PSY992: Organizational Psychology

Rick DeShon

Spring 2018

Time & Place: Tuesday 1:50pm – 4:40pm, 325 Psychology
Office: Psychology Building 306
Office Hours: By appointment
Phone: 517-353-4624
Email: deshon@msu.edu

REQUIRED READING

Please see the assigned materials list for each week. You can find copies of the readings here.

INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY

I do not have set office hours but I am available to meet with students by appointment. My schedule is full and “dropping by” my office may not be the most effective strategy. Please email to schedule appointments. I check email frequently and will respond quickly.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a seminar for doctoral students in fields related to industrial and organizational psychology, organizational behavior, and human resource development. This course is a survey of topics relevant to the field of organizational behavior. The course introduces participants to substantive issues, both macro and micro level, relevant to organizational behavior as addressed by psychologist, sociologist, management, and researchers of other fields. The course places an emphasis on the theory and research on organizational behavior rather than taking a managerial/practice focus. Theories are reviewed and analyzed and relevant organizational variables are discussed in terms of constructs and the linkage of conceptualization and operationalization of constructs. Throughout the course, a major focus is on the quality of the constructs developed in the field of Organizational Science. Discussions will focus on the definition and conceptualization of constructs as well as their operationalization and interpretation. Practical implications of this research are drawn when appropriate.

COURSE ACTIVITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

The course is conducted as a graduate seminar in which participation is expected and encouraged. The class is team taught by faculty in the organizational psychology program and the organizational behavior group in the management department. Assignments will be given at various times in the course. Additional ones may be added. Active participation in class discussions is expected – it is why you are here! You (and the facilitators) are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Of course, you are also expected to come to every class as we have much to learn! You can only participate in a meaningful way if you read and actively reflect on all the material assigned before class – that is your responsibility. There will also be a number of assignments to be completed across the semester. Some assignments are short papers and others are written work that will provide information that helps stimulate discussion during class. You
will also prepare a research proposal based on the integration of the materials that we discussed in the class, and present your proposal at the end of the semester.

GRADING CRITERIA

1. Participation (20%) During class, you should be prepared to discuss the reading materials. We will focus the discussion on (a) theoretical framework, (b) study design, (c) methodology, and (d) empirical findings, and (e) research and practical implications, of the assigned articles. A portion of your grade reflects your active, high-quality participation and discussion of the articles in class.

2. In class assignments/short papers (30%) Various assignments are given at different times of the course, and additional ones may be assigned by the faculty member leading the class discussion. These assignments will make up 30% of the course grade.

3. Class paper (50%)
   You will work individually on a paper concerning a topic covered in this class. The goal of this assignment is to produce a professional quality scientific research paper. While all papers must be focused squarely on a topic that is covered in this course, they can follow on one of two formats:
   - a proposal of an empirical study that could be conducted at some future time, or
   - a theoretical paper in which a new conceptual framework is proposed for integrating and discussing the literature on a topic (similar to what would be found in Psychological Bulletin or Academy of Management Review).

The development of this paper will follow three steps:

First, you need to select your paper format and topic and provide a brief description (a paragraph or two) of your general idea to me as soon as possible, but no later than the start of class on February 16th. Paper topics cannot be duplicated and will be approved on a first come basis. I encourage you to turn in your summary ASAP so that you end up with a topic that is of interest to you.

Second, you will develop a detailed outline and the initial “hook” that clearly describes your focus and what you intend to do with the paper (i.e., propose a study, develop a new theoretical model). The structure of this outline should be clear—but the format or style doesn’t matter. So it can be in bullet points, incomplete sentences, paragraphs, or whatever format that suits your writing style. The “hook” refers to the first couple of paragraphs in a paper that clearly articulate the purpose of the paper, its contribution, and how it fits with the existing literature. The key for this assignment is that I need to be able to judge whether or not the logic of the arguments to be made in the final paper are flowing clearly and whether there is potential for the paper to meaningfully contribute to the literature. This outline should be emailed directly to me on or before by March 1st, and is worth 10% of your final grade.

