MNGT 7970 Doctoral Seminar in Management - Advanced Organizational Behavior

Dr. Kevin Mossholder
Office: 412 Lowder Building, 844-6529
Office Hours: 2:00-5:00 pm Wednesday, or by appointment
E-mail: kmossh@auburn.edu

Time and Location: Thursday 2-4:30, Lowder 402

Grading system: Class deliverables and participation - 50%; Major paper - 50%
A 100 - 90; B 89 - 80; C 79 - 70; D 69 - 60; F 59 - 0

Class deliverables include topic and discussion leader roles, written literature critiques, participation in class discussion, and oral presentations.

Objectives:
1. To further your understanding of theory and research of organizational behavior (OB).
2. To develop a knowledge framework in OB that will contribute to your skill as an organizational scientist.
3. To develop skills in critically reading and evaluating scholarly works.
4. To develop communication skills important for professional endeavors.

Readings: Required articles are taken from various journals; most are available in full text pdf-format from available electronic resources.

Structure: This course offers an introduction to established and emerging trends, theory, and research within organizational behavior domain. Traditionally, scholars have taken an individual level focus in examining organizational behavior. However, contemporary perspectives have widened this lens to offer a more complete and thorough understanding of the role of individuals in organizational life and the effects of context on these relationships. In particular, current perspectives seek to explore and understand the behaviors, thoughts and emotions of individuals within the context of work relationships, teams, and organizational settings. Although still focusing on the individual, the scholars have acknowledged that individuals are nested within relationships and groups which also affect individual attitudes and behaviors. Accordingly, this seminar will highlight interconnections, exchanges, and relations among individuals, and outcomes that transpire as a result.

It is generally helpful for students to have taken graduate courses in statistics and research methodology. Also, as the second in a two part organizational behavior series, it presumes a working knowledge of dispositional (e.g., personality), cognitive (e.g., sensemaking), and attitudinal (e.g., job satisfaction) research within the domain. However, depending on one’s background, participation in the first course in the series is not absolutely necessary.

As with any doctoral seminar, you need to attend class regularly, read the articles, and be prepared to discuss the articles in class. Readings should be well digested prior to class so that seminar participants are capable of freely discussing them without constantly referring to them.
Participation reflects not only your own ideas and insights, but also the degree to which you listen and offer insights on other students’ comments and ideas.

**COOPERATIVE LEARNING**

To master the OB literature, you must conceptually integrate the assigned readings. To facilitate this, a variety of cooperative learning techniques will be employed over the course of the semester. Cooperative learning involves the instructional use of peer presentations, dyadic interactions, and small group activities so that students can work together to enhance their own and each other’s learning. The specific techniques to be employed in this seminar are summarized below.

**Class processes.** Because this is a doctoral seminar, a substantial part of the learning occurs as part of a lively class discussion. To have a good and productive discussion, it’s essential that you read and give substantial thought to the assigned articles and come to class with some key points you intend to make. That is, you should come to class prepared to pose questions, debate, defend, integrate, propose, apply, etc. Valuable contributions are: (a) relevant, (b) unique, and (c) advance the discussion. This is a better approach than simply highlighting and underlining material.

My role is to serve as a discussion catalyst or facilitator. I may provide brief overviews of topic areas to provide antecedent perspective or contextual background, and pose questions to augment those offered by topic and article experts. You will take turns playing two critical roles designed to enhance the cooperative learning experience: (a) topic expert, and (b) article expert. There are two purposes for these assignments: (a) to enhance your skill at organizing and presenting academic information to a group of your peers; and (b) to allow you to explore in depth a topic that interests you.

**Topic expert.** As topic expert, you will have an opportunity to lead the class discussion on topics we will cover (see the syllabus below). Although all students are responsible for reading the assigned material, the topic expert is expected to have also completed additional reading on his or her topic. Such reading may involve articles listed as suggested readings, or other material that you select. In general, your “presentation” will involve providing an overview of the topic and then leading the group through a discussion of what you consider to be the key questions, contributions, limitations, and directions for future research. Remember, *your role is to lead a discussion of the topic, not provide a lecture.* Thus, you may want to consider:

1. What are the issues, puzzles, dilemmas and conundrums raised in this set of readings?
2. What ideas did you find to be the most exciting or generative? Why? How might you use these ideas in your work?
3. In what ways do the readings in this session support, build on or contradict one another? What is the connection between the readings for this topic and others in the course?
4. Are there burning research questions that need answering? Are there methodological issues to face in answering these questions?
Topic experts may find some of the following techniques useful in facilitating interactive discussions:

**Topical debates.** For some topics areas (e.g., where disagreements or divisive issues exist), you could develop pro or con positions regarding the topic being discussed. Suggested readings and other sources could be used to support for their position. Debates could bring out varying positions and integrate divergent views. Alternatively, someone could play the role of devil’s advocate vis-à-vis for certain perspectives within a particular topic.

