Seminar

“Topics in Organizational Economics”
(Summer Term 2020)

Prof. Dr. Gerd Muehlheusser and Dr. Niklas Wallmeier

Preliminaries: The seminar will take place as a Blockseminar from TUESDAY May 26 to THURSDAY May 28, 2020 at the youth hostel Dikjen Deel in Westerland (Sylt). All three seminar days will be fully occupied with seminar slots so that participants are expected to arrive on MONDAY May 25 and to leave on FRIDAY May 29. The seminar will be held jointly with students from the University of Regensburg (Prof. Dr. Andreas Roider).

Expenses: The cost per night in the youth hostel is 40 Euro per person (shared rooms, including full board). The total amount for accommodation of 160 Euro (4 nights à 40 Euro) must be paid in advance (cash only) at the startup meeting on March 26, 2020 (see below).

Important: You need to bring the exact amount of 160 Euro in cash. Moreover, students must organize and pay for their trip on their own. The price for a one-way trip with the Schleswig-Holstein Ticket is 29 Euro. Groups of 5 can ride on for a total of 41 Euro (8.20 Euro per person) for the whole group.

Outline: The seminar is paper-based and covers a number of recent topics in organizational economics (i.e., the application of economic tools - theory, experiments, empirical studies - to foster our understanding of what affects the performance of organizations, such as firms or administrations). Each session is centered around the core reference(s) on the respective topic on the reading list, to be presented by groups of two students, followed by a discussion (again by groups of two), and a general in-class discussion. The written paper (Seminararbeit) is supposed to build on a larger base of the relevant literature. The main language of the course is German, but, if preferred by you, your presentations and seminar paper may be in English as well.

Prerequisites: Solid knowledge in Microeconomics, Game Theory and Microeconometrics.
Assessment:

1. Seminar presentation (ca 30-45 min, 45%)

2. Written paper (Seminararbeit, 12-15 pages, 45%)

3. Presentation as a discussant (ca 10 min, 10%)

Group work (presentations and seminar papers) will be graded for the group as a whole, and each group member receives the same grade. Students who insist on individual grades must notify us in advance. Active participation in the general class discussions following the presentations is strongly encouraged and can upgrade your final grade by up to 0.4.

Important Dates Before the Start of the Seminar:

- March 26, 2020, 12:00 - 13:00, room 2053 (VMP 5): Startup meeting and assignment of groups for the presentations and discussions. This is also the deadline for payment of 160 Euro for the youth hostel (see above).

- May 10, 2020, 23:59: Deadline for submitting the written papers (Seminararbeiten) by email to Niklas Wallmeier (niklas.wallmeier@uni-hamburg.de). This ensures that discussants have enough time to prepare their discussion.

- May 17, 2020, 23:59: Deadline for submitting the slides of the main presentations (not for the discussions) by email to Niklas Wallmeier (niklas.wallmeier@uni-hamburg.de). Note that this means that you must submit this material before the seminar takes place!
Seminar Topics

For each of the topics, there will be a presentation and a discussion by a group of students. Half of the topics will be assigned for presentations by students from Hamburg (those are marked “H/R”), the other half for presentations by students from Regensburg (those are marked “R/H”). The respective discussion will be held by students from the other place.

I. Contests and Tournaments

- **Topic 1 (R/H)**: Heterogenous Contestants I
  Core reference: Brown (2011)

- **Topic 2 (H/R)**: Heterogenous Contestants II
  Core reference: Muehlheusser, Schneemann, and Sliwka (2016)

II. Contracts and Incentives

- **Topic 3 (R/H)**: Biases in Contract Choice
  Core reference: DellaVigna and Malmendier (2006)

- **Topic 4 (R/H)**: What Motivates Effort?

- **Topic 5 (R/H)**: The Role of Communication of Incentive Schemes

- **Topic 6 (H/R)**: Incentives on the Team Level
  Core reference: Friebel, Heinz, Krüger, and Zubanov (2017)

III. The Role