

PHD SEMINAR IN ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY – SPECIAL TOPICS SPRING 2022

Spring 2024 - BIDDING
Mondays, 2:15 – 5:00 PM
Kravis 630/Virtual

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TA:

"Science is a conversation between rigor and imagination. What one proposes, the other evaluates."

Andrew Abbott

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This PhD Seminar introduces dominant approaches to scientific inquiry in the social sciences, particularly focusing on the area of Organizational Theory. We will then work through existing research across a number of research topics and cultivate critical skills for the evaluation of cutting-edge research. Throughout the semester students will: (1) develop a greater appreciation for how sociologists and organization theorists apply sociological concepts and frameworks to the study of various topics, (2) develop critical skills for the evaluation of cutting-edge work in these research community; (c) and be better prepared to contribute to research in these traditions. Through our discussions of existing research, we will explore a range of research methodologies used by social scientists and consider strengths, limitations, and tradeoffs for each.

In sum, the class is about cultivating a taste for research in this tradition, which involves appreciating why researchers are doing what they are doing, distinguishing good from bad work, and applying those lessons to one's own research (which should also be applicable to other areas of social science).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

You will be evaluated on four types of work throughout the semester: (a) class participation (30%); (b) referee reports (20%); (c) response to referee report (20%), (d) and paper proposal presentation (30%).

Class Participation (30%)

Classroom learning is always a shared responsibility, but it is especially critical in a doctoral seminar. Though I will structure and facilitate the discussion, it is your responsibility to come to

class well prepared and ready to engage actively. This means that for our class session to be successful, each student is expected to be present, to be prepared, to engage thoughtfully in the discussion, and to be respectful of others. Though you do not have written assignments each week, I encourage you to engage with the readings critically and be prepared for a thoughtful discussion. Some weeks I will provide thought questions – please reflect on these before class.

Please be sure to let me know in advance if you will miss a session. The expectation is that all students attend all sessions unless there is an unforeseeable circumstance or illness. If you must miss class, you are expected to keep up with the reading as we cover a great deal of territory in every class.

Referee Reports (20%)

Each student will be responsible for producing two referee reports over the course of the semester. You can select for which weeks you complete a report. I recommend that you organize your thoughts in terms of the following questions (some of which will be more or less relevant depending on the specific readings) – more detail on each of these dimensions will be covered in class.

1. Motivation: Why do the authors say that their topic or question is important? What does the author (implicitly or explicitly) regard as incomplete in existing research such that his or her research constitutes a significant contribution? Do you think that this motivation effectively answers the “so what” question?
2. Theory: What distinguishes the theoretical viewpoint of the authors from existing research in that space? What causal mechanism or mechanisms do the authors focus on and why? What are the potential advantages of a given focus and what are the drawbacks?
3. Evidence: What types of evidence do the authors bring to bear to support their argument? Which sorts of analyses do you find most compelling and why? Can you imagine additional data or other research designs being better suited for supporting their claims? Why do you think the authors made the design and data choices that they made?
4. Big Picture: To what extent do you regard this reading as making a significant contribution to the this week’s stream of research? How could the work have made a bigger contribution? Would you recommend that this paper be: accepted, offered an opportunity to revise and resubmit, or rejected.

Response to Referee Report (20%)

In addition to being a critic of existing research, you will also have opportunities to assume the role of producer where you will read a published paper and corresponding referee reports the author has received. Each student will be responsible for producing one response letter explaining their reaction to the reviewer comments and how they believe the author addressed the critiques in the final paper. Consider: Which points are valid critiques of the existing work? Which do you feel are unwarranted? What were the most substantial ways the author addressed these in the

final paper (3-5)? What else would you have done (that the author did not) in response to the comments from reviewers/editor?

Presentation of Paper Proposal (30%)

Verbally communicating one's research to an audience is a key element to success in academia. Often, before having a full draft of a paper, we present our research, for example at conferences or department seminars. You will have the opportunity to develop this skill by presenting your research proposal during the final week of the semester. These presentations will be 15-20 minutes in length and include a question and answer component, similar to typical conference session. You should plan to share a PowerPoint-style presentation and will be evaluated on your ability to communicate the motivation for your research, your central research question, the existing theory and literature, and a research design.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: January 24	Introduction to Empirical Inquiry in the Social Sciences (*virtual)
Week 2: January 31	Labor Markets I: Demand-side (Organizational) Processes (*virtual)
Week 3: February 7	Labor Markets II: Supply-side (Applicant) Processes
Week 4: February 14	Identity: Specialists versus Generalists
Week 5: February 21	Status I: Understanding Sources and Effects of Status
Week 6: February 28	Status II: Broader Perspectives on Status Effects
Week 7: March 21	Networks: Implications for Inequality
Week 8: March 28	Guest Session w/ Dan Wang (TBD)
Week 9: April 4	Organizational Claims & Actions I: Understanding Formalization
Week 10: April 11	Organizational Claims & Actions II: When Claims (Do Not) Equal Action
Week 11 & 12: April 18 & 25	Proposal Presentations

