Syllabus

Företagsekonomins klassiker och forskningsfronter/Business Administration: Classics and Research Frontiers (Doctoral Course, 7.5 ECTS)

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Timeline: November and December

Background

This course surveys key classical and contemporary works that have significantly influenced business administration and it does so by including works from accounting, finance, management and marketing. - The four subdisciplines of business administration. An active researcher from each subdiscipline will lecture about their particular classics and contemporary works. The ambition is to offer classical works for each subdisciplines, point out commonalities between the subdisciplines but also bring up what make the subdisciplines differ. One way by which this is achieved is that each lecture will also be attended by an instructor from another subdiscipline as to stimulate a discussion between the subdisciplines. Through critical reading, discussion, and analysis of theoretical, empirical and methodological studies, students will engage with classical and contemporary themes for each subdiscipline.

Aim

The course has two aims:

- Study each subdiscipline's classics and contemporary works
- Reflect upon what unites and what are the key elements that differ between the subdisciplines

Course content

Each subdiscipline will be responsible for 2 sessions, each session being 2 hours. Lectures will focus on underlying assumptions for the particular subdiscipline, dominant methodologies and theories. Furthermore, as business administration is related to society links to contemporary issues in practice such as firms, organisations, professions and society at large will be discussed.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course the student should be able to:

- explain the emergence of each subdiscipline that today forms business administration;
- discuss and explain key components of each subdiscipline;
- discuss and reflect about commonalities and differences between the subdisciplines.

Teaching and learning activities

The course is taught through a combination of seminars, individual exercises, presentations, and written assignments. The language of instruction and examination is English. In case all participants are Swedish-speaking, the language of instruction and examination is Swedish.

Examination

You are expected to read and analyze the required readings before each lecture (preparing yourself to orally discuss the content), and to collect your thoughts in a "course diary".
A personal diary is a notebook in which you write individual comments and reflections on course material as the course progresses. You are recommended to use the guiding questions in Appendix 1 as a guideline when you write these comments in your diary (see the end of this document). Please bring your diary to all lectures (to be used for additional note-taking and as a resource for continuous dialogues and discussions). Your course diary functions as an open-book in that you write the diary for yourself to use later in this course (and hopefully later in your Ph.D.) Yet at the same time you must make it completely clear for an outside reader. The course diary is part of the final examination.

Formulating reflective questions before each lecture
From your reading, formalize 2-3 principal questions based on the readings. The questions can focus on aspects from a specific article but also reflect a broader topic that relate to the overarching theme from the perspective of your research project. No yes/no questions, but rather questions that opens up and encourage a reflexive mindset. Prepare to ask your question(s) during the module and drive that discussion until the class has formed a relevant answer to your question/problem. No PowerPoint is needed.

Main paper/hand-in: Synthesis and personal course diary
The main paper and hand-in are composed of two parts in one document: 1) A synthesis of your course diary that will serve as a problematization/background to your reflexive questions and 2) your course diary from the whole course.

Part 1: This is a synthesis of your course diary that focuses on your reflection on your selected course literature for all the lectures, concerning your Ph.D. project. This synthesis should be about 2,000 words. This means that you will discuss similarities, differences, and linkages between different works that you have read, weaving the streams of research together rather than just reporting it. One way to achieve it, but clearly not limited to this, is to discuss how key terms, for example "organizations", "debt" etc., take on similar and different meanings over the subdisciplines. Ideally, this section results in a new way of thinking about the field of business administration. Part 1 must cover all four subdisciplines. Clarity of text, "golden thread" and structuring are important to make it sensible and understandable for the outside reader.

Part 2: This is your personal diary that you have continuously worked on during the course, following e.g., the structure below. However, for the hand-in of the "course diary," you select a minimum of two articles for each lecture for a "close read".

Parts 1 and 2 should include a complete reference list at the end of the document. You may use any established reference style you want, but you have to use it consistently throughout parts 1 and 2.

Guiding questions for writing a course diary (when reading articles)

- What is the issue, question, or problem that this article/chapter deals with?
- How is it (or not) related to other subdisciplines?
- Theoretical position taken by the author(s)?
- Method used?
- Main results and contribution, and to what extent do you agree with them?
- In addition, construct 3 principal questions that preferably cover the whole theme.

Guiding questions for writing a synthesizes of your course diary

- How does the content of the articles contribute to your own Ph.D. project?
- How could they be applied?
- Does any of the content provide ideas for future research?

Participation in all activities is compulsory. Your performance on the course is assessed individually and graded according to a two-level scale (Pass or Fail). In order to pass the course, you must have participated in at least 80% of scheduled course meetings, and passed all assignments.