

Professor Jean Bartunek  
 MB873, Research Seminar II  
 Spring, 2016  
 Class: Monday, 1:00 – 3:30

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 Office hours: Mon 3:45 – 5:00 or by appointment  
 Syllabus as of **February 13, 2016**

Required Readings

**Books:**

- Huff, A. S. 2009. *Designing research for publication*. Los Angeles: Sage (H)  
 Jaccard, J., & Jacoby, J. 2010. *Theory construction and model-building skills: A practical guide for social scientists*. New York: Guilford Press. (J&J)  
 Van de Ven, A. H. 2007. *Engaged scholarship: A guide for organizational and social research*. New York: Oxford (V).

Readings on our class Canvas site: <https://bostoncollege.instructure.com/courses/1561088>

Readings are included in the “**modules**” section of Canvas under the week during which they will be discussed

**February 1:**

- Colquitt, J. A., & Zapata-Phelan, C. P. 2007. Trends in theory building and theory testing: A five-decade study of the *Academy of Management Journal*. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50: 1281 - 1303.  
 Corley, K. G., & Gioia, D. A. 2011. Building theory about theory Building: what constitutes a theoretical contribution? *Academy of Management Review*, 36: 12–32.  
 Oldham, G. R., & Hackman, J. R. 2005. How job characteristics theory happened. In Smith, K. G., & Hitt, M. A. (Eds.). *Great minds in management: The process of theory development: 151 – 170*. New York: Oxford University Press  
**ASQ Theory Forum** that includes the three following papers:  
 Sutton, R. I., & Staw, B. M. 1995. What theory is *not*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40: 371 - 384.  
 Weick, K. E. 1995. What theory is *not*, theorizing *is*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40: 385 - 390.  
 Dimaggio, P. J. 1995. Comments on "What theory is *not*". *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40: 391- 397.

**February 8:**

- Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. 2011. Generating research questions through problematization. *Academy of Management Review*, 36: 247–271

Readings assigned by **Jerry Kane**

- Kane, G.C., Johnson, J., & Majchrzak, A. 2014. Emergent life cycle: The tension between knowledge change and knowledge retention in open online coproduction communities. *Management Science*, 60: 3026-3048.  
 Kane, G. C., Alavi, M., Labianca, G., & Borgatti, S. P. 2014. What’s different about social media networks? A framework and research agenda. *MIS Quarterly*, 38: 275-304.

**February 15:**

- Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. 1976. Motivation through the Design of Work: Test of a Theory. *Organizational Behavior and Human performance*, 16: 250 – 279.
- Oldham, G. R., Hackman, J. R., & Pearce J. L. 1976. Conditions under which employees respond positively to enriched work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 61: 395-403.
- Shepherd, D. A., & Sutcliffe, K. M. 2015. The use of anthropomorphizing as a tool for generating organizational theories. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 9:1, 97-142,
- Locke, K. & Golden-Biddle, K. & Feldman, M. 2008. Making doubt generative: rethinking the role of doubt in the research process. *Organization Science*, 19(6): 907- 918

Readings assigned by **Boram Do**

- Hinkin, T. R. 1995. A review of scale development practices in the study of organizations. *Journal of Management*, 21: 967-988.
- Mitchell, T. R., Holtom, B. C., Lee, T. W., Sablinski, C.J., & Erez, M. 2001. Why people stay: Using job embeddedness to predict voluntary turnover. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44: 1102-1121.

**February 22:**

- Langley, A., Smallman, C., Tsoukas, H., & Van de Ven, A. H. 2013. Process studies of change in organization and management: Unveiling temporality, activity, and flow. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56: 1-13.
- Klag, M., & Langley, A. 2013: Approaching the conceptual leap in qualitative research. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15: 149-166.
- Howard-Grenville, J., Metzger, M. L., & Meyer, A. D. 2013. Rekindling the flame: Processes of identity resurrection. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56: 113–136
- Vaughan, D. 2004. Theorizing disaster: analogy, historical ethnography, and the *Challenger* incident. *Ethnography*, 5: 315-347.

