

**HWS 2024**  
**MAN 675: Selected Challenges in Nonprofit Management**  
**Focus Topic: Rethinking Business**  
*(Last update: July 2024)*

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*Chair of Business Administration, Public & Nonprofit Management*

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## 1 Course Description

Business is a contested institution. This is inevitable in a world where economic conditions are improving for many, yet persistent suffering and inequities remain for others. (1) Some people worry about the social and environmental costs of profit-driven market competition and the impacts of recurring economic crises. (2) Conversely, others emphasize the rapid increases in productivity and living standards fostered by a dynamic business sector, warning that stronger government regulations or the imposition of non-economic norms might undermine these benefits. (3) Additionally, some see business as a powerful tool for positive environmental and social change, contingent upon business leaders engaging with stakeholders and pursuing more ethical and sustainable goals. These debates persist because the underlying theoretical foundations rely on different views of society and human nature. They are intense and involve a wide range of perspectives.

This seminar aims not to solve the debates about what business ought to do nor to highlight all differing views on the role of business in society but rather to expose students to newly emerging organizational forms that challenge the dominant view that the goal of business is to increase its profits. System change in this instance is conceptualized as using business as a powerful tool to challenge existing norms such as shareholder primacy as outlined in view (1) and create positive and environmental change as outlined in view (3) to address grand challenges like increasing inequality or anthropogenic climate warming. During the seminar, we will investigate this view by exposing ourselves to organizations, their members, and ultimately, their purpose.

To explore this topic, we will work with recent research articles published in prestigious management journals that focus on the power of organizations, organizational design, and how systemic change toward incorporating stakeholder views and environmental goals in organizations unfolds. Furthermore, we will explore this phenomenon by taking a practical look at organizations that rethink the purpose and structure of organizations and hereby change the landscape of organizations.

## 2 Learning and Qualification Outcome

The course has objectives in three domains: organizational design, strategic planning, and critical thinking. By the end of the module, students will have acquired competencies in all three domains:

In the organizational design domain, students will be able to:

- (1) explain framework conditions as well as theoretical foundations of organizational practices that create and reproduce power structures;
- (2) explain framework conditions as well as theoretical foundations of new organizational forms;
- (3) understand the strengths and weaknesses of new organizational forms;

In the strategic planning domain, students will be able to:

- (4) analyze situations from the point of view of multiple stakeholders;
- (5) analyze how these diverse stakeholders interact in shaping the conduct of business;
- (6) identify and assess alternative courses of action considering multiple criteria;

- (7) develop creative implementation approaches that respond to specific contextual challenges;

In the critical thinking domain, students will be able to:

- (8) climb down the ladder of inference to identify the origin of divergent views;
- (9) find common ground in ambiguous, complex, and controversial problems.

Moreover, key competencies such as presentation skills, team competencies, working with academic papers, and breaking down & elaborating on managerial challenges shall be acquired.

### 3 Organizational Information

The time frame of the seminar: 05<sup>th</sup> of September 2024 until 05<sup>th</sup> of December 2024

Deadlines: See timetable page 8 for details

Form of assessment: Presentation (group work; 25 %),  
Learning diary (pass/fail),  
Written seminar work (individual work; 75 %)

Registration: This term there is no central registration. All students interested are invited to join the first kick-off session.  
**Note:** After the first session a *binding examination registration is mandatory until Monday, 09<sup>th</sup> of September 2024, noon via ILIAS.*

Course materials: ILIAS

Credits: 6 ECTS (= 180 working hours: attendance of seminar (about 25)  
+ preparation for sessions (about 30)  
+ preparation and presentation of case study (about 40)  
+ preparation of learning diary (about 20)  
+ writing seminar paper (about 65))

#### **Contact Details**

Lecturer: Ludwig Uhl  
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Office hours: Upon appointment (usually Thursday morning)

## 4 Course Details

The seminar starts on Thursday, 05<sup>th</sup> of September 2024. The seminar consists of two parts.

First, we will have input sessions where we will discuss scientific papers to create a common understanding of the underlying theoretical foundations and then dive deeper into the boundary conditions of systemic change by building an understanding of newly emerging organizational forms, their possibilities, and causes for hindrance. These input sessions will be both theoretical and practical by diving into practical simulations that will help us to better understand the phenomena at hand and experience power structures as well as managerial challenges in purpose-oriented organizations. These class sessions will take the form of a facilitated discussion.

Second, we will have class sessions that are focused on cases that usually begin with the instructor framing the issues of the day, followed by oral presentations by one or two student teams, presenting their analysis of the case as if they were consultants and the rest of the class were the client in the case and representatives of other relevant stakeholder groups. We then open the discussion to the class. Therefore, all students must prepare the cases before class. As a group, we will try to build a complete analysis of the situation and address the problems and issues it presents. Note the sequence: in this course, unlike many others that use case studies, we do not use cases to illustrate how to apply a theory that is explained in the readings. Rather, the cases here portray situations that are complex and ambiguous—like the difficult situations we face in the real world, where neither the critical issues nor the path to a solution are obvious. In this way, the course aims to build strategic planning and critical thinking skills.

