

The Practice Turn in Organizational Research

ORBH 533

Spring 2013

Location: PBL 418

Prof. John Paul Stephens

PBL 428

Office hours: M – F, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

jps136@case.edu

(216) 368-1710

Course Goals

This course is designed to introduce students to the role of practice and performativity in organizing. This involves exploring the link between doing and thinking by and between individuals in an effort to address larger issues of group- and organizational-level behavior. With this introduction to micro-level behavior in organizations, students will examine how concrete, observed actions provide certain affordances for organizational processes, and how these actions embody and constitute larger organizational goals and outcomes. For each student, the end product of the course will be a preliminary thesis on how this perspective on action and practice in organizations can enlighten their own research focus as they move forward with their own programs of research.

Assignments

Reaction Papers

Each class will consist of a discussion in a small seminar format. Students will produce brief, 3-5 page reaction papers each week summarizing their interpretations of the assigned readings. These reaction papers should address 3 questions: 1) What are the author's main ideas? 2) How does the author address the issue of *doing* in organizations and its link to organizational concerns, goals and outcomes? 3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author's ideas? Each reaction paper will serve as the basis for students' talking points throughout the session, and the analysis you put into these papers should ultimately flow into your final paper. Please be prepared to share your week's reflections with others in the seminar, both verbally and with copies to others (either electronic or hard copy).

Discussion Leaders

In addition to the weekly reaction papers, pairs of students will take leadership of the topic matter and discussion for that week's class, from Weeks 2 through 5 of the course.

Final Paper

Each student will produce a 15-20 page paper at the end of the class. This paper will be a preliminary examination of how the practice lens illuminates (or not) their current research focus. Students will be encouraged to think through how action, interaction, speech, gesture, conversation, practice, structure, routines, and enactment all relate to their view of organizational behavior. Students will be free to draw on the content of their weekly reaction papers in order to complete this assignment. This will be due on May 3rd, 2013. Final grades are due May 11th, 2013.

Other Resources

Optional Readings:

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge University Press: New York.

Johnson, M. (2008). *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. New York: Basic Books.

Lave, J. (1988). *Cognition in Practice: Mind, Mathematics and Culture in Everyday Life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Paget, M.A. (1993). *A Complex Sorrow: Reflections on Cancer and an Abbreviated Life*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press

Schatzki, T.R., Knorr Cetina, K., Von Savigny, E. (2001). *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. Routledge: New York.

Schon, D.A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner*. Basic Books: New York.

Sheets-Johnstone, M. (2011). *The Primacy of Movement*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Suchman, L.A. (1987). *Plans and Situated Actions: The Problem of Human Machine Communication*. University of Cambridge Press: Cambridge, U.K.

PDFs of other readings will be posted on the Blackboard site to be read at your convenience.
E.g. Feldman & Rafaeli, 2002.

Academic Integrity:

All students in this course are expected to adhere to university standards of academic integrity. The Standards of Academic Integrity Policy is available at <http://intranet.weatherhead.case.edu/registrar/policies/integrity.cfm>, which outlines your responsibility in more detail.

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course. This includes, but is not limited to, turning in written work that was prepared by someone other than you and making minor modifications to the work of someone else and turning it in as your own.

From the Academy of Management

(http://meeting.aomonline.org/2006/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=21&Itemid=40):

“Authorship and credit should be shared in correct proportion to the various parties’ contributions. Whether published or not, ideas or concepts derived from others should be acknowledged, as should advice and assistance received. [You] should guard against plagiarizing the work of others.”

General Class Schedule & Readings

Tuesday 26th March: Asking Bigger Questions – the role of situated knowledge and action.

Readings:

Anderson, P.J.J., Blatt, R., Christianson, M.K., Grant, A.M., Marquis, C., Neuman, E.J., Sonenshein, S., & Sutcliffe, K.M. (2006). Understanding mechanisms in organizational research: Reflections from a collective journey. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 15, 102-113.

Heath, C. & Sitkin, S. (2000). Big-B versus Big-O: What is *Organizational* about Organizational Behavior? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 22, 43-58.

Orlikowski, W.J. (2002). Knowing in practice: Enacting a collective capability in distributed organizing. *Organization Science*, 13(3), 249-273.

Reckwitz, A. (2002). Toward a theory of social practices: A development in culturalist theorizing. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 5(2), 243 – 263.

Keywords of the day: mechanisms; (shared) practice; organizational; knowing; doing

Tuesday 2nd April: Foundations of Doing in Organizing

Readings:

Barnes, B. (2001). Practice as collective action. In T.R. Schatzki, K. Knorr Cetina, & E. Von Savigny (eds.) *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. pp. 17-28. Routledge: New York.

Boden, D. (1994). The interaction order of organizations. *The business of talk: Organizations in action*. Cambridge, MA: Polity, pp 79-107.

Cohen, M.D. (2008). Reading Dewey: Some Implications for the Study of Routine. In P. Adler (Ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Sociology and Organization Studies: Classical Foundations*, pp. 444-463.

Feldman, M.S., & Pentland, B.T. (2003). Reconceptualizing organizational routines as a source of flexibility and change. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 48(1), 94-118.

Jarzabkowski, P., & Seidl, D. (2008). The role of meetings in the social practice of strategy. *Organization Studies*, 29(11), 1391-1426.

Keywords of the day: talk; meetings; routines; embodiment; coordination

Tuesday 9th April: The Body in Organizing

Goodwin, C. (2000). Action and embodiment within situated human interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 32, 1489-1522.

Heaphy, E.D., & Dutton, J.E. (2008). Positive social interactions and the human body at work: Linking organizations and physiology. *Academy of Management Review*, 33(1), 137-162.

Hindmarsh, J., & Pilnick, A. (2007). Knowing Bodies at Work: Embodiment and Ephemeral Teamwork in Anaesthesia. *Organization Studies*, 28, 1395-1416.

Michel, A. (2012). Transcending socialization: A nine-year ethnography of the body's role in organizational control and knowledge workers' transformation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 56(3), 325-368.

Sheets-Johnstone, M. (1981). Thinking in movement. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 39(4), 399-407.

Keywords of the day: mind; body; situation; pragmatism

Tuesday 16th April: Methods for Capturing Performativity

Streeck, J., & Mehus, S. (2005). Microethnography: The study of practices. In K.Fitch & R.Sanders (Eds.), *Handbook of language and social interaction*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum: pp. 381-404.

Guest (Skype) speaker: Curtis LeBaron

Activities: Review and analysis of video-data

Monday 23rd April: Bridging the Cartesian Divide: Final Considerations

Ashcraft, K.L., Kuhn, T.R., & Cooren, F. (2009). Constitutional Amendments: "Materializing" Organizational Communication. *Academy of Management Annals*, 3(1), 1-64.

Taylor, S.S. (2000). Aesthetic knowledge in academia: Capitalist pigs at the Academy of Management. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 9(3), 304-328.

Gergen, M. M. & Gergen, K. J. (2010). Performative Social Science and Psychology. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 12(1), Art. 11

Lok, J., & DeRond, M. (2013). On the plasticity of institutions: Containing and restoring practice breakdowns at the Cambridge University Boat Club. *Academy of Management Journal* 56(1), 185-207.

Keywords of the day: performativity; materiality; representing knowledge, legitimacy