WEEK 1

Introduction to Empirical Inquiry in the Social Sciences

January 24, 2022

Required:

Medawar, "Is the Scientific Paper Fraudulent?"

Zuckerman, Ezra. 2008. "Tips to Article Writers."

Zuckerman, Ezra. 2010. "MIT Economic Sociology Program: Guide to Evaluating/Refereeing Research Papers."

Optional:

Watts, Duncan J. 2014. "Common Sense and Sociological Explanations." *American Journal of Sociology* 120 (2): 313–51.

Assignment:

Come prepared to discuss one piece of research you admire. Bring a copy with you to class.

WEEK 2

Labor Markets I: Demand-side (Organizational) Processes

January 31, 2022

Required

Rivera, L. A. 2020 "Employer Decision Making." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 46: 215–232.

Fernandez-Mateo I, King Z. 2011. Anticipatory sorting and gender segregation in temporary employment. *Manag. Sci.* 57(6):989–1008

Galperin, Roman V., Oliver Hahl, Adina D. Sterling, and Jerry Guo (2019) "Too Good to Hire? Capability and Inferences about Commitment in Labor Markets." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, March

Keller, JR. 2017. "Posting and Slotting: How Hiring Processes Shape the Quality of Hire and Compensation in Internal Labor Markets." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, October

Supplementary

Beckman CM, Phillips DJ. 2005. "Interorganizational Determinants of Promotion: Client Leadership and the Attainment of Women Attorneys." *American Sociological Review* 70(4):678–701.

WEEK 3

Labor Markets II: Supply-side (Applicant) Processes

February 7, 2022

Brands, Raina A., and Isabel Fernandez-Mateo. 2016. "Leaning Out: How Negative Recruitment Experiences Shape Women's Decisions to Compete for Executive Roles." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, December

Fernandez RM, Friedrich C. 2011. Gender sorting at the application interface. *Ind. Relat.* 50(4):591–609

Kang, S. K., K. A. DeCelles, A. Tilcsik, and S. Jun 2016 "Whitened Résumés: Race and Self-Presentation in the Labor Market." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 61: 469–502.

Abraham, M., and V. Burbano. (*forthcoming*). "Congruence Between Leadership Gender and Organizational Claims Affects the Gender Composition of the Applicant Pool: Field Experimental Evidence." *Organization Science*.

WEEK 4

Identity: Specialists versus Generalists

February 14, 2022

Ferguson, J., Hasan, S. 2013 "Specialization and career advancement: Evidence from the Indian Administrative Service." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 58: 233–256.

Merluzzi, Jennifer, and Damon J. Phillips. 2016. "The Specialist Discount: Negative Returns for MBAs with Focused Profiles in Investment Banking." *Administrative Science Quarterly*

**see also [this podcast episode](#) for more behind-the-scenes on this project*

Pedulla DS. 2016. Penalized or protected? Gender and the consequences of nonstandard and mismatched employment histories. *American Sociological Review*. 81(2):262–89

Zuckerman, Ezra W, Tai-Young Kim, Kalinda Ukanwa, and James von Rittmann. 2003. "Robust Identities or Non-Entities? Typecasting in the Feature Film Labor Market." *American Journal of Sociology* 108: 1018-1075.

WEEK 5

Status I: Understanding Sources and Effects of Status

February 21, 2022

Correll, S. J., & Ridgeway, C. L. 2003. Expectation States Theory. In J. Delamater (Ed.), Handbook of Social Psychology (1st ed.). Springer.

Botelho, T. L., and M. Abraham. 2017 “Pursuing Quality: How Search Costs and Uncertainty Magnify Gender-based Double Standards in a Multistage Evaluation Process.” Administrative Science Quarterly, 62: 698–730.

**see also [this podcast episode](#) for more behind-the-scenes on this project*

Lynn, F. B., J. M. Podolny, and L. Tao. 2009 “A Sociological (De)Construction of the Relationship between Status and Quality.” American Journal of Sociology, 115: 755–804.

