University of St.Gallen

8,224: Organizational Behavior and Change

Subject information

ECTS-Credits: 4

Attached courses

Timetable	Language	Lecturer
7,225,1.00 Organizational Behavior and Change	**English**	**Beyes Timon**

Course information

Course prerequisites

Course content

Introduction

All areas of life – whether work, consumption, citizenship, play and sex – have in recent decades become increasingly "organized" while the world of organizations is characterized by an increasing diversity of forms and styles. Organizational practices – not in the least in the form of fashions and fads - have become multiplied as a response to the various technological breakthroughs, to rapidly changing markets and to developing societal and global conditions. It is no surprise then that Organization Studies (and its relatives, Organizational Behaviour, Organizational Theory and Organizational Science) has in the last 20 years gone through an at once creative and polemic variation of paradigms, approaches and models.

As a consequence, any current or future practitioner who engages with organizational management, leadership or entrepreneurship cannot trust to stick with one approach, one view or one model. In these waves of change and innovation as the only constant, practitioners are launched to become competent in (combining/alternating/choosing from) various tools, styles and worldviews. This course aims at students becoming comfortable with multiple approaches to organizational questions/themes and becoming competent in developing creative and reflexive scenarios that enrich rather than reduce organizational reality.

As a further consequence, practitioners, always invited to jump on the bandwagon of innovation and the latest "new new thing" and many times immersed in the imperatives of the here-and-now with a short memory and a near (-sighted) horizon, are expected to understand classic themes and ever recurring social processes (such as learning or emotion) in relationship to new organizational developments and to new societal conditions.

Learning agenda/goals

Organizational Behaviour and Change is conceived as a course for students that learn to act as well-grounded modelists, critical thinkers and creative practitioners who learn to connect and interweave conceptual frameworks and everyday social practices/problems through inventing new ideas and enriching personal repertoires. The learning agenda will be enacted through class-room participation and thus based on the engagement, imagination and alignments of students themselves. The subsequent learning goals are set as parameters of departure and follow a four C-model: classical, critical, creative and collaborative:

1. Know your *classics*. To become well-grounded in the classical organizational processes, such as efficiency, adaptation, learning, innovation, emotion, power, culture and domination. The course-handbook (Morgan 2006) will guide us in reaching this goal.

2. Sharpen yourself with the *critics*. To become familiar with the critical thinking in organization theory based on understanding the various meta-theoretical orientations in organizational theory and to understand the consequences of these philosophical and meta-theoretical positions for everyday organizational phenomena, problems and practices. The part on theorizing and its relationship to paradigmatic orientations, metaphors and models in organization theory will guide us in reaching this goal.

3. Re-invent *creatively*. To translate the mixture of basic models and paradigmatic orientations in exploring new and creative possibilities for problems related with individual, team and organizational change, based on recent insights and experiences in research and practice. We aim at performing this during the creative conference session and the learning papers.

4. Learn *collaboratively*. To contribute to the forming of a community of practice and to develop the basic skills of joint enterprise, trust building and generation of shared repertoires. We aim at practicing this during the

sessions, the group work and the creative conference.

Learning/Teaching methods

The pedagogy of the class is developed around different principles. First, the class will be considered as a process of collective learning and "organized" through a network of semi-autonomous learning groups. The participants are invited to become co-constructors of "the organizational reality of the classroom" and as such are inventive learners.

Second, the teaching approach will be varied, shifting between short introductory lectures and participatory and experiential learning, including role plays, movie-illustrations and interpretations, case learning tasks and group presentations.

Lastly, this course is enacted by choosing a dialogical classroom model. An important feature of dialogism is the art of asking questions, and thus students will be asked at several occasions to bring in questions to develop insights, discussions and to question taken for granted assumptions and models.

Course structure

Lecture-scheme

Session 1: OBC – 1 (22 September): Introduction: The kind of questions we ask

Session 2: OBC – 2 (29 September): Models, metaphors and paradigms

Session 3: OBC – 3 (06 October): Machine/Organism metaphor

Session 4: OBC – 4 (13 October): Machine/Organism metaphor – part 2

Session 5: OBC – 5 (20 October): Culture metaphor

Session 6: OBC – 6 (10 November): Psychic prisons metaphor

Session 7: OBC – 7 (17 November): Brain metaphor

Session 8: OBC – 8 (24 November): Flux metaphor

Session 9: OBC – 9 (1 December): Political systems metaphor

Session 10: OBC – 10 (8 December): Ugly faces metaphor

Session 11-12: OBC: 11 (15 December): Change conference; *double session (08-12)*

Sessions take place in room 10-070.

