Organizational Theory Foundations of High-Impact HRIR

Course Instructor

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Teaching Assistant

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Zoom Office Hours: Wed 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM and by appointment

Course Description, Goals, & Objectives

Course Description
Managers face the challenge of managing effectively in a rapidly changing environment that has no geographic boundaries. They need to figure out how to adjust and respond to:

- Rapid technological change
- Increased complexity in the market
- Trade wars and disrupted supply chains
- Climate change and the environment
- Rising diversity in the workplace and society
- Uncertain global environment
• Demands for ethical management and corporate social responsibility

• A global pandemic, the resulting reorganization of work
  - Work is changing, WFH is becoming a norm
  - “Let’s meet” means something else
  - Will need to reconfigure
  - How work is organized
  - How decision-making is allocated
  - How individual and group outcomes are measured and workers monitored
  - How workers in different roles are compensated and incentivized

Organization theory is the study of the structure, behavior, and performance of organizations. In the notes for this course, I blend contributions from several disciplines to develop principles that govern the design of effective organization structure. Organization design consists of the allocation of decision-making rights to employees at different levels and parts of the organization, the choice of compensation and incentive schemes, the selection of monitoring, supervision and accountability systems for employees at all levels, from line workers to heads of divisions, and several supporting practices such as recruiting, training and promotion schemes. The design of an organization’s structure or architecture thus includes the choice of teams (functional, ad hoc, or none), the type of incentives, performance evaluation systems, internal labor markets, the degree of vertical integration and outsourcing, and much more. These elements or components of organization design have to be related to each other in a coherent fashion and be consistent with the internal and external environment of an organization.

**Course Objectives**

*The principal goal of this course is to acquire a fundamental understanding of what managers can do to make organizations gain and sustain competitive advantage through organizational design.*

The course introduces the complex relationship between an organization’s design (architecture/structure), behavior, and performance. It emphasizes the dependence of this relationship on company strategy, technology, size, and other contingencies. The course connects and integrates knowledge from related courses. It urges students to think critically about the organization in its entirety, relating different functions to the overall strategy of the organization and emphasizing the role of human resources.

We will study theoretical principles, which will be applied to design at the micro or workplace/unit level as well as to the macro or organization level.

Each class will consist of approximately 50% lecture; the rest of the time will be spent on general discussion and group and individual exercises. **Please read the materials in advance** – this is a condition for learning in this class.
Data Practices

To make this class more accessible to all enrolled students, we intend to record all class lectures and discussions. Since your audio/video may be part of those recordings we are informing you. Along with the instructor and teaching assistants, these recordings will be shared with only the students enrolled in the class during this semester, in accordance with FERPA regulations.

Course Meeting Information

**Time:** Wed 08:00 AM - 11:00 AM

**Place:** On Zoom

Readings

The principal readings will consist of lecture notes I wrote for this course, available on Canvas.

Assignments & Grading

**Case studies/audit papers**

Material studied in the course will be applied to the analysis of actual companies. Each group will select a company and will write a paper as well as present a summary in class. You should choose a company for which you can get access to information regarding key elements of its organization design.

The papers should be written as a professional report, using proper and clear prose. Although some groups may divide responsibility for different parts of the paper, the parts should be well integrated and well written. The entire group is responsible for the entire paper. Be sure to document the sources of information in your paper (i.e., including references). The papers should be double-spaced, using 12-point pitch.

1) Micro (unit/workplace) level – about 10 pages

   A. Choose a unit of the company (department, division)
   B. Describe the technology of production: how the main product/service is made
   C. Characterize the task environment of core employees
   D. Identify who makes decisions, and what kind of decisions (by the role of employee)
   E. Describe the compensation, incentives, and rewards for different types of employees
   F. Describe the monitoring, supervision, and performance evaluation systems
   G. Characterize the internal labor markets
2) Macro organization level – about 10 pages

   A. Hierarchy (tiers and span of control) and centralization/decentralization of decision-making
   B. Unit grouping and divisionalization
   C. Profit, cost and other accountability centers
   D. Vertical integration and outsourcing

3) Critical examinations of organization design – about 3 pages

   A. Is the design consistent with key contingencies?
   B. Is the design coherent?
   C. How would you improve the existing design?

**Presentations**

Each group will present the paper in class (The 10-minute presentation followed by 5 minutes of Q&A). The grade for the presentation will be the same for all group members.

At the end of the course, you will have an opportunity to evaluate the other members of your group for their contributions to the group’s work.

**Problem Set Assignment**

A problem set will be assigned on Feb 10 (after class), due by 11:59 PM Feb 16.

**Final Exam**

Timed comprehensive, True/False, multiple-choice questions, and brief essays.

