

# 183 The Psychology of Work

The Swedish Program  
Stockholm School of Economics

Spring, 2017

**Time:** Fridays 13:00-16:00

**Location:** Room A975

**Instructor:** Aleksandra Bujacz

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**Office hours:** appointment

## Course description

During this course we will talk about selected topics in social psychology with a main focus (and application to) work and organizational psychology. In our discussions throughout the course we will be moving from a person-oriented to a structural-oriented perspective. The course consists of three modules:

- I. *The person and the situation:* feelings, values and goals of an individual, and how are they influenced by the work environment.
- II. *Groups and leaders:* cooperation, judgment, effectiveness of teamwork, and reasons why we need leaders.
- III. *Stability and change in the organization:* climate, culture, organizational processes, and how to initiate a change.

The goal of this course is to give you a possibility to reflect on selected questions about human behavior at work and in the organizational context. You will get familiar with current research findings and based on this knowledge you will be asked to form your own opinions and recommendations for solving real-life problems. We will work with case studies and practical examples that will give you an opportunity to find an immediate application of your knowledge.

## Learning outcomes

During this course you will learn how to:

- characterize a work environment in terms of risk factors and protective factors for workers' well-being;
- discuss basic mechanisms of work motivation and well-being at work;
- define key concepts of organizational science: team, leader, information sharing, culture, climate, stereotype, intervention;
- outline a change process taking into consideration the multilevel complexity of organizations;
- present an evidence-based argument in a clear and concise way.

## Course requirements and examinations

The final grade for the course is based on the following:

Active participation	20%
Midterm paper and presentation	30%
Final paper and presentation	50%

*Grading*

You will be required to present your work in front of the class for both midterm and final exam. Papers will be peer-reviewed. You will review at least two papers written by your classmates. You will be able to respond to the comments raised by your reviewers in your presentation.

Your paper and presentation will be graded with one grade according to the following criteria:

A = excellent work reflecting a mastery of assigned task

B = very good work but still lacking something

C = average work reflecting the minimal effort/competence/knowledge

D = below average work showing little effort/competence/knowledge

F = poor and unacceptable level of effort/competence/knowledge

### *Attendance*

This course assumes an interactive approach which requires engaged participation from all members of the class. Your presence is essential to the liveliness of this course; therefore regular attendance is expected and considered mandatory. You are allowed one absence from class for the entire semester in case of a (documented) emergency situation or when the notice is given to the instructor at least one week in advance. If you will miss more than one class, or fail to inform the instructor about your absence in advance, your final grade will be decreased by one point (e.g., A will become A-) for each class you did not attend.

Attendance at the first session is obligatory.

### *Active participation*

The course requires not only attendance, but also an active and constructive participation in the discussion during class. To facilitate active participation, you will be given a small homework prior to each class. Homework assignments will be related to course literature, and their aim is to help you prepare for class and facilitate our discussion during class. Homework is obligatory (unless a student will not be present during a class). Every time you will come to class unprepared, your active participation grade will be decreased by one point (e.g., A will become A-).

### *Midterm paper and presentation*

This assignment requires conducting a short interview with a working adult person of your choice. You will combine the information you gained from the interview into a paper and a presentation. Any form of presentation is allowed as long as it will respect the time limit and involve legal activities.

### *Final paper and presentation*

This assignment requires reading and critically reviewing a popular psychology book chapter or an article (from the list provided by the instructor or of your own choice). Each student should review different text. The review should include a short summary of the text's content together with your reflections and comments about it. You will have to present the review as a paper and as a presentation.

### *Classroom rules*

We are all expected to behave respectfully in the classroom. This includes, but is not limited to, coming to class on time, giving speakers your undivided attention, addressing your classmates and the instructor with respect, and refraining from academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, taking credit for the work of others, etc.). At the first session you will be given a chance to propose other rules and recommendations that will facilitate your work during the course.

## **Required readings**

We will not follow any textbook during this course. Instead, we will analyze recent publications that review topics of our interest and present important studies. The selected research articles and other scientific resources will be distributed during the course. The articles are listed in the syllabus, but they might be subject to change.

### Course schedule

You will be provided with the assigned readings before every session (note that hard copies will not be distributed). Students are expected to read course materials before each session and prepare for active involvement. You are welcomed to look for, and present during class, any additional information that will help you discuss the topic. Total time for each session is expected to be 3 hours including breaks. The course consists of three types of in-class activities:

1. **Thematic seminar** which cover specific topics (8 sessions). Reading course materials and preparation for discussion is required before the seminars. Each seminar is structured as follows:
  - a. Reflection on homework assignments and discussion based on the course materials;
  - b. Experimental assignment (solve a problem, play a role etc.) or practical assignment (case study, real world example etc.);
  - c. Summary and feedback.
2. **Study visits** (2 sessions). Guided tours in institutions dealing with employee stress and health. The purpose of the visits is to provide a specific Swedish context to the issues discussed in class. Please note! The schedule of the visits might change depending on the availability of the institutional partners.
3. **Students' presentations** (2 sessions). Students' work will be presented, discussed and graded twice during the course. Participation is required.