**March 21:**

- Vaughan, D. 1992: Theory elaboration: The heuristics of case analysis. In C. C. Ragin & H. S. Becker (Eds.) *What is a case? Exploring the foundations of social inquiry* (173–202). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Suddaby, R. 2010. Editor's comments: Construct clarity in theories of management and organization. *Academy of Management Review*, 35(3), 346-357.

**April 4:**

- Academy of Management Revised code of ethical conduct.
- Colquitt, J. 2013. From the editors: Data overlap policies at AMJ. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56: 331-333.
- Kacmar, M. 2009. From the editors: An ethical quiz. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52, No. 3, 432–434.
- Lee, T. W., & Mitchell, T. R. 2011. Working in research teams: Lessons from personal experiences. *Management and Organization Review* 7:3 461–469
- Chen, X. 2011. Author ethical dilemmas in the research publication process. *Management and Organization Review* 7:3 423–432
- Kolb, D. M. 2015. Managing yourself: Be your own best advocate. *Harvard Business Review*, November, 130-133

**April 11:**

- Bunge, M. 2004. How does it work: The search for explanatory mechanisms. *Philosophy of the social sciences*, 34, 182-210.
- Hedström, P., & Ylikoski, P. 2010. Causal mechanisms in the social sciences. *Annual review of sociology*, 36: 49-67.

**May 2:**

- Bartunek, J. M., & Rynes, S. L. 2014. Academics and practitioners are alike and unlike: the paradoxes of academic-practitioner relationships. *Journal of Management* 40: 1181 – 1201
- Kessler, E. H., & Bartunek, J. M. 2014. Designing management maps and apps: Insights for discovering and creating our management realities. *Academy of Management Review*. 39: 234-243.

**Requirements**

All work prepared in conjunction with the class *must* use the Academy of Management style guide.

**Second year students.** With the guidance of a two person committee, each student will design, carry out, and formally present a piece of empirical research throughout the calendar year. The assignment for this course “ends” with the oral presentation of the paper at the beginning of December, 2016. The eventual final written project (to be completed by the end of class in April/May, 2017) should be of sufficiently high quality to submit to a suitable professional journal or meeting, at least after some revision and editing.

**Third year students.** With the guidance of a two person committee, each student will successfully complete the written third year paper by the end of the spring semester. Each student will also start serious planning for the dissertation proposal.

Class meetings are designed to facilitate work on these projects (and other research as desired). Sessions will be devoted in part to student research projects (under the title “student-led discussion” in the course schedule). Each student will lead two (approximately) 30 minute discussions about their research.

At least one of the discussions led by second year students must be about the third year paper.  
At least one of the discussions led by third year students must be about the proposed dissertation.

**Notes regarding making materials available**

When students are assigning reading to be done by class members in preparation for the student discussion section of a particular class, the materials must be made available by **Thursday** of the preceding week. Otherwise the grade for leadership of part of a class will be lowered.

The simplest way to make materials available is probably to email them and put them in a shared dropbox folder. Then after the class in which they’re discussed they can be moved to a *primed discussion* folder on Canvas for long term storage and availability.

**Some suggestions about the student-led portions of the class**

I encourage you to be creative about this use of time. To aid in this, I have included below several suggestions students from prior versions of our class have made that might help with structuring the

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discussion. *Part of your grade for leadership of a part of the class will depend on how well you have structured the discussion.*

- \* It helps if you assign particular questions on which you want assistance.
- \* When you conduct this discussion you are welcome to invite faculty members you are working with on your third year project or those whom you expect to be working with on your dissertation to join us.
- \* If you spend the entire time presenting you will probably get less help than if you present a bit and spend the bulk of time getting feedback from your classmates.
- \* You may want to record your session, or have one of your classmates take notes on it, so that you will be better able to concentrate on the conversation.
- \* In addition to the class presentation time, individual second and third year students may wish to be paired outside of time, as "research buddies, to help each other out.
- \* It is sometimes helpful for the presenter to assign certain parts of the paper in advance. For example, a second year student asking help in a third year paper may ask one classmate to pay special attention to the proposed literature, another to a proposed survey design, etc.
- \* Students may wish help with a very small portion of the paper. You may, for example, ask everyone to look just at the conceptual framework. It is not necessary for the class to discuss the entire paper.
- \* Those giving assistance need to remember that it is the presenter's paper on which we are working, not the paper they wish the presenter were writing.
- \* Those giving assistance can be clear about how they can be helpful and the areas in which they cannot be helpful (e.g. theories they are totally unfamiliar with)

### Course Schedule

**January 25:** Introduction to the class.

**Second year students:** Prior to the beginning of class second year students email copies of their proposals to all class members. During class they present them formally (about 15 minutes each), using PowerPoint slides.