The seminars' timetable with a detailed outline of the course details can be found on page 8.

### 4.1 *General Requirements of the Students*

The contents of the seminar will be largely based on current scientific literature as well as case studies. Reading scientific articles, their critical discussion, and interactive elements are essential parts of this seminar. The case study presentations and preparation for these sessions are also, core to the seminar. Consequently, thorough preparation, good time management, and self-discipline are mandatory for the satisfactory completion of the module. The course language is English. Also, the current scientific literature we will discuss in class is in English. Therefore, mastery of the English language is a basic requirement for participation in the course.

To facilitate learning we will make use of learning analytics by using “LeAP” – Learning Analytics Profiles – a module that is integrated with ILIAS and eases student-lecturer communication. The module offers an overview of the learning goals, readings for the week, and the option to give feedback on the readings. The tool will be introduced during the kick-off session.

The prerequisite for a successful completion of the seminar is regular attendance. Excused absence during seminar sessions is allowed for a maximum of 180 minutes except in sessions where students must present.

#### 4.2 Proof of Performance and Requirements for the Examination Portfolio

The proof of performance consists of the presentation of a case study (25 points), the creation of a learning diary (pass/fail), and a written seminar work (75 points). The exact requirements for the individual components of the examination portfolio are presented in the following sections.

Table 1 gives you an overview of the examination portfolio.

**Table 1. Examination Portfolio MAN 675, Fall Term 2024.**

<b>What</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Scope</b>	<b>Modus</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Deadline (for all)</b>
Case study presentation	Presentation	max. 45 min.	Group work	25	Monday, 28.10.2024, noon
Learning diary	Text	0.5 to 0.75 pages per session	Individual work	0	Weekly Friday at noon, starting on the 20.09.2024
Seminar work	Text	5,000 to 6,000 words	Individual work	75	Monday, 13.01.2025, noon
<b>Total</b>				<b>100</b>	

##### 4.2.1 Requirements for the Learning Diary

The goal of the learning diary is to reflect on the seminar's content. Students will have to hand in a written reflection of roughly 0.5 to 0.75 pages per session following the guidelines of the chair (found on ILIAS). The learning diary aims to enhance the learning atmosphere, by offering the opportunity for the students to reflect on the contents of the seminar and to further develop the seminar through feedback. Guiding questions that could aid in reflecting on the sessions are:

- (1) What is the most relevant insight you have gained today?
- (2) What came as a surprise to you?
- (3) Which further questions do you have at the end of this session?
- (4) What should be done, maintained, or changed so that we can learn well and successfully in the future?

These questions build a possible foundation for the learning diary and can be replaced. Also, not all of them must be answered every session. Nevertheless, students will have to hand in their learning diary document via ILIAS on the Friday after the subsequent session by noon (e.g.: for the first session the learning diary must be handed in on Friday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, for the second session, the 11<sup>th</sup> of October, and so on; see timetable).

#### 4.2.2 Requirements for the Presentation of a Case Study

The students present one case study regarding a newly emerging organization form in a group size that depends on the final class size. They should show that they understood the challenges that the founders/management team were confronted with (potential problems, challenges & opportunities; *U*). The students should present an introduction to the organizational form at the core followed by an outline of what the organization could have done in their situation (potential solutions; *S*), an evaluation of these solutions (choice; *C*), and a course of conduct (implementation plan; *T*) on how the organizational transformation could have been established based on the input from the theory sessions.

While working on the case students should follow the Marshall School of Business's "USC-CT" framework<sup>1</sup> for critical thinking as the problems at hand are typically deeply ambiguous and cannot be solved by some kind of calculation. The framework comprises the following contents:

- U: Uncover the various potential problems, challenges & opportunities vis-à-vis organizational goals.
- S: Select the most critical problem(s), challenge(s), and/or opportunity(ies). Prioritize.
- C: Create a multitude of potential solutions.
- C: Choose the solution(s) that has the potential to be the most effective.
- T: Translate your solution(s) into an effective implementation plan.

The case study presentation is a PowerPoint presentation and should not exceed 45 minutes and be in English. It should be clear which students contributed what part to the presentation. Understanding of the case study, critical discussion, and clarity of the presentation will be evaluated. What is expected of you for the case presentation will be further explicated in the kick-off session.

The lecturer will conduct the allocation of the cases and groups according to content preferences submitted with the "Form for seminar registration and theme preferences" until Mon, 09.09.2024, noon via ILIAS, and will be communicated via ILIAS. Cases can be either taken from existing case studies proposed by the lecturer or worked out by students themselves. This will be discussed in the kick-off session.