<i>Syllabus</i>	<i>Topics and Readings</i>
<b>Session 1</b> 27 <sup>th</sup> Jan. Friday 13:00-16:00 room A975	<i>Seminar: Setting the stage</i> Individual. Social context. Psychological theories. + discussing the rules of participation in the course
<b>Session 2</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb. Friday 13:00-16:00 room A975	<i>Seminar: Work environment</i> Engagement. Burnout. Demands. Resources. Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Sanz-Vergel, A. I. (2014). Burnout and Work Engagement: The JD–R Approach. <i>Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior</i> , 1(1), 389–411. doi:10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091235 Eurofound and EU-OSHA. (2014). Psychosocial risks in Europe: Prevalence and strategies for prevention (Chapter 1). Luxembourg. doi:10.2806/70971
<b>Session 3</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> Feb. Friday 13:00-16:00 room A975	<i>Seminar: The “why” of work</i> Basic needs. Work motivation. Gagne, M., & Deci, E. L. (2005). Self-determination theory and work motivation. <i>Journal of Organizational Behavior</i> , 26(4), 331–362. doi:10.1002/job.322 Van den Broeck, A., Vansteenkiste, M., De Witte, H., & Lens, W. (2008). Explaining the relationships between job characteristics, burnout, and engagement: The role of basic psychological need satisfaction. <i>Work &amp; Stress</i> . doi:10.1080/02678370802393672

<b>Session 4</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> Feb. Friday 13:00-16:00	<b>Study visit: Stockholm Stress Center</b> <a href="http://www.stockholmstresscenter.se/">http://www.stockholmstresscenter.se/</a> (we meet at the main SSE entrance at 13:00) Midterm paper submission deadline: 23 <sup>th</sup> Feb.
<b>Session 5</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> Feb. Friday 13:00-16:00 room A975	<b>Seminar: Well-being at work</b> Person-Job fit. Happiness. Job satisfaction. Job engagement. Warr, P., & Inceoglu, I. (2012). Job engagement, job satisfaction, and contrasting associations with person-job fit. <i>Journal of Occupational Health Psychology</i> , 17(2), 129–138. doi:10.1037/a0026859 Peer review submission deadline: 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb.
<b>Session 6</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> March Friday 13:00-16:00 room A975	<b>Midterm presentations</b> ** Position paper guidelines distributed for final assignments
<b>Session 7</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> March Wednesday 16:30-19:30 room A975	<b>Seminar: Leaders</b> Leadership. Status. Power. Anderson, C., & Brion, S. (2014). Perspectives on Power in Organizations. <i>Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior</i> , 1(1), 67–97. doi:10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091259
<b>Session 8</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> March Friday 13:00-16:00 room A975	<b>Seminar: Groups</b> Teams. Information sharing. Decision making. Scholten, L., van Knippenberg, D., Nijstad, B. a., & De Dreu, C. K. W. (2007). Motivated information processing and group decision-making: Effects of process accountability on information processing and decision quality. <i>Journal of Experimental Social Psychology</i> , 43(4), 539–552. doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2006.05.010 Steinel, W., Utz, S., & Koning, L. (2010). The good, the bad and the ugly thing to do when sharing information: Revealing, concealing and lying depend on social motivation, distribution and importance of information. <i>Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes</i> , 113(2), 85–96. doi:10.1016/j.obhdp.2010.07.001
<b>Session 9</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> March Friday 13:00-16:00 room A975	<b>Seminar: Organization</b> Climate. Culture. Structure. Tellis, G. J., Prabhu, J. C., & Chandy, R. K. (2009). Radical Innovation Across Nations: The Preeminence of Corporate Culture. <i>Journal of Marketing</i> , 73(1), 3–23. doi:10.1509/jmkg.73.1.3 Ren, F., & Zhang, J. (2015). Job Stressors, Organizational Innovation Climate, and Employees' Innovative Behavior. <i>Creativity Research Journal</i> , 27(1), 16–23. doi:10.1080/10400419.2015.992659
31 <sup>st</sup> March	NO CLASS
<b>Session 10</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> April Friday 13:00-16:00 room A975	<b>Seminar: Interventions</b> Targeting. Implementation. Change in organizations. Eurofound and EU-OSHA. (2014). Psychosocial risks in Europe: Prevalence and strategies for prevention (Chapter 4: Organizational interventions on psychosocial risks). Luxembourg. doi:10.2806/70971 Final paper submission deadline: 20 <sup>th</sup> April
14 <sup>th</sup> April	NO CLASS

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**Session 11**     *Study visit: Karolinska Institutet Unit for Health Promotion*  
21<sup>st</sup> April     <https://internwebben.ki.se/en/health-promotion>  
Friday     *(we meet at the main SSE entrance at 13:00)*  
13:00-16:00     *Peer review submission deadline: 25<sup>th</sup> April*

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**Session 12**     **Final presentations**  
28<sup>th</sup> April  
Friday  
13:00-16:00  
room A975

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