Third, a complete paper that corresponds to one of the two formats described above is expected. The final paper is due on April 20th. Additionally, each author will briefly present an overview of your paper to the class on April 30th. The presentation should be between 10-15 minutes, and include the essence of your paper. The presentation is worth 10% of your final grade, and the written paper is worth 30% of your final grade.

Final Grades will be determined as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>90% and above</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
<td>85 – 89%</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
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MAKE-UP POLICY

All assignments must be completed when scheduled. Unless prior permission has been obtained, NO late or makeup assignments will be accepted or given. Permission may be granted for those who contact the instructor prior to the scheduled date, and provided her with valid documentation related to the absence either before or after the absence.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is strongly encouraged, and it will influence your participation grade. You are expected to be aware of any changes in dates of assignment.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY

The official university policy is as follows:

It has always been the policy of the University to permit students and faculty to observe those holidays set aside by their chosen religious faith. The faculty and staff should be sensitive to the observance of these holidays so that students who absent themselves from classes on these days are not seriously disadvantaged. It is the responsibility of those students who wish to be absent to make arrangements in advance with their instructors. It is also the responsibility of those faculty who wish to be absent to make arrangements in advance with their chairpersons, who shall assume the responsibility for covering their classes.

As Michigan State University has become increasingly multicultural, the incidence of conflicts between mandatory academic requirements and religious observances has increased. In the absence of a simple and dignified way to determine the validity of individual claims, the claim of a religious conflict should be accepted at face value. Be aware that some degrees of observance may have a more extensive period of observance. Instructors may expect a reasonable limit to the number of requests by any one student. Some instructors attempt to cover all reasons for student absences from required academic events such as quizzes or exams with a blanket policy, e.g., allowing the student to drop one grade or two quizzes without penalty. If this is meant to extend to religious observances, the instructor should state this clearly at the beginning of the term. If instructors require make-up exams, they retain the right to determine the content of the exams and the conditions of administration, giving due consideration to equitable treatment.

MISCONDUCT

Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty will result in failure of the course. The official university policy is as follows:

The principles of truth and honesty are fundamental to the educational process and the academic integrity of the University; therefore, no student shall:

1. claim or submit the academic work of another as one’s own.
2. procure, provide, accept or use any materials containing questions or answers to any examination or assignment without proper authorization.
3. complete or attempt to complete any assignment or examination for another individual without proper authorization.
4. allow any examination or assignment to be completed for oneself, in part or in total, by another without proper authorization.
5. alter, tamper with, appropriate, destroy or otherwise interfere with the research, resources, or other academic work of another person.
6. fabricate or falsify data or results.

INCOMPLETE POLICY

The official university policy is as follows:

The I-Incomplete may be given only when: the student (a) has completed at least 6/7 of the term of instruction, but is unable to complete the course work and/or take the final examination because of illness or other compelling reason; and (b) has done satisfactory work in the course; and (c) in the instructor's judgment can complete the required work without repeating the course.

Provided these conditions are met, the instructor electing to give an I-Incomplete files an Agreement for Completion of (I) Incomplete at the time course grades are due. This agreement specifies what the student must do, and when, to remove the I-Incomplete. The department or school office gives a copy to the student, and retains a copy for at least one year.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states: “The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, the psychology department adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site www.msu.edu)

Therefore, you are expected to complete all course assignments without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Specific to this course, plagiarism of an assignment results in a zero for that assignment.

CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT

Cell phones must be turned off before class starts and put away unless you have been explicitly told to access the internet. The course is structured to encourage discussion and interaction – please treat other members of the class with courtesy and respect. If you are disruptive (e.g., talking when others have the floor, making inappropriate remarks, interfering with others’ learning), you will be asked to leave the class. Texting, emailing, game playing, and web surfing during class are counterproductive to learning, lessen your capacity to engage with those around you, and can be rude. Leave the outside world outside of class and be fully present. I reserve the right to confiscate for the duration of class any device that I feel is affecting my ability to teach effectively regardless of whether you think it is not distracting you. If for some reason you must arrive late or leave early (e.g., illness, car trouble), please take a seat near the door and minimize disruption of others with your arrival/departure. Given our early start, feel free to bring coffee/breakfast.

