Dr. Mikko Ketokivi is Professor of Operations Management and Organization Design at IE Business School. He is also the current Editor-in-Chief of Journal of Operations Management (FT-45 journal). In his sparetime, he act as the Chairman of the Board at Ultimate Hockey Corps, a Finnish high-tech startup that designs and manufactures high-end composite ice hockey sticks.

Dr. Ketokivi’s academic work has been published in the leading academic journals, such as Administrative Science Quarterly, Academy of Management Review, Strategic Management Journal, Journal of Operations Management, Decision Sciences, Production and Operations Management, and Journal of Organization Design. He teaches organization design, strategic management, and research methods at the MBA and PhD levels. In addition to IE Business School, Dr. Ketokivi has taught at HEC School of Management (Paris), HEC Lausanne, Helsinki University of Technology, University of Helsinki, and University of Minnesota. He has also worked extensively in collaboration with both public research organizations as well as private enterprises, providing them with expertise on analysis of complex statistical data in particular.

Prof. Ketokivi’s Academic Career

Professor of Operations Management & Organization Design – IE Business School (2010 – present)
Affiliate Professor – HEC School of Management, Paris (2006 – 2007)
Associate Research Fellow – The Research Institute of the Finnish Economy (2006 – present)
Senior Lecturer – Helsinki University of Technology (2006 – 2010)

OBJECTIVES

How are activities in organizations defined, divided, and coordinated? Why are organizations structured the way they are? Why are there so many different kinds of organizational designs and structures, even among firms in similar industries? How do we know an organization is well (or poorly) designed? Is there a link from organization design to performance? What is the link between strategy and structure of an organization? What kind of organization-scientific research informs us about these questions? What kinds of contributions can contemporary researchers make to this already well-researched body of knowledge?

Organization design is the most researched topic in organizational studies. In this course, we develop an understanding of this body of knowledge as well as explore potential opportunities for new contributions. The empirical research on organization design is also highly relevant to managerial practice, and we will examine the relevance question as well throughout the seminar.
We start the course with four face-to-face class meetings. Each of the four meetings consists of two sessions, making the face-to-face part of the course a total of eight sessions. The remaining seven sessions are on-line forums.

In the class meetings, we first develop an understanding of the key concepts and seminal theories and perspectives on organization design. We then proceed by looking at empirical research -- both qualitative and quantitative -- on the topic. The focus in the class meetings is discussion and debate on assigned pre-readings.

The readings in this seminar consist of theoretical and empirical research articles from top-level academic research journals. These readings are listed below in conjunction with the session in which they are assigned as pre-readings.

**PROGRAM**

**SESSIONS 1 & 2 (FACE TO FACE)**

**THE SCIENCE OF ORGANIZATION DESIGN**

The popular press is flooded with concepts such as the matrix organization, lateral processes, flexible hierarchies, et cetera. But how is the topic approached in organization-scientific research? What are the intellectual and paradigmatic bases for such research? In the first meeting, we lay the foundation to the seminar by addressing these fundamental questions.

In preparation, read first the article that lays out the practitioner perspective:


Then read two more organization-scientifically oriented articles:


As you read through the latter two, ask yourself: How are these articles similar to (or different from) your understanding of and experiences with organization design? What do they bring to the table that the practitioner piece does not? How can all three articles help you further develop your own ideas?

R.A.: Do You Have a Well-Designed Organization? (R0203K-PDF-ENG)
R.A.: Tackling design anew: Getting back to the heart of organizational theory
R.A.: Organizational boundaries and theories of organization

**SESSIONS 3 & 4 (FACE TO FACE)**

**CHOOSING THE PARADIGM**

Every attempt to understand the (overwhelming) complexity of organizations requires the choice of a perspective -- a paradigm. This choice is a crucial step in a doctoral dissertation as well. Conventionally, rational theories with focus on organizational efficiency have been most visible in research on organization design, and are typically adopted both in popular parlance and in consulting rhetoric as well. More recently, other views -- such as power, politics, and identity -- have gained influence. The goal of this meeting is to develop an appreciation of the alternative perspectives. In preparation, read the following (to be handed out by professor):
1. March, J. G. 1994. A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen. New York: Free Press. Chapters 1, 4, and 5. What kinds of questions about organization design (e.g., Goold & Campbell’s nine tests discussed in session 1-2) do you think best suit the rational approach (chapter 1), the political approach (chapter 4), and the ambiguity/interpretation approach (chapter 5)? Try to think of one example of each to discuss in class. We expand on these perspectives in online sessions.

B.C.: A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen (chapters 1, 4, 5)

SESSIONS 5 & 6 (FACE TO FACE)

WHERE IS THE “FRONTIER OF ORGANIZATION DESIGN RESEARCH”?

Scholars have studied organization designs for almost 60 years. The purpose of this session is to look at the development of various research programs along the way, and to identify where the frontier of organization research is today. In preparation, read the following article that delineates the chronology of research on organization design:

In particular, try to develop an understanding of the five C's -- contingency, configuration, complementarity, complexity, and creativity.

R.A.: Returning to the frontier of contingency theory of organizational and institutional designs

SESSIONS 7 & 8 (FACE TO FACE)

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ON ORGANIZATION DESIGN

Organization designs are complex and heterogeneous -- so is research on them. In this session, we look at examples of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In discussing the quantitative, we look at the conceptual and statistical treatment of one of the key concepts in organization design: fit. An example of qualitative research is Barker’s analysis of self-managing teams.


R.A.: The concept of fit in strategy research: Toward verbal and statistical correspondence
R.A.: Tightening the iron cage: Concertive control in self-managing teams

SESSION 9 (FORUM)

THE RATIONALITY OF ORGANIZATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL CONTROL


R.A.: A conceptual framework for the design of organizational control mechanisms
SESSION 10 (FORUM)

THE POLITICS OF ORGANIZATION: SEPARATION OF OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

R.A.: Separation of ownership and control R.A.: Corporate boards of directors: In principle and in practice

SESSION 11 (FORUM)

THE AMBIGUITY OF ORGANIZATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

R.A.: Identity ambiguity and change in the wake of a corporate spin-off

SESSION 12 (FORUM)

COMBINING PERSPECTIVES FOR A HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING: THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

R.A.: Conceptual models and the Cuban missile crisis

SESSION 13 (FORUM)

ORGANIZING FOR INNOVATION I: THE AMBIDEXTROUS ORGANIZATION

T.N.: Organizational Ambidexterity: Past, present and future

SESSION 14 (FORUM)

ORGANIZING FOR INNOVATION II: MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF UNCERTAINTY

R.A.: Speed and search: Designing organizations for turbulence and complexity

SESSION 15 (FORUM)

SUMMARY

Summary session, no readings assigned.
EVALUATION CRITERIA

Grades will be determined as follows:
70% Class participation
30% Course assignment

In the course assignment, students are asked to develop their thoughts in a written assignment. The content and topic of the assignment will be determined on an individual needs basis with the instructor. Ideally, this assignment should be used to develop and get feedback on the student's thesis ideas.