This doctoral seminar will explore the relations between innovation, organization designs, executive leadership, and organization evolution. We will explore the diverse literatures on the nature of innovation patterns as product/service classes evolve. Will we pay particular attention to the impact of distributed innovation on organizational forms. We then explore the relations between organization designs and innovation outcomes. We conclude with an exploration of the role of senior teams in shaping organizational designs and organizational outcomes as product classes evolve. We will explore when and under what conditions organizational action shapes innovation outcomes. This course is for students interested in understanding and, in turn, conducting research in these broad domains. As these research areas are contested terrains, after getting through the basics we will focus on the contentious and unresolved issues.

Our seminar will improve your ability to do your own independent theory building and to connect your concepts to empirical research. During the term we will focus on a range of inter-related topics. As issues of technology, strategy, senior teams, organization design, and organizational evolution cross disciplinary boundaries, students will be encouraged to develop their own cross-boundary ideas. Students will review and critique a range of both theoretical and empirical work on technical change, senior teams, organizations, and organizational change. Students will present a research proposal. These proposals must include the student’s conceptual model, hypotheses or research questions, and research design.

Each week we will focus on a particular topic. We will read and critically discuss several theoretical and empirical contributions, with individual students playing central roles in leading our discussions. Students will be evaluated on class participation (50 percent) and an integrative literature review and research proposal (50 percent).

**Discussion of Reading**
Each session will have a set of common readings (see # in syllabus). Individual students will take responsibility for reviewing the remainder of the readings. Students will prepare a 1-2-page synthesis/review which should be posted on our class website at least two days prior to our meeting.

After we discuss the common readings, students will lead a discussion of the papers they reviewed. Reviews/critics should include the following:
Summary of the paper

This should be brief. Your first task is simply to create some context or background for the paper and outline its major arguments.

Main contributions

This should be detailed and well articulated. You are expected to show the main contributions of the paper. “Contributions” can refer to several things. They can refer to the contributions made to a particular field of study. Or, contributions can refer to your own understanding of a particular phenomenon — you should therefore answer the question, “What have I learned from this paper?” This can include not only content discoveries (i.e., some novel concept of theory) but also methods discovery (i.e., how to go about being a researcher).

Critique

What are the paper’s conceptual shortcomings and/or research design or technical flaws? You should also consider new opportunities for research and theoretical development.

Finally, note that selected students are only expected to start discussions on a paper. Fellow participants are expected to be active in ensuing discussions.

Literature Review and/or Research Proposal

The research proposal provides each student the opportunity to conceive and plan a study on some issue within our course’s domain. The proposal must include a critical literature review, theoretical framework, and research questions and/or hypotheses. Research proposals should also include a research design. I would like to discuss your topic with you no later than our fourth class meeting.

Articles will be made available online from the course platform or handed out. Books will be on reserve in Baker Library.
February 1
Class 1: Introduction and Overview


February 8
Class 2: Innovation and Organizations: The Phenomena


February 15  
Class 3: Innovation and Technological Change: Discontinuities, Dominant Designs, and Innovation Streams

# Abernathy, W. J. 1978. The productivity dilemma: roadblock to innovation in the automobile industry. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. (Read Chapters 1, 2, 4, & 7.)


Read: Pinch and Bijker (pp.17-50)


February 22
Class 4: Distributed Innovation


# Von Hippel, E. Democratizing Innovation, 2005, MIT Press. Chapters 1-6, 10,11


March 1
Class 5: Core Organizational Processes


Donaldson, L. 2001. The contingency theory of organizations. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications. (Read Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, & 9.)


Weick, K. E. 1979. The social psychology of organizing (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill. (Read Chapters 3-8.)

March 8
Class 6: Core Organizational Processes, continued


March 15
Class 7: Organizational Identity


March 29
Class 8: Incremental Change and Inertia


April 5
Class 9: Organizational Evolution and Change


April 12
Class 10: Exploration and Exploitation


April 19
Class 11: Executive Leadership, Innovation and Organizational Outcomes


April 26 (and May 3?)
Class 12/13: Student Presentations and Synthesis