MKTG 8217  
Theory Construction & Evaluation  
Fall, 2013  
(T), 1:00 – 4:00pm, FCB 368

Professor:  Dan L. Sherrell  
Office:  FEC 150  
Office Hours:  4:00 – 6:00pm, T & Th., other times by appointment  
Phone:  678-4552  
E-mail:  dsherrill@memphis.edu

Texts:  
[Note: this book is out-of-print. With the author’s permission, a copy of the assigned book chapters will be made available to students.]

Prerequisites:  
Doctoral student classification

Course Perspective:  
This is a doctoral-level course designed to help each student develop and evaluate theory as a preliminary step to a career involving teaching; conducting research; and engaging in publication activities as a professor. The course uses a seminar format with primary emphasis on the in-depth discussion of material assigned for reading. Preparation for each class will entail considerable reading and thinking about the relevant topics for discussion. Because many of the topics discussed in this course are subjective in nature, group consensus regarding these topics is neither expected nor desired. It is very important that all participants read and think about the assignment materials prior to each seminar session. All participants are expected to contribute their ideas, insights, and critiques to each session. Students who do not participate will be specifically asked to join in and contribute. To develop as a scholar, you must be able to communicate your ideas and assimilate new information from discussion.

Course Objectives:  
The basic objectives of this course are:  
a.  Review the basic tenets of philosophy of science as they relate to theory generation and testing.  
b.  Examine the development of relevant theory in your discipline.  
c.  Present critiques of the dominant theoretical perspectives on topics of your choosing from your discipline.  
d.  Develop an appreciation for the accepted (and/or debated) boundaries of your relevant discipline.  
e.  Provide the foundation and opportunity for each student to develop a theoretical paper that deals with a functional area or controversial theoretical issue in your relevant discipline.

Course Requirements:  
a.  Read textbook chapters and assigned readings prior to class meetings and be prepared to participate in class discussions.

b.  Prepare for and complete the mid-term examination.

c.  Prepare and present a critique of two (2) empirical research articles from your chosen discipline. Your choice of articles must be approved by the course instructor no later than 1 week (7 days) prior to the presentation of your critique in class. The student is also responsible for delivering an electronic copy of
the selected article to the professor at that time (or a hard copy if the electronic version is unavailable). All papers being critiqued will be made available to the class for review prior to your presentation.

The focus of these critiques should be on the conceptual development and theoretical justification for the research questions addressed by the study. The methodological short-comings of the research study should not be the primary emphasis of your critique. You are trying to answer the questions:

- What is (are) the research question(s) addressed by this study?
- Why is (are) the research question(s) addressed by this study important?
- What should the reader expect the empirical outcome to be?
- Why should the reader expect the predicted outcome?
- What do the results tell us about our knowledge on this topic that is useful?

Students will be asked to make a brief (i.e., 15-20 min.) presentation of their article critique in class. The order of student presentations will be determined through random assignment. Each student will be asked to critique and present their evaluation of two (2) published empirical articles from their chosen discipline during the semester (see schedule below).

d. Students will be formed into teams of two (2) students each and asked to prepare a report identifying and validating the presence of a minimum of at least three (3) empirical generalizations in their discipline. Hunt’s criteria for lawlike generalizations should be used as the benchmark for evaluation of the common empirical regularities appearing in the team’s chosen discipline. However, each team will still have to operationalize Hunt’s criteria for their specific discipline. That is, each team’s report/presentation should describe how the team developed their selection criteria for identifying and selecting empirical generalizations in their discipline. The available empirical evidence used to support the claims of a discipline’s empirical generalizations should be reviewed and a determination of a level of consensus across research studies for the empirical generalizations evaluated.

