

## **TU-L1010 THEORY BUILDING AND RESEARCH DESIGN IN STRATEGY AND VENTURING**

5 credit units

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Course brochure, Spring 2016

December 22, 2015

### **INTRODUCTION**

The course is intended mainly for first-year doctoral students majoring in strategy and venturing. The course is a continuation for the fall term course Research Methods in Industrial Engineering and Management 1. Students wishing to participate in the course are recommended to take first the fall term course. However, passing the fall term course is not a prerequisite for the participation.

The course comprises readings, assignments, seminar sessions, seminar presentations, discussions, an exam, as well as developing a research proposal for the doctoral dissertation. The sessions will consist of lecture/discussion among the instructor and the seminar participants. It is essential that all participants come to each class prepared. To this end, each seminar participant will prepare and e-mail to the instructor short pre-assignment related to different parts of preparing a research proposal before each session. This is to stimulate discussion and to help participants get more out of the seminar in terms of developing their own research. The class is most effective when everyone contributes and participates in the learning process.

### **OBJECTIVE AND FOCUS**

The concrete key objective is to help participants create and develop a good dissertation proposal. The course focuses on areas relevant for developing a good research proposal including problem formulation, literature review, theory and hypothesis development, and research designs and methodological choices. The course is intended to be an arena where students can discuss their research projects and get feedback from the faculty and from their fellow students.

### **INSTRUCTOR**

The instructor of the course is Professor Markku Maula. His contact information is:  
email: [markku.maula@aalto.fi](mailto:markku.maula@aalto.fi), mobile phone: +358 40 556 0677

### **SCHEDULE**

The seminar will be held on Mondays from 13.15 to 16:00 at TUAS Building, first floor, seminar room TU1021-1022. The schedule of the course is presented below:

<b>Date (Mondays)</b>	<b>Submission by email by 10:00 am</b>	<b>TUAS Building, Meeting room TU1021-1022 at 13:15-16:00</b>
January 4	DL for enrollment	
<b>January 18</b>	DL for pre-assignment for Session 1	<b>Session 1: Introduction</b>
<b>January 25</b>	DL for pre-assignment for Session 2	<b>Session 2: Literature review</b>
<b>February 1</b>	DL for pre-assignment for Session 3	<b>Session 3: Theory development</b>
<b>February 8</b>	DL for pre-assignment for Session 4	<b>Session 4: Research designs</b>
<b>February 16</b>	<b>(TUESDAY)</b>	<b>Exam at 13:00-16:00 at Otakaari 1 (exact location informed in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor lobby)</b>
March 14	DL for the <u>draft dissertation proposal</u>	
<b>March 21</b>	DL for pre-assignment for Session 5	<b>Session 5: Dissertation proposal presentations</b>
April 4	DL for the <u>finalized dissertation proposal</u>	

## PASSING THE COURSE AND GRADING POLICY

The course grade will be determined as follows:

Pre-lecture assignments, presentations, and class participation	30%
Exam	35%
Dissertation proposal	35%

*Dissertation proposal:* The major goal and requirement of the course is a completed research proposal at the end of the spring semester. This means a paper describing in detail the proposed study, with all the necessary supporting materials and argumentation expected in a proposal, importance of the problem, past work, expected results, and analysis strategy, for example.

*Exam:* An exam covering the reading materials will be arranged in the middle of the course. The idea of the exam is to ensure that all participants have got familiar with the reading materials before finalizing their own draft dissertation proposals.

*Pre-lecture assignments:* Before each seminar session, each seminar participant will prepare and e-mail to the instructor a short assignment related to the topic of the session. This is to stimulate class discussion and also to help participants get more out of the course in terms of developing their own research. The class is most effective when everyone contributes and participates in the learning process.

*Presentations:* Each participant will give two types of seminar presentations: (i) short presentations concerning their research and the pre-assignments, and (ii) the dissertation proposal.

In the first four seminar sessions, after a short lecture in the beginning, we will discuss the experiences of seminar participants concerning their own research. To stimulate the discussion, participants will give short presentations concerning their pre-assignments.

In the last presentation sessions, the participants will present their own doctoral dissertation proposals. These presentations will provide the participants with an opportunity to obtain feedback and suggestions from other participants in the seminar course. In order to allow sufficient time for discussion, the research proposal presentations should not exceed 20 minutes.

