HCMG 904-001: Doctoral Seminar in Organizational Behavior and Theory in Health Care  
The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania  
Fall 2018

Instructor: Ingrid Nembhard, PhD, MS  
Time: Mondays at 12-3 PM (Bring your lunch)  
Location: Colonial Penn Center (3641 Locust Walk), Chestnut Room

Course Description:
This course examines how Organization Behavior and Theory (OBT) inform health services research and practice by introducing students to OBT and their application to the health care industry. The course will examine key issues in OBT that have relevance for health care organizations and professionals, different perspectives on key issues, and how OBT currently informs health services research and practice. We will discuss “micro” theories (i.e., social psychological theories of organizational behavior) and “macro” theories (i.e., theories focused on the structural and environmental aspects of organizations). We will examine the strengths and weaknesses of various theories, how they can be used as a foundation for research on health care organizations, methods used to study them, and the implications for health policy and management. Examples of published health services research grounded in OBT will be discussed so that students become familiar with the theories-in-use and various publication outlets for health care management (HCM) research.

Intended Audience:
This course is required for first-year students in the PhD Program in Health Care Management. Any PhD student with interest in conducting research on health care organizations and professionals is also welcome to enroll.

Course Objectives:
Upon completion of this course, students should:
1. Have a solid understanding of key topics, perspectives and findings in OBT that relate to the health care sector;
2. Be able to critically assess research methods used to examine theories and concepts in the context of health care;
3. Be able to apply OBT to issues in health care;
4. Be familiar with general management and health care journals, and the HCM work they publish; and
5. Be able to lead a discussion on topics in OBT that relate to the health care sector.

Prerequisites: None.

Course Outline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date*</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Discussant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.</td>
<td>Pre-read</td>
<td>Introduction to OBT</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Introduction to OBT in Health Care</td>
<td>Ingrid Nembhard</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>9/17</td>
<td>Contingency Theory</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>Institutional Theory</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>Population Ecology</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>10/8</td>
<td>Resource Dependency</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>Organizational Change</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>10/22</td>
<td>Leadership and Followership</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>Decision-making and Sense-making</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>11/5</td>
<td>Organizational Culture</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>Work Teams</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>11/19</td>
<td>Organization Design and Coordination</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>Networks</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>12/3</td>
<td>Innovation and Its Diffusion</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>Organizational Learning</td>
<td>Ingrid Nembhard</td>
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**Course Materials:** There are typically six to seven required readings for each session, with half focused on theory and half demonstrating the application of theory in health care. When there are seven readings, two of them are short applications. Optional readings are also provided. It is completely your choice whether to read these. I recommend reading their abstracts to get an even better sense of the variety of research done and possible on each topic.
- My goal is for you to learn and enjoy the readings so if we need to do five readings or divide them, we will.

**Course Requirements:**

- **Class attendance and participation – 50% of grade**
  - Each student is expected to attend each class, having completed all required readings and prepared to actively engage in a constructive conversation about the readings and the topic of the day. (20% of grade)
  - Each student will lead our discussion on at least one macro topic (Weeks 2-6, 13) and one micro topic (Weeks 7-12). Number of times as discussant will depend on class size. As the session discussant, the student will:
    1. summarize the assigned articles (~5 minutes)
    2. present briefly what are the major strengths and weakness of each paper (25 minutes)
    3. offer 2-3 questions sparked by the week’s readings that our class should discuss (5 minutes)
      (30% of grade)

- **Weekly, written readings analysis addressing the following questions (3 pages maximum) – 50% of grade**
  In these analyses, you should address the following and submit 2-3 questions you would like to discuss:
  1. What are the main point(s) of the readings? (1-2 sentences)
  2. What did you find most interesting or insightful about the readings?
  3. What critiques do you have? **Think:** What did you find confusing? What gap did you find in the arguments? How well was the research designed? Would you have used the methods employed?
  4. How does each reading or theory compare to the others for this week and/or past weeks?
  5. What do the readings suggest should be on the research agenda or is missing from HCM research?

**Background Reference List (all provide summaries of organizational theories and/or topics in HCM):**


**For students who wish to pursue careers, and thus job market positions, in Management or Operations Departments at business schools upon completion of their PhD in Health Care Management:** I recommend taking additional courses (content and methods courses) in the Management Department (see [https://mgmt.wharton.upenn.edu/programs/phd/course-descriptions/](https://mgmt.wharton.upenn.edu/programs/phd/course-descriptions/)) or Operations, Information and Decisions Department (see [https://oid.wharton.upenn.edu/programs/phd/course-descriptions/](https://oid.wharton.upenn.edu/programs/phd/course-descriptions/)) in order to continue your learning and meet other faculty who may serve as mentors. Through these courses, you will meet your student-peers and have more opportunity to engage in activities that will prepare you for the broad audience of economists, sociologists and psychologists that you might encounter on the Management/Business School job market and career path.

A few seminal articles covered in this course (≤ 5 at current count) are covered in other department courses. In this course, we will be applying these articles to health care so discussion will be different. You should not worry about redundancy.
Session 0 (Pre-read): Introduction to Organizational Theory and Methods

Required

Session 1: Introduction to Organizational Behavior and Theory in Health Care

Required

Optional

Session 2: Contingency and Complexity Theories

Required - Theory

Required - Application

Optional

Session 3: Institutional Theory

Required - Theory

Required - Application

Optional

Session 4: Population Ecology

Required - Theory

Required – Application
Optional:

**Session 5: Resource Dependence**

**Required - Theory**

**Required - Application**

**Optional**

**Session 6: Organizational Change**

**Theory**

**Application**


Optional


Session 7: Leadership and Followership

Required - Theory


Required - Application


Optional


Session 8: Decision-making and Sense-making in Organizations

Required – Theory

Required - Application

Optional
- Burgess, D.J. 2010. Are providers more likely to contribute to healthcare disparities under high levels of cognitive load? How features of the healthcare setting may lead to biases in medical decision making. *Medical Decision Making*. 30(2):246-57.

Session 9: Organizational Culture and Climate

Required - Theory

Required - Application

Optional

**Session 10: Work Teams**

**Required - Theory**

**Required - Application**

**Optional**

**Session 11: Organizational Design and Coordination**

**Required - Theory**

**Required - Application**

**Optional**

**Session 12: Networks**

**Required - Theory**

**Required - Application**

**Optional**

**Session 13: Innovation and Its Diffusion**

**Theory**

**Application**


Optional


**Session 14: Organizational Learning**

*Required - Theory*


*Required - Application*


*Optional*


10
Topics We Don’t Have Time to Cover but May Be of Interest

The Design of Work and Work Routines
Theory

Application

Identification – Social, Organizational and Professional
Theory and Reviews

Application

Performance Evaluation: Using Quality as a Goal
Theory and Reviews

Application