ONLINE AND IN-PERSON COURTESY EXPECTATIONS

As a seminar, this is a discussion based class. While I encourage you to be yourself in your expressions, I also expect courtesy and respect for others (online and in person). Please refrain from language that others might find offensive. There are topics we will discuss where individuals may have very different opinions and views – please express your dissenting viewpoint diplomatically.
RECORDING

As members of a learning community, students are expected to respect the intellectual property of course instructors. All course materials presented to students are subject to the following conditions of use: 1. Students may record lectures/classroom activities and use the recordings for their own course-related purposes. 2. Students may share the recordings for others enrolled in this specific course section. Sharing is limited to using the recordings only for course-related purposes 3. Students may not post the recordings or any other course materials online or distribute them to anyone not enrolled in this section of the class without the advance written permission of the course instructor and, if applicable, any students whose voice or image is included in the recordings. That means you cannot post a photo or video or other recording of anyone in the class to any social media site (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) without their written consent. Violation of this policy may result in a grade penalty up to a 0.0 in the course. 4. Any student violating the conditions described above may face academic disciplinary sanctions.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have a disability that will require accommodations, please see me the first week of class. If you will miss class for a religious observance, let me know in advance.

GRIEF ABSENCE POLICY

Students seeking a grief absence should be directed to the Grief Absence Request Form found on the RO home page (https://reg.msu.edu/) under ‘Student Services - Grief Absence Request Form’ OR to StuInfo (https://stuinfo.msu.edu/) under ‘Academics - Enrollment Information and Services - Grief Absence Request Form.’ Students will be asked to supply information on the nature of the loss, the date they became aware, and the expected period of absence. Once completed, the information is routed to the Assoc. Dean of the student’s college and must be received prior to the student leaving campus. The student will receive a confidential message confirming the submission and reminding them that supporting documentation must be provided and who to send it to. In addition, the appropriate dean’s office will be notified that a request has been submitted. Once the appropriate administrator has either approved or denied the request, the student will again receive a confidential message notifying them of the decision of the dean’s office. If approved, instructors will be notified by the appropriate dean’s office of the period of absence. Instructors are expected to arrange for students to make up the missed work.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If an emergency should occur that would require the cancellation of class, I will send an email via D2L. While an emergency occurring during class is unlikely, please take time the first day to think through your emergency plans for such events (e.g., know at least two exits from the building).
COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING LIST

Week 1 (1/9): Introduction and Overview (Rick DeShon)

Read:


Week 2 (1/16): Theory Development (Rick DeShon)

Read:


Do:

In 3 – 4 double-spaced pages, come up with one research idea (could be your thesis, or a project that you are currently working on) and generate the following materials:

1. A brief description of your research idea/project you are currently working on and your proposed methodology;

2. Critically evaluate your idea/project on the theoretical ground (i.e., considering how the AMJ editors would evaluate your idea and hypothesis regarding the hook, theoretical contribution, novelty); and

3. Defend your design concerning the causality issues.

4. Email your document by 5pm the day before class.
Week 3 (1/23): Organizational Metaphors (Kevin Ford)

Read:

Morgan, Chapters 2, 3, & 4 Images of Organizations


Do:

Use the “organizations as machines” matrix as a model and half the class is the complete the matrix for the “organizations as organisms” and the other half of the class is to do “organizations as brains”.

Week 4 (1/30): Organizational Theory (Kevin Ford)

Read:


Do:

Bennis in 1966 wrote a paper called “The coming death of bureaucracy” He predicted that in the next 25 to 50 years there will be an end to bureaucracy “as we know it” and the rise of new social systems to better suit the demands of industrialization. For your paper, discuss one issue that you agree with relevant to the Bennis article and one issue that you disagree with relevant to this article. Again, the paper should be no more than 2 to 3 pages double-spaced typed. Papers are due at the beginning of class.
Week 5 (2/6): Division of Labor (Rick DeShon)

Read:


Adam Smith (1776). *The wealth of Nations* (pp. 1-25).


Do:

In preparation for this class, please think about the following questions:

1. Why is division of labor and specialization so prevalent in nature and organizations?
2. Under what conditions might it be better (what does better mean here?) to be a generalist rather than a specialist?
3. Why have you chosen to specialize?
4. Under what conditions might an organism or organization overspecialize? How might you detect over specialization?
5. What are the social and organizational consequences of division of labor and specialization?