## COURSE MATERIALS

Most of the course materials will be made available online for the enrolled course participants. One set of binders containing all course materials will also be available at TUAS Building / 4th floor for short-term loan. Please contact Maria Tikka beforehand to ensure the availability of the materials

(maria.tikka@aalto.fi, tel. +358 50 3853493). The total amount of course readings equals roughly to 700 pages.

## INFORMATION

Up-to-date information about the course is made available on the MyCourses page of the course: <https://mycourses.aalto.fi/course/view.php?id=9343>

## DETAILED PROGRAM

### *DL for enrollment*

January 4 (Monday) by email to Markku.Maula@aalto.fi

Please include the following information in your e-mail:

1. your name
2. e-mail address
3. student number
4. postgraduate major
5. name of your supervising professor
6. topic of your thesis work
7. the stage where you are at in the doctoral dissertation process
8. whether or not you will be able to make it to all sessions
9. any comments or questions concerning the course

### *Session 1: Introduction, research proposals & choice of topic*

January 18 (Monday) at 13:15-16:00 at TU1021-1022

Introduction

- Course objectives
- Practical arrangements
- Lecture on developing a dissertation proposal

#### *Pre-lecture readings*

- Christensen, C. M. & Raynor, M. E. 2003. Why Hard-Nosed Executives Should Care About Management Theory. *Harvard Business Review* (September): 67-74.
- Van de Ven, A. H. 2007. *Engaged Scholarship: A Guide for Organizational and Social Research*, Oxford University Press, Chapter 1 Engaged Scholarship in a Professional School.
- Bartunek, J.M., Rynes, S.L., Ireland, R.D., 2006. What Makes Management Research Interesting, And Why Does It Matter? *Academy of Management Journal* 49, 9-15.
- Van de Ven, A. H. 2007. *Engaged Scholarship: A Guide for Organizational and Social Research*, Oxford University Press, Chapter 3 Formulating the Research Problem.
- Sandberg, J., Alvesson, M., 2011. Ways of constructing research questions: gap-spotting or problematization? *Organization* 18, 23-44.
- Colquitt, J. A. & George, G. 2011. Publishing in AMJ part 1: Topic choice. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(3): 432-435.
- Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W. W., & Silverman, S. J. 2000. *Proposals That Work: A Guide for Planning Dissertations and Grant Proposals*. London: Sage Publications. (Chapters 1 - 6).

#### *Pre-lecture assignment*

- Formulate and describe your research problem (max 1 page)
- Submit this by email to the instructor by before the session on Monday January 18 by 10:00 am

- Be prepared to present and discuss the research problem

### ***Session 2: Literature review and framing a contribution***

January 25 (Monday) at 13:15-16:00 at TU1021-1022

#### *Pre-lecture readings*

- Porter, A., Kongthong, A. & Lu, J.-C. 2002. Research profiling: Improving the literature review. *Scientometrics* 53(3): 351-370.
- Tranfield, D., Denyer, D., & Smart, P. 2003. Towards a Methodology for Developing Evidence-Informed Management Knowledge by Means of Systematic Review. *British Journal of Management* 14(3): 207-222.
- Briner, R. B. & Denyer, D. 2012. Systematic review and evidence synthesis as a practice and scholarship tool. In D. M. Rousseau (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Evidence-Based Management*: Oxford University Press.
- Jones, O., Gatrell, C., 2014. Editorial: The Future of Writing and Reviewing for IJMR. *International Journal of Management Reviews* 16, 249-264.
- Locke, K. & Golden-Biddle, K. 1997. Constructing Opportunities for Contribution: Structuring Intertextual Coherence and Problematizing in Organizational Studies. *Academy of Management Journal* 40(5): 1023-1062.
- Grant, A. M. & Pollock, T. G. 2011. Publishing in AMJ—part 3: Setting the hook. *Academy of Management Journal* 54(5): 873-879.

#### *Pre-lecture assignment*

- Write as rigorous as possible literature review related to your research problem (preferably about 5 pages, max 10 pages including tables and figures)
- Submit this by email to the instructor by before the session on Monday January 25 by 10:00 am
- Be prepared to present and discuss the process and outcome of the literature review

