

**Course Outline**  
**MOVING FORWARD**  
**PhD Course, 3 ECTS, Period III-IV, 2024**

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**Target group:** 1<sup>st</sup> (and 2<sup>nd</sup>) year doctoral students at the Department of Management Studies

**Schedule:** 14 February, 20 March, 17 April, 15 May (each 9-12)

**Location:** Meeting room (R038/U213) of the Dept of Management Studies

**MyCourses:** *Course: MNGT3-L0002 - Moving Forward, Lecture, 14.2.2024-15.5.2024 (aalto.fi)*,  
<https://mycourses.aalto.fi/course/view.php?id=37943>

### **Learning Goals**

This introductory course is designed to support 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> year doctoral students in understanding how to build an early-career academic research profile, and how to connect to and network with the international academic community. Students will also learn more about the main academic conferences, academic journals, and publishing processes in their research field. They also gain practical insights into how to craft a convincing research plan and how to apply for research funding from different foundations. After the course the students will better understand the different ways a PhD journey can serve as promising foundation for an academic career in their field of interest. In specific, we address questions such as:

- How to write a research plan?
- How to frame research focus (during very early stages)?
- How to apply for funding?
- How to build your academic profile from early on?
- How to join and connect with the international academic community?
- How to form your own research network?
- How to author and co-author academic papers?
- How to choose academic conferences and journals for your early-career papers?

### **Learning Content**

Following the learning goals, the course is divided into *four sessions* providing students with understandings and ‘tips & tricks’ for applying for funding, building an academic profile, connecting to the international academic community, crafting a doctoral research plan, and writing and revising papers to be considered for publication. Class discussions will support this learning and sharing of experiences, ideas, and questions. Teachers in charge will also provide some introductions to the key themes and issues, provide the necessary reading materials, and assignments. Please note that the teachers will always implement continuous feedback from students during the course. Hence, some themes and assignments might be adjusted from session to session depending on emerging needs.

**1<sup>st</sup> session (reflections of first semester and funding applications):** In this session, students will be able to share and discuss their experiences of the first two periods of their doctoral studies and give a status update of their doctoral research project (planning). The teachers will also provide feedback on student's grant application drafts and share some practical insights on writing funding applications for different institutions in Finland and on framing a relevant research focus for a grant application.

**2<sup>nd</sup> session (academic profiling and networking):** In this session, students will be able to share insights from their interviews with an early-stage academic on academic profiling and career building. Following this, the teachers and students will discuss more in detail on how to build an academic profile (+CV), communicate research in social media, and connect to the international community already early in the PhD process. The teachers will also share some practical insights on their writing a first conference paper, as well as on pitching research and first paper presentations at conferences or workshops.

**3<sup>rd</sup> session (writing, revising, and publishing papers):** In this session, students will be able to share and get feedback on a thesis proposal or draft of an early-stage paper they're (planning to be) working on (soon). The teachers will share some practical insights on "how to plan and frame a research paper", also by walking through some of their experienced publication processes, both in their early and later-career stage. The teachers will also provide some "tips & tricks" for selecting academic journals for the first thesis papers and for (co-)authoring research paper projects as early-career researcher.

**4<sup>th</sup> session (improving research plans and preparing for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of PhD studies):** In this session, students will be able to share and discuss their revised drafts of the doctoral research plan, also to be used for upcoming funding applications. We will also discuss more in detail some of the key themes that might be pressing for further developing your research plans, such as framing research focus, data collection strategy, choice of methods, theoretical implications, publication strategies, budgeting, and research ethics. Using some previous examples of thesis examination processes, the session will also touch upon the main criteria used for the evaluation of a successful doctoral thesis.

## **Assignments**

All your assignments need to be submitted before the respective session in [MyCourses](#).

### **Pre-assignment work for Session 1:**

The pre-assignment work for session 1 comprises several, short individual assignments.

**First, write a short reflection essay** (minimum of 1000 words) **by 12 February**. The reflection essay includes:

- **(a) your personal experiences** of the first two periods (or early stages) of the PhD journey; *for instance, let us know what were your main activities? What did you enjoy most and found most interesting and useful? What were your main challenges so far in your PhD journey and where you think you need more support?*
- **(b) a brief pitch** of what you “think” (at this stage) your **doctoral thesis** (incl. first paper(s)) is/will be about (e.g. theoretical conversations, methodology, data collection efforts, expected contributions) and how you plan the next steps in conducting your research.

