

## DOCTORAL COURSE SYLLABUS

### GENERAL INFORMATION

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#### **Course title: Multilevel Issues in Management & Organization (complete & consultation variants)**

Academic year: 2023-2024

Code: MIMO 2023-2024

Lecturers: prof. dr. Robert Kaše, prof. dr. Miha Škerlavaj

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

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*“In the field of physics, one of the biggest challenges and critical issues is how to integrate the laws that explain the behavior of small objects (i.e., quantum theory) with the laws that explain the behavior of large objects (e.g., relativity theory; Padmanabhan, 2006). Such integration would lead to a “grand relativistic quantum field theory.” The field of management faces a similar challenge; that is, how to integrate theories that explain phenomena at the individual or group level of analysis (e.g., goal setting) with theories that explain phenomena at the organizational level of analysis (e.g., resource-based view of the firm) to create a “grand organization and management theory.” (Aguinis et al., 2001, p. 396).*

Without the ambition to teach students how to develop a “grand organization and management theory” this course acknowledges that most of the phenomena in organizations unfold across levels. Although by tradition management and organization scholars identify themselves as either “micro” or “macro”, there have been increasingly louder calls for spanning the so called “micro-macro” divide. At the moment, management and organization scholarship is still not fully integrated due to the complexity and numerous challenges of developing theory and doing research across levels. However, over the last two decades acknowledging and addressing cross-level issues has increasingly become a necessity of all high-quality conceptual or empirical research in the field.

This means that a researcher today almost has no other choice but to integrate theories across different levels (this usually includes adopting an interdisciplinary perspective and going beyond the horizon of theories taught during their basic training) along with gathering and analyzing complex multilevel data. The specialization and sophistication of both macro and micro streams in management and organization research brought the discipline into a situation, where the low hanging fruit in terms of scientific contribution has already been picked and where extant contributions establish that further understanding of phenomena in organizations and producing useful evidence-based advice for practice necessitates multilevel theory and research. At the same time, the now mature hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), multilevel SEM (MSEM) and some other techniques provided the analytical repertoire to do empirical research and facilitated a momentum of multilevel studies in top management and organization journals. This course is organized in the spirit of the idea that multilevel thinking is foundational for organizational scientists and that we need to develop a community of scholars, who can theorize and study multilevel aspects of organizations (Rousseau, 2011).

Therefore, the purpose of the course is to develop young scholars’ capacity for understanding, using and developing multilevel theory in management and organization. Specifically, we aim to:

- improve awareness of PhD students for multilevel theory and research,
- decrease the possibility of flawed single-level research designs addressing phenomena in management and organization,
- motivate PhD students to integrate multilevel aspects in their research designs,
- develop understanding and skills for developing multilevel theory and models,
- facilitate smoother development of theoretically sound empirical multilevel models,
- facilitate and support multilevel interdisciplinary research.

Apart from attaining these goals the course will also continue to develop skills for effective scholarly communication; such as presenting and reviewing an article, communicating constructive criticism, and developing and defending arguments.

The **complete version** of the course is taught as a combination of interactive introductory lecture with preassigned readings, participatory seminar sessions (three to four sessions) with preassigned readings and a simulation of a scholarly conference, where students present and discuss their own topics using the multilevel lens. Due to the more demanding literature content the papers will be organized by substantive areas (3-4 topical areas) to provide contextualization of key ideas and a steeper learning curve of participants.

The **consultation version** of the course is taught as a combination of interactive introductory lecture with preassigned readings, individual sessions with students and a seminar, where multilevel research designs are presented and discussed.

## **COURSE CONTENTS & SCHEDULE**

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### **Theoretical origins and principles of multilevel research in management and organization**

- Multilevel approach to theory and research in organizations
- The micro-macro divide in management and organization
- The development of the multilevel paradigm in management and organization
- The Coleman bathtub and microfoundations of social theory
- Towards multilevel research design

**Topical multilevel research area seminars** (adjusted to the current student cohort)

**Theory development & research designs through the lens of multilevel paradigm**

## **KEY LITERATURE (extensive reading list available at the start of the course)**

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Coleman, J. S. (1990). *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Humphrey, S. E., & LeBreton, J. M. (2019). *The handbook of multilevel theory, measurement, and analysis* (pp. ix-637). American Psychological Association.