Course literature

Literature in relation to sessions

Firstly, the text-book readings are from Gareth Morgan's "Images of Organization" (Thousand Oaks et al: Sage, 2006). Secondly, the meta-theoretical reading is based on a Deetz- (1996) and Morgan- (1980) article. Thirdly, the research-based readings on individual, team and/or organizational change are to be collected by the learning teams. The literature is ordered according to expected preparations for sessions.

Session 1:

- Chapter 1, Morgan

Session 2:

Deetz, S. 1996. Describing differences in approaches to organization science: Rethinking Burrell and Morgan and their legacy. *Organization Science*, 7, 2, 191-207.

Morgan, G. 1980. Paradigms, metaphors, and puzzle solving in organization theory. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 25, 4, 605-622.

Session 3 and 4:

- Chapter, 2 and 3, Morgan

Session 5:

- Chapter 5, Morgan

Session 6:

- Chapter 7, Morgan

Session 7 :

- Chapter 4, Morgan

Session 8 :

- Chapter 8, Morgan

Session 9 :

- Chapter 6, Morgan

Session 10 :

- Chapter 9, Morgan

Session 11/12: Change Conference

- Preparatory literature search conducted by groups

Course additional information

Requirements

The course requirement consists of group work during the semester (50 %) and a written (individual) exam (50%). The class consists of learning groups that work on a learning paper that discusses a problem formulation concerning a specific theme with regard to individual, team and/or organizational change. The analysis is based on working with a critical mix of metaphorical perspectives (to explain the change process), a literature search of recent articles (that support the analysis) and on a critical perspectivation (that documents how and reflects on how certain insights have been constructed).

In connection to change projects (as reported in the papers), learning groups present their main insights during the change conference in a compact and creative form. Each group prepares an interactive exhibition corner that informatively, engagingly and originally documents the learnings of their group that can open up for a conversation with other class participants. This event should also help to get an overview of the different learnings that the class has generated and integrate the learnings on change processes of the various teams.

Students are required to come prepared to class, engage with ad-hoc group work (which will not be formally graded) and individual reflection. However, failure in complying with these tasks can be sanctioned in the final grading.

Specific requirements of paper and deadlines will be handed out during class.

Contact

timon.beyes@unisg.ch

Information about the Examination

Examination type
decentral - Presentation (in groups) (50%)
Examination aids
no regulation necessary
No rules for examination aids are required for this examination.

- For written examinations at home (term paper), courses without credits, etc., no specific rules for examination aids are required.
- The regulations of the University of St. Gallen and the rules of academic work (sources and aids must always be identified) are applicable in a subsidiary fashion.
- All written work must be accompanied by a declaration of authorship.

Question language: **English**
Answer language: **English**

central - Written examination (50%, 60 mins.)
Examination aids
Closed Book
The following rules apply to all examinations irrespective of requirements and use:

- A simple pocket calculator is admissible (for the definition of simple pocket calculators incapable of communication, cf. general regulations concerning examination aids of 14 December 2010 and note the "Pocket calculators" fact sheet). Any other EDP and electronic means of communication such as notebooks, PDAs and mobile telephones, etc., are inadmissible.
- A bilingual dictionary (without handwritten notes) may be used if the examination questions and/or answers are not in the candidate's native language. Electronic dictionaries are inadmissible.
- The procurement of these examination aids is exclusively the students' responsibility.
- No other examination aids are admissible.

Question language: **English**
Answer language: **English**

1. The students have to be familiar with the variety of metaphors in organizational theory and understand the consequences of these philosophical and meta-theoretical positions for everyday organizational phenomena, problems and practices.

2. The students have to be well-grounded in the classical organizational processes, such as efficiency, adaptation, learning, innovation, emotion, power, culture and domination

3. The students should be able to explore, interpret and understand the consequences of the metaphoric perspectives for the theory and practice of organizational change.

Exam-relevant literature

Literature on Organizational Behavior

- Morgan, G. 2006. Images of Organization, Sage (all chapters)

- Deetz, S. 1996. Describing differences in approaches to organization science: Rethinking Burrell and Morgan and their legacy. Organization Science, 7, 2, 191-207.

- Morgan, G. 1980. Paradigms, metaphors, and puzzle solving in organization theory. Administrative Science Quarterly, 25, 4, 605-622.

- The various cases and illustrations which have been applied during the lectures.

Literature on Change:

The students have to know the contents and literature of their own group paper and well as the contents of three other group papers on change processes.

Attention please:

Wir machen Sie darauf aufmerksam, dass dieses Merkblatt verbindlich ist und vor anderen Informationen wie persönlichen Datenbanken der Dozenten/-innen, Angaben in den Vorlesungen etc. unbedingt den Vorrang hat.