Based on the reflection essay, prepare also a **short presentation** (max. 6 min) to **(a)** briefly share your reflections about the early stages of your PhD journey and **(b)** to give a short pitch on what your PhD is/will be about.

**Second**, you need to submit

- a draft of your **(doctoral) research plan** (2-3 pages) **by 12 February**, to be used for a grant application targeted, for instance, at the [Ella & Georg Ehrnrooth Foundation](#) or [Jenny and Antti Wihuri foundation](#). You can of course also target your research plan at any other foundation of immediate interest; in this case just name the foundation also explicitly so that we can give more focused feedback.

Taken together, this assignment serves as a basis for in-class discussions on how the research plans can be further improved for the upcoming grant applications (note: the application DL for the *Ehrnrooth Foundation* is 29 February and for the *Wihuri Foundation* is 31 May). Don't worry at all about the early stage of your draft – being at this stage is completely normal, and simply getting started is already a significant step forward.

### Pre-assignment for Session 2:

The pre-assignment for session 2 comprises one individual assignment and one group assignment.

**First, interview an early/mid-stage academic** (Post-doctoral researcher, Lecturer, Assistant Professor) of interest, and write and submit a short summary (minimum of 2000 words) of your key insights from the interview **by 18 March**. Exemplary themes informing the interview could be around *how they developed their academic profile and CV from early on, how they formed their own research network, how their first paper publication processes went, how they authored and co-authored papers, or how they chose academic conferences and journals for their early-career papers?* That said, these are just examples, and you can freely choose the themes that interest you most and feel are most relevant for your own PhD journey.

Based on the essay, also prepare a **short presentation** (max. 6 min) to briefly share your reflections and main insights from the interview.

**Second**, team-up with all your peers in the course and start **planning a symposium-type panel discussion** comprising of four faculty members (ideally representing all our four units of the Department of Management Studies). Potential themes for the discussion include *methodologies* and *data collection and data management*, but feel free to suggest other themes that you might find interesting and relevant. For the assignment, create a **pre-information material** (minimum 200-400 words) around the symposium (incl. main discussion topics, potential panelists, schedule, space, etc.).

One of the team members needs to **submit the program draft by 20 March** to MyCourses. In the session, we will then briefly discuss the material and potential further adjustments; after which you need to **share the information about the symposium by 27 March** via email (incl. calendar invite) to the entire Department of Management Studies and maybe also later to other, closely related Departments at our School (e.g. Marketing, Accounting).

The panel discussion will be then actively arranged and guided by the whole team in the second half of our final course session on **15 May (10:30-12:00)** or on another suitable day/time in the same week. More information on this will be given the introductory session on 14 February.

### **Pre-assignment for Session 3:**

The pre-assignment for session 3 comprises of two individual assignments.

**First**, submit a draft of a **thesis paper proposal** (2000-3000 words) that you are currently working on **by 11 April**. The paper proposal is free format, but they should explain the purpose of the paper, theoretical background, the research gap that is addressed, and methodological approach taken. If you have already collected some data, you could include the methods of analysis and preliminary findings. Also, prepare a short presentation (max. 6 min) to present your thesis paper proposal/short paper in-class.

**Second**, you need to write a **short review** (minimum of 400 words) of a paper proposal by one of your peers (assigned by the teacher), which includes some of your general ideas and suggestions for how the paper could be further improved. **Submit the review by 16 April**. Be also prepared to share your main suggestions in-class as to help further develop the thesis paper that was assigned to you.

Taken together, these assignments serve as a basis for in-class (group) discussions on how the research proposals/ideas can be further improved.

### **Pre-assignment for Session 4:**

The pre-assignment for session 4 comprises two individual assignments and one group assignment.

**First**, submit an **extended draft of your doctoral research plan or your paper proposal by 9 May**. In session 3, or via email afterwards, you can discuss your preferred options with the responsible teachers, also depending on the stage of your research.

**Second**, submit a **short review** (minimum of 400 words) of a research plan of **one of your peers** (assigned by the teacher), which includes some of your general ideas and suggestions for how the research plan could be further improved. **Submit the review by 14 May**. Also, be prepared to share your main suggestions in the session as to help further develop the paper that was assigned to you.

**Third**, together with your peers in the course you need to arrange, chair, and moderate a **symposium-type panel discussion** comprising of four faculty members. The Panel discussion takes place on 15 May, from 10:30-12:00 (or on another agreed day/time in the same week), and you can creatively plan and structure the session around your current needs, questions, challenges etc. and, more generally, based on what you would like to know from the panelists' perspective. More information on this session will be given in sessions 1-3.