Kozlowski, S. W. J., & Klein, K. J. (2000). A multilevel approach to theory and research in organizations: Contextual, temporal, and emergent processes. In K. J. Klein & S. W. J. Kozlowski (Eds.), *Multilevel theory, research, and methods in organizations: Foundations, extensions, and new directions*. (Vol. xxix, 605 pp. , pp. 3-90). San Francisco, CA, US: Jossey-Bass.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND WORKFLOW**

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### **Complete variant**

**Preparation.** Students are required to read all the assigned materials thoroughly. They will be asked to do **write-ups** before coming to seminar and actively participate in the discussions.

**Workflow during the seminars.** Each of the students will have the opportunity and obligation to present a certain assigned article and lead discussion in one of the predetermined facilitation methods (world café and group discussions, Socratic debate etc.).

Each of the students assigned to present a certain paper using a predetermined technique is responsible for both content as well as process aspects of a session. All of the others are expected to take an active role and will be graded also on this behalf.

**The final test.** For the closed-door test, students will be assigned a recent multilevel paper and will have 48 hours to read it. After that, there will be a closed-door exam (in duration of 90 minutes) with several essay questions about the paper.

Composition of the final grade:

- Presentation and leading discussion of a chosen article / active participation in discussion: 40%
- Write-ups: 40%
- Final test: 20%

**Grading:** commended (90%+), pass (60%+), and fail (below 60%).

### **Consultation variant**

**Preparation for interactive lecture.** Students are required to read all the assigned materials thoroughly and prepare questions for an interactive discussion. Questions are to be submitted to instructors and all participants by TBA.

**Preparation for individual session with instructors.** You will have the opportunity to discuss your research proposal with the instructors individually. Please make sure that you are prepared for the meeting. The topics of the meeting will include (but are not limited to):

1. Discuss your literature review of contributions using multilevel theory or research design in the area of your PhD project.
2. Prepare for discussing your ideas for project write-up with instructors.

### **Project research proposal write-up “My research design through the lens of multilevel paradigm”**

The purpose of this final project is to write 10-page research design proposal providing overview of the multilevel literature relevant to your PhD topic and/or thoughts on methodological issue around it. The key question which you should answer in your proposal is how multilevel literature can inform my research. It might include the following sections:

- 1) Review of existing theoretical and empirical literature
- 2) Multilevel view of (core) construct(s) of your doctoral research project

- 3) Research design consistent with the multilevel paradigm
- 4) Implications for empirical strategy (if you used multilevel paradigm)
- 5) Discussion – value added of the multilevel paradigm for my research project

The write-up should be submitted to instructors by TBA.

**Preparing a review of your colleague's research proposal.** Reviewing is a very important activity for you as a member of any research community as well as a learning opportunity. This course will provide you with the opportunity to review your colleagues' work and get feedback on your review. You will be asked to read your colleagues' project proposals and prepare written reviews for 2 of your colleagues.

**In the review you should address the following questions:**

- 1) Has all of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature for the project been considered?
- 2) Has the author utilized the multilevel approach in an appropriate way?
- 3) Is author's discussion of the (core) constructs consistent with the multilevel paradigm?
- 4) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed multilevel research project?
- 5) What are the main challenges in empirical implementation of the project?
- 6) Which opportunities do you see for improvement of the proposed project?

**Some general guidelines for reviewing (an excerpt from AMR's guidelines):**

- **Be developmental and polite.** Recognize the paper's strengths as well as areas for improvement. Try to find the kernels of good ideas, even if they are hidden in the manuscript, in an effort to provide authors direction regarding those ideas with the most promise. Helping to develop others' ideas can be a significant contribution to our field. As a way to provide personal and friendly reviews, please try to use "you" rather than "the author's paper" in the text of the review.
- **Be specific and number your points.** Only with specificity will authors be able to recognize and potentially overcome the weaknesses you see. Numbering your comments and providing some indication of how significant each comment is in relation to the others is helpful for both the action editor and the authors.
- **Help point the authors in the direction of other relevant work.** If you believe there is other work the authors will find helpful to substantiate the manuscript, please provide that direction in your review. You need not provide a full reference (although authors will appreciate it if you do), but please provide author names and year of publication. It is not enough to say there is work the authors need to consider, for example, without providing some examples. This is particularly important when referring authors to work outside management for consideration.

**Composition of the final grade:**

- Presentation of the final project: 70%
- Reviews: 20% (10% each)
- Participation / interaction: 10%

**Grading:** pass (60%+), and fail (below 60%).