

**BMA403**  
**Special Topics in Management**  
*Semester 1, 2008*

This unit will be offered in:

**Hobart**

The lecturing team responsible will be:

**Dr Denise Faifua (Lecturer-in-Charge)**

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**<http://www.utas.edu.au/mgmt/student.htm>**

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## Introduction to the Unit

The study of management and marketing is, at a fundamental level, the study of organisations and organisational life. At an undergraduate level, the emphasis is on concepts and theories with appropriate examples and case studies to aid understanding. Rarely is there time to delve into the bases of the development of these issues or their current standing in a scholarly fashion. Some of the 'givens' of undergraduate work will be challenged in this unit. Further, some of the issues that were barely touched on will be opened to in-depth discussion and dialogue. In this way, although the unit may not contribute directly to your thesis, it will, in a more fundamental way, influence the way you see organisations, understand organisational life and argue for particular points of view.

To date there have been a limited number of attempts to represent organisational studies as a whole and to take stock of the major paradigms, histories, issues, and debates of concern to organisational researchers, practitioners and students. *Classics of Organisation Theory* (Shafritz, et.al. 2005) is one attempt at synthesizing classical perspectives in organisation theory. In contrast, *The Handbook of Organisational Studies* (Clegg, Hardy & Nord, 1996) provides a more critical overview of emerging themes.

### Enrolment in the unit

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, students should not enrol in BMA units after the end of week two of semester, as the School cannot guarantee:

- that any extra assistance will be provided by the teaching team in respect of work covered in the period before enrolment; and
- that penalties will not be applied for the late submission of any piece or pieces of assessment that were due during that period.

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## Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- Determine the historical development of current and emerging perspectives in organisation theory.
- Identify theoretical and methodological assumptions and their adoption in different perspectives.
- Critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of seminal articles.
- Present complex theoretical material in a logical and coherent manner.

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## Generic Graduate Attributes

The University has defined a set of generic graduate attributes (GGAs) that can be expected of all graduates (see <http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/policies/index.htm>). By undertaking this unit you should make progress in attaining the following attributes:

### Knowledge

- Students will develop an understanding of how organisation theory is developed.
- Students will develop an understanding of organisation theory as it applies to management and marketing.
- Students will gain an understanding of the limitations of, and develop a capacity to evaluate, their current knowledge.
- Students will develop a broad knowledge base and respect the contribution of other disciplines.

### Communication Skills

- Students will be encouraged to communicate effectively using oral and written mediums.
- Students will be encouraged to present well-reasoned arguments in a logical and coherent manner.
- Students will be encouraged to lead class discussion and generate debate.

- Students will be encouraged to listen to and evaluate the views of others.

### **Problem-Solving Skills**

- Students will learn how to review, critically analyse and evaluate key ideas and concepts in the evolution of theory.
- Students will learn to identify theoretical, methodological and empirical issues in the literature.

### **Global Perspective**

- Students will be exposed to organisation theory issues in an Australian and a global context.

### **Social Responsibility**

- Students will develop an appreciation of the social and ethical implications of research.
- Students will be encouraged to act ethically, with integrity and social responsibility, in the undertaking of research.

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## **Prerequisites**

Completion of BBus, BBA or equivalent and entry into the Management Honours program.

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## **Texts**

### **Prescribed Texts**

Shafritz, J. M., Ott, J. S. & Jang, Y. S. 2005. *Classics of organization theory* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). USA: Thomson Wadsworth. **(To be purchased by students)**

Selected readings from Clegg, S. R., Hardy, C., & Nord, W. R. 1996. *Handbook of organizational studies*. London: Sage. **(To be provided)**

### **School Publications**

Students must obtain the following electronic publications which are available from the School of Management website:

<http://www.utas.edu.au/mgmt/student.htm>

*Writing Assignments: A Guide*

*School of Management Referencing Style*

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## **Recommended Reading**

The publications listed below are highly recommended for further reading on the topics covered in the unit.

### **Books**

The prescribed text is a synthesis of classical organisation theories and the selected readings are a collection of articles covering critical developments across a range of organisation theory perspectives. In addition, it is important that you attempt to find additional articles, which will enable you to assess the currency of the perspective/s you are examining. Some of the literature you will collect may be conflictive – this should not

be avoided but rather used as a source of discussion and debate. The additional literature you look for is guided by the seminar topic and must be peer-reviewed articles from respected academic journals and/or scholarly books.

