Business Administration 545B
Advances in Organizational Behavior
Fall 2013
Wed 6:00-8:45, Rehn 12

Instructor
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Office hours: Wed & Thu 1:30-4:30

Course Overview
This course considers recent research and theory in organizational behavior. Topics include individual differences, organizational learning, work motivation, group motivation, group performance, conflict, communication, leadership, decision making, organizational change, and culture. The course format is a small discussion seminar and the focus is on articles from the past five years in top management and psychology journals (such as AMJ, AMR, ASQ, JAP, and JPSP), though occasional practitioner pieces or innovative earlier work will also be considered.

The major course requirements are regular attendance and participation in discussions, weekly readings (3-6 articles per week depending on topic and article length), a paper (e.g., research paper, research proposal, theory paper, literature review), a presentation based on the paper, and weekly “challenge questions” (to promote thinking about the topic before class, each requires only a one-page response).

Objectives
1. To gain familiarity with recent research and theory on organizational behavior.
2. To successfully apply major concepts, practices, and theories of organizational behavior to the resolution of problems and challenges within organizations.
3. To enhance your ability to analyze organizational behavior issues and problems from a scientific perspective.
4. To identify, acknowledge, and evaluate your own assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs regarding the behavior of individuals and groups within organizations.
5. To facilitate the identification and development of promising research questions for future studies of individual and group behavior.

Format
Before each session, we will all review a set of readings and consider a number of issues and questions to be discussed. I will provide a list of discussion questions to assist in your preparation. You will be expected to bring your own additional questions and issues for consideration. Before each session, I will also provide a "challenge question" for consideration. You should prepare a brief (one page), typed response, submit it via the course webpage at least one hour before class, and bring also a copy with you to class.

Although I will often share insights and information that cannot be gleaned directly from the readings, there will be very little lecture in this course. My role is to facilitate critical thinking, integration, and application of concepts; to play devil’s advocate in our discussions and challenge you to analyze your own assumptions and arguments; and to stimulate creativity and generation of new ideas. Your role is to come prepared to every session--having read, carefully considered, and critically examined all materials and issues raised; to be an enthusiastic and thoughtful contributor to our discussions; to challenge your colleagues’ ideas and stimulate their creativity; and to integrate and extract practical information from the course that will be useful to your career. Active, high quality participation is expected from everyone. My
sincere wish is that we will all work together to create a learning environment that is stimulating, challenging, and fun.

Course Themes
Regardless of the specific issues we’re considering, a number of themes will run throughout the course and will serve as focal points or organizing assumptions. Though we will on occasion debate the validity of these assumptions, I think we will find them useful for organizing our discussions.
1. Systems thinking – Organizations are complex, dynamic entities consisting of individuals, groups, communication networks, divisions, and linkages within and across these entities.
2. The power of the situation – Powerful situations can create their own reality and serve to either constrain or empower individuals and groups.
3. The power of the individual – Although situations exert a strong influence on behavior, individual differences and personality are also very important to fully understanding organizational behavior.
4. Basic behavioral processes – There are fundamental behavioral processes than often transcend settings. Lessons learned from theory, laboratory work, case studies, field experimentation, and business practice are all relevant to understanding organizational behavior, and we will consider all of these sources of information in this course.
5. The ubiquity of change – All aspects of organizational behavior are influenced significantly by change, and change is a central aspect of all organizations and systems.
6. Learned aspects of leadership – A fundamental controversy in leadership is whether leaders are born or made. We will consider this controversy, but also reach beyond it to acknowledge that regardless of genetic and personality influences, at least some of the key aspects of leadership can be learned and therefore taught.
7. Our social nature – Humans are social animals that are influenced by the presence, attitudes, and actions of others. In order to fully understand individuals within organizations, we must consider their relationships and interactions with other individuals, groups, and entities both within and outside the organization.
8. Hidden paradoxes – Phenomena that are typically regarded as mostly positive or negative in nature often have potentially inverse implications, at least under certain conditions or when applied to certain situations.

