

Interdisciplinary Programmes

Academic year 2021-2022

Applying Organisation Theories to Practice

IA091 - Autumn - 6 ECTS

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

[Joerg Dietz](#)

[Office hours](#)

> ASSISTANT

[Siddhant Marur](#)

[Office hours](#)

Syllabus

Basic Logistics

- Course website: <https://moodle.graduateinstitute.ch/enrol/index.php?id=2297>
- 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) Practice the application of theories about organizational behaviour and organizations, such as organizational design, culture and change, to the real world through case studies. By doing so, we strive to
- 2) Understand these theories and their concepts and
- 3) Develop procedural knowledge for critiquing and applying these theories to practice.

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

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 at the end of this document.

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

Short case analysis papers:	60%
Class attendance and contribution:	10%
Final exam:	30%

a) Eight short case analysis papers (60%):

The first type of assignment is **700-word double-spaced** case analysis paper of the assigned case for each week (EXCEPT for the first session on September 23 and the sessions on December 16 and 23). The case analysis must take advantage of the additionally assigned readings. Students need to do these papers for eight sessions. Because there are eleven eligible sessions for submitting case analysis papers, for up to three classes you can decide not to submit a case analysis paper. If students submit more than eight case analysis papers, we will use the average of the eight best submitted ones. If students submit less than eight case analysis papers, the grade will be 1 for this portion of the evaluation. Please note that late submissions will not be accepted. 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). Nonetheless, we will provide short written feedback for the first submitted case analysis paper.

These papers are due by **the end of the day prior to the class (i.e., every Wednesday evening at 23:59pm)**. 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) The case analysis papers address the questions stated in the assignment sheet. Number your responses according to the numbering used in the assignment sheet (so that we can identify where you respond to which question).
In formulating your response, it is often helpful to offer initially a short overview of the structure of your response. Please note that you do need to summarize the case, but that you should rather directly take on the questions.
- b) Your response applies the assigned readings, where appropriate. Clearly indicate, where you drew on the readings by mentioning the authors' names and year in parentheses. Note that we expect responses that are analytic. That is, do not just restate from the case, but, when explaining why a situation occurred, mention what you see as the cause, and when suggesting an action that a case actor should take, explain why the actor should do so.
- c) Write down one open-ended discussion question about the week's case/readings that you'd like to talk about in class.
- d) When drawing on a source, as already stated under b), always mention it in the text (typically by giving author names and year in parenthesis, such as Miller & Smith, 2019). You only need to add a reference at the end of your assignment for those sources that are not mentioned in the assignment sheet.

Please note that the 700-word guideline is a guideline, not a firm limit. From past classes, we have learned that most assignments have about 700 words, and this is my expectation for the length. However, sometimes student write up to a 1000 words, and we will read up to 1000 words, but not more than that.

We will evaluate your case analysis papers using these criteria:

- Responds to the questions and is analytic in doing so (not a general essay on the case).
- Applies the readings, where appropriate. Simply referencing the papers is not indicative of having applied them. If the readings are not applicable at all, then please briefly explain why. Note: Do not assume that your response must exclusively draw on the papers. Your task is to provide a response that is analytic of the case (and not merely an application of the readings to the case). Thus,

your responses typically draw on your reasoning and possibly other sources in addition to assigned readings.

- Contains novel and provocative insights
- Is logically coherent, concise, and easily readable. Logical coherence, for example, can result from identifying 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 (30%)

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 16 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 case analysis 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 2020: APPLYING ORGANIZATION THEORIES TO PRACTICE

SESSION	DATE	SEMINAR CONTENT
1	September 23	Course Introduction
2	September 30	Performance Management (Case: Elise Smart)
3	October 7	Organizational Design (Case: Keeping Google Googley)
4	October 14	Organizations and Membership in Organizations (Case: Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation)
5	October 21 (online)	Organizational Culture: Basics (Case: Four Seasons Goes to Paris)
6	October 28 (online)	Organizational Structure: (Case: Procter and Gamble Org. 2005)
7	November 4	Holocracy: A New Organizational Design (Case: Liip Switzerland)
8	November 11	Designing for Performance in an NGO (Street Child Europe)
9	November 18	The Stakeholder Approach (Planet for Children)
10	November 25	Organizational Change: Basics (Tackling Fraud and Corruption in the United Nations)
11	December 2	Organizational Change: The Change Agent (Case: Red Cross Children's Home Guyana)
12	December 9	Leadership (Jason, the Project Leader)
13	December 16	Exam (16:15 – 20:15)
14	December 23	NO CLASS