Course Description and Objectives

This doctoral seminar focuses on theory construction in business-related research. That is, what is theory and what is it not? What makes a theory successful or a ‘good theory’? Or, what is it about certain theories that lead to them being used and cited more by other researchers? These are a few of the questions that we’ll be reviewing in this course. Theory construction is an important topic for both conceptual and empirical research in any academic research area, and we will be taking a cross discipline approach to how to actually write better theory.

In this seminar, we’ll review the building blocks of good theory through (1) research on best practices in theory construction across business disciplines, (2) review of several successful theories from information systems, organizational science, finance, economics, strategy, marketing, and other business related areas, and (3) picking apart several journal award winning theory papers that we'll use for templates. Topics will range from micro to macro concepts.

Participant Responsibilities:
1. Each week: Read articles, summarize selected articles, prepare exercises (including reviewing your colleagues’ work).
2. In-class interaction central to learning.
3. Ongoing development of hypotheses and research design for proposal(s) or paper. Final 'mini'-proposal' will contain theoretical motivation, hypotheses, research design, proposed test statistics and implications if hypotheses supported.

Learning Objectives (Seminar Knowledge Goals):
1. Information: Knowledge of basic conceptual issues in theory development, design options, different research modes, data sources, design options.
2. Competencies: Assess theories, develop testable hypotheses, design studies in organizational contexts, pick appropriate statistical method to test theory, identify test statistics for specific hypotheses, match methods and theory, critically review empirical work, draft parts of scholarly articles.
3. Core skills: Ability to execute separate parts of ‘normal science’ project within professional norms including basic rules of inference and quasi-experimental design.

4. Advanced and additional skills: Ability to develop impactful hypotheses; ability to focus and shape scholarly research project; long term career issues

**Required Materials/Readings**

There is no mandatory textbook for this doctoral seminar. A listing of required scholarly reading selections will be posted to the course web page. Each week we will discuss somewhere between six to about a dozen or so scholarly articles. The articles may be found in the online databases of the campus library. PDF copies or links to PDF copies will also be posted online at least one week in advance. Any changes to the list will be announced at least one week in advance.

**Supplementary Materials (Not Required)**


**Attendance Policy and Course Schedule**

Students are required to know the content from all class discussions and reading assignments. If students elect to miss a class, they are responsible for getting notes on the missed material. If a student chooses to miss class due to a non-University approved reason, the student will not receive credit for any in class exercises, quizzes, exams, etc., occurring or due on that day. Further, classes begin promptly. If students are late for presentations, they will be docked participation points.

The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the course instructor. Notice of such changes will be by announcement in class, email notice to the official class roster, or by changes to this syllabus posted on the course website at [http://belkfaculty.uncc.edu/jhanse15](http://belkfaculty.uncc.edu/jhanse15) under Courses.

**Grading**

Grading (A = 90% or above, B = 80% to 89.9%, C = 70% to 79.9%, U < 70%) will be based on general class participation and discussion of readings, presenting your own work in class, submitted exercises, reviewing other students’ exercises, and the final proposal/paper. In general, our goal is to encourage risk-taking and effort. Thus, I will assess most submitted exercises only in terms of whether they are (1) exceptionally good, (2) good and reasonable or (3) problematic.
Your final grade will be assessed based on:

Written summaries, exercise, and reviews 40%
In class discussion and presentations 30%
Final proposal/paper & presentation 30%

**Description of Assignments and Grading**

**Exercises:** As this is doctoral seminar, most assignments will take the form of written exercises that have participants practice writing academic research, usually in the form of a couple paragraphs to a few pages at a time.

**Class Participation:** Students’ participation will be evaluated based on active class involvement. Students will take turns in leading seminar discussions. Disrespectful or disturbing behavior of students during class time will have a substantial negative impact on the class participation grade. Students are strongly encouraged to actively share their views in class discussions since the final participation grade is determined based on both attendance quizzes and class involvement.

**Final Paper:** The final exam takes the form of a new conceptual research paper. More information will be made available in class.

Students in this course seeking accommodations for disabilities must first consult with the Office of Disability Services and follow the instructions of that office for obtaining accommodations.

**Academic Integrity**

Karl G. Maeser, a 19th century educator, is quoted as once stating: "I have been asked what I mean by my word of honor. I will tell you. Place me behind prison walls-- ever so high, ever so thick, reaching ever so far into the ground - there is a possibility that in some way or another I will escape; but stand me on a floor and draw a chalk line around me and have me give my word of honor never to cross it. Can I get out of the Circle? No. Never! I would die first." I expect students, guest speakers, visitors, and faculty (including myself) to follow the principles of honor and honesty described in the quotation. To provide further guidance on how to do this, all students are required by the university to read and abide by the Code of Student Academic Integrity. Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are set forth in the Code. The Code is available from the Dean of Students Office or online at: http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html. The normal penalty for a first offense is zero credit on the work involving dishonesty and further substantial reduction of the course grade. In almost all cases the course grade is reduced to F. Copies of the code can also be obtained from the Dean of Students Office.
**Inclement Weather**

University Policy Statement #13. The University is open unless the Chancellor announces that the University is closed. The inclement weather hotline number to call is 704-786-2877. In the event of inclement weather, check your email the morning of class. Your instructor will use his best judgment as to whether class should be held understanding that some of you commute from far away and notify you by email if class is cancelled.