#### 4.2.3 Requirements for the Written Seminar Thesis

The goal of the seminar thesis is twofold. First, the seminar thesis should reflect the student's ability to critically – and in written form – discuss the challenges organizations face when rethinking the boundaries of business based on topic-specific theoretical-conceptual foundations. Second, in the seminar thesis, students should critically analyze one case study to exemplify the challenges organizations face while transitioning. To support this process, students should use existing scientific management literature and the USC-CT framework to make their arguments. Students can select any organization, including one of the organizations analyzed in the case studies to make their case.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://students.marshall.usc.edu/sites/default/files/2020-01/5-Step-USC-CT-Problem-Solving-Process.pdf>

Assessment criteria are the content, – particularly the critical discussion of a real-life challenge considering suitable theoretical concepts – a systematic approach, scientific language, and formal aspects of the thesis. The seminar work must follow the guidelines provided by the chair (uploaded on ILIAS & chair website).

## 5 Literature

- Amis, J. M., Mair, J., & Munir, K. A. (2020). The organizational reproduction of inequality. *Academy of Management Annals*, 14(1), 195-230.  
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- Davis, J. H., Schoorman, F. D., & Donaldson, L. (1997). Toward a stewardship theory of management. *Academy of Management Review*, 22(1), 20-47.  
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- Ghoshal, S. (2005). Bad management theories are destroying good management practices. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 4(1), 75-91.  
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- Haveman, H. A. (2022). *The Power of Organizations: A New Approach to Organizational Theory*. Princeton University Press.  
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<http://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=94043>

McMullen, J. S., & Warnick, B. J. (2016). Should we require every new venture to be a hybrid organization?. *Journal of Management Studies*, 53(4), 630-662.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12150>



## 6 Timetable

Last update: July 2024, changes may occur throughout the semester

Date	Time	Place	Session	Content	Readings
Thur, 05.09.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	Kick-off session	Administration, introduction	-
<i>Mon, 09.09.2023</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Deadline signing up for seminar</i>		
Thur, 12.09.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	Theory session 1	Foundations	<b>Mandatory</b> Ghoshal (2005) <b>Optional</b> Jensen & Meckling (1976)
Thur, 19.09.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	Theory session 2	The power of organizations	<b>Mandatory</b> Amis, Mair & Munir (2020) <b>Optional</b> Chapter 1 & 2 of Haveman (2022)
<i>Fri, 20.09.2024</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Upload learning diary entry theory session 1</i>		
Thur, 26.09.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	Simulation 1	Power simulation	<b>Mandatory</b> Preparation of instruction video
<i>Fri, 27.09.2024</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Upload learning diary entry theory session 2</i>		
Thur, 03.10.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	<b>No session</b> due to German Day of Unity	-	-
Thur, 10.10.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	Theory session 3	Rethinking business	<b>Mandatory</b> Battilana, Yen, Ferreras & Ramarajan (2022) <b>AND</b> Davis, Schoorman & Donaldson (1997) <b>Optional</b> Hollensbe, Wookey, Hickey, George & Nichols (2014)
<i>Fri, 11.10.2024</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Upload learning diary entry simulation 1</i>		
Wed, 16.10.2024	Tbd.	Tbd.	Presentation consultation	-	-
Thur, 17.10.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	Theory session 4	Excursus: hybrid organizations	<b>Mandatory</b> McMullen & Warnick (2016) <b>Optional</b> Battilana, Besharov & Mitzinneck (2017)
<i>Fri, 18.10.2024</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Upload learning diary entry theory session 3</i>		
Thur, 24.10.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	Reflection & Simulation 2	-	<b>Mandatory</b> Reading of case material
<i>Fri, 25.10.2024</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Upload learning diary entry theory session 4</i>		
<i>Mon, 28.10.2024</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Deadline group project: Presentation</i>		
Thur, 31.10.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	Case session 1	Patagonia: Rethinking corporate ownership	<b>Mandatory</b> Reading of Patagonia Case (uploaded on ILIAS)
<i>Fri, 01.11.2024</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Upload learning diary entry simulation 2</i>		
Thur, 07.11.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	Case session 2	Goldeimer: Governance	<b>Mandatory</b> Reading of Goldeimer Case (uploaded on ILIAS)
<i>Fri, 08.11.2024</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Upload learning diary entry case session 1</i>		

Thur, 14.11.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	Case session 3	WILDPLASTIC: Finance	<b>Mandatory</b> Reading of WILDPLASTIC Case (uploaded on ILIAS)
<i>Fri, 15.11.2024</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Upload learning diary entry case session 2</i>		
Thur, 21.11.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	Case session 4	Zentek: Participation	<b>Mandatory</b> Reading of Zentek Case (uploaded on ILIAS)
<i>Fri, 15.11.2024</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Upload learning diary entry case session 3</i>		
Thur, 28.11.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	Practitioner talk	Tba.	-
<i>Fri, 29.11.2024</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Upload learning diary entry case session 4</i>		
Thur, 05.12.2024	13:45 – 15:15	O 048	Wrap-up session	Summary seminar, Q&A for seminar paper	-
<i>Fri, 29.11.2024</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Upload learning diary practitioner talk &amp; seminar reflection</i>		
<i>Mon, 13.01.2025</i>	<i>noon</i>	<i>on ILIAS</i>	<i>Deadline individual work: Seminar paper</i>		