**Comparison tables.** For some areas (e.g., leadership), students could formulate tables for comparing key theories. Such tables could be focal point of discussion.

**Concept maps.** Students may also generate concept maps which depict relations among focal constructs. Figures containing key concepts may be arranged to show such phenomena as lineage, nesting, branching, etc. Although conceptual maps should be based in the substance of theoretical domains, they may also include extensions and insights of their developers.

**Article expert.** In this role, you circulate in advance of the class one to two page abstract/critique of the article to which you have been assigned. You should also be prepared to field questions and lead a discussion of the article. The abstracts can contribute to your depth of knowledge regarding course concepts, and the empirical methods used in this area. As applicable, the abstract should include: a) article title in AOM or APA style; b) theoretical foundations, research questions or hypotheses; c) key research methods and analyses; and d) major findings and contributions. You should also include intriguing or puzzling issues, strengths and weakness of the article, ideas for future research and other points of interest.

**MAJOR PAPER**

Students will be required to prepare a major paper during the semester. A paper topic should be selected that is congruent with course content or related topics. It is okay if you want to pursue an OB stream not specifically addressed by the articles (e.g., creativity, culture). However, care must be taken not to select topics germane to content more appropriately covered in other courses (e.g., policy/strategy, employee compensation). The ties with OB must be clear, and all topics must be approved regarding acceptability within the framework of this course. Papers must be written explicitly for this course. Papers that are revised or modified from other courses will not be accepted.

Major papers generally fall into two categories, review and research proposal. In the review category, emphasis is placed on describing the state of research in a particular area, proposing new perspectives or structures, and generating broad research directions or propositions. This paper should be more than a description of research studies; it should synthesize trends and suggest what needs to be done in the future. It would follow after reviews found in journals like *Academy of Management Review* or *Journal of Management*. In the research proposal category, emphasis is on producing a more focused, theoretically driven proposal. The proposal would have characteristics similar to those found in journals like *Academy of Management Journal* or *Journal of Applied Psychology*. If you identify a topic for which data is available, you may
choose to produce an actual manuscript, subject to the same format constraints as the research proposal.

Regardless of the type chosen, the paper should be geared toward presentation at a suitable national or regional conference. You should prepare a one or two page summary of your paper topic, including the a) title, b) research question, substantive outline, or description of content that will be included, and c) likely presentation/publication outlet. You may have a topic in mind already. If not, you should start as soon as possible to identify and formulate a plan for the paper. You should okay the topic with me before formally working on your outline. An outline of the paper is due as specified on the syllabus, but can always be submitted earlier. You have some flexibility regarding changes to your formal outline, but check with me before making major changes. Paper outlines and papers are due as noted below. Both hard and electronic copies should be submitted along with hard and electronic copies of a two page (maximum) synopsis.

**Special Accommodations:** Any student needing special accommodations should contact me to discuss an “Accommodations Memo” as soon as possible. If you do not have an accommodation memo but need special accommodations, contact the Program for Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 334-844-5943 (Voice T/O)

**Academic Dishonesty:** All portions of the Auburn University Honesty Code (Title XII) found in the *Tiger Cub* will apply to this class. Academic dishonesty is an offense that will be reported to the Academic Honesty Committee per the process described in the *Tiger Cub.*
### Tentative Topic Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic Area (Topic Area Number)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 09</td>
<td>Introduction and organizational session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Theory building and research in OB (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Individuals and interconnections (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Individuals and interconnections (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 06</td>
<td>Social exchange and attachment (3)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Social exchange and attachment (3)</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Social exchange and attachment (3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Outline for paper due</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Justice, OCB, and deviance dynamics (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 06</td>
<td>Justice, OCB, and deviance dynamics (4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Justice, OCB, and deviance dynamics (4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Influence and trust (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 03</td>
<td>Influence and trust (5)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Influence and trust (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Group and team considerations (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Group and team considerations (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Finals week: Paper presentations (TBA); papers due day after presentations</td>
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**Topic Area 1: Theory building and research in OB**

**Required readings**


**Suggested readings**


**Topic Area 2:** Individuals and interconnections

**Required readings**


**Suggested readings**

Kilduff, M., & Brass, D. J. (2010). Organizational social network research: Core ideas and key debates. *Academy of Management Annals, 4*, 317-357.

**Topic Area 3:** Social exchange and attachment

**Required readings**


**Suggested readings**


**Topic Area 4:** Justice, OCB, and deviance dynamics

**Required readings**

**ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE**


**OCB and deviance**


**Suggested readings**

Organizational justice, OCB, and deviance


**Topic Area 5: Influence and trust**

**Influence processes**


**Trust processes**


**Suggested readings**

**INFLUENCE PROCESSES**


**TRUST**


**Topic Area 6:** Group and team considerations

**Required readings**


**Suggested readings**