**Third year students:** Come ready to talk very casually in class about where you are in your third year paper process and what you need to do to complete it by the deadline. (Note that during the second half of class #2 you will talk with second year students about what you have learned from a process perspective about accomplishing the paper up to the point of presentation in December. So don't include any process issues for the first class.)

Some class planning for the semester.

**February 1:** Discussion of theory building.

Readings: ASQ theory forum (Staw & Sutton and the two responses), Oldham and Hackman chapter, Colquitt & Zapata-Phelan, Corley & Gioia readings

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First half of class:

1. What is and is not organizational theorizing, or, perhaps, theoretical contributions?
2. What are "good" organizational theories? What differences does theorizing make in publications (cf. Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan)?
3. What did you learn from Oldham and Hackman about how a theory might be developed and what happens to it after that?
4. How would you assess the quality of the theorizing, including using Corley and Gioia's criteria of originality and utility, in your own and your classmates' work on your third year papers to this point?
5. What questions about theory are raised for you about your own and each others' work?

Second half of class: Discussion by the third and fourth year students about the process of their third year papers.

**February 8:** Discussion of initial steps/decisions associated with theorizing

Readings: V, ch. 1 – 3, J&J, ch. 2 – 4, Alvesson & Sandberg as well as readings assigned by Jerry Kane

In preparation for class:

1. Use problematization (Alvesson & Sandberg reading) to challenge at least one assumption any of the material discussed to this point.
2. Use at least three of the heuristics in J&J ch. 4 to develop possible ideas for theorizing
3. Consider what epistemological stance underlies your work (V, ch. 2)
4. What would it mean to situate your research as problem focused? (cf. V, p. 95f)?

First half of class:

1. What are the results of your problematization of assumption(s)?
2. Report the results of our idea generation work based on the heuristics
3. What, if anything, is "different" about engaged scholarship from other types of scholarship?
4. To the extent you can tell, what epistemological stance underlies your work (V, ch. 2)? Does this matter?
5. Discussion of V, p. 95f with regard to your projects

Second half of class. Presentation by Professor Gerald Kane (Information Systems) about theorizing based on phenomena

**February 15:** Building theory

Reading: V, ch. 4, ch. 5; H ch. 11; Hackman & Oldham; Oldham, Hackman & Pearce; Shepherd & Sutcliffe; Locke et al. as well as readings assigned by Boram Do

First half of class:

1. What are the differences between process and variance theories (as process theorizing was originally discussed in the 1980s)?
2. What are examples of process and variance theories you have studied to this point?
3. To what do the terms grounded, qualitative, emergent and process theorizing refer?
4. We will "walk through" the materials in the Van de Ven and Whetten chapters using the

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Hackman and Oldham papers as an example

5. Describe something – anything – from your own work experience that casts doubt on any dimension of the Hackman-Oldham model
6. What questions/concerns/comments about theorizing are evoked for you by these materials?
7. Referring back to the Alvesson and Sandberg reading, using problematization to challenge at least one assumption from the Hackman and Oldham work.

Second Half of Class: Boram Do discussing the processes associated with the development of her construct “work related gratitude”

**February 22:** Qualitative and process Theorizing

Readings: Klag & Langley, Langley et al, Howard-Grenville et al.; Vaughan

First half of class:

1. What are defining characteristics of process studies?
2. How might theorizing happen in qualitative studies, as per Klag and Langley? Which of the suggestions they make are accessible to you?
3. We will “walk through” the materials in the Klag & Langley, Langley et al., & Vaughan readings using the Howard-Grenville et al. paper as an example.
4. What are differences and similarities between grounded, qualitative, and process theorizing?