## **Library Resources**

The library offers a variety of electronic and physical resources that may be helpful for completing assignments.

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## **Flexible Learning: MyLO**

MyLO software has been incorporated into the delivery of this unit to enhance the learning experience by providing access to up to date course materials and by allowing for online discussion through this web-based environment.

To access MyLO from your own computer you will need the appropriate software, and hardware to run that software. See *Learning Online* <http://uconnect.utas.edu.au/> for computer software you will need.

**Note:** Older computers may not have the hardware to run some of the required software applications. Contact your local IT support person or the Service Desk on 6226 1818 if you experience difficulties. The School of Management has prepared a MyLO Information Sheet which includes access guidelines and contact information. It is available to download as a Word document from the School of Management website: <http://www.utas.edu.au/mgmt/student.htm>

## **Privacy Policy and Notice**

The School of Management takes the utmost care to protect the privacy and security of your personal information and to ensure its accuracy.

If you have any concerns about your privacy in MyLO please contact the lecturer-in-charge of this unit or view the University of Tasmania MyLO Privacy Policy Statement available from the university website on <http://www.utas.edu.au/coursesonline/privacy.htm>.

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## Assessment

In order to pass this unit you must achieve an overall mark of at least 50 per cent of the total available marks. Details of each item of Coursework are provided in the Assignment Topics section.

Method of Assessment	Value	Due Date	Length*
<b>Coursework</b>			
Presentations	25 marks	To be timetabled in first workshop	20 minutes per session as discussants plus open discussion – maximum 45 minutes overall.
Participation	15 marks		
<b>Examination</b>	60 marks	Exam Period	4500 words overall
Total Marks	100		

\* **Word Limit:** The word count includes such items as headings, in-text references, quotes and executive summaries. It **does not** include the reference list at the end of the assignment.

## Examination

### *Format*

The final examination will be a “take-home” exam provided after the last seminar on 16 May, 2008 and is due on 13 June, 2008. The examination is worth 60 per cent of your assessment. The examination will consist of a) a choice of three out of five essay questions worth 20 per cent each for a total mark out of 60 OR alternatively b) you may choose to critique the classical synthesis of the prescribed text for the total mark out of 60.

### *Scheduled date and place*

Your final examination for this unit will be held during the scheduled examination period as indicated by Student Administration in correspondence to you.

Examinations will normally be scheduled Monday to Saturday inclusive. Examinations may be held during the day or evening and students should consult the university information which will be made available towards the end of semester.

You are advised to make any necessary arrangements with employers now for time off during examination period to sit this examination. Your participation at the scheduled time is not negotiable unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**Note that you will be expected to sit the examination at your recorded study centre.**

### *Supplementary Examination*

Except in special circumstances and on the recommendation of the lecturer-in-charge or the Head of School, a student who fails will not be granted a supplementary examination.

## Special Consideration and Student Difficulties

If a student is experiencing difficulties with their studies or assignments have personal or life planning issues, disability or illness which may affect their course of study, they are advised to raise these with their lecturer in the first instance. Students may also contact the Catalyst Officer, who will be able to help in identifying the issues that need to be addressed, give general advice, assist by liaising with academic staff, as well as referring students to any relevant University-wide support services. The Catalyst Officer is located in room 318a in the Commerce Building in Hobart and is contactable by phone on 6226 1916. There is also a range of University-wide support services available including Student Services, International Services and Learning Development. Please refer to the *Current Students* homepage at: <http://www.utas.edu.au/students/index.html>

Should a student require assistance in accessing the Library, visit their website for more information at <http://www.utas.edu.au/library/>

Students who have completed their examinations and who feel that they have been disadvantaged due to illness or other circumstances affecting their study, may fill out a form to request that their lecturer takes this into consideration when marking the examination. Forms should be submitted directly to the relevant school, accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation, as soon as possible after the completion of the examination. Granting of special consideration is at the discretion of the lecturer and school. The relevant form can be found at the following website:

[http://www.studentcentre.utas.edu.au/examinations\\_and\\_results/forms\\_files/index.htm#eits](http://www.studentcentre.utas.edu.au/examinations_and_results/forms_files/index.htm#eits)

Students with a non-English speaking background may be permitted to take a bilingual dictionary into an exam. This dictionary must not be annotated, that is, must have no notes written in it. In order to use a bilingual dictionary, students must request permission from the Student Centre.

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## Submission of Coursework

### Lodging Coursework

All Coursework must have the School of Management Assignment Cover Sheet and Title Page attached, both of which are available as a blank template from the School of Management website:

<http://www.utas.edu.au/mgmt/student.htm>

**All assignments must include the tutor's name on the assignment Cover Sheets when they are handed in. If this is not done the assignment will not be accepted and therefore marked.**

Please remember that you are responsible for lodging your Coursework on or before the due date. We suggest you keep a copy. Even in the most 'perfect' of systems, items sometimes go astray.

Note that you may also be required to submit an electronic copy of your Coursework. More details of this will be given in Lectures.

*Hobart students:* Lodge in assignment box at room 316, Commerce & Economics Building.

*Launceston students:* Lodge in assignment box beside room A170.

**All coursework must be handed in at 2.00 pm on the due date.**

### Late Coursework

#### *Written Work*

Extensions will only be granted on medical or compassionate grounds and will not be granted because of work or other commitments. Requests for extensions should be **made in writing** to the lecturer-in-charge prior to the due date. Medical certificates or other evidence must be attached and must contain information which justifies the extension sought.

Late assignments which have **not** been granted an extension will, at the lecturer's discretion, be penalised by deducting ten per cent of total marks for each full day overdue.

Assignments submitted more than six days late will normally not be accepted by the lecturer-in-charge.

### **Tests**

Students who are unable to sit a test on medical or compassionate grounds (work or other commitments are not considered 'compassionate grounds') may request that they be permitted to submit alternative Coursework.

Please do not expect a special test to be held for you if you choose to go on holidays or undertake other activities on the scheduled date. If you do need to request alternative Coursework, you should do so in writing to the lecturer-in-charge prior to the due date. Medical certificates or other evidence must be attached and must contain information which justifies the request. The telephone number of the doctor should also be included.

### **Return of Coursework**

Coursework will be returned during classes or it can be collected from the lecturer's or tutor's room at nominated times; it will not be available from the School's offices.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. It is taking and using someone else's thoughts, writings or inventions and representing them as your own, for example:

- using an author's words without putting them in quotation marks and citing the source;
- using an author's ideas without proper acknowledgment and citation; or
- copying another student's work.

**If you have any doubts about how to refer to the work of others in your assignments, please consult your lecturer or tutor** for relevant referencing guidelines, and the academic integrity resources on the web at <http://www.utas.edu.au/tl/supporting/academicintegrity/index.html>.

The intentional copying of someone else's work as one's own is a serious offence punishable by penalties that may range from a fine or deduction/cancellation of marks and, in the most serious of cases, to exclusion from a unit, a course or the University. Details of penalties that can be imposed are available in the Ordinance of Student Discipline—Part 3 Academic Misconduct, see <http://www.utas.edu.au/universitycouncil/legislation/ord9.pdf>

**The University reserves the right to submit (or to require you to submit) assignments to online plagiarism detection software and might then retain a copy of the assignment on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking.**

### **Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S)**

The University is committed to providing a safe and secure teaching and learning environment. In addition to specific requirements of this unit you should refer to the University's policy at: [http://www.admin.utas.edu.au/hr/ohs/pol\\_proc/ohs.pdf](http://www.admin.utas.edu.au/hr/ohs/pol_proc/ohs.pdf)

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## Seminars

*Due Date:* Nominated weeks – see study schedule (each student will be discussant at two seminars)

*Length:* 20 min. presentation plus discussion

*Value:* 40 marks  
Presentation marks 2 x 12.5; total 25 marks  
Participation marks are ongoing; total 15 marks

This element of your assessment comprises a fortnightly seminar presentation and critical discussion, based on a chapter or chapters from your textbook (Shafritz et.al. 2005), one of the readings from Clegg et al. (1996) – see Study Schedule – and any additional articles the presenters collect. Students not presenting need to have carefully read the text chapter/s and seminal article beforehand and be prepared to contribute to the discussion.

