COURSE..... **Institutions, Categories, and Social Evaluations**
SEMESTER/YEAR.... 2º/2026
PROGRAM..... Winter School
CLASS-HOURS..... 30 hours
PROFESSOR..... Diego M. Coraiola
LANGUAGE.....ENGLISH

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Organizations compete in the market not only for financial but also for symbolic resources. Their capacity to thrive depends on how they are perceived and socially evaluated by different audiences. The ability of a market actor to acquire and mobilize resources, experiment with new combinations, and pursue innovative paths rests on its skill in understanding, navigating, and shaping institutional infrastructures so that it aligns its activities with the expectations and interests of stakeholders and other critical audiences.

In this course, we will examine markets as arenas of meaning; a stage where organizations perform before critical audiences, and where they may be rewarded or penalized for their acts. We will explore how organizations navigate institutional arrangements and categorical boundaries, and the work they do to expand, contract, and reshape meanings, labels, and standards to influence stakeholder perception. We will focus particularly on key forms of social evaluation (legitimacy, authenticity, reputation, stigma, and status) that determine organizational success or failure in the eyes of diverse audiences.

By the end of this course, students will have a strong grasp of contemporary organization theory and research on the symbolic dimension of organizing. They will acquire analytical tools to better understand real-world organizational dynamics and the influence of audiences and social evaluations in an increasingly connected and mediatized world. Moreover, they will gain additional insights into the requirements and criteria for publishing impactful research in leading management journals.

LEARNING GOALS

The course learning goals are presented in the table below, showing how they contribute to the learning goals related to methods, for the stricto sensu graduate programs at FGV-EAESP.

Program learning goals	**Course learning goals**	**Level of contribution**
Scientific method	• Additional knowledge about what defines quality research in Management and Organization Studies • A more specific understanding of the symbolic dimension of organizing and the importance of institutions, categories, and social evaluations	● ● ●
Research project / procedures	• Capacity to evaluate the soundness of theory, methods, and findings given the current state of knowledge in social evaluations	● ● ○
Qualitative research methods	• Capacity to understand and assess whether a description of qualitative design is appropriate and sound	● ● ○
Quantitative research methods	• Capacity to understand and assess whether a description of quantitative design is appropriate and sound	● ● ○
Development of academic papers	• Hands-on experience conceptualizing and designing novel research within the topics covered in class	● ● ●
Other course learning goals: ---		

The full description of the learning goals of FGV-EAESP stricto sensu graduate programs can be found at https://rebrand.ly/cursos-pos-eaesp.

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PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

- Organization Theory
- Research Methods

CONTENT/METHODOLOGY

This course is organized as a seminar. The seminar format emphasizes collaborative learning: students learn from one another as much as from the instructor, and our collective aim is to interrogate, refine, and extend theoretical perspectives on institutions, categories, and social evaluations.

Students are expected to complete all assigned readings in advance and come prepared to engage in class discussion. In every session, one or more students will be assigned to lead the discussion of one of the readings. Leading the discussion involves a concise presentation of the article's core arguments, methodological approach, theoretical contributions, and potential questions and critiques stimulated by the reading. The goal is not to summarize the article, but to frame it in ways that generate dialogue, connect it to other works in the syllabus, and highlight its relevance for current debates in management and organization theory. In addition to leading discussions, all students are expected to contribute actively to class conversations by posing questions, offering insights, and bringing their own understanding and experience to draw connections with the readings and build novel insights.

When doing the readings, keep the following questions in mind.

1. What do you know about the topic? Did you learn anything new?
2. What is the main motivation (gap/insight) for developing this paper? Why does it matter?
3. What is the key literature/theory they want to contribute to?
4. What is the basic argument the authors are trying to advance?
5. Which core constructs are they mobilizing?
6. Which methodological approach did they use? Is it sound in your opinion? Why?
7. How did they present their findings? Are they believable? Why?
8. What are the boundary conditions of their theorization?
9. What have they missed, or what could have been improved in their paper?
10. How is this reading connected to the other readings of the course?

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Students will be assessed based on three criteria as follows.

Assignment	Types	Date	Weight
Summary	Hand-in	Every Session	15%
Participation	In class	Every Class	35%
Paper/Proposal	Hand-in	Ago 17, 2025	50%

Summaries

In every meeting, one or more students will be assigned to lead the discussion of a selected reading. Discussion leaders are expected to prepare a one-page summary of the reading they will present in class, including its core arguments, contributions, and possible critiques.

