Structural Aspects of Social Interaction – Soc 552
Spring 2016, Tuesdays 5pm – 8pm in Tarbutton 206

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Pirkey
Office: Tarbutton Hall, room 232
Office Hours: Tues 3:30-4:30 and Thurs. 10-11, or by appointment
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This course examines theories that address how status, power, and legitimacy processes operate in small group interaction. We will begin by reviewing classic theoretical and empirical works on the emergence and operation of status orders, and progress to contemporary extensions of these foundational theories. A selection of work from the organizational management/behavior literature, particularly organizational perspectives on social exchange, will provide a point of reference for critical discussions about the influence of factors such as context and methodological traditions on the development of theory.

Course Requirements

Informed Participation
Seminar courses, particularly those small in size, are most successful when all members attend regularly and come well prepared. Seminar members should have readings completed before class, and with questions/comments that will add to a productive discussion of the material.

Response Memos
Each week students will write a response memo for one of the readings (assignments to readings will be decided the week prior to ensure all readings are covered). The memo should include a concise summary of the article, identification of strengths and weaknesses, how the article connects to the other readings for the week, and new questions that emerge from the reading. The memo should include the full citation at the top of the first page, and be no longer than two double spaced pages (1 inch margins, 11-12pt font).

Seminar Paper:
A 15-20 Page extensive theoretical paper to be discussed in class. A brief proposal is due prior to the start of spring break, and a working draft should be handed in no later than March 29th. Because students take this course for different reasons, and are different stages in their career, the paper can take on one of a number of forms. You may write:

1. A position paper presenting a cogent argument regarding a theoretical or empirical issue on a topic relevant to evaluations in social interactions
2. A research proposal that includes a review of relevant literature, hypotheses, and/or tentative research methods
3. An analytical synthesis of topics stemming from the two different parts of the course
4. A substantially revised version of a previous paper that draws upon the areas studied in this course.
Peer Review
We will do a simulated peer review process, where each student will act as a peer reviewer for two of their classmates. Authors will provide a response memo addressing their reviews when they hand in the completed seminar paper. Authors are responsible for distributing their papers to the appropriate class members by April 12th. Readers will act as peer reviewers, and will write a 1-2 page critique. The critique should address the author’s argument and identify other inadequacies as well as offer constructive suggestions for revisions. Readers should provide copies of their reviews to all class members. The critiques will form the basis for the paper discussions. Authors will have the opportunity to address the reviews in a response memo and during class discussion.

Course Expectations and Policies

Honor Code:
The Honor Code is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to plagiarize, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. The Emory University honor code applies fully to this course. When you submit your assignments, you are pledging to the honor code. For reference, please consult http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html.

Disabilities:
Students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (http://www.ods.emory.edu/; 727-6016) to obtain proper documentation if accommodations are needed.

Course Outline

Jan 12 Introduction to the course

STATUS

Jan. 19: Classical Studies of Emergence and Operation of Status Orders

Overview of the Expectation States Theory of Status Processes


Jan 26: Origins of Status Characteristics


Feb 02: Gender and Status in Interaction


Feb 09: Status and Legitimacy


Feb 16: Status Process and Organizations


Proposal for course paper due

Feb 23: Status/Legitimacy Processes in Organizations : Gender


Mar 01: Status, Legitimacy, Race, and Ethnicity


Mar 08: Spring Break

POWER AND LEGITIMACY

Mar 15: Conceptions and Theories of Power and Legitimacy


Mar 22: Social Exchange Networks


Mar 29: Exchange Network Extensions


**Working draft of seminar paper due**

Apr 05: Organizational Approaches to and Extensions of Social Exchange Theory


Apr 12: Status, Power, and Legitimacy


**Deadline for distributing papers for peer review**

**Apr 19:** Discussion of final papers, wrap up  
**April 26:** Final Papers Due by 5pm (hard copy preferred)