

Interdisciplinary Programmes

Academic year 2019-2020

Applying Organisation Theories to Practice

IA091 - Autumn - 6 ECTS

Thursday 16h15 - 18h00

Course Description

The course seeks to enable students to understand and address managerial and leadership challenges in practice on the basis of academic work on organizations. Students learn about theories on the purpose and fundamental challenges of organizations. They also learn about scholarly views regarding the motivations and behaviors of individuals in organizations. More importantly, the course stimulates students to reflect critically about these scholarly views and their application to the real world. Themes includes the design of effective organizations, the management of organizational change, as well as leadership and motivation. The course is taught mostly with real-world cases balanced with readings.

> PROFESSOR

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Syllabus

Basic Logistics

- Course website: <https://moodle.graduateinstitute.ch/user/index.php?id=1447>
- Course Timing: 2 hours per week, 13 sessions in the autumn semester
- Schedule of classes: Thursdays, 16:15 – 18:00
- Location: A2

Objectives: We seek to:

- 1) Understand concepts from theories about organizational behaviour and organizations, such as organizational design, culture and change.

2) Develop procedural knowledge for critiquing and applying these theories to practice.

3) Practice the application of these theories to the real world through case studies.

Materials: A mix of cases, readings, and lecture materials (to be found on the moodle site for the course once it is set up).

Assignments: You will find the assignments for each class on the moodle site for the course.

Workload: For most classes, students read a case describing a real-world situation and between 1 and 3 other readings. For written assignments, please see the section on evaluation.

Content: For the content, see the class line up (p. 4).

Evaluation: The course is graded on the basis of three types of individual assignments:

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|------------------------------------|-----|
| Short case/ analysis papers: | 50% |
| Class attendance and contribution: | 10% |
| Final exam: | 40% |

a) Eight short case analysis papers (50%):

The first type of assignment is a **2-page maximum double-spaced** case analysis paper of the assigned case for each week. The case analysis must take advantage of the additionally assigned readings. for all sessions EXCEPT the first session on September 19 (and the exam session on December 12). Students need to do these papers for eight sessions (not for the first session on September 19 and not for the exam session on December 12).

As we have eleven sessions eligible for these case analysis papers, you can opt out of submitting reflection papers for three classes. Please note that late submissions will not be accepted, and that the overall grade for these papers is 1, should you not have submitted eight papers on time. Students are responsible for making sure that they have submitted the required number of papers in a timely fashion.

Case analysis papers will not be graded individually, but rather at the end of the course as a package that will reflect the overall quality and the evolution of your understanding/learning during the course (the focus is on your overall development over the course). These papers are due by **the end of the day prior to the class (i.e., every Wednesday evening at 7pm). They are to be uploaded to the moodle site for the course (file name : Firstname_lastname _sessionnumber).**

The very first line of the paper shows your full name and the session number.

These case analysis papers contain the following:

- a) Indicate very briefly core themes (e.g., problems, challenges) of the case that you address in your case analysis. If we use a case over two sessions, the case analysis papers must cover different aspects of the case. If there is not case for a session, very briefly summarize the core content of each reading.
- b) Conduct a case analysis by elaborating on causes (immediate and root causes) of the identified problems/challenges. The analysis applies the assigned readings, where appropriate. Clearly indicate, where you drew on the readings by mentioning the authors' names in parentheses. If there is not a case for a session, critique the readings.
- c) Write down three open-ended discussion questions about the week's case/readings that you'd like to talk about in class.

I will evaluate your case analysis papers using these criteria:

- Is an analysis of the case (not of a general problem / challenge in organizations)
- Applies the readings in the case analysis, where appropriate. Simply referencing the papers is not indicative of having applied them. If the readings are not applicable, then please briefly explain why. Note: Do not assume that your analysis must exclusively draw on the papers. Your task is to provide a case analysis (and not merely an application of the readings to the case). Thus, your case analysis typically also draws on your reasoning and possibly other sources.
- Contains novel and provocative insights
- Is logically coherent, concise, and easily readable. For case analyses, logical coherence results from identifying case problems and challenges and from elaborating on causes (immediate and root causes) of these problems/challenges. For conciseness, avoid redundancies and focus on the most critical issues. For readability, as a rule of thumb, write short sentences (up to three lines), write in active voice, and use transitions between paragraphs.

