

The Practice of Strategy

Autumn 2017

Time:	Wednesday, 9h00-12h00 (every two weeks Sep 20 - Dec 13, 2017)
Room:	UNK-E-2, Universitätsstrasse 84, 8006, Zurich
Lecturer:	Dr. Katharina Dittrich
Exam:	None
ECTS-Points:	3
Course webpage:	www.om.uzh.ch (see under teaching)
Language:	English
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Description

While strategy is often understood as something organizations have, the strategy-as-practice perspective emphasizes strategy as something people in organizations do. In other words, strategy is seen as a social practice that is constituted by the daily activities of strategy actors. Taking this perspective, in this seminar we will discuss a range of important topics in strategy research, including the activities of different strategy actors (top and middle managers), the dynamics of strategic decision making, the process of strategic change, and the practices and tools used in strategizing. The seminar concludes with a reflection on the practical relevance of the practice-based research on strategy.

This seminar is primarily research-oriented and aims to provide students with the foundations to understand the practice-based approach to studying strategy. Based on papers published in top international journals, we will discuss concrete research exemplars as to how strategists – top or middle managers – produce, reproduce and change strategy.

This seminar is highly participative. In each session, students are evaluated for actively taking part in discussions. During the semester, students are in charge of presenting papers of one session and to animate debates in another one.

Objectives of the course

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

1. Understand the practice approach to studying strategy.
2. Understand how practices shape important aspects of strategy.
3. Understand the role of strategists in strategy process.

Seminar prerequisites

None

Seminar Evaluation

1. Presentation of papers – 15%
2. Animating the debate surrounding the presentation of papers – 15%
3. Active discussion of papers in each session and presence – 20%
4. At the end of the seminar, you have to submit a thesis of 10 pages, which critically discusses the papers examined in the course. Deadline for submission of the thesis is **January 15th, 2018** – 50%.

Schedule and Reading Materials

1. Strategy: A Strategy-as-Practice Perspective

(September 20th, 9h00-12h00)

Readings:

- (1) *Jarzabkowski, P., Balogun, J., & Seidl, D. 2007. Strategizing: The challenges of a practice perspective. Human Relations, 60(1): 5-27.*
- (2) *Whittington, R. 2006. Completing the practice turn in strategy research. Organization Studies, 27(5): 613-634.*

2. Top Managers in Strategizing

(October 4th, 9h00-12h00)

Readings:

- (1) *Gioia, D. A., & Chittipeddi, K. 1991. Sensemaking and sensegiving in strategic change initiation. Strategic Management Journal, 12(6): 433-448.*
- (2) *Ma, S., & Seidl, D. 2016. New CEOs and their collaborators: Divergence and convergence between the strategic leadership constellation and the top management team. Strategic Management Journal, Forthcoming.*

3. Middle Managers in Strategizing

(October 18th, 9h00-12h00)

Readings:

- (1) *Balogun, J., & Johnson, G. 2004. Organizational restructuring and middle manager sensemaking. Academy of Management Journal, 47(4): 523-549.*
- (2) *Guo, Y., Huy, Q. N., & Xiao, Z. 2016. How middle managers manage the political environment to achieve market goals: Insights from China's state-owned enterprises. Strategic Management Journal, Forthcoming.*

4. Strategic Decision Making

(November 1st, 9h00-12h00)

Readings:

- (1) *Eisenhardt, K. M. 1989. Making fast strategic decisions in high-velocity environments. Academy of Management Journal, 32(3): 543-576.*
- (2) *Kornberger, M., & Clegg, S. 2011. Strategy as performative practice: The case of Sydney 2030. Strategic Organization, 9(2): 136-162.*

5. Strategic Change Process

(November 15th, 9h00-12h00)

Readings:

- (1) *Mantere, S., Schildt, H. A., & Sillince, J. A. A. 2012. Reversal of strategic change. Academy of Management Journal, 55(1): 172-196.*
- (2) *Huy, Q. N., Corley, K. G., & Kraatz, M. S. 2014. From Support to Mutiny: Shifting Legitimacy Judgments and Emotional Reactions Impacting the Implementation of Radical Change. Academy of Management Journal, 57(6): 1650-1680.*

6. Strategy Meetings and Workshops

(November 29th, 9h00-12h00)

Readings:

- (1) *Hendry, J., & Seidl, D. 2003. The structure and significance of strategic episodes: Social systems theory and the practice of strategic change. Journal of Management Studies, 40(1): 175-195.*
- (2) *Jarzabkowski, P., & Seidl, D. 2008. The role of meetings in the social practice of strategy. Organization Studies, 29(11): 1391-1426.*

7. Practical Relevance and Synthesis

(December 13th, 9h00-12h00)

Readings:

- (1) *Langley, A. 2015. The ongoing challenge of developing cumulative knowledge about strategy as practice. In D. Golsorkhi, L. Rouleau, D. Seidl, & E. Vaara (Eds.), Cambridge Handbook of Strategy as Practice, 2nd ed.: 111-127. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.*
- (2) *Feldman, M., & Worline, M. 2016. The Practicality of Practice Theory. Academy of Management Learning & Education, 15(2): 304-324.*

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.

Class communication

E-mail is the official method of communication for this lecture. If we send an e-mail to your registered address we consider you to have been informed.

Students with disabilities

Students with disability should contact the lecturer and the disability office as early as possible to make the necessary arrangement.