



**Mittuniversitetet**

MID SWEDEN UNIVERSITY

Course plan for:

## **Sociology, Organisation theory for a changing world, 7,5 ECTS**

### **Aim**

This course aims to deepen the theoretical knowledge of organisation and organising in a world of uncertainty, change, global challenges and recurring crises and disasters.

### **Learning objectives**

After the successful completion of this course, the doctoral student should be able to, in an independent way,

- discern analytically distinguishing characteristics of organisations and organising in a world of uncertainty and change
- critically reflect on trends in contemporary organisation theory
- discuss organisation theoretical arguments within their research area in a critical way.

### **Content**

The course is based on two premises. The first is that *a changing world affects the foundations of organisation and organising*. In a traditional sense, organisations need a clear social structure, clear environmental boundaries, a (coherent) organisational culture and physical structures. However, in many contexts and situations, this is not something we can take for granted nowadays. Because of this, we need a new theoretical understanding of what organisation and organising are and how they happen.

The second premise is that *many of today's challenges and events in the world are both complicated and complex*. On the one hand, both problems and their solutions can be controversial and unclear, and on the other hand, the number of organisations and interests involved can be large and multifaceted. These complications apply to acute problems such as a pandemic or natural hazards and creeping crises alike, such as climate change. For this reason, traditional organisational theory is not necessarily helpful to describe and understand the challenges and events that need to be solved in today's world.

With these premises as a starting point, the course's content consists of recent theory in organisational research that explicitly considers aspects of time, space and relations in the context of change and uncertainty. Organisation and organising are certainly sometimes described as a way in themselves to deal with uncertainty. The classical organisational theory has dealt with this in detail. The difference here is that we "go beyond" the organisation itself. On the one hand, we deal with the conditions for organisation and organising during uncertainty and change. On the other hand, we address recent organisation theory that deals with how and why organisations operate within these conditions.

The course consists of an introduction and then four subsequent themes, each addressing aspects of organisation and organising under uncertain conditions.

1. *Process theory of organisation* treats organisation as a process of "doing", "re-doing", and "un-doing". Rather than talking about formal structures and fixed units, organisation within this perspective is understood as an ongoing dynamic with meaningful "wholes" of various kinds.
2. *Organisation and networks* addresses theories that emphasise the importance of relationships in explaining and interpreting organisational phenomena. In this perspective, organisations are not something that "contains" relationships or an arena in which relationships are played out. Organisations are a relational fabric in themselves; organisations "are relationships" rather than "have relationships".
3. *Partial organisation* is about phenomena in social life that are partly organised without taking place within the framework of a formal organisation. One example is rescue and relief in major accidents and disasters, where a wide range of organisations come together but where the workplace as a whole is not an organisation.
4. *Temporary organisation* is about the increasingly common forms of organisation where permanence is not a starting point. Instead, these organisational forms are time-limited, either predetermined or not. The most studied temporary organisation is the project-based.

## Eligibility

Students who want to register for this class must be enrolled in a PhD-program. They must also be allowed to count the credits from the class as part of their PhD training.

## Selection

The maximum number of participants is 20. The prioritisation for registration is as follows.

1. PhD students in sociology at Mid Sweden University.
2. PhD students in other disciplines than sociology at Mid Sweden University.
3. PhD students from other universities.

## Teaching

The course consists of a series of seminars, including lectures and discussions among the participants.

## Examination

The examination consists of written assignments and active participation in the seminars. All seminars are mandatory. There will be written assignments for each seminar and a final assignment for the final seminar. Discussants will be appointed for each paper in the final seminar.

## Grading

Pass (G) or Fail (U).

## Literature

### Theme I – Process theory of organisation

Davis, Gerald F., & Marquis, Christopher. (2005). Prospects for organization theory in the early twenty-first century: Institutional fields and mechanisms. *Organization science* 16(4): 332–343. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0137>.

Helin, Jenny, Hernes, Tor, Hjort, Daniel & Holt, Robin. (2014) Process is how Process does. I Helin, Jenny, Hernes, Tor, Hjort, Daniel & Holt, Robin. (red.) *The Oxford Handbook of Process Philosophy and Organization Studies*. Oxford University Press, ss. 1–16.

