Introduction

Over the last 100 years, the fields of Management and Organization Theory have contributed to the enrichment of our understanding of economic and management action, with novel approaches, theories and methodological tools. This doctoral course provides a broad overview of the classics of management and the major theoretical debates within organization theory, and how they have influenced research in more applied fields. We will read and discuss theoretical and empirical papers, and explore how many of the ideas we find in these classics are relevant for current research questions and management challenges.

Objectives

This introductory doctoral course provides a broad overview of the key theoretical insights in management and organization theory, and how they have influenced research also in other management disciplines (operations, marketing, finance). By the end of the course the students will be able to frame a research question from a theoretical point of view, and develop original research ideas to advance scholarship in their field.

Learning Outcomes

- Evaluate the relevance of the theoretical advancements of scientific publications in organization theory
- Evaluate the scientific standards and quality of the methodologies of scientific publications in management organization theory
- Write a literature review of a sub-stream of research of organization theory, integrating several scientific contribution
- Generate new theory that advances our current understanding of organizations
- Lead a dialectic discussion that integrates several scientific contributions
- Communicate and debate the merits of one’s scientific ideas

Competences

General competencies
CG1: Acquire knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes required to conduct research on a global basis in the field of business management.
CG3: Conduct a critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas with the objective to produce general principles applicable to business situations.
CG6: Use appropriate tools and techniques for problem solving, correction contrasting and decision validation

Basic competencies
CB6: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding that provide a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and / or application of ideas, often related to a research context.

Specific competencies
CE1: Understand the concepts of social and human sciences relevant and necessary to carry out research projects of international level in the area of business management.
CE2: Profound knowledge of tools in the fields of mathematics, statistics, econometrics and multivariate analyzes in order to carry out relevant research projects on a global level.
CE3: Organization, planning and implementation of a research project related to social sciences.
CE4: Distinguishing of the different fields of management sciences and acknowledgement of the research methodologies related to them.
CE6: Ability to take current management and organizational problems and identify how different theories of organizations can help us understand them.
CE7: Ability to design research programs in the area of Business Management.
CE8: Analyze business phenomena formal analysis tools (logic and mathematics) in order to develop consistent structural theories.
CE17: Ability to critically establish, the relevance and significance of the results obtained with respect to the proposed objectives, and prepare conclusions within the framework of current scientific knowledge on the topic in question.

Methodology

1. Readings and class discussion
Students are expected to read all the required readings and be prepared to discuss the material in class on the schedule indicated in the syllabus. All students should come to class with questions, topics, and issues to be raised for discussion. My role is to facilitate and direct the discussion. Your role is to engage each other in developing the best critical understanding of each paper.

As you do the readings, think about the following questions:
1) What are the basic arguments made by the author(s)? What are their strengths?
2) What are the weaknesses of the argument?
3) If you disagree with an argument, what would it take to convince you?
5) Are there critical differences between these authors’ arguments and those of others we have read?
6) Can these differences be resolved through an empirical test? How would you design a test to resolve these differences?
7) If an empirical paper, what alternative explanations can account for the findings of the authors?

2. Discussion leadership
In addition to preparing the papers for discussion, two students will also jointly lead each session. I will email you the assignment for the course one week before we start. Discussion leaders will provide the class with a short overview (max 20 minutes) of the main issues tackled by the readings, and open the general discussion by identifying some key debate issues and questions.

The readings in the “Classics Matter” section suggest how classic management organization theories might be leveraged to understand contemporary phenomena. Discussion leaders are encouraged to explore these and other issues that they might be interested in.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on class participation and on the average grade of the weekly memos students should prepare.

Before each class, students are asked to prepare brief memos (MAX 1000 words) relating to the readings of the class. Some of the memo should answer the question asked in the syllabus, while in other cases, the student can focus the memo on one or more of the following issues:

- specific ideas and concepts you found interesting
- concerns you might have with some of the ideas/arguments
- empirical settings that could be explored using a theory
- connections between different approaches and/or papers.

Memos are due the day before class and should be uploaded to Virtual Campus by 3pm. I will correct them, grade them, and return them to you in class. For the final grade, I will compute the average grade across the memos, dropping the grade of the worst one.

Grading:

Class participation:  50%
Short memo:  50%
Course Outline: Topics and Articles

Sessions 1-2. Sep. 21, 09:30-12:15h
The Classic Tradition (Engineering and Administrative)

Required readings:

Classics matter:

Memo Question:
• Compare and contrast the readings. Can you identify a common thread among them? Are there key differences? Can we really talk about one classical tradition?