Course Assignments and Grades
1. Paper (100 points). A description of the paper and a sample evaluation form are attached. Note that you may choose to revise and resubmit your paper for a final evaluation after seeing my comments (see schedule for due dates).
2. Presentation of paper (30 points). At the end of the semester, you will be asked to make a 15-20 minute presentation of your paper to the class. The presentation is intended to be similar to a paper presentation you might make at a regional or national conference. Prepare well and make good use of visual aids. A sample evaluation form is attached to this syllabus.
3. Challenge questions (24 points). One page, typed responses. Responses must show evidence of critical, integrative thought and are scored as acceptable (2 points) or unacceptable (0 points).
4. Participation (26 points). This will be scored based on the quality and quantity of your contributions to class discussions. Note that quality is the most important factor here. A single insightful comment or question that takes the discussion to a new level or in a new direction is often a valuable contribution. To assist me in evaluating your participation, you will be asked to complete a self-assessment form near the end of the semester.

Total: 180 points.
Scale:

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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>162-180</td>
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Course Policies

1. **Preparation, attendance, and in-class participation.** Regular attendance, careful preparation, and high-quality participation is expected from all.

2. **Readings.** There is no textbook for this course. Readings will be assigned each week from journal articles. You are responsible for obtaining these articles on your own. Most of them will be available in full-text form using one of the reference databases available via the Morris Library web site. Please note that I am assuming that you already have at least a basic working knowledge of major theories and principles of organizational behavior from prior courses. This is not intended as a course that provides a complete summary of classic organizational behavior research and theory. Instead, it focuses on recent articles in top journals that are of special interest. If you think you lack familiarity with the basics in any of our topic areas let me know and I will be glad to refer you to more general reviews and textbooks that will help you get up to speed.

3. **Professionalism.** All class members are expected to conduct themselves with courtesy and professionalism at all times. In particular, I want to encourage open discussions where we feel free to attack ideas. However, keep in mind that we should not personalize our comments and should focus instead on the ideas. Similarly, we should not take someone arguing against our own view as a personal attack as long as the critique is professionally stated and not personalized.

4. **Syllabus Attachment.** Visit the link below and review the information carefully: [http://pvcaa.siu.edu/_common/documents/Syllabus_Attachment.pdf](http://pvcaa.siu.edu/_common/documents/Syllabus_Attachment.pdf)

5. **Possible Changes to Syllabus and Course Schedule.** This syllabus represents my best reasonable expectations. However, changes may be made to accommodate our interests or time constraints.
**Paper Instructions**

Write a paper on a topic that is personally interesting to you, that has clear and obvious relevance to this class, and that demonstrates your mastery of prior research and theory on organizational behavior. Your paper must be new for this class, and must be different in a significant and substantial way from any papers you have submitted for other classes. There are several options for type of paper (see below). Length should be approximately 20-30 pages, double-spaced, but quality of content and clarity of expression is more important than length. Use appropriate headings and organization. Use 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Attach a list of references using either APA format or the very similar format used by the Academy of Management. If you wish, you may also make revisions to your final paper and resubmit it after receiving my feedback. This option is only available for papers that are turned in on time. I will also be happy to discuss the paper with you informally at any time as you proceed.

**Paper Options:**

1. **Research proposal.** Identify a limited set of specific hypotheses and design a study to test them. Provide an introduction containing a literature review and framing your hypotheses in terms of one or more specific theories, a method section describing your study clearly and concisely, a results or analysis strategy section that clarifies how you will test your hypotheses and what specific pattern of results you are predicting, and a discussion section that highlights methodological strengths and weaknesses, potential implications, and possible future directions.

2. **Theory paper.** Propose a new theory, extend an existing theory in a substantive and unique way, or develop an integrative theory than combines several existing theories into a coherent framework. Compare and contrast your theory with prior theories, identify unique hypotheses that can be derived from the theory, briefly discuss how they could be tested, and identify the unique advantages and implications of your approach for research and practice. Also be sure to identify the limitations of your theory.

3. **Review paper.** Write an integrative review of research in a specific topic area. Do not write a paper that is a laundry list of studies and what was found. Instead, integrate the findings around new ideas or insights. Support your conclusions with relevant research.

4. **Detailed case analysis.** Present one or more problems that a single, specific, organization is facing that is directly relevant to a content area of this course. Highlight the factors that led to the problem, the factors that are currently contributing to it, and any barriers to change that may exist. Use relevant theory, research, and practice to design a strategy for improving the current situation and reducing or eliminating the problem you have identified. Be specific about the pros and cons of your suggested approach and defend it. Compare your approach with other possibilities and clarify why your approach holds promise.

