The Practice of Strategy

Syllabus

Master's Degree Seminar

Autumn 2013

Module Number: MOEC0384
Room: UNK-E-2 at Universitätsstrasse 84, Zurich
Starting from: September 18th, 2013
Time: 9h00-12h00
Lecturer: Dr. Stéphane Guérard
Exam Date: None
ECTS-Points: 6
Course webpage: http://www.business.uzh.ch/professorships/om/teaching/current_en.html
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Seminar overview
The strategy-as-practice perspective conceptualizes strategy as something people in organizations do instead of something an organization have. This seminar strives to understand how strategy is performed by practitioners (board, top and middle managers) who draw on different practices (planning, decision-making, meetings) which are embedded in various organizational processes (cognitive, cultural, political, discursive and identity works).

This seminar is more than disseminating knowledge, it is an experience where students are encouraged to share, expand and create their understandings of the practice of strategy. Papers published in top international journals serve as a basis for discussion as to how strategists produce, reproduce and transform strategy. Participation is compulsory, the number of participants is limited and part of the work is performed in team. Please refer to the section below to know the procedure as to how to apply to this seminar.

Note that the essay you have to produce for this seminar can easily serve as a basis for your master's degree thesis.

Seminar objectives
At the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Understand how strategy formation is the result of day-to-day practices.
2. Explain the role of different actors in the development and implementation of strategies.
4. Develop capacity to be creative and critical in your thinking.
5. Engage in active discussions related to strategy.

Seminar prerequisites
None
How to apply?
In order to participate in this seminar, you have to send the lecturer a motivational letter explaining your motivations to participate in this seminar, your CV and the grades you obtained so far. Upon reception of your applications, the lecturer will select the participants. Application deadline is September 10th, 2013. The confirmation of your participation will be sent to you on the following day.

Grading
1. Presentation of papers – 15% (see appendix for more details)
2. Animating the debate surrounding the presentation of papers – 15%
3. Each student hand-in one memo of half a page during the semester – 10%
4. Active discussion of papers in each session and presence – 30%
5. At the end of the seminar, you have to hand in an essay of 5 pages which integrate and connect in a creative, consistent and elegant way at least 10 papers that you have read during the semester. This essay has to be handed-in before January 21st, 2013 at 18h00 – 30%.

Reading Material and Schedule

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<th>Themes</th>
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WWF Statutory Course Policies
Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating or engaging in unethical behavior will be reported to the Dean’s office according to the guidelines on academic dishonesty set forth by the University of Zurich.

Don’t forget to officially register yourself using the registration tool (Modulbuchungstool) of the University of Zurich.

Note: The information in this syllabus supports the official information in the electronic university registration tool (VVZ – Vorlesungsverzeichnis). In cases of doubt, the official information at the VVZ is decisive.

References
Appendix

Your presentation
A. 15 minutes per paper
B. The structure of your presentation should be as follow:
   1. Present the purpose of the paper i.e. the reason why the authors wrote this paper.
   2. Explain briefly what the main message of the paper is.
   3. Present the empirical material i.e. the case study that they use to support their message – put a strong emphasis on this.
   4. Then present the theory that explains the cases, the data.

Your animation
A. Prepare an animation of 20 minutes per paper.
B. The idea of an animation is to ensure that a maximum of people participate and to keep the discussion alive. To have a good impact, prepare provocative questions in advance that reflect a good understanding of the papers participants had to read.
C. The structure of your animation could be as follow:
   1. Right after the presentation, ask the audience if they have clarification questions.
   2. Then engage the audience by asking questions.
   3. Let people express themselves and try to synthesize what has been discussed so far before reorienting the debate in another direction (if needed).

Your memos
A. You have to prepare one memo during the seminar. I will assign you the session where you have to hand-in a memo. The memo reflects your understanding of the papers of a session by connecting their main ideas, by highlighting their contradictions and complementarities, and by showing the aspects with which you disagree. When you animate or present during a session, you will not have to hand-in a memo.
B. The length is half a page, single interline.
C. You have to hand-in your memo electronically at least 24 hours before the beginning of the session.

Your essay
A. Your essay has to have between 5 and 8 pages and has to be handed-in after the semester.
B. An essay is an original contribution which mobilizes different concepts and ideas seen in different papers that we have read during the seminar in order to support an idea, answer a question, illustrate a point of view, built a new theory, etc. It is not a summary.
C. To perform this task, you should mobilize at least 10 papers that were presented during the seminar.
D. An essay has an introduction, a development and a conclusion.
E. If you are interested, your essay can serve as a basis to write your master’s degree thesis with me or one member of our research team.