



PROCESS AND PRACTICE APPROACHES TO ORGANIZATION STUDIES

An Introductory Course Online & Warwick University May-July 2023

Description

The course aims to provide doctoral students with an understanding of the theoretical basis, methodological implications, and scholarly debates on process and practice studies in Organisation Studies.

When completed, the course carries 15 Cats (7.5 ECTS). Credit is only available for students from the University of Warwick and member universities of the Eutopia consortium. Students from other institutions may attend on a first-come-first-served basis and will receive an attendance certificate.

Target

The course is aimed at postgraduate students at the Master, Pre Phd (Mphil) or PhD level. **The course is limited to 20 participants.**

Principle course aims

- Learn about the historical and conceptual foundations of process and practice approaches to organization and management studies.
- Introduce the students to the main methodological and theoretical issues in studying organizations from process and practice perspectives
- Expose students to the different scholarly conversation in this space.
- Expose students to the research conducted at Warwick and meet the WBS staff

Learning objectives

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Understand the theoretical foundations and current direction of process and practice-based organizational research
- Compare, contrast, and recognize connections and tensions between different approaches and concepts.
- Identify the gaps and develop ideas about expanding these theories and frameworks through their research.
- Navigate the field of process and practice-based studies to identify the research agenda you intend to contribute to.
- Apply the principles of process and practice perspectives on the study of organizations

Structure & fees

The course includes two parts.

- The first part comprises 5 three hours lectures delivered online.
 - The lectures are listed in the table below and described further in the second part of this document.
 - The lectures requires a substantial amount of pre-readings and activities.
- The second part requires participation in-person participation in all the activities of the [11th Warwick Summer School on Practice and Process Studies](#).

Attendance to the course is FREE. However, students must register (and pay) the reduced fee of the [Summer School on Practice and Process Studies](#). Financial support might be provided to Eutopia students.

The course

Date, time & location	Lecturer	Theme
12 May 3 to 6pm BST (online)	Hari Tsoukas	What is process research?
19 May 3 to 6pm BST (online)	Ann Langley	How to conduct process Research
26 May 3 to 6pm BST (online)	Davide Nicolini	The nature and variety of the practice-theoretical perspective
9 June 3 to 6pm BST (online)	Davide Nicolini	Studying organizational phenomena from a practice-theoretical perspective
16 June 3 to 6pm BST (online)	Katharina Dittrich	Application: The dynamics of organizational routines
12-14 July full day, In-person attendance at University of Warwick, Coventry, UK	Summer School on Practice and Process Studies with the special theme "The body and embodiment in Practice and Process Studies" on the third day	

Assessment

The students aiming to obtain credit must attend at least 75% of the lectures, participate in the Summer School and submit an 3500 words essay in English.

Contact

if you have any questions or you want to register please contact IKON@WBS.AC.UK

CONTENT OF THE SESSIONS

WHAT IS PROCESS RESEARCH?

Haridimos Tsoukas

Process organizational research, drawing on process metaphysics, addresses questions about evolving phenomena. Its point of departure is how agents experience as organizational reality is generated. It shifts thinking from an entitative to a relational ontology whereby “organization” (and related phenomena) is not seen as an already accomplished entity with pre-given properties but as a phenomenon constituted by interaction processes among humans and non-humans. From a process perspective, change is endemic rather than episodic; time is constitutive rather than a medium; agency is essential rather than epiphenomenal. The shift in language from “organization” to “organizing” epitomizes the process turn. Accordingly, from a process perspective, questions of “how” gain new importance: how is organizing accomplished? How is strategy made? How are routines done? How is organizational identity enacted? And so on. In this session we will:

- (a) Provide an introduction to process metaphysics and how it shapes the scholarly language of description and explanation
- (b) Introduce participants to the main thinking and issues related to process organizational research, especially change, agency, and time
- (c) Map the different types of process organizational research

HOW TO DO PROCESS RESEARCH AND WRITE PROCESS PAPERS?

Ann Langley

In this lecture, I will examine existing approaches to conducting qualitative process research (i.e., studies that view phenomena as becoming or evolving over time) and explore how they formulate and link empirical and theoretical elements. The lecture will also describe and compare a number of alternative generic strategies for the analysis of process data, looking at the consequences of these strategies for emerging theories. In particular, I will propose four process-theorizing styles that can be used to frame the results of a process study and frame the novel contribution in a process-based paper.

THE NATURE AND VARIETY OF THE PRACTICE-THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Davide Nicolini

In this session, we will examine the origin, nature, and specific characteristics of a practice-theoretical perspective. The term practice-theoretical perspective refers to a family of approaches in which social practices form the fundamental theoretical category and unit of analysis (Nicolini, 2013). During the session, we will distinguish between different generations of practice scholars and reflect on the similarities and differences between emerging practice-theoretical perspectives and traditions. We will also examine the practical differences deriving from adopting different strands of practice-based sensitivities.

STUDYING ORGANIZATIONAL PHENOMENA FROM A PRACTICE- THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Davide Nicolini

In this session, we will examine the practical implications and benefits of adopting a practice-theoretical perspective in studying organizational and managerial phenomena. We will start by examining the practical implications of adhering to different practice - theoretical perspectives in terms of units of observations, unit of analysis, and related methodologies. We will then discuss different strategies that can be used to study organizational phenomena using a practice-theoretical perspective. Finally, we will review several studies that exemplify the benefits and limitations of conducting practice-based studies in management and organizational studies.

THE DYNAMICS OF ORGANIZATIONAL ROUTINES

Katharina Dittrich

Organizational routines are a core area of research in the area of organization studies and management. Routines, typically defined as repetitive, recognizable patterns of actions, are the basis for accomplishing work in organizations. Early work on routines in the Carnegie tradition (e.g., March and Simon 1958, Cyert and March 1963) emphasized the stability of routines and their role in organizational inertia. More recent work, informed by practice and process theory, has shifted the focus to the internal dynamics of routines that can lead to both stability and change (e.g., Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Feldman et al., 2016). This stream of research has become known as the Theory of Routine Dynamics. By now, Routine Dynamics has grown into a substantial field of research in the area of Practice and Process Organisation Studies.

This session will provide an introduction to core concepts and methodological tools in Routine Dynamics research, including questions such,

- What is the new ontology of routines? What are the core concepts in this perspective?
- How does this view of routines change the traditional understanding of routines?
- How do you go about studying the dynamics of routines?