# Organization theory and design

## Gr. A-K: Prof. Chiara Paolino; Gr. L-Z: Prof. Rita Bissola, Prof. Francesca Mochi

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims at providing students with a comprehensive knowledge about Organization Design and how it interacts with organizational strategy and environment. The course aim is also to offer knowledge about the basic principles of Organizational Behavior and how it can be interpreted in the light of organization design choices.

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

* Demonstrate knowledge about organizational structures, their features, contexts of application and implications for firm competitive advantage.
* Demonstrate knowledge about the relationship between organizational structures and organizational values, individual motivation, team dynamics, and leadership.
* Possess adequate skills to devise basic problems related to organization design and its implication for managing people at the workplace.
* Apply their knowledge and skills to business cases and role-playing, in order to address issues and devise solutions in organization design.
* Practice their communication skills, by developing through cases and an essay their ability to use the appropriate terminology and consistent reasoning in the field of organization theory.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The first part of the course is devoted to the study of the main theoretical approaches within Organization Theory and their relevance to interpret companies’ competitiveness. To this aim, the importance of considering execution and implementation (as well as strategy formulation and revision) as a necessary element to get the intended organizational results will be highlighted. Moreover, this first part will be focused on developing and applying the principles and techniques of Organization Design. More specifically, course contents are the following:

* Definition of organization Theory and of organization Design.
* Analysis of the link among environment-strategy-structure.
* Contingency-based approach to organization theory.
* Organization design and competitive advantage.
* Organizational archetypes, their features and boundary conditions.
* Organization design and organizational values.
* Organizational change.

The second part of the course is devoted to how organization design influence individual and team dynamics in organization. More specifically, in this second part the course contents revolve around how organization design choices interact with:

* individual motivation;
* team dynamics;
* leadership;
* diversity and inclusion.

***READING LIST***

J. Roberts, *The Modern Firm: Organizational Design for Performance and Growth,* Oxford University Press, 2007.

Lecture, cases and notes provided by the instructor.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The teaching methods is based on an interactive and involving approach. The instructors will adopt different tools (e.g. role-playing and simulations, self-tests, brief and long case studies, incidents driven from real businesses; guest lectures) so that students can be autonomous in grasping the main contents from the proposed learning experiences. All these stimuli will be followed by guided debriefing and a sharing of the theoretical models to enable students to summarize the main theoretical and practical ‘takeaways’ of each class. Collaborative learning, through team working, will represent one of the pillars of the course.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

*Attending students:*

A final written exam will represent the opportunity for students to show their understanding of the course topics and their ability to use what they have learned to solve real problems related to Organization Theory and Design. Moreover, a team assignment will give students the opportunity to practice collaborative learning, while deepening their understanding of the topics covered in class and their applications to real cases.

More specifically, the course evaluation will be based on:

* *Final written exam (75%)*: closed-books exam composed of open and closed questions, where the student is required to answer both proving theoretical explanations and examples for the work done in class. The exam will be based on the topics covered by the teaching materials discussed in class and published on Blackboard.
* *Group assignment (25% each)*: students will be required to carry out oneassignment in team, which will give them the opportunity to reason more deeply on the meaning of the theoretical approaches covered in class and their managerial implications. The assignment consists of the critical analysis of a movie, proposed by the professors, where students have to devise organizational issues and comment on them with the appropriate organizational terminology.

*Not attending students:*

Students who choose not to attend classes need to be prepared on the book specified in the Reading List above.

The exam will be written, closed-book and composed of open and closed questions on the assigned book.

The evaluation criteria (both for attending and not attending students) will be the following:

* Acquisition of the technical knowledge related to all the contents the course develops.
* Ability to use the Organization Theory terminology in the appropriate way, according to the main theoretical frameworks the course illustrates.
* Ability to connect in a critical way all the contents and cases the course focuses on, so to arrive to a consistent view of the subject.
* Ability to analyze and address real organizational issues, through the appropiate conceptual frameworks.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Classes and exams will be held in presence (unless different guidelines will be provided with Rector’s decree).

To record Organization Theory and Design grade, students’ need to have recorded Principles of Management grade first.

*OFFICE HOURS*

Proff. Chiara Paolino, Rita Bissola and Francesca Mochi hold their office hours once a week. To schedule their appointment, students are expected to write an email in advance.