b) Class attendance and contribution (10%)

Class contribution refers to your participation in class. You will be evaluated on the extent to which you contributed to the learning of the class during the whole semester. Contribution demands your presence, punctuality and active participation, but is not just a matter of speaking more. In order to contribute effectively, you must have read and studied the assigned materials carefully and have come prepared with thoughtful reactions and questions. I will evaluate your attendance and contribution to the class on several dimensions:

- Quality of your participation: Bringing new and interesting as well as well-substantiated and logical perspectives to the attention of the class; giving relevant and interesting examples; questioning and challenging the course materials or practices that are explained in the readings.
- Quantity of your participation: Participating consistently, but not dominating class discussions. To give everyone a fair chance of participation, the instructor reserves the right not to call on you and instead to allow someone else to talk. The instructor may also ask you to wrap up your point if it is too lengthy.
- Quality of your listening: Listening attentively; not talking with each other during lectures and class presentations.
- Manner of discussion: Making constructive criticisms and expressing your disagreements in a respectful manner.

c) Final exam (40%)

The format of the final exam is an open-book, 4-hour exam that seeks to assess your comprehension of the class materials, as well as your problem-solving/decision-making skills, as they were developed through the discussions in class. Your task will be to read the case and to respond to specific questions (more details to be announced in the exam instructions). The exam takes place on December 12 between 16:15 and 20:15.

Approach:

I see this course as a seminar. A seminar is not a lecture, although there will be occasions throughout the course when there will be lecture-like elements. In a seminar we collectively share ownership of, and responsibility for, the success of the course. Co-operation, reinforcement, and the sharing of ideas are keys to both learning and the course's success. Most sessions will include a case discussion and a discussion of pertinent readings. Occasionally, there will be group work.

The cases and readings demand considerable thought and reflection. To prepare for class, you must read and carefully study the assigned materials. In addition to the weekly reflection papers, reflect about responses to the assignment questions for each class. This won't always be easy. Be prepared to discuss your observations, conclusions, and the implications of these in class.

In short, my expectations for you are simple: You **attend** classes; you are **prepared** for the classes; and you are **involved** in contributing to the learning that takes place in the classes.

Ethics:

Plagiarism has been defined as "the act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of his writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the product of one's own mind" (Excerpted from H.C. Black, Black's Law Dictionary, West Publishing Co., 1979, 5th Ed., p. 1035). This concept applies with equal force to all assignments and contributions. You must complete your assignments in your own words. Whenever you take an idea or a passage of text from another author, you must acknowledge your debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations.

CLASS LINE-UP 2019: APPLYING ORGANIZATION THEORIES TO PRACTICE

| SESSION | DATE | SEMINAR CONTENT |
|----------------|--------------|--|
| 1 | September 19 | Course Introduction |
| 2 | September 26 | Organizations and Membership in Organizations (Case: Guest Complaints at the Hotel: The Consultant Intervention) |
| 3 | October 3 | Organizational Design (Case: Keeping Google Googley) |
| 4 | October 10 | Organizational Culture: Basics (Case: Four Seasons Goes to Paris) |
| 5 | October 17 | NO CLASS |
| 6 | October 24 | Organizational Culture in a Global Organization (Case: Four Seasons Goes to Paris continued) |
| 7 | October 31 | Organizational Structure: (Case: Procter and Gamble Org. 2005) |
| 8 | November 7 | Holocracy: A New Organizational Design (Case: Liip Switzerland) |
| 9 | November 14 | Organizational Design in an NGO (Street Child Europe) |
| 10 | November 21 | Organizational Change: Basics (Case: Red Cross Children's Home Guyana) |
| 11 | November 28 | Organizational Change: The Change Agent (Case: Red Cross Children's Home Guyana) |
| 12 | December 5 | Leadership (Jason, the Project Leader) |
| 13 | December 12 | Exam (16:15 – 20:15) |
| 14 | December 19 | Performance Management (Case: Elise Smart) |