Second Half of class: Student-led discussion (two students)

**February 29:** (Somebody else’s) theory and theory building, part 1.

For this class and the other devoted to this topic, students will choose one published theory (that’s different from the theories other students choose) on which they would like to lead discussion in class. Students will lead class discussion that analyzes the theory in terms of the Whetten, Van de Ven, and Jaccard & Jacoby and/or Langley et al. materials. *Students will need to assign the article(s) you want your classmates to read a week in advance.* On February 29 three theories will be presented.

First half of class:

1. What is this theory? Describe its constructs, the links between constructs, why the constructs are linked as they are, and the contextual and conceptual assumptions.
2. How adequate is this theory “theoretically”, based on the material in class readings?

Second half of class: Student-led discussion (two students)

**March 14:** (Somebody else’s) theory and theory building, part 2.

Readings: The BC IRB website, <http://www.bc.edu/research/oric/human.html> Prepare questions for Judy Clair, who will be discussing the work of the IRB with our class.

For this class and the other devoted to this topic, students will choose one published theory (that’s different from the theories other students choose) on which they would like to lead discussion in class. Students will lead class discussion that analyzes the theory in terms of the Whetten, Van de Ven, and Jaccard & Jacoby and/or Langley et al. materials. *Students will need to assign the article(s) you want your classmates to read a week in advance.* On March 14 three theories will be presented.

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First Half of class:

Judy Clair, who until recently was CSOM's representative on the IRB, will discuss her experience there.

Second half of class:

1. What is this theory? Describe its constructs, the links between constructs, why the constructs are linked as they are, and the contextual and conceptual assumptions.
2. How adequate is this theory "theoretically", based on the material in class readings?

**March 21:** Your own theory-building/theory elaboration: beginning with constructs

Readings: H. p. 217 – 223, exercises 38 (1 – 3) or 39 (1 – 6), J&J ch. 5; Vaughan; Suddaby

In preparation for class:

Choose some focal *variance* construct in which you're at least somewhat interested (along with complementary constructs) and that you think you can develop beyond the extent to which they have been developed so far in the scholarly literature. Do NOT choose a construct that is a central part of your theorizing for a current research project.

Define the construct

If this is a new construct do exercise 38 (1-3) in H. If it is an already existing construct do exercise 39 (1-6) in H. Develop the conceptual definition of the construct (J&J) and then describe the process you used to create the conceptual definition. Send this material to everyone by Sunday night before class

First half of class:

1. How does theory *elaboration* differ from theory *building*? (Note: We are NOT doing theory elaboration to the extent that Vaughan describes.)
2. Discuss the constructs to this point

Second half of class: Student-led discussion (two students)

**March 28:** *Your own theory-building/elaboration: relationships between the constructs*

Readings: H, p. 223-224 – through #12, exercises 38 (4, 5) or 39 (7), J&J ch. 6

In preparation for class:

Begin with (a revised version of) the materials you developed for the March 21 class. Develop relationships between the constructs. As with the prior week, if you are working with (a) new construct(s) carry out exercise 38 (4-5); if you are elaborating something already existing, carry out exercise 39 (7). As part of this process conduct at least one thought experiment (J&J) that describes a relationship between two variables you are considering (qualitative and/or quantitative) and derive theoretical propositions from the experiment. Send this material to everyone by Sunday night before class

First half of class:

Discuss relationships among the constructs to this point

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Second Half of class: Sharon Comvalius-Goddard, the director of the Office of Sponsored Programs at BC, <http://www.bc.edu/research/osp.html>, will discuss what is involved in getting grants. We will prepare some questions for her in advance.

**April 4:** Ethics in organizational research

Readings: AOM Code of Ethical Conduct, Kacmar, Lee & Mitchell, Chen, Colquit, Kolb

In preparation for class:

1. Read all of the assigned readings and prepare to describe in class the issues that any or all of them evoke for you.
2. Prior to the class (by Friday, March 25 at the latest) send me at least one “vignette” of one or more ethical issues you have encountered, including issues that might have been particularly difficult for you because you, as a doctoral student, were in a less powerful position.

First half of class:

Discussion of the ethical issues evoked by the materials.

Discussion of (and practice in) using the methods Kolb describes to handle ethical issues when we are in less powerful positions.

Second half of class: Student led discussion (two students)

**April 11:** Your own theory-building/elaboration: “because”/causal models and mechanisms

Reading: H, p. 224 - 225 #13, Hedstrom & Ylikoski; Bunge

In preparation for class:

Begin with (a revised version of) the materials you developed for the March 17 and March 31 classes. Construct a causal model that incorporates all your variables. Answer the question “why” with regard to all the crucial links in your model, perhaps, though not necessarily, using the language of social mechanisms. Give precise and clear conceptual definitions of each variable. It helps if the “why” is related to some already existing theory.

First half of class:

Discuss your answers to *why* the constructs are linked as they are.

Second Half of class: Student led discussion (two students)

**April 25:** Contextual and conceptual assumptions

Reading: H, 225-227, Exercise 38 (6) or Exercise 39 (8),. Reread Alvesson and Sandberg

In preparation for class:

Begin with (a revised version of) the materials you developed for the March 17, March 31 and April 14 classes. Develop your contextual and conceptual assumptions, taking special account of the recommendations in the Alvesson and Sandberg paper. As with prior weeks, if you are working with (a) new construct(s) carry out exercise 38 (6); if you are elaborating something already existing, carry out exercise 39 (8). Send this material to everyone by Sunday night before class

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First half of class: discuss your assumptions regarding your model.

Also: discuss what the material on grounded and emergent theory adds to your understanding of theorizing.

Second Half of class: Student led discussion (two students)

## **May 2: Theory and Practice**

Readings: V, ch. 8, 9. Kessler & Bartunek, Bartunek & Rynes

First half of class:

1. Should management scholars be engaged with practice? If so, how?
2. How convincing are Van de Ven's arguments regarding this issue?
3. What does "the Grand Design" as summarized in Kessler and Bartunek suggest about your conceptual assumptions?
4. Based on Kessler and Bartunek, design a management app that would "apply" the theoretical "map" you've been developing
5. How feasible is the kind of paradoxical approach to academic-practitioner relationships suggested by Bartunek and Rynes?

Second Half of class: Student led discussion (two students)

**December, 2016.** The last day of class for all. For current second year students: **Formal oral research presentations**

## **Grading**

Current Second year students will receive a "J" grade at the end of the semester. The class grade will be computed after the presentation in December. The grade will depend on

- \*how well developed the draft proposal for your second year project is on the first day of class (10%),
- \*student preparation for and participation in class discussion (15%),
- \*leadership of class sessions, which includes getting materials to classmates out sufficiently prior to class and structuring the class discussion well (25%)
- \*and the oral presentation (50%), which of course will depend on the research work done over the course of the year. The grade for the presentation will be given by the chair of the student's committee.

The grade for third year students will be given at the end of the semester. It will depend on

- \*the satisfactory completion of the third year paper by **May 13, 2016 at the latest** (30%),
- \*student preparation for and participation in class discussion (30%),
- \* leadership of class sessions, which includes getting materials to classmates out sufficiently prior to class and structuring the class discussion well (40%). At least one session must address thoughts regarding a dissertation proposal. It is expected that students will have sketched out some preliminary ideas of an introduction section and some sense of the likely methodology to be used.

Note: Assuming you have taken an independent study dealing with your third year paper, the independent study grade based on the *quality* of the third year paper (not just its completion) will be given by the chair of your committee (or whoever supervised your independent study).

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*About independent studies associated with your third year paper.* Usually students sign up for one independent study, **MB898**, with their advisor, associated with their third year paper. They typically do this during the fall semester of their third year. They typically get a “j” grade at the end of the semester, and the grade is completed when the written third year paper is completed satisfactorily in the spring semester.

Reminder of due dates

The **Thursday before class** for materials for student-led discussions

A **week in advance** for the “someone else’s” theory articles

The **Sunday before class** for your own theory-building materials