**On Respect**

The college has asked all faculty to refer to the College Statement on Diversity in syllabi. It is available on the college website. For info on how to actually incorporate diversity into business or academic settings, I advise interested individuals to read the conclusion section of my published research on *Understanding Ethical Diversity in Organizations* (published in Organizational Science), found on my website under the research tab.

I will conduct this class in an atmosphere of mutual respect. I encourage active participation in class discussions. Each of us may have strongly differing opinions on the various topics of class discussions. The conflict of ideas is encouraged and welcome. The orderly questioning of the ideas of others, including mine, is similarly welcome. However, I will exercise my responsibility to manage the discussions so that ideas and argument can proceed in an orderly fashion. Participants should expect that if their conduct during class discussions seriously disrupts the atmosphere of mutual respect I expect in this class, they will not be permitted to participate further.

Further, all students are required to abide by the UNC Charlotte Sexual Harassment Policy (http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-61.html) and the policy on Responsible Use of University Computing and Electronic Communication Resources (http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-66.html).

Cell phones must be set to vibrate/silent mode or turned off during class. Cell phone calls or text messaging in class will result in a participation deduction. Other behavior that disrupts the learning of other students will also result in a deduction per incident. It is possible to deduct more points then the normal points allocated for participation. Classroom civility expectations are that all individuals will follow all other university guidelines.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tentative Topic</th>
<th>Exercises</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22-Aug</td>
<td>What is the Goal (of Scientific Research)</td>
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<tr>
<td>29-Aug</td>
<td>What is Theory</td>
<td>DV identification Exercise Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-Sep</td>
<td>What is Good Theory… Interesting/Novel</td>
<td>Big Questions Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-Sep</td>
<td>What is Good Theory… Hypotheses/Persuasion</td>
<td>DV paragraphs Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>19-Sep</td>
<td>What is Good Theory… The Review Process</td>
<td>DV paragraphs revision due</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-Sep</td>
<td>How to Build Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-Oct</td>
<td>Selected Marketing Theories</td>
<td>IV1 paragraphs Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-Oct</td>
<td>Selected Management Theories</td>
<td>IV2 paragraphs Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>17-Oct</td>
<td>Selected Finance Theories</td>
<td>IV2 paragraphs Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-Oct</td>
<td>Selected Information Systems Theories</td>
<td>IV2 paragraphs Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-Oct</td>
<td>Selected Other Theories</td>
<td>IV2 paragraphs Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-Nov</td>
<td>Theory Boundaries: Moderators</td>
<td>Moderators Paragraphs Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>14-Nov</td>
<td>Reviewing as a method of improving theory writing</td>
<td>Back End and Introduction Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-Nov</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>28-Nov</td>
<td>Theory Paper Presentations</td>
<td>Paper Draft Due for Peer Reviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-Dec</td>
<td>Job Interviewing and the First Six Years</td>
<td>Peer Paper Reviews Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-Dec</td>
<td>Final Paper Due</td>
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A reading list for each topic is found on the course website. As this is an evolutionary course based on the students’ questions and progress each week, the lists may occasionally be updated up to a week in advance of a particular date. An initial tentative copy is included below for initial referencing.
Initial (Tentative) List of Readings by Seminar Date.

This list may be updated during the semester as needed. Updates will be announced at least a week in advance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>22-Aug: What is the Goal (of Scientific Research)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is Science</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Goal According to Relativism Based Views</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Goal According to Scientific Realism</strong></td>
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<th>29-Aug: What is Theory</th>
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### 5-Sept: What is Good Theory...How to Be Interesting/Novel


### 12-Sept: What is Good Theory...How to Write Hypotheses Persuasively


Zaltman, LeMasters, and Heffring, *Theory Construction in Marketing*, 97-112. (see moodle for copy)


### 19-Sept: What is Good Theory...The Review Process


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### 26-Sept: How to Build Theory


Bem, D.J. (2002) "Writing the Empirical Journal Article"


Zaltman, LeMasters, and Heffring, *Theory Construction in Marketing*, pp.71-96. (Chapter 4) (see moodle for copy)


**3-Oct: Selected Marketing Theories**


**Resource Advantage theory (R-A theory)**


**Market Orientation**


**Learning Orientation**


**Service Dominant Logic**


**10-Oct: Selected Management Theories**


**Dynamic Capabilities**


**Resource Based View of the Firm**


**Transaction Cost Economics**


17-Oct: Selected Finance Theories

**Capital Asset Pricing Model**

**Institutional Theory**

24 Oct- Selected Info Systems Theories

**Technology Diffusion**

**Technology Acceptance Model**

**Theory of Reasoned Action**

Motivation Model

31-Oct: Selected Other Theories

**Agency Theory**

**Stewardship Theory**

**Stakeholder Theory**
Prospect Theory

Organizational Culture Theory

CSR


7-Nov: Theory Boundaries: Moderators
Industry Competitiveness & Concentration
Risk-Taking
Centralization
Commitment to Learning
Trust
Incremental vs. Radical Innovation
Resource Exploration vs. Exploitation
Etc

14-Nov: Reviewing as a method of improving theory writing

21-Nov: Thanksgiving Holiday – University Closed

28-Nov: Theory Paper Presentations
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<td>12-Dec</td>
<td>11-1:30 Final Exam Slot (per University Calendar)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final Theory Paper Due</td>
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