**Keys to a Successful Paper:**

1. Personal interest in the subject matter. Please select a topic that interests and excites you in some way! You will take a lot more away from this in the long term if you do so.

2. Mastery of core concepts. Good papers integrate concepts in a creative way that demonstrates mastery of the concepts and ease in applying them. Make sure you’ve reasoned through the implications of each methodological choice or strategy you propose.

3. Mastery of existing literature on the topic. Be sure to do a thorough literature review and to fully acknowledge and incorporate relevant prior research and theory into your paper.

4. Evidence of new ideas or a novel perspective. Although you’ll need to reference appropriate prior thought on your issue, I want to know what you have to say that is unique. Back up your conclusions with solid logic and evidence and make sure your viewpoints are internally consistent, but start with your own viewpoint and use prior research, theory, and application to support and refine your view.

5. Organization. Outline your thoughts in advance so that each paragraph makes one key point and the paper is presented in a logical order. Use headings.

6. Clarity and precision. Strive to be efficient and precise in your writing. Eliminate redundancy. Copy edit.
Evaluation Form for Papers

1. _____ Paper is clearly and directly relevant to this class.
2. _____ Paper incorporates prior relevant research and theory on organizational behavior.
3. _____ Prior research and theory is presented clearly and accurately.
4. _____ Paper is persuasive, making a strong case for the hypotheses or viewpoints presented.
5. _____ Paper demonstrates careful thought about the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed research and/or conclusions drawn.
6. _____ Clear rationale for hypotheses, methodological choices, suggested strategies, and/or conclusions is provided using logic, evidence, and prior research and theory.
7. _____ Paper is well-planned, logically organized, and makes good use of headings.
8. _____ Writing is clear and easy to follow.
9. _____ Writing is precise and efficient.
10. _____ Paper is free from typos and grammar flaws.
11. _____ Paper includes well-chosen, relevant citations.
12. _____ References uses appropriate formatting (either APA or Academy of Management).

Score (out of 100 points):

Comments:

Evaluation Form for Presentations

1. not at all descriptive 2. somewhat descriptive 3. very descriptive

1. Speaker articulated words cleanly.
2. Speaker refrained from awkward verbal utterances (umm, uh, er, you know, etc.).
3. Speaker spoke actively and did not just read passively from notes.
4. Speaker made eye contact with audience members.
5. Text on slides or overheads was clearly visible.
6. Slides were well organized.
7. Slides contained the right amount of information (neither too little nor too much).
8. Presentation was well paced.
9. Material presented was clear.
10. Presentation included relevant research and theory.
11. Conclusions were supported with logic and evidence.
12. Limitations were clearly acknowledged.
13. Speaker answered questions well.
14. Presentation was polished and professional.

Score (out of 30):

Comments:
Getting Full-Text Articles Online at SIU
1. Go to the Morris library page at http://www.lib.siu.edu/
2. A variety of databases can be accessed from the “ONESEARCH” link. EBSCO, First Search, Proquest, and Google Scholar will be especially useful for this class (or look for Business or Psychology within Databases by Subject).
3. Each database will use a specific search engine format. You should be able to search by author, year, source, title, abstract, etc. in most databases. Searching by both author and year (or author and part of the title) usually works well for finding specific articles you already have the reference for. Searching by title or keyword usually works well for finding articles on specific topics. Experimenting and trying several different searches is the best way to learn this quickly.
4. Once you have found the full-text article, you can read it, download it, or e-mail it (for personal use only, relevant copyright restrictions apply).

Course Schedule
Aug 21 – Course Orientation, Research Trends
Aug 28 – Culture
Sep 4 – Individual Differences
Sep 11 – Mood and Emotion
Sep 18 – Organizational Learning
Sep 25 – Work Motivation
Oct 2 – Group Motivation
Oct 9 – Group Performance
Oct 16 – Conflict
Oct 23 – Communication
Oct 30 – Power and Politics
Nov 6 – Leadership
Nov 13 – Decision Making, PAPER DUE
Nov 20 – Ethical Issues
Nov 27 – (Thanksgiving holiday – no classes)
Dec 4 – Presentations, (optional) PAPER RESUBMISSIONS DUE