Course Overview

The term organizational behavior is meant to reflect both a macro emphasis on organizations and a micro emphasis on individual behavior. Yet, OB research has fulfilled the promise of a multilevel approach to organization studies unevenly. As Lyman Porter (1996) noted in the fortieth-anniversary issue of Administrative Science Quarterly, “A continuing and frequently stated challenge that we ought to keep trying to meet is to forge a stronger link between the macro and micro parts of the field. This argues for giving more attention to what have been labeled meso phenomena and also to research attempts to show how individual and group actions can affect organizational actions, as well as vice versa. A focus on only the macro side or only the micro side of the organizational studies coin, as it were, will keep giving us an incomplete and ultimately unsatisfying picture.” Encouragingly, since 1996, the number of multilevel studies in organizational journals has sensibly increased, providing organizational scholars with a more solid theoretical and empirical foundation to conduct multilevel OB research.

Leveraging this foundation, this course introduces you to the study of meso OB, defined as the simultaneous study of multiple levels of organizational behavior. You will learn about multilevel theory and tools and read both classic and recent empirical research and theory on topics spanning multiple levels, such as social identity, organizational culture and climate, power, social networks, and organizational change. Building on this body of work, you will develop your own meso research proposal and present it to the class at the end of the semester. Thus, the course aims to help you:
• To gain an understanding of some of the central concepts and tools in meso organizational behavior research.
• To gain exposure to a number of areas of meso OB research and begin a process of becoming familiar with multilevel theory and empirical strategies.
• To begin to identify areas of particular interest to you and to start thinking about how a meso OB perspective might be suitable to your research questions.
• To begin to develop your own point of view on the field of OB through a meso lens.

Assessment

There will be two components of your final grade:

1. Class participation: 40%
2. Research Proposal: 60%

Class Participation: Prior to each class, you must have thoroughly studied the assigned readings. My expectation of thorough preparation is high. I also encourage you to discuss the readings with classmates prior to class. This will facilitate high quality discussions in class. You are expected to actively participate in each class. We will use class time to draw out themes and key ideas from the readings, to discuss the contributions, strengths and weaknesses of the research, to consider the emerging general direction of the area, and to identify promising future directions for research.

At the beginning of each session, we will randomly assign each listed reading to one student, who will be responsible for laying the groundwork for the discussion of that reading. Since any of the readings might be assigned to any student on any given class, you should come to class prepared to critically evaluate all readings and provide an overview of their (1) core ideas and memorable insights; (2) theoretical and/or methodological limitations; and (3) outstanding questions and ideas for future research. Seminar discussion will also focus on identifying themes and concepts that cut across the articles, and applying these concepts to your own area of research. You should be prepared, therefore, to discuss both the assigned readings and how they apply to your own area of interest, with the ultimate goal of turning these ideas into a written research proposal.

Research Proposal: Each student is responsible for writing a research proposal. A two-page synopsis is due on Session 7, and full draft is due on the day you give your class presentation (Session 11 or 12), and the final version is due one week after the last session. The proposal should be based on one of the topics covered in the course and present a framework for executing an original study. Think of a proposal as a shortened version of one of the empirical papers we read, without the results section.

To develop your research proposal throughout the term, you should identify a content domain that is of interest to you. You will then develop a meso model for your content area. Each week you will add complexity to your model as we discuss additional concepts. The proposal should therefore draw on some of the readings from the class, but also incorporate additional work from the relevant literatures. Feel free to talk to me at any time about potential paper ideas, and additional literature.
### Schedule

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### Assigned Readings

**Session 1. OB Meso Concepts**


**Session 2. OB Meso Methods**


**Session 3. Social Identity**


Session 4. Organizational Climate & Culture


Session 5. Power and Social Exchange


Session 6. Organizational Networks


**Session 7. Affect in Organizations**


**Session 8. Teams in Organizations**


Session 9. Organizational Decision Making


44. Whyte, G. (2011). The role of leader hyper self-efficacy in groupthink-type decision making University of Toronto. Rotman School of Management.

Session 10. Organizational Change


11. Student Presentations

Session 12. Student Presentations