.

Research ideas: I also want you to get in the habit of keeping a journal of research ideas. Every week, you should come up with at least one idea for a paper topic. What sort of data would you need? How would you test it?

Career history: You should write an intellectual biography of one of the authors of one of the papers in the course. With whom did they (probably) study and interact? What perspectives seemed influential to their early thinking? How did their research evolve? Due **October 15**.

Literature analysis: Every time one writes a paper, it is important to have a good understanding of the existing literature on the topic. Pick some phenomenon. Find the articles that have studied the phenomenon. Categorize those articles into sets. Explain the key differences across the sets and the similarities within the sets. Submit a one paragraph statement of the phenomenon by October 22; due **December 10**.

Instructor

Feel free to contact me by e-mail: olav.sorenson@yale.edu. I will also hold office hours every Tuesday afternoon (2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.) and every Wednesday afternoon (1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.). If you do not wish to wait, please sign up for an available time slot by noon on Tuesday (e-mail: keith.geriak@yale.edu).

Schedule

1. SEPTEMBER 10: COURSE INTRODUCTION

- Scott, W. Richard, and Gerald F. Davis (2007). *Organizations and Organizing: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education (Chapters 2-4)

2. SEPTEMBER 17: THE ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

- **Required:** Hannan, Michael T., and John Freeman (1977). "The population ecology of organizations," *American Journal of Sociology*, 82: 929-964
- **Required:** Podolny, Joel, Toby E. Stuart, and Michael T. Hannan (1994). "Networks, knowledge, and niches: Competition in the worldwide semiconductor industry, 1984-1991," *American Journal of Sociology*, 102: 659-689
- **Required:** Sorenson, Olav, and Pino G. Audia (2000). "The social structure of entrepreneurial activity: Geographic concentration of footwear production in the United States, 1940-1989" *American Journal of Sociology*, 106: 424-462
- Hannan, Michael T., and John Freeman (1989). *Organizational Ecology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press
- Carroll, Glenn R., and Michael T. Hannan (2000). *The Demography of Corporations and Industries*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

3. SEPTEMBER 24: IMPRINTING

- **Required:** Hannan, Michael T., and John Freeman (1984). "Structural inertia and organizational change," *American Sociological Review*, 49, 149-164
- **Required:** Burton, M. Diane, and Christine M. Beckman (2007). "Leaving a legacy: Position imprints and successor turnover in young firms" *American Sociological Review*, 72: 239-266
- **Required:** András Tilcsik (2014). "Imprint-environment fit and performance: How organizational munificence at the time of hire affects subsequent job performance," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 59: 639-668
- Stinchcombe, Arthur L. (1965). "Social structure and organizations," Pp. 142-193 in James G. March (ed.) *Handbook of Organizations*. Chicago: Rand McNally (focus on pp. 153-169)
- Baron, James N., Michael T. Hannan, and M. Diane Burton (2001). "Labor pains: Change in organizational models and employee turnover in young, high-tech firms," *American Journal of Sociology*, 106: 960-1012

4. OCTOBER 1: ECOLOGIES OF ACTORS AND PRODUCTS

- **Required:** Kabo, Felichism W., Natalie Cotton-Nessler, Yongha Hwang, Margaret C. Levenstein, and Jason Owen-Smith (2014). “Proximity effects on the dynamics and outcomes of scientific collaborations,” *Research Policy*, 43: 1469-1485
- **Required:** Sørensen, Jesper B., and Amanda Sharkey (2014). “Entrepreneurship as a mobility process,” *American Sociological Review*, 79: 328-349
- **Required:** Barroso, Alicia, Marco S. Giarratana, Samira Reis, and Olav Sorenson (2016). “Crowding, satiation, and saturation: The days of television series’ lives,” *Strategic Management Journal*, 37: 565-585
- Sorenson, Olav (2000). “Letting the market work for you: An evolutionary perspective on product strategy,” *Strategic Management Journal*, 21: 577-592
- Sørensen, Jesper B., and Olav Sorenson (2007). “Corporate demography and income inequality,” *American Sociological Review*, 72: 766-783
- Carroll, Glenn R., Olga Khessina, and David G. McKendrick (2010). “The social lives of products: Analyzing product demography for management theory and practice,” *Academy of Management Annals*, 4: 157-203

5. OCTOBER 8: LEARNING (ECOLOGIES OF ROUTINES)

- **Required:** March, James G. (1991). “Exploration and exploitation in organizational learning,” *Organization Science*, 2: 71-87
- **Required:** Levitt, Steven D., John A. List, and Chad Syverson (2013). “Toward an understanding of learning by doing: Evidence from an automobile assembly plant” *Journal of Political Economy*, 121: 643-681
- **Required:** Maslach, David, Oana Branzei, Claus Rerup, and Mark J. Zbaracki (2018). “Noise as signal in learning from rare events,” *Organization Science*, 29: 225-246
- March, James G. (1988). *Decisions and Organizations*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell
- Thompson, Peter (2010) “Learning by doing,” pp. 429-476 in Bronwyn Hall and Nathan Rosenberg (eds.) *Handbook of the Economics of Innovation*, North-Holland.