### ***Session 3: Theorizing and hypothesis development***

February 1 (Monday) at 13:15-16:00 at TU1021-1022

#### *Pre-lecture readings*

- Whetten, D. A. 1989. What Constitutes a Theoretical Contribution. *Academy of Management Review* 14(4): 490-495.
- Corley, K. G. & Gioia, D. A. 2011. Building theory about theory building: What constitutes a theoretical contribution? *Academy of Management Review* 36(1): 12-32.
- Bettis, R. A., Gambardella, A., Helfat, C., & Mitchell, W. 2014. Theory in strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal* 35(10): 1411-1413.
- Colquitt, J.A. & Zapata-Phelan, C.P. 2007. Trends in Theory Building and Theory Testing: A Five-Decade Study of the Academy of Management Journal. *Academy of Management Journal* 50(6): 1281-1303.
- Van de Ven, A. H. 2007. *Engaged Scholarship: A Guide for Organizational and Social Research*, Oxford University Press, Chapter 4 Building a Theory.
- Weick, K. E. 1989. Theory Construction as Disciplined Imagination. *Academy of Management Review* 14(4): 516-531.
- Poole, M. S. & Van de Ven, A. H. 1989. Using Paradox to Build Management and Organization Theories. *Academy of Management Review* 14(4): 562-578.
- Christensen, C.M. 2006. The Ongoing Process of Building a Theory of Disruption. *Journal of Product Innovation Management* 23(1): 39-55.

- Sparrowe, R.T., Mayer, K.J., 2011. Publishing in AMJ—Part 4: Grounding Hypotheses. *Academy of Management Journal* 54: 1098-1102.

*Pre-lecture assignment*

- Develop as robust as possible new propositions or hypotheses concerning your research problem (max 5 pages).
- Submit this by email to the instructor by before the session on Monday February 1 by 10:00 am
- Be prepared to present and discuss the propositions/hypotheses

**Session 4: Empirical research design**

February 8 (Monday) at 13:15-16:00 at TU1021-1022

*Pre-lecture readings*

- Aguinis, H., Pierce, C.A., Bosco, F.A. & Muslin, I.S. 2009. First Decade of Organizational Research Methods: Trends in Design, Measurement, and Data-Analysis Topics. *Organizational Research Methods* 12(1): 69.
- Ketchen, D.J., Jr., Boyd, B.K. & Bergh, D.D. 2008. Research Methodology in Strategic Management: Past Accomplishments and Future Challenges. *Organizational Research Methods* 11(4): 643-658.
- Bettis, R., Gambardella, A., Helfat, C., & Mitchell, W. 2014. Quantitative empirical analysis in strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal* 35(7): 949-953.
- Echambadi, R., Campbell, B. & Agarwal, R. 2006. Encouraging Best Practice in Quantitative Management Research: An Incomplete List of Opportunities. *Journal of Management Studies* 43(8): 1801-1820.
- Semadeni, M., Withers, M. C., & Trevis Certo, S. 2014. The Perils of Endogeneity and Instrumental Variables in Strategy Research: Understanding through Simulations. *Strategic Management Journal* 35(7): 1070-1079.
- Graebner, M. E., Martin, J. A., & Roundy, P. T. 2012. Qualitative Data: Cooking Without a Recipe. *Strategic Organization* 10(3): 276-284.
- Eisenhardt, K. M. & Graebner, M. E. 2007. Theory Building from Cases: Opportunities and Challenges. *Academy of Management Journal* 50(1), 25-32.
- Bono, J. E. & McNamara, G. 2011. Publishing in AMJ—part 2: Research design. *Academy of Management Journal* 54(4): 657-660.

*Pre-lecture assignment*

- Plan as robust as possible (but practically feasible) way (research design and methods) to test your hypothesis/proposition (max 5 pages)
- Submit this by email to the instructor by before the session on Monday February 8 by 10:00 am
- Be prepared to present and discuss the research design

**Exam**

February 16 (**Tuesday**) at 13:00-16:00 at Otakaari 1 (the exact room will be informed in the Otakaari 1 lobby)

- The exam will cover all the reading materials of the course announced in this course syllabus.

***DL for the draft dissertation proposal***

March 14 (Monday) at 10:00 am by email

- Submit the draft version of your research proposal by email to the instructor by 10:00 am. This deadline is strict (the drafts will be distributed by the instructor to course participants for their feedback and Session 5 pre-assignments immediately after the deadline)

***Session 5: Dissertation proposal presentations***

March 21 (Monday) at 13:15-16:00 at TU1021-1022

*Pre-lecture readings*

- Research proposals to be discussed in the session

*Pre-lecture assignment*

- For each research proposal, write 1-3 pages of suggestions on how to develop the research plans
- Submit these by email to the instructor by before the session on Monday March 21 by 10:00 am

***DL for the finalized research proposal***

April 4 (Monday) at 10:00 am by email

- Submit the final version of your research proposal for the instructor to be graded (DL 10:00 am). This deadline is strict.