Hernes, Tor, & Weik, Elke. (2007). Organization as process: Drawing a line between endogenous and exogenous views. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 23(3): 251–264. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2007.06.002>

Hernes, Tor. (2014). *A process theory of organization*. Oxford University Press.

Langley, Ann & Tsoukas, Haridimos. (Eds.). (2016). *The SAGE handbook of process organization studies*. Sage. Selected parts.

### Theme II – Organisation and networks

Amati, Viviana, Lomi, Alessandro, Mascia, Daniele, & Pallotti, Francesca. (2021). The Co-evolution of Organizational and Network Structure: The Role of Multilevel Mixing and Closure Mechanisms. *Organizational Research Methods* 24(2): 285–318. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428119857469>

Bodin, Örjan & Nohrstedt, Daniel. (2016). Formation and performance of collaborative disaster management networks: Evidence from a Swedish wildfire response. *Global Environmental Change*, 41: 183–194. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2016.10.004>

Borgatti, Stephen P. & Foster, Pacey C. (2003). The network paradigm in organizational research: A review and typology. *Journal of management*. 29(6): 991–1013. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063\(03\)00087-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063(03)00087-4)

Borgatti, Stephen & Hagin, Daniel. (2011). On Network Theory. *Organization Science* 22(5): 1168–1181. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0641>

Carpenter, Mason A., Li, Mingxian & Jiang, Han. (2012). Social Network Research in Organizational Contexts: A Systematic Review of Methodological Issues and Choices. *Journal of Management*. 38(4): 1328–1361. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206312440119>

Haveman, Heather A. Wetts, Rachel. (2019). Contemporary organizational theory: The demographic, relational, and cultural perspectives. *Sociology Compass*. 13(3): e12664. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12664>

Kapucu, Naim, Arslan, Tolga & Collins, Matthew Lloyd. (2010). Examining intergovernmental and interorganizational response to catastrophic disasters: Toward a network-centered approach. *Administration & Society*, 42(2): 222–247. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0095399710362517>

Moynihan, Donald P. (2009). The network governance of crisis response: Case studies of incident command systems. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. 19(4): 895–915. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mun033>

Moliterno, Thomas P. & Mahony, Douglas M. (2011). Network Theory of Organization: A Multilevel Approach, *Journal of Management*, 37(2): 443–467. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0149206310371692>.

Petridou, Evangelia, Becker, Per & Sparf, Jörgen. (2021). Policy Entrepreneurs in Public Administration: A Social Network Analysis. *Politics & Policy*. 49: 414–445. <https://doi.org/10.1111/polp.12400>.

van den Oord, Steven, Vanlaer, Niels, Marynissen, Hugo, Bruggemans, Bert, Van Roey, Jan, Albers, Sascha, Cambré, Bart & Kenis, Patrick. (2020). Network of Networks: Preliminary Lessons from the Antwerp Port Authority on Crisis Management and Network Governance to Deal with the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Public Administration Review*. 80: 880–894. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13256>

Zappa Paola & Lomi Alessandro. (2016). Knowledge Sharing in Organizations: A Multilevel Network Analysis. In: Lazega Emmanuel & Snijders Tom A. B. (Eds.) *Multilevel Network Analysis for the Social Sciences*. Methods Series (Methodological Prospects in the Social Sciences), vol 12. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-24520-1\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-24520-1_14)

### **Theme III – Partial organisation**

Ahrne, Göran, Aspers, Patrik, & Brunsson, Nils. (2015). The organization of markets.

*Organization Studies* 36(1): 7–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840614544557>

Ahrne, Göran & Brunsson, Nils. (2011). Organization outside organizations: the significance of partial organization. *Organization* 18(1): 83–104. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508410376256>.

