Education 867: Seminar in Organization Theory (Winter 2012)

Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education
University of Michigan School of Education

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Class: Thursday, 1-4pm, 2218 SEB

Course Description:

This is an advanced seminar in organization theory, with specific application to problems and issues in education. It is primarily intended for doctoral students, and will be particularly useful for students who intend to use organization theory as a conceptual framework for research studies and dissertation.

This course will cover the major strands of organization theory with application to education, including organizational structure, resource dependence, strategy, symbols, institutional theory, organizational culture, socialization, leadership and decision making. Although this course is housed in the School of Education, and educational issues will be a special focus, it is open to all students and a diversity of topical interests is welcomed.

An introductory course in organizations, such as ED761 or 752, is required prior to taking the course. It is also recommended that students participate in the ICOS seminar (Business Administration 840 or Information 702; Friday, 1:30-3:00) to become increasingly familiar with cutting-edge research in organizations, but this is not a requirement.

Objectives:

1. Identify and understand the major strands of research in organization theory.
2. Application of organization theory to research on social problems and issues, particularly those in education.
3. Writing a major literature review or conducting a research study in organizations.

Course Requirements:

Requirements for Section 1 (3 credits):

Class Participation. As in any doctoral course, students and faculty need to be co-owners of the class and collectively responsible for its quality and outcomes. I will take responsibility for the overall design and direction of the course and for the academic requirements, but the course will be facilitated as a seminar or inquiry in which all
participants hold themselves and each other accountable for a strong and rich intellectual enterprise and dialogue.

Your attendance is essential to a successful collective experience. The format of the class requires that each person come prepared to take an active role in class. This means not only having read the assigned materials, but also being prepared to discuss the salient issues, questions, and problems emerging from the readings, to utilize your knowledge and professional experiences in addressing the readings and any class activities, case problems, etc. Class participation also involves opening oneself to challenge and to be challenged by the ideas and topics of the session. Please notify me by email in advance if you are unable to attend any class session. Students who miss four or more class sessions must withdraw from the course. The quality of your class participation is worth 50% of your final grade.

Research Paper. The intent of this assignment is to give you a chance to prepare your own analysis of an issue in organizations. There are a number of possibilities for this paper, including a literature review, analytic case study, or research project, quantitative or qualitative. This paper will be approximately 25 pages of text (double-spaced, not including appendices or bibliography). I will provide you with feedback throughout the process. (50% of grade).

Requirements for Section 2 (1 credit): This section is only open to PhD candidates and/or those who have taken the course in a prior term. Students enrolling for one credit are required to attend class on regular basis, participate in discussions, keep up with the reading, and co-lead one session of the course on a topic to be negotiated with the instructor.

Requirements for Audit: This is open to all students. Auditors are required to attend class on regular basis, actively participate in discussions, and keep up with the reading.

Course Texts:


Other Readings:

The course readings are available electronically through CTools. Please download and print out these articles at your own convenience.
Course Schedule

January 5: Introduction to the Course

Discussion of Scott & Davis, Bastedo

January 12: Institutionalism: Old and Neo-Old


January 19: Meyer-School Institutional Theory


January 26: Neo-Institutional Theory

Workshop: Ozan Jaquette


February 2: Institutional Logics & Entrepreneurs

Workshop: Megan Tompkins-Stange


**February 9: Boundaries and Classifications**

Workshop: Julie Posselt


**February 16: Social Movements**

Workshop: Cassie Barnhardt


**February 23: Resource Dependence and Academic Capitalism**

Workshop: Ozan Jaquette


**March 8: Organizational Identity**


**March 15: Social Networks**

Workshop: Molly Ott


**March 22: Sensemaking**

Workshop: Ryan Smerek


**March 29: Diversity and Discrimination**


April 5: Routines and Work

Workshop: Danielle Molina


April 12: What is Organizational Theory in Higher Education?

Bastedo chapter 12 (revisit)


Revised: March 9, 2012