Kim, J. W., and B. G. King. 2014 “Seeing Stars: Matthew Effects and Status Bias in Major League Baseball Umpiring.” Management Science, 60: 2619–2644.

WEEK 6

Status II: Broader Perspectives on Status Effects

February 28, 2022

Bothner, M. S., Kim, Y.-K., & Smith, E. B. 2011. How Does Status Affect Performance? Status as an Asset vs. Status as a Liability in the PGA and NASCAR. Organization Science, 23(2): 416–433.

Kovács, B., and A. J. Sharkey 2014 “The Paradox of Publicity: How Awards Can Negatively Affect the Evaluation of Quality.” Administrative Science Quarterly, 59: 1–33.

Botelho, T. L., and M. Gertsberg 2021 “The Disciplining Effect of Status: Evaluator Status Awards and Observed Gender Bias in Evaluations.” Management Science.

Abraham, M., Botelho, T., and Carter, J. The Effect of Evaluator Placement on Peer Evaluations: Over and under placed evaluators are biased in their subsequent allocation of status awards. *Working paper*.

WEEK 7

Networks: Implications for Inequality

March 21, 2022

Rivera, Mark T., Sara B. Soderstrom, and Brian Uzzi. 2010. “Dynamics of Dyads in Social Networks: Assortative, Relational, and Proximity Mechanisms.” Annual Review of Sociology 36 (1): 91–115.

Rubineau B, Fernandez RM. 2015. Tipping points: the gender segregating and desegregating effects of network recruitment. Organization Science 26(6):1646–64

Castilla, Emilio, Ben Rissing. 2019. Best in Class: The Returns on Endorsement in Business School Admissions, Administrative Science Quarterly . 64(1):230–270.

Abraham, Mabel. 2020. "Gender-Role Incongruity and Audience-Based Gender Bias: An Examination of Networking among Entrepreneurs." *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 65(1):151–180.

WEEK 8

Organizational Stability and Change: Guest Session with Dan Wang

March 28, 2022

Gould, Roger V. 1991. "Multiple Networks and Mobilization in the Paris Commune, 1871." *American Sociological Review* 56 (6): 716–29.

Ray, Victor. 2019. "A Theory of Racialized Organizations." *American Sociological Review* 84 (1): 26–53.

Kellogg, Katherine C. 2012. "Making the Cut: Using Status-Based Countertactics to Block Social Movement Implementation and Microinstitutional Change in Surgery." *Organization Science* 23 (6): 1546–70.

WEEK 9

Organizational Claims & Actions I: Understanding Formalization

April 4, 2022

Castilla, Emilio J., and Stephen Benard. 2010. "The Paradox of Meritocracy in Organizations." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 55 (4): 543–76.

Kalev, Alexandra, Erin Kelly, and Frank Dobbin. 2006. "Best Practices or Best Guesses? Assessing the Efficacy of Corporate Affirmative Action and Diversity Policies." *American Sociological Review* 71 (4): 589–617.

Correll, Shelley, Katherine Weisshaar, Alison Wynn, JoAnne Wehner. 2020. Inside the Black Box of Organizational Life: The Gendered Language of Performance Assessment. *American Sociological Review*. 85(6):1022–1050.

Abraham, Mabel. 2017. "Pay Formalization Revisited: Considering the Effects of Manager Gender and Discretion on Closing the Gender Wage Gap." *Academy of Management Journal* 60 (1): 29–54.

WEEK 10

Organizational Claims & Actions II: When Claims (Do Not) Equal Action

April 11, 2022

McDonnell, Mary-Hunter, and Brayden King. 2013. "Keeping up Appearances: Reputational Threat and Impression Management after Social Movement Boycotts." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 58 (3): 387–419.

Bromley, Patricia, and Walter W. Powell. 2012. "From Smoke and Mirrors to Walking the Talk: Decoupling in the Contemporary World." *The Academy of Management Annals* 6 (1): 483–530.

Crilly, Donal, Morten Hansen, and Maurizio Zollo. 2016. "The Grammar of Decoupling: A Cognitive-Linguistic Perspective on Firms' Sustainability Claims and Stakeholders' Interpretation." *Academy of Management Journal* 59 (2): 705–29.

Weick, Karl, Kathleen Sutcliffe, and David Obstfeld. 2005. "Organizing and the Process of Sensemaking." *Organization Science*. 16 (4): 409–21.

WEEK 11 & 12

Proposal Presentations

April 18 & April 25, 2022