Ahrne, Göran, Brunsson, Nils & Seidl, David. (2016). Resurrecting organization by going beyond organizations. *European Management Journal* 34(2): 93–101. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2016.02.003>

Ahrne, Göran, Brunsson, Nils & Seidl, David. (2016). On the fruitfulness of the concept of partial organization: A rejoinder to Apelt et al. *European Management Journal* 35(3): 297–299. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2017.04.003>

Apelt, Maja, Besio, Cristina, Corsi, Giancarlo, von Groddeck, Victoria, Grothe–Hammer, Michael & Tacke, Veronika. (2017). Resurrecting organization without renouncing society: A response to Ahrne, Brunsson and Seidl. *European Management Journal* 35(1): 8–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2017.01.002>

Haug, Christoph. (2013). Organizing spaces: Meeting arenas as a social movement infrastructure between organization, network and institution. *Organization Studies* 34(5–6): 705–732. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840613479232>

Laamanen, Mikko, Moser, Christine, Bor, Sanne & den Hond, Frank. (2020). A partial organization approach to the dynamics of social order in social movement organizing. *Current Sociology Monograph* 68(4): 520–545. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392120907643>

Nielsen, Kristian Roed. (2018). Crowdfunding through a partial organization lens – The co-dependent organization. *European Management Journal* 36: 695–707. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2018.01.006>

Rasche, Andreas, de Bakker, Frank G. A. & Moon, Jeremy. (2013). Complete and partial organizing for corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Business Ethics* 115: 651–663. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1824-x>

Rostami, Amir, Mondani, Hernan, Liljeros, Fredrik & Edling, Christofer. (2018). Criminal organizing applying the theory of partial organization to four cases of organized crime. *Trends in Organized Crime* 21:315–342. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12117-017-9315-6>

Yu, Kyoung-Hee, Kang, Su-Dol & Rhodes, Carl. (2020). The partial organization of networked corruption. *Business & Society* 59(7): 1377–1409. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650318775024>

#### Theme IV – Temporary organisation

Bakker, René M. (2010). Taking stock of temporary organizational forms: A systematic review and research agenda. *International Journal of Management Reviews* 12: 466–486. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2010.00281.x>

Bakker, René M., DeFillippi, Robert J., Schwab Andreeas & Sydow, Jörg. (2016). Temporary organizing: Promises, processes, problems. *Organization Studies* 37(12): 1703–1719. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840616655982>

Bechky, Beth A. (2006). Gaffers, gofers, and grips: role-based coordination in temporary organizations. *Organization Science* 17: 3–21. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1050.0149>

Engwall, Mats. (2003). No project is an island: Linking projects to history and context. *Research policy* 32: 789–808. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-7333\(02\)00088-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0048-7333(02)00088-4)

Engwall, Mats, & Svensson, Charlotta. (2004). Cheetah teams in product development: the most extreme form of temporary organization? *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 20: 297–317. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2003.05.001>

Jacobsson, Mattias, Burström, Thommie & Wolson Timothy L. (2013). The role of transition in temporary organizations: Linking temporary to the permanent. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business* 6: 576–586. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMPB-12-2011-0081>

Kramer, Mikael W. (2009). Role negotiations in a temporary organization: Making sense during role development in an educational theater production. *Management Communication Quarterly* 23(2): 188–217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318909341410>

Lundin, Rolf A. & Söderholm, Anders. (1995). A theory of the temporary organization. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 11: 437–455. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0956-5221\(95\)00036-U](https://doi.org/10.1016/0956-5221(95)00036-U)

Manning, Stephan. (2017). The rise of project network organizations: Building core teams and flexible partner tools for interorganizational projects. *Research Policy* 46: 1399–1415. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2017.06.005>

Packendorff, Johann. (1995). Inquiring into the temporary organization: New directions for project management research. *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 11: 319–333. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0956-5221\(95\)00018-Q](https://doi.org/10.1016/0956-5221(95)00018-Q)

Stjerne, Iben Sandal & Svejenova, Silviya. (2016). Connecting temporary and permanent

organizing: Tensions and boundary work in sequential film projects. *Organization Studies* 37(12): 1771–1792. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840616655492>

Sydow, Jörg and Windeler, Arnold. (2020). Temporary organizing and permanent contexts. *Current Sociology* 68(4): 480–498. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392120907629>

Tukiainen, Sampo & Granqvist, Nina. (2016). Temporary organizing and institutional change. *Organization Studies* 37(12): 819–840. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840616662683>