Optional readings:
• Gilbreth, Frank and Lillian, 1924. "Classifying the Elements of Work". Management and Administration, 8(2), 151-154.
Sessions 3-4. Sep. 28, 09:30-12:15h
The Classic Tradition (Sociological Foundations)

Required readings:

Classics matter:
- Capitalism’s secret love affair with bureaucracy. https://www.ft.com/content/73212b74-c1ba-11e4-8b74-00144feab7de

Memo Question:
- Adler, Haveman, and Shenhav offer three historical reconstruction of the relationship between various strands of theorizing on bureaucracy. Explain their key differences and points of convergence, and relate them to your own reading of Weber's pages on bureaucracy.

Optional readings:

Sessions 5-6. Oct. 5, 09:30-12:15h
The Harvard Tradition: Chester Barnard

Required readings:
Classics matter:

Memo Question:
- What is Barnard trying to accomplish? How does that related to the challenges of his time?

Optional readings:

Sessions 7-8. Oct. 13, 09:30-12:15h
Institutionalism: Philip Selznick

Required readings:

Classics matter:

Memo Question:
- Which ideas from Selznik would you say still matters today?

Optional readings:
Sessions 9-10. Oct. 20, 09:30-12:15h
The Carnegie School: Herbert Simon

Required readings:

Classics matter:

Memo Question:
- How can Simon help us make sense of how Artificial Intelligence will change organizations?

Optional readings:

Sessions 11-12. Oct. 26, 09:30-12:15h
The Carnegie School: James March

Required readings:
Ch. 7 A Summary of Basic Concepts, pp. 161-176-127.


Classics matter:
- [https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2016-06-17/blockchain-company-s-smart-contracts-were-dumb](https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2016-06-17/blockchain-company-s-smart-contracts-were-dumb)
- [https://www.wired.com/2016/06/50-million-hack-just-showed-dao-human/](https://www.wired.com/2016/06/50-million-hack-just-showed-dao-human/)

Memo Question:
- How does the Carnegie School change as we move from Simon's work towards the work of March and collaborators? Both in terms of theoretical ideas, focus of attention, and methodological approach.

Optional readings:

Sessions 13-14. Nov. 3, 09:30-12:15h

Contingency Theory & Resource Dependence

Required readings:

Classics matter:
Memo Question:
Is Thompson a contingency theorist, as Donaldson suggest? What are the main differences between his theory and the ones of other contingency theorists?

Optional readings:

Sessions 15-16. Nov. 10, 09:30-12:15h
The Fabulous 70s: New Institutionalism

Required readings:

Classics matter:
MEMO QUESTION:
How is new institutionalism different from the old one (especially Selznick's work)?

OPTIONAL READINGS:

SESSIONS 17-18. NOV. 17, 09:30-12:15H
THE FABULOUS 70S: POPULATION ECOLOGY

REQUIRED READINGS:

CLASSICS MATTER:

MEMO QUESTION:
As you compare population ecology with previous theories of organizing, what are the key similarities and differences with contingency theory, institutional theory, and resource dependence theory?

OPTIONAL READINGS:
SESSIONS 19-20. NOV. 23, 09:30-12:15h
THE FABULOUS 70s: NETWORKS, EMBEDDEDNESS & WRAP-UP

REQUIRED READINGS:

CLASSICS MATTER:
- https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/10/12/the-network-man

MEMO QUESTION:

OPTIONAL READINGS:
Professor’s Biography

Prof. Fabrizio Ferraro

Professor of Strategic Management

Ph.D in Management Science, Stanford University
M.Sc. in Sociology, Stanford University
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Fabrizio Ferraro is Professor of Strategic Management at IESE Business School. He holds a PhD in Management from Stanford University. His current research explores the emergence of responsible investing in mainstream financial markets and was supported by a five-year grant (2011-2015) of the European Research Council (ERC). Previously he studied the institutionalization of the Global Reporting Initiative and his work has been published in the Administrative Science Quarterly, Academy of Management Review, Academy of Management Journal, Organization Science, and Organization Studies among others.

He received the 2005 IESE Prize for Excellence in Research, the 2006 Best Paper Award from the Academy of Management Review. He serves or has served as a member of the editorial board of Academy of Management Review and Academy of Management Discovery, and European Management Review.