The University of Pennsylvania  
The Wharton School  
Management Department  

PhD Seminar on Family Business Research  
MGMT 938 — Q2 Fall 2019  
Tuesdays 9:00 AM — 12:00 Noon  
SHDH Bowman Room 2039  

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Course Overview and Design  

Family firms differ in a number of ways from non-family firms. These differences may result in differential behavior and performance of family firms versus non-family firms. Although family-controlled firms make up the vast majority of businesses around the world, academic research in this space is sparse. This seminar seeks to expose students to state of the art theoretical and empirical perspectives on family businesses. Throughout the course, we will focus on the ownership, control, and management issues that set family firms apart. We will focus on the main issues faced by family firms and attempt to critically examine how, using a range of methodologies, researchers have approached these issues. As we review the literature, we will seek to identify promising research areas, which may be of interest to you in the context of your dissertation research. In addition to addressing the content of the received literature, we will examine the process of crafting research papers and getting them published in top tier journals. Towards that end, we will characterize the key elements of high-impact papers and review the development process of such studies.  

You are expected to come to class fully prepared to discuss and analyze the assigned readings for the session. Each week we will focus on approximately five papers from the suggested reading list. You should read at least one additional paper from the readings list (the one that interests you the most) to compare and contrast the insights from that paper with the ones covered in class. This will enrich the quality of class discussion and analysis, and give you a broader understanding of the field.  

“Analyzing” a paper involves identifying and laying out:  
- Research question(s)  
- Central arguments and hypotheses  
- For empirical papers, methods (research design, sample, data collection, construct measures, analytic techniques) and results  
- Key conclusions
• Strengths, weaknesses, contributions to the literature, and interesting areas/questions for discussion.

Each student will serve as the discussion leader for one or more of the course sessions. Discussion leaders are expected to:

(i) critically review several articles;
(ii) identify new insights in the research that is being reviewed;
(iii) evaluate its contribution to the literature;
(iv) position the articles within the received literature on the subject matter;
(v) present your own point of view on each article;
(vi) raise discussion questions; and
(vii) prepare a short PPT in which you highlight your analyses of the assigned papers and act as the discussion moderator for the class session.

In addition, you should reflect on the following questions that consider the readings collectively:

(i) What are the common themes within the articles, contradictions among the articles, and insights?
(ii) What are the most important conclusions from the readings viewed collectively?
(iii) What might be appropriate follow-on research questions for a study based on a research gap that is suggested? (This entails your developing an understanding of the assigned articles, their relationship to one another, and their collective synthesis.)

Requirements and Evaluation

One reaction paper is due by **December 17, 2019**. It will contain a comprehensive evaluation of a paper (rather than a mere summary of the paper), selected from the reading list or another paper that is of interest to you and has been vetted by the Instructor. Your course grade will be determined as follows:

- Your participation in class discussions: 33%
- Your effectiveness as a discussion leader: 33%
- Your reaction paper: 34%

Other course features and resources

The class readings have been split between two sites: Study.net and Canvas. All third party copyrighted materials are found on Study.net; all other readings are found on Canvas. This is meant to minimize the cost of students obtaining reading materials.

- There is a dedicated Canvas site for our course. Course materials that are not copyrighted by a third party and periodic announcements will be posted on this Canvas site. The Canvas URL is:

  [https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1450989](https://canvas.upenn.edu/courses/1450989)
You will be able to access Study.net through Canvas. You should receive an email with logon information from Study.net at the beginning of the term. Please contact customerservice@study.net with any logon issues.

The Course at a Glance

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<td>1</td>
<td>Tuesday, October 15, 2019 9:00 AM – 12:00 noon</td>
<td>Introduction to Family Business Research</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Tuesday, October 22, 2019 9:00 AM – 12:00 noon</td>
<td>Family Firm Performance</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Tuesday, October 29, 2019 9:00 AM – 12:00 noon</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Tuesday, November 5, 2019 9:00 AM – 12:00 noon</td>
<td>Ownership and Governance of Family Firms</td>
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<td>Tuesday, November 26, 2019 9:00 AM – 12:00 noon</td>
<td>Management, Strategy, and Valuation of Family Firms</td>
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<td>Succession in Ownership, Control, and Management in Family Firms</td>
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Suggested Books


James Hughes (2004), *Family Wealth: Keeping it in the family*. 
Detailed Course Outline

Notes: Each week I will point you to the specific papers on which our discussion will center in the following class meeting. Changes to the reading list can be anticipated throughout the term.

I. Session 1: Tuesday, October 15, 2019 (9:00 AM to 12:00 noon)

A. Introduction and Overview

   Readings:


II. Session 2: Tuesday, October 22, 2019 (9:00 AM to 12:00 noon)

A. Family Firm Performance

Readings:


III. Session 3: **Tuesday, October 29, 2019 (9:00 AM to 12:00 noon)**

**A. Family Dynamics**-- How family relationships and decision-making affect the family business

Readings:


IV. Session 4: Tuesday, November 5, 2019 (9:00 AM to 12:00 noon)

A. Ownership and Governance of Family Firms

Readings:


l. Klasa, Sandy (2007), Why do controlling families of public firms sell their
   remaining ownership stake? *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis*,
   42(2), 339-367.

m. La Porta, Rafael, Florencio López De Silanes, and Andrei Shleifer (1999),

n. La Porta, Rafael, Florencio López de Silanes, Andrei Shleifer, and Robert Vishny
   1147–1170.

o. Masulis R., Pham P.K., Zein J. (2011), Family business groups around the world:
   Financing advantages, control motivations, and organizational choices. *Review of
   Financial Studies*, 24(11), 3556-3600.


   orientation among the Fortune 500: does family ownership matter? *Journal of
   Business Ethics* 72(2): 149–162.

r. Villalonga, Belén, and Raphael Amit (2009), How are U.S. family firms

s. Villalonga, Belen, Amit, Raphael, Trujillo, María-Andrea, and Guzmann,
   Alexander (2015), Governance of family firms. The *Annual Review of Financial
   Economics* 7:635–54.

V. Session 5: Tuesday, November 26, 2019 (9:00 AM to 12:00 noon)

A. Management, Strategy, and Valuation of Family Firms

Readings:


VI. Session 6: **Tuesday, December 3, 2019 (9:00 AM to 12:00 noon)**

A. Succession of Ownership, Control, and Management in Family Firms

Readings:


