Course Syllabus

Organizational Psychology and Workplace Safety

(7.5 hp)

Master’s Program PAO
Fall Semester 2017
Organizational Psychology and Workplace Safety

Course Content
The course presents a preventative perspective on the management, administration, and putting into practice of safety-related activities that are grounded in social, organizational, and cognitive psychology. The behavioral science perspective is of increasing importance as technical/organizational systems expand, interact, and become more complex. New systems are being introduced in existing organizational structures as institutionalized types of organization are giving way to temporary and less fixed constellations. This carries with it new operational frameworks with risks for error at the individual level and in connection with organizational decision-making. Focusing on preventative safety is therefore all the more important. The course takes into account the interplay of humans, technology, and organizations (HTO), while more specifically looking at the aspects of organizational psychology that relate to decision-making in operational management, risk and incident analysis, and quality assurance.

Instruction
The course is comprised of a series of seminars in which each seminar meeting focuses on a key safety-related area in accordance with the readings and topics on the schedule. The seminars are obligatory. The seminars will involve lectures on topics within safety research along with discussions based on the lectures and assigned readings. The readings are in the form of articles, book chapters, etc., and related exercises in which the students apply what they have read may be assigned. Students are expected to have a good understanding of the assigned readings in order to contribute to the class discussion. The course concludes with an examination seminar in which individually written papers will be presented and discussed.

Expected Learning Outcomes
After course completion the students are expected:

- To be able to critically and systematically integrate the knowledge as well as analyze, judge, and utilize complex phenomena and issues that are relevant to safety considerations in organizations.
- To be able to critically, independently, and creatively identify and formulate lines of inquiry as well as design and carry out advanced assignments using appropriate methods and within given timeframes.
- To be able to orally and in writing clearly present and discuss his/her conclusions and the knowledge and arguments that they are based on.
- To be able to demonstrate the skills that are needed to engage in research and development work or to independently work in another advanced field.

Knowledge Assessment and Examination
A seven-point, outcome-related grading system is used in this course (see below). The course is structured such that students are reading, discussing, and being evaluated continually. Course assessment is based on (1) participation in discussion seminars and (2) an individually written essay.

1. Discussion seminars
The following requirements must be met to receive a final grade in the course:

- Active participation in the seminars (absence from more than one seminar meeting must be compensated for by an extra assignment)
For this requirement the grades of “pass” and “fail” (with the possibility of supplementary examination) are used. Assessment is based on the following criteria:

- Ability to facilitate a topic-related discussion
- Inclusion of reflection and original reasoning

2. Individually written essay

The final examination in the course is in the form of an individually written essay that utilizes one or more of the main topics or concepts presented in the course. The essay (5-7 pages, single-spaced type, including references) is to be assessed and graded according to the seven-point ECTS scale (A, B, C, D, E, Fx, F). The assessment of the essay is based on the following criteria:

- Relevant connection to the issues in question
- Connection to the course literature and other literature relevant to the assignment
- Clarity and structure of the description
- Inclusion of reflection and original reasoning about the problem

The grading will be based on the quality of the individual essay (according to the above) and also take into account the oral presentation at the examination seminar.

Grading Criteria

The grading is based on the following criteria:

A. The expected study outcomes have been reached to an exceptionally high degree.
   The student is able to combine concepts, theories, and models to explain actual examples and is also able to point out the explicatory limitations of the concepts/theories/models through reference to the nature of the actual examples or to alternative theoretical views. The student engages in argumentation and discussion independent of the literature and in a manner that creates new syntheses and lines of reasoning that go beyond the course literature.

B. The expected study outcomes have been reached to a very high degree.
   The student is able to combine and compare concepts, theories, and models to explain actual examples. The student engages in independent argumentation and discussion in a manner that goes beyond the course literature and that, to some degree, creates new syntheses.

C. The expected study outcomes have been reached to a high degree.
   The student is able to apply the concepts, theories, and models from the literature to explain actual examples. The student is able, to some degree, to draw independent connections between the various theories and lines of reasoning presented in the literature.

D. The expected study outcomes have been satisfactorily reached.
   The student is able to describe the concepts, theories, and models in his/her own words. The student is able to refer to the concepts, theories, and models when discussing actual examples.

E. The expected study outcomes have been reached despite some deficiencies.
   The student is able to define the concepts and describe what the theories and models are meant to explain. The student is able to utilize such lines of reasoning to some extent to describe the processes occurring in actual examples.
Fx. Insufficient.
The learning outcomes have not been reached. In one or more areas the level of performance is judged to reflect “certain deficiencies that must be resolved,” but “unsatisfactory” was not judged to apply to any single area. Compensatory work is required.

F. Completely insufficient.
The learning outcomes have not been reached and reaching them is not judged to be possible. The level of performance in one or more areas is judged to be “unsatisfactory.”

Course Literature
Main textbook:

Academic articles: (download via SU account)


