



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2010/2011

DRE 6005 The Theory and Practice of Conducting Process Research in Organisational Settings

Programme

Leadership and Organization

Responsible for the course

Department

Department of Leadership and Organizational Behaviour

Term

According to study plan

ECTS Credits

6

Language of instruction

English

Introduction

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an overview of the key theoretical and practical challenges of conducting process research in organisational settings. A process here is taken to mean "a sequence of individual and collective events, actions and activities unfolding over time in context". Pettigrew (1997:338). The organisational processes explored in the course include decision making, change, innovation and strategy making.

The course readings will be organised around the research practices and writing of a limited number of key process scholars. The scholars are Robert Burgelman, Kathy Eisenhardt, Ann Langley, Henry Mintzberg, Andrew Pettigrew and Andrew Van de Ven. Since a process analysis needs to deal with past, present and future time, the course will "give time for time". We will explore the challenges of analysing processes in real time and retrospective time and the combination of the two. One day in the course will be devoted to the power of the historical perspective and method. In that day we will benefit from the experience of two members of the Business History group at BI, Associate Professor Sverre Christensen and Dr Eirinn Larsen.

Learning outcome

At the end of the course students will be in a better position to appreciate:

1. The varieties of research practice now available in process scholarship. Practice will include the meaning and significance of key terms such as process and process analysis, the role of temporality in social science, and the relationship between context and action in studying core organisational processes.
2. The power of diachronic analysis and the policy significance of knowing how things happen and not just what is happening.
3. The data collection and data analysis challenges in process work.
4. The challenges of holism and analysing phenomena across multiple levels of analysis.
5. The potential of the historical perspective and method for analysing organisational processes.
6. And finally, the special challenges of writing and publishing for process scholars.

Prerequisites

Admission to a PhD programme is a general requirement for participation in PhD courses at BI Norwegian School of Management.

External candidates are kindly asked to attach confirmation of admission to a PhD programme when signing up for a course with the doctoral administration.

Students will not be permitted to "sit in" on this course. Active participation will be critical to the educational experience and all enrolled students must engage in the sequence of classroom presentations and end of course assignment.

Compulsory reading

Recommended reading

Course outline

The course consists of six sessions each of 5 hours each.

- Session 1: What is process and what is a processual analysis?
- Session 2: The Pettigrew et al approach to process scholarship
- Session 3: The process scholarship of Ann Langley and Henry Mintzberg
- Session 4: The historical perspective and method
- Session 5: The process scholarship of Robert Burgelman and Andrew Van de Ven
- Session 6: The process scholarship of Kathy Eisenhardt. Review, synthesis and critique

To a large extent, the value of this course will depend on the level and quality of student preparation and participation in classroom discussion.

Course credit will be given based upon the quality of student class presentation and participation (30%), and a course paper prepared after the course (70%) (See below).

Computer-based tools

Learning process and workload

For each session a limited number of assigned readings are indicated. Each participant is expected to read all the required reading prior to each session and to be able to comment upon them during the discussion. Additional articles may be added or substituted during the course.

During each session two or three students will offer powerpoint presentations around the essential readings for that week. The purpose of the presentation is:

- (a) To explain the main ideas and empirical results in the readings.
- (b) To discuss how the readings contribute to the appreciation of process scholarship, and
- (c) To discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the readings.

The presentations should be no more than 15 minutes. The presentations will be graded on whether the student has understood the essence of the readings, and how effectively the student fulfils the three purposes of the presentations mentioned above.

30% of the course grade will be allocated based on student presentation and discussion in the 6 sessions.

Lectures and seminars 30 hours
Reading and seminar preparation 100 hours
Writing course paper 45 hours
Total 175 hours

Examination

Students will write a 4,000 – 5,000 word paper. The purpose of the paper is to develop a research idea based on the literature in the course and to explore the implications of this idea. Full guidance on the aims, objectives and grading criteria for the paper will be provided by the course lecturer in the first session of the course.

The course assignment is due according to the deadline set in the PhD handbook. The paper should be original work completed specifically for the course.

Course credit will be given based upon the quality of student class presentation and participation (30%), and a course paper prepared after the course (70%)

The grade is given as pass or fail. All parts of the evaluation need to be passed in order to get a grade in the course.

Examination code(s)

DRE6XXX1 accounts for 100% of the final grade

Examination support materials

Re-sit examination

Next time the course is offered.

Additional information

Honour Code

Academic honesty and trust are important to all of us as individuals, and represent values that are encouraged and promoted by the honour code system. This is a most significant university tradition. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the ideals of the honour code system, to which the faculty are also deeply committed.

Any violation of the honour code will be dealt with in accordance with BI's procedures for cheating. These issues are a serious matter to everyone associated with the programs at BI and are at the heart of the honor code and academy integrity. If you have any questions about your responsibilities under the honour code, please ask.