Student teams will be asked to prepare a report and a presentation to make to the class at the end of the semester (see schedule below). Student teams will be formed during the second class meeting.

e. Individually choose a functional area of interest in your discipline (e.g., sales management, service quality, health care marketing, customer loyalty, etc.) and:

- identify an important (i.e., publishable) research question/issue in your discipline;
- critically analyze the available theoretical frameworks that could be used to address that question;
- choose a theoretical perspective/framework from which to address your chosen issue;
- develop a series of research hypotheses and describe a general method you would use to address the research issues you have identified; and
- present that paper to the class during the final exam period at the end of the semester.

The paper should include:

- A clear explanation of the research question/issue you are addressing, including an evaluation of the importance of the question/issue to your discipline;
- A description of the theoretical frameworks that have been used or can be used to address the question/issue you have chosen;
- A description of the research hypotheses you would use to examine the research question you have chosen; and
- A general description of the research method you would intend to use in testing the research hypotheses you have specified

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Each student must submit a prospectus to the instructor by 10/29 (see schedule). This prospectus should include:

a) A brief description of the research question/issue chosen for the paper;

b) A discussion of the implications of solutions to this particular research question (i.e., So what?); and

c) A brief explanation of the available theoretical frameworks for addressing your chosen question/issue.

Your completed paper is due on December 10th.

Grade Determination:
Evaluation measures for the course will be weighted as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article critiques (2 critiques)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team exercise</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual conceptual paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course grades will be assigned using the university +/- grading system.

Course Administration:
The course syllabus and lecture notes/slides will be made available through the University elearn course management system at: [http://elearn.memphis.edu](http://elearn.memphis.edu). The assigned reading material will be available on the University umdrive site at: [http://umdrive.memphis.edu/dsherrll/public](http://umdrive.memphis.edu/dsherrll/public).

MKTG 8217 – Fall 2013
Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/27</td>
<td>Course introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9/03</td>
<td>Hunt, <em>Modern Theory</em>, Ch. 1; assigned articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Hunt, <em>Modern Theory</em>, Ch. 2 &amp; 3; assigned articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/17</td>
<td>Hunt, <em>Modern Theory</em>, Ch. 4 &amp; 5; assigned articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9/24</td>
<td>Hunt, <em>Modern Theory</em>, Ch. 6 &amp; 7; assigned articles; article critique choices approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10/01</td>
<td>Article (A) critiques; article critique choices approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/08</td>
<td>Article (A) critiques¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10/15</td>
<td><strong>Fall Break – no class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/22</td>
<td><em>Exam I (Hunt (1-7) + assigned articles</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>Assigned articles; <strong>Prospectus for individual paper due in class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11/05</td>
<td>Assigned articles; article critique choices approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>Article (B) critiques; article critique choices approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11/19</td>
<td>Article (B) critiques¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>Team Exercise Presentations¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12/03</td>
<td>Assigned articles; <strong>Team Exercise reports due in class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12/10</td>
<td><strong>Final exam - Individual papers due by 4:00pm (electronically or my office)</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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¹ Student presentation order will be determined by random assignment.
Class Assignments
Fall, 2013

Class 1 – 8/27
Introduction

Class 2 – 9/03
Hunt, *Modern Theory*, Ch. 1


Class 3 – 9/10
Hunt, *Modern Theory*, Ch. 2 & 3


Class 4 – 9/17
Hunt, *Modern Theory*, Ch. 4 & 5


**Class 5 – 9/24**
Hunt, *Modern Theory*, Ch. 6 & 7


**Class 6 – 10/01**
Article critiques – 1st paper

**Class 7 – 10/08**
Article critiques – 1st paper

**Class 8 – 10/15 – No Class; Fall Break**

**Class 9 – 10/22 – Exam I (Hunt 1-7) + assigned articles**

**Class 10 – 10/29**


Class 11 – 11/05


Class 12 – 11/12
Article critiques – 2nd paper

Class 13 – 11/19
Article critiques – 2nd paper

Class 14 – 11/26
Empirical Generalizations – Team Exercise presentations

Class 15 – 12/03
Empirical Generalizations – Team Exercise reports due


12/10 – Final exam period
Individual papers due electronically by 4:00pm