Students not assigned as discussion leaders should prepare a one-page summary connecting the themes of the readings for that class, emphasizing points of convergence, divergence, and questions for further discussion. These summaries will help ensure that all participants are actively engaging with the material and contributing to the seminar conversation.

The summaries should not be longer than one page (single-spaced, 12-point font) and should be emailed to the instructor before the beginning of the class. Students are encouraged to keep these documents organized as a reference for future research projects.

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Participation

Active participation is essential to the success of this seminar. Students are expected to attend every session in full and to contribute regularly in ways that are informed, thoughtful, and constructive. This requires completing all assigned readings before class, preparing questions in advance, and being ready to engage critically with the material and with peers.

While all students are expected to take part in the discussion, discussion leaders are expected to provide a clear and concise summary of their assigned reading. They are also expected to stimulate debate by raising questions, inviting different perspectives, and bringing their own knowledge and experiences to enrich the conversation.

Paper/Proposal

A short conceptual paper or research proposal (~3,000 words) is due two weeks after the end of the course. The goal is to develop a short paper/proposal suitable for submission to the EGOS Conference. The paper should incorporate the readings and seminar discussions, additional readings outside class and the student's personal reflection. The paper should demonstrate originality and not merely replicate existing work. The paper should include: (1) a fully developed introduction (~1-1.5 pages) clarifying the gap and the conversation you aim to contribute to, how you plan to do that with your argument or empirical research, and a clear outline of the expected contributions of your argument/research, (2) a brief review of the literature that highlights why your research is needed, (3) an outline of the methods or the argument you intend to develop, and (4) some concrete contributions and implications of your theoretical contributions.

COURSE SCHEDULE (OPTIONAL)

Session	Date	Contents
1	July 15	Foundations: Institutions, Categories, and Meaning
2	July 16	Tools of Interpretation: Signaling, Framing, and Sensemaking
3	July 17	Legitimacy
4	July 20	Authenticity
5	July 21	Reputation
6	July 22	Status
7	July 23	Stigma
8	July 24	Presentations and Wrap-up

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Session 1

1. DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields. *American Sociological Review*, *48*(2), 147-160.
2. Scott, W. R. (2008). *Institutions and organizations: Ideas and interests* (3rd ed., selected chapters).
3. Douglas, M. (1986). *How institutions think* (selected chapters).
4. Zuckerman, E. W. (1999). The categorical imperative: Securities analysts and the illegitimacy discount. *American Journal of Sociology*, *104*(5), 1398-1438.
5. Bitektine, A. (2011). Toward a Theory of Social Judgments of Organizations: The Case of Legitimacy, Reputation, and Status. *Academy of Management Review*, *36*(1), 151-179.
6. Pollock, T. G., Lashley, K., Rindova, V. P., & Han, J.-H. (2019). Which of These Things Are Not Like the Others? Comparing the Rational, Emotional, and Moral Aspects of Reputation, Status, Celebrity, and Stigma. *Academy of Management Annals*, *13*(2), 444-478.

Session 2

1. Weick, K. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations* (selected chapters).

2. Spence, M. (1973). Job Market Signaling. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *87*(3), 355-374.
3. Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience* (excerpts).
4. Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *26*, 611-639.
5. Sharkey, A., Kovács, B., & Hsu, G. (2023). Expert critics, rankings, and review aggregators: The changing nature of intermediation and the rise of markets with multiple intermediaries. *Academy of Management Annals*, *17*(1), 1-36.

Session 3

1. Suchman, M. C. (1995). Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches. *The Academy of Management Review*, *20*(3), 571-610.
2. Deephouse, D. L., & Suchman, M. (2008). Legitimacy in organizational institutionalism. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin, & R. Suddaby (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of organizational institutionalism* (pp. 49-77).
3. Suddaby, R., & Greenwood, R. (2005). Rhetorical Strategies of Legitimacy. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *50*(1), 35-67.
4. Suddaby, R., Bitektine, A., & Haack, P. (2017). Legitimacy. *Academy of Management Annals*, *11*(1), 451-478.
5. Rao, H., Monin, P., & Durand, R. (2003). Institutional Change in Toque Ville: Nouvelle Cuisine as an Identity Movement in French Gastronomy. *American Journal of Sociology*, *108*(4), 795-843.

Session 4

1. Beverland, M. B. (2005). Crafting brand authenticity: the case of luxury wines. *Journal of Management Studies*, *42*(5), 1003-1029.
2. Lehman, D. W., O'Connor, K., Kovács, B., & Newman, G. E. (2019). Authenticity. *Academy of Management Annals*, *13*(1), 1-42.
3. Verhaal, J. C., & Dobrev, S. D. (2022). The Authenticity Paradox: Why the Returns to Authenticity on Audience Appeal Decrease in Popularity and Iconicity. *Journal of Management*, *48*(2), 251-280.
4. Weber, K., Heinze, K. L., & DeSoucey, M. (2008). Forage for Thought: Mobilizing Codes in the Movement for Grass-fed Meat and Dairy Products. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *53*(3), 529-567.
5. Jago, A. S. (2019). Algorithms and authenticity. *Academy of Management Discoveries*, *5*(1), 38-56.

Session 5

1. Deephouse, D. L. (2000). Media Reputation as a Strategic Resource: An Integration of Mass Communication and Resource-Based Theories. *Journal of Management*, *26*(6), 1091-1112.
2. Fombrun, C., & Shanley, M. (1990). What's in a Name? Reputation Building and Corporate Strategy. *The Academy of Management Journal*, *33*(2), 233-258.
3. Lange, D., Lee, P. M., & Dai, Y. (2011). Organizational Reputation: A Review. *Journal of Management*, *37*(1), 153-184.
4. Rao, H. (1994). The Social Construction of Reputation: Certification Contests, Legitimation, and the Survival of Organizations in the American Automobile Industry: 1895-1912. *Strategic Management Journal*, *15*, 29-44.
5. Ravasi, D., Rindova, V., Etter, M., & Cornelissen, J. (2018). The Formation of Organizational Reputation. *Academy of Management Annals*, *12*(2), 574-599.
6. Rindova, V. P., Williamson, I. O., Petkova, A. P., & Sever, J. M. (2005). Being Good or Being Known: An Empirical Examination of the Dimensions, Antecedents, and Consequences of Organizational Reputation. *Academy of Management Journal*, *48*(6), 1033-1049.

Session 6

1. Podolny, J. M. (1993). A Status-Based Model of Market Competition. *American Journal of Sociology*, *98*(4), 829-872.
2. Piazza, A., & Castellucci, F. (2014). Status in Organization and Management Theory. *Journal of Management*, *40*(1), 287-315.
3. Rindova, V. P., Pollock, T. G., & Hayward, M. L. (2006). Celebrity firms: The social construction of market popularity. *Academy of Management Review*, *31*(1), 50-71.
4. Delmestri, G., & Greenwood, R. (2016). How Cinderella Became a Queen: Theorizing Radical Status Change. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *61*(4), 507-550.

5. Carlos, W. C., & Lewis, B. W. (2018). Strategic Silence: Withholding Certification Status as a Hypocrisy Avoidance Tactic. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *63*(1), 130-169.
6. Lounsbury, M. (2002). Institutional Transformation and Status Mobility: The Professionalization of the Field of Finance. *The Academy of Management Journal*, *45*(1), 255-266. https://doi.org/10.2307/3069295

Session 7

1. Hudson, B. A. (2008). Against all Odds: A Consideration of Core-Stigmatized Organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, *33*(1), 252-266.
2. Zhang, R., Wang, M. S., Toubiana, M., & Greenwood, R. (2021). Stigma Beyond Levels: Advancing Research on Stigmatization. *Academy of Management Annals*, *15*(1), 188-222. https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2019.0031
3. Hudson, B. A., & Okhuysen, G. A. (2009). Not with a Ten-Foot Pole: Core Stigma, Stigma Transfer, and Improbable Persistence of Men's Bathhouses. *Organization Science*, *20*(1), 134-153.
4. Helms, W. S., & Patterson, K. D. W. (2014). Eliciting Acceptance For "Illicit" Organizations: The Positive Implications of Stigma for MMA Organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, *57*(5), 1453-1484.
5. Helms, W. S., Patterson, K. D. W., & Hudson, B. A. (2019). Let's Not "Taint" Stigma Research With Legitimacy, Please. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, *28*(1), 5-10.
6. Aranda, A. M., Helms, W. S., Patterson, K. D., Roulet, T. J., & Hudson, B. A. (2023). Standing on the shoulders of Goffman: Advancing a relational research agenda on stigma. *Business & Society*, *62*(7), 1339-1377.

FURTHER INFORMATION (OPTIONAL)

All the readings will be provided prior to class. Any changes in the reading list will be made 24h prior to the class.