Week 6 (2/13): Teams (Rick DeShon)

Read:


Do:

Preparation: Here are four reviews of the team effectiveness literature across the decade. Be prepared to discuss the following issues. Bring notes, drawings or other artifacts to capture your perspective. All the reviews cover the same material but take a somewhat different focus. Q: What are the primary foci and guiding frameworks for each of the reviews?

Assignment: Based on the foci and frameworks, synthesize a heuristic that captures what you consider to be the best elements across the models. Prepare a powerpoint slide of your synthetic heuristic. Include notes (note pane) that document support for the features you incorporated. Be prepared to discuss your heuristic. Email the ppt slide to me a week in advance.

Week 8 (2/20): Diversity (Ann Marie Ryan)

Read:


DO:

1. PRIOR to doing the assigned readings, take 5 minutes to answer the questions in Exhibit 1.1 on p35 of Ferdman.

2. AFTER doing the reading, take 5 minutes to reflect on Harrison and Klein’s types of diversity: separation, variety, and disparity. How (if at all) are each present in the settings to which you belong? Those you study?

These questions are not to be handed in, but will serve to help engage you in our discussion.

Week 7 (2/27): Culture & Climate (Rick DeShon)

Read


Do:

Be prepared to discuss the specifics of each of the papers. Reading across them, be prepared to address the following questions.

1. Where does climate originate—is it a property of the setting, the person, both? Be prepared to explain your position and to cite the relevant papers.

2. If you were to try to design a positive climate, what five factors would you want to control? How do they influence climate? Link to the papers.

3. What is the difference between climate and culture? Succinctly describe their similarities and differences.

Week 9 (3/6): Spring Break

Week 10 (3/13): Work & Family (Ann Marie Ryan)

Read


Do:

1. For each of the articles: Generate at least one question about the article for further discussion in class. Make sure your questions are open-ended and/or thought provoking, rather than purely descriptive (e.g., who were the participants in Study 2?).

2. Do some self-reflection: In what ways do your work and non-work lives enrich each other? What does balance mean for you? How do you make decisions between work and non-work demands?

3. Last, speaking of roles and boundaries: where should we draw the line on our own involvement in employees' non-work matters?
Week 11 (3/20): Work Motivation (Rick DeShon)

Read:


Do:

Perform the following thought experiments:
1. Imagine you needed to design an autonomous robot to explore a distant planet. What would be the key motivational features in your design?
2. Next, imagine that the task of planetary exploration required multiple, interacting autonomous robots. How would you modify your design to account for the “social” aspects of planetary exploration?
3. Describe the key features in your design in 1-2 pages and send by 5pm the day before class.

Week 13 (3/27): Leadership (John Schaubroeck)

Read:


Do:

For each of the empirical articles (i.e., all except Barling et al, 2010), answer the following questions:

1. What is the main research question?
2. If there is a secondary research question, what is it?
3. What primary mechanism do the authors postulate to explain the hypothesized processes?
4. What is the one major strength of the study?
5. What is the one major weakness of the study?
6. How might someone build on the study by testing a different model that advances new understanding about the general research question? (Include a diagram of your model together with your narrative description of it.)

Answers may range from 1-2 typed sentences to one brief paragraph and are to be handed in at the class session.

Week 12 (4/3): Justice (Rick DeShon)

Read


Do:

1. One brief paragraph: How do the four dimensions of justice fit with the topics or in the settings that you research?
2. 1-2 pages: Develop your own mental “model” of how justice perceptions develop. Provide a narrative summary as well as a visual one. Be prepared to compare and discuss your map with the class.
3. 1-2 paragraphs: What are some issues to consider when measuring justice?
Week 14 (4/10): Organizational Change (Kevin Ford)

Read:

Morgan (2006). Chapter 8: Unfolding logic of change


Do:

Ferndale Case:

What metaphor or metaphors (or elements of different metaphors) make the most sense to understand what is happening at the Ferndale plant and why? What concept or concepts from the organizational change chapter has relevance to this case and why?

Week 15 (4/17): Paper Presentations (Rick DeShon)