6. OCTOBER 15: THE INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

- **Required:** Meyer, John W., and Brian Rowan (1977). “Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 83: 340-363
- **Required:** Ruef, Martin, and W. Richard Scott (1998). “A multidimensional model of organizational legitimacy: Hospital survival in changing institutional environments,” *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43: 877-904
- **Required:** Ingram, Paul, and Brian S. Silverman (2016). “The cultural contingency of structure: Evidence from entry to the slave trade in and around the abolition movement,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 122: 755-797
- DiMaggio, Paul J., and Walter W. Powell (1983). “The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields,” *American Sociological Review*, 48: 147-160
- Durand, Rudolphe, and Patricia Thornton (2018). “Categorizing institutional logics, institutionalizing categories: A review of two literatures,” *Academy of Management Annals*, 12: in press

7. OCTOBER 22: CATEGORIES

- **Required:** Zuckerman, Ezra W. (1999). “The categorical imperative: Securities analysts and the illegitimacy discount,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 104: 1398-1438
- **Required:** Hsu, Greta, Michael T. Hannan and Özgecan Koçak (2009). “Multiple category memberships in markets: A formal theory and two empirical tests,” *American Sociological Review*, 74: 150-169
- **Required:** Goldberg, Amir, Michael T. Hannan, and Balázs Kovács (2016). “What does it mean to span cultural boundaries? Variety and atypicality in cultural consumption,” *American Sociological Review*, 81: 215-24
- Fleischer, Anne (2009). “Ambiguity and the equity of rating systems: United States brokerage firms, 1995-2000,” *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 54: 555-574
- Negro, Giacomo, and Ming D. Leung (2013). “‘Actual’ and perceptual effects of category spanning,” *Organization Science*, 24: 684-696

8. OCTOBER 29: EXCHANGE RELATIONS

- **Required:** Emerson, Richard M. (1962). "Power dependence relations," *American Sociological Review*, 27: 31-41
- **Required:** Sorenson, Olav, and David M. Waguespack (2006). "Social structure and exchange: Self-confirming dynamics in Hollywood," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 51: 560-589
- **Required:** Baldassarri, Delia (2015). "Cooperative networks: Altruism, group solidarity, reciprocity, and sanctioning in Ugandan producer organizations," *American Journal of Sociology*, 121: 355-395
- Blau, Peter M. (1964). *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York: Wiley
- Pfeffer, Jeffrey, and Gerald R. Salancik (1978). *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*. New York: Harper & Row
- Uzzi, Brian (1996). "The sources and consequences of embeddedness for the economic performance of organizations: The network effect," *American Sociological Review*, 61: 674-698

9. NOVEMBER 5: SOCIAL STRUCTURES

- **Required:** Granovetter, Mark S. (1973). "The strength of weak ties," *American Journal of Sociology*, 78: 1360-1380
- **Required:** Burt, Ronald S. (2004). "Structural holes and good ideas," *American Journal of Sociology*, 110: 349-399
- **Required:** Kleinbaum, Adam M. (2012). "Organizational misfits and the origins of brokerage in intrafirm networks," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 57: 407-452
- Simmel, Georg (1950). "The triad," Pp. 145-169 in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press
- Coleman, James S. (1988). "Social capital in the creation of human capital," *American Journal of Sociology*, 94: S95-S120
- Burt, Ronald S. (1992). *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

10. NOVEMBER 12: STATUS

- **Required:** Merton, Robert K. (1968). "The Matthew effect in science," *Science*, 159: 56-63
- **Required:** Podolny, Joel M. (1993). "A status-based model of market competition," *American Journal of Sociology*, 98: 829-872
- **Required:** Simcoe, Timothy S. and David M. Waguespack (2011). "Status, quality, and attention: What's in a (missing) name?" *Management Science*, 57: 274-290
- Stuart, Toby E., Ha Hoang and Ralph Hybels (1998). "Interorganizational endorsements and the performance of entrepreneurial ventures." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44: 315-349
- Gould, Roger V. (2002). "The origins of status hierarchies: A formal theory and empirical test," *American Journal of Sociology*, 107: 1143-1178
- Sorenson, Olav (2014). "Status and reputation: Synonyms or separate concepts?" *Strategic Organization*, 12: 62-69

11. NOVEMBER 26: SOCIAL INFLUENCE

- **Required:** Coleman, James S., Elihu Katz and Herbert Menzel (1957). "The diffusion of an innovation among physicians," *Sociometry*, 20: 253-270
- **Required:** Burt, Ronald S. (1987). "Social contagion and innovations: Cohesion versus structural equivalence," *American Journal of Sociology*, 92: 1287-1335
- **Required:** Liu, Ka-Yuet, Marissa King, and Peter S. Bearman (2010). "Social influence and the autism epidemic," *American Journal of Sociology*, 115: 1387-1434
- Rogers, Everett M. (1995). *Diffusion of Innovations*, 4th edition. New York: Free Press
- Strang, David, and Sarah A. Soule (1988). "Diffusion in organizations and social movements: From hybrid corn to poison pills," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24: 265-290

12. DECEMBER 3: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

- **Required:** McCarthy, John D., and Mayer N. Zald (1977). "Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory," *American Journal of Sociology*, 82: 1212-1241
- **Required:** Rao, Hayagreeva, Phillipe Monin, and Rodolphe Durand (2003). "Institutional change in toque ville: Nouvelle cuisine as an identity movement in French gastronomy," *American Journal of Sociology*, 108: 795-843
- **Required:** Yue, Lori (2016). "The great and the small: The impact of collective action on the evolution of corporate board interlocks after the Panic of 1907," *American Sociological Review*, 81: 374-395
- Gould, Roger V. (1991). "Multiple networks and mobilization in the Paris commune, 1871," *American Sociological Review*, 56: 716-729
- Benford, Robert D., and David A. Snow (2000). "Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26: 611-639

13. DECEMBER 10: ORGANIZING LITERATURES