**Course Grading (100 points)**

- Your Company: paper 30 points, presentation 10 points
- Problem set assignment 10 points
- Final exam 40 points
- Class attendance, class participation, and professionalism 5 points
- Group members’ evaluation 5 points

**Grading Scale**

> 95 A
90-94 A-
87-89 B+
84-86 B
80-83 B-
77-79 C+
Incomplete

Click [here](http://onestop.umn.edu/grades_and_transcripts/grades/incompletes.html) for the University of Minnesota’s policy on awarding incomplete (I) grade.

Course schedule

Course outline and tentative schedule (Updated version will be posted on Canvas)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W1: 1/20</td>
<td>Introduction; Framework for analyzing organizations; Organizational Goal Setting</td>
<td>Lecture Notes: Sec I, II, &amp; III</td>
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<td>W2: 1/27</td>
<td>Agency-managerial (AM) and technical-administrative (TA); Organization Design/Structure/Architecture</td>
<td>Lecture Notes: Sec IV &amp; V</td>
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<td>W3: 2/3</td>
<td>Guest Speaker: Nick Christense (Polaris)</td>
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<td>W4: 2/10</td>
<td>Micro (unit) level design; Macro (organization) level design</td>
<td>Lecture Notes: Sec VI</td>
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<td>W5: 2/17</td>
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<td>W6: 2/24</td>
<td>Macro (organization) level design</td>
<td>Lecture Notes: Sec VII</td>
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<td>W7: 3/3</td>
<td><strong>Your Company Presentation on 3/3</strong></td>
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Carlson Course Grading Policy

Carlson School uses a grading policy based upon a class median aggregate GPA. Learn more about the [Carlson Course Grading Policy](https://z.umn.edu/policy-carlson_graduate_grading).

Carlson & University Policies

**Student Academic Misconduct and Scholastic Dishonesty**
The Carlson School defines academic misconduct as any act by a student that misrepresents the student's own academic work or that compromises the academic work of another. Scholastic misconduct includes (but is not limited to) cheating on assignments or examinations, plagiarizing, i.e., misrepresenting as one's own work any work done by another, submitting the same paper, or substantially similar papers, to meet the requirement of more than one course without the approval and consent of the instructors concerned, or sabotaging another's work. Within this general definition, however, instructors determine what constitutes academic misconduct in the courses they teach. Students found guilty of academic misconduct face penalties ranging from lowering of the course grade or awarding a grade of F or N for the entire course, to suspension from the University.

Review the Student Conduct Code (https://z.umn.edu/policy-carlson_student_conduct_code) and Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website (https://z.umn.edu/student_conduct_academic_integrity).

If you are interested in learning more about how to cite sources and avoid plagiarism, U of M libraries offers online tutorials and tools related to citations (https://z.umn.edu/research_citation_tools). You can also visit the Center for Writing (https://z.umn.edu/center_for_writing) for additional assistance.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Minnesota is committed to providing all students equal access to learning opportunities.

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. Students registered with the DRC, who have a letter requesting accommodations, are encouraged to contact the instructor early in the semester. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g. psychiatric, attention, learning, vision, hearing, physical, or systemic), are invited to contact the DRC for a confidential discussion at 612-626-1333 (V/TTY) or at drc@umn.edu (mailto:drc@umn.edu). Additional information is available on the Disability Resource Center website (https://z.umn.edu/disability_resource_center).

Title IX

Title IX (https://z.umn.edu/title_IX_process) prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and relationship violence, in education.

Students with Mental Health and Stress Management

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. Learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services (https://z.umn.edu/mental_health_services), available on campus.
Student Writing Support

As a student, you may experience challenges in your writing. The University of Minnesota has a student writing support resource (https://z.umn.edu/student_writing_support) to help with your writing.

Additional University Policies

2. Scholastic Dishonesty (see Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code (https://z.umn.edu/policy-student_conduct_code) and the Administrative Policy: Teaching and Learning: Instructor and Unit Responsibilities: Twin Cities, Morris, Rochester (https://z.umn.edu/policy-instructor_unit_responsibilities)).
7. Board of Regents Policy: Disability Services (https://z.umn.edu/policy-disability_services)

Course Summary:

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<td>Wed Jan 20, 2021</td>
<td>HRIR 6401 (001) Organizational Theory Foundations of High-Impact HRIR (Spring 2021) (<a href="https://canvas.umn.edu/calendar?event_id=501618&amp;include_contexts=course_221721">https://canvas.umn.edu/calendar?event_id=501618&amp;include_contexts=course_221721</a>)</td>
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<td>Tue Mar 2, 2021</td>
<td>Paper Your Company Sec 2 &amp; 3 <a href="https://canvas.umn.edu/courses/221721/assignments/1614676">link</a></td>
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