Special Topics: Innovation & Creativity
Doctoral Seminar, Management & Organizations Department
MGMT-GB.3198.01
Spring 2013

Instructor: J.P. Eggers (jeggers@stern.nyu.edu)
Office Hours: By appointment
Class Times: Wednesdays, 2:00pm to 5:00pm, Tisch Hall 720
Class Dates: February 6 to March 14

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The ability of individuals and organizations to both devise and commercialized/implement innovative ideas is a central part of the world today. The number of “guru” books on innovation and creativity is practically endless, suggesting the voracious interest from practitioners in improving their ability to be creative. Similarly, the academic literature on creativity and innovation is both expansive and (at times) highly contradictory. This course is intended as a multi-level, multi-disciplinary doctoral seminar investigating the broad questions of innovation and creativity. By no means will we be able to cover every aspect of these questions, but the goal is to understand the major factors that have been of interest in prior and current research related to innovation and creativity. You have likely touched on at least a few aspects of interest in this course elsewhere in your doctoral education, but our goal here is to pull these diverse interests together in a way that allows us to build a more holistic view of innovative activity in organizations.

The six class sessions are arranged in a somewhat peculiar order, though there is an intended method. The idea is to start with a broad, industry-level view of innovation and how technologies evolve, then to move to the most micro-individual level of creativity and slowly build up to the organization level (progressing through individual, dyadic, and group levels along the way). Thus, we focus initially on why innovation is important but complex first, before moving across multiple levels to our core focus on the organization. As innovation and creativity are not only multi-level phenomena, but also multi-disciplinary in their research interest, the reading list is drawn from a broad array of sources – many from management, but also from applied areas that include marketing, information systems, and finance, as well as disciplinary research in psychology, sociology and economics. You are not expected or required to be proficient in each space of the literature, but you should be willing to engage with methodologies and theoretical approaches that are new to you.

Readings in each section are arranged in a logical (as opposed to a chronological) manner, but the range in dates of the articles in each session allows students to understand how thinking in each area has evolved over time. The articles within each topic incorporate a variety of theoretical and empirical approaches, giving us an opportunity to explore different ways of pursuing answers to some of the same questions, and also helping you to develop a portfolio of theories and methods with which you are familiar. There are three categories of readings included – required readings (those listed first), optional readings (those listed “below the line”), and readings that are central to the conversation that I assume that you have covered in other courses (marked with a * below the line). I recognize that there may be more required readings per class than in other seminars, but we will not dwell too long on any given article and instead will move across articles quickly – you may feel free to read quickly as necessary.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Class Participation.** Class discussion and interaction are a crucial part of our synthesis of the material and learning. It is therefore vital that you come to every class, prepared and ready to contribute. Good participation includes asking questions, raising original ideas, making constructive comments, and having a positive attitude toward learning. Each student is expected to read all of the required readings for the week.

2. **Article Summaries.** Additionally, once during the course each student will be asked to choose one additional reading (not a required reading), either from the list of “below the line” readings on the syllabus or of the student’s choices on a related topic, create a short (~1 page) summary of the major points of the article, and quickly (~5 minutes) present the paper to the group. These summaries should include (but are not limited to):
   1. Complete reference of the article
   2. Very brief synopsis of the purpose of study or argument of paper
   3. An explanation of the primary hypotheses/propositions and constructs in the paper
   4. The methods used in the paper (if empirical)
   5. Key findings/conclusions
   6. Your assessment of strengths/weaknesses of the study or arguments

3. **Research Proposal.** Each student will be asked to create a short but detailed research proposal at the end of the course. This proposal should focus on a viable research topic centered in their own area of interest (psychology, strategy, economics, etc.), dealing with issues related to creativity and/or innovation, and that is at least somewhat multilevel (individual, dyadic, group, organization, industry). The proposal should identify: (a) a specific research question, (b) why this question is interesting and novel, (c) the primary prior literature that serves as the audience for the proposal, and (d) how to investigate this question (methodology, data, etc.). There is no set length for the proposal, but five to ten (5-10) pages (double-spaced) should be sufficient. Students should talk with the professor prior to working on the proposal to discuss viable directions and topics. The proposals are due via email no later than Wednesday, March 20, at 5pm EST.

COURSE GRADING

Grades will be determined as follows:

- Class Participation: 50%
- Article Summary: 10%
- Research Proposal: 40%
1) Technology & Innovation – Macro (Industry) Perspectives (February 6, 2013)


2) Creativity in Organizations – Individual Perspectives (February 13, 2013)


3) Creativity in Organizations – Incentives & Motivation (February 20, 2013)


4) Creativity in Organizations – Groups & the Dynamics of Interaction (February 27, 2013)


5) Creativity in Organizations – Management of Innovation (March 6, 2013)

6) Technology & Innovation – Micro (Firm) Perspectives (March 20, 2013)