Beginning with the seminar in Week 3, students will present on topics, acting as discussants and providing an up-to-date analysis of the topic. The discussants must provide a brief overview explaining the historical roots of the perspective and describing its theoretical underpinnings. The discussants must critically review the seminal article, assessing how it contributes to the perspective, and evaluating its strengths and weaknesses (remember it is easy to be critical of an author's contribution and much more difficult to assess the contribution they seek to make – aim for a balanced evaluation). The discussants must use any current literature which is available to determine whether the perspective has stagnated or moved. Relevant peer-reviewed articles must be referenced in handouts provided for those not presenting. Discussants will be expected to act as leaders in the open discussion. This will require you to support observations made in your presentation in a manner that demonstrates the depth of your understanding.

Since these seminars form the basis of the examinable part of the unit, active participation in the seminars has great value. It is not essential, but students may take advantage of PowerPoint presentation as a means of skill development towards the presentations of their thesis topics. By taking the form of a mini-seminar, you will begin to gain confidence in your ability to develop a deep understanding of a set of disparate but important management topics, while also developing skills which will assist you in participating at subsequent School of Management Research Seminars.

**Presentation marks:** The lecturer will give a mark out of 12.5 for each presentation, leading to a total mark out of 25.

Not only will the time you act as discussant and leader of a session be formally assessed but your participation as a student in the seminars will also contribute to your final assessment. You are therefore strongly advised to develop your own written summary of the chapters and seminal articles. In addition, by combining your initial overview with the outcomes of discussion, you will begin to develop a strong foundation for your exam and, subsequently, a much stronger and more in-depth understanding of seminal issues in organisational studies.

**Participation marks:** The lecturer will give a mark out of 15 for your contribution in all of the seminars, leading to a total participation mark out of 15.

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## Exam

**Due Date:** 13 June, 2008

**A)** *Length:* Three (3) questions each 1500 words, total 4500 words maximum

*Value:* Three (3) questions each 20 marks; total 60 marks

**OR**

**B)** *Length:* One question, total 4500 words maximum

*Value:* One question; total 60 marks

This will be a “take-home” exam provided after the final seminar on **16 May**.

**Option A):** The exam will be derived from the seminars with no more than one question from any one seminar. Ten questions will be provided and students will be required to answer any three (3). Each question is worth 20 marks. Active and thoughtful participation in the fortnightly seminars will be the best preparation for the exam.

**Option B):** The exam will be based on a critique of the classical synthesis of organisation theory as presented in your prescribed text. If you choose this option you answer only one question from Section B and must not answer any questions from Section A. Again, active and thoughtful participation in the fortnightly seminars will be the best preparation for the exam.

# Study Schedule

Semester 1, 2008

Week	Date	Text Chapter Shafritz, et. al.		Seminal article Clegg, et. al.
1	29 February	Foreword, Introduction to Text, Chap. 1		
3	14 March	Chap. 2	Neo-classical organisation theory	The Normal Science of Structural Contingency Theory
		Chap. 5	Organisational economics theory	Organisational Economics: Understanding the relationship between organisations and economic analysis
6	11 April	Chap. 3	Human resource theory, or the organisational behaviour perspective	The Individual in Organisational Studies: The great disappearing act?
		Chap. 9	Theories of organisation and environments	The Institutionalisation of Institution Theory
7	18 April	Chap. 6	Power and politics organisation theory	Decision-making in Organisations
		Chap. 4	Modern structural organisation theory	Creative Deconstruction: Strategy and Organisations
9	2 May	Chap. 7	Organisation culture theory	Organisational Learning: Affirming an Oxymoron
		Chap. 8	Reform through changes in organisational culture	The Organisational Culture War Games: A Struggle for Intellectual Dominance
11	16 May	Text synthesis	Postmodernism	Critical Theory and Postmodernism Approaches to Organisational Studies
		Text synthesis	Metatheoretical analysis	Normal Science, Paradigms, Metaphors, Discourses, Genealogies of Analysis

A Calendar/Study Planner showing dates is available from School of Management website at <http://www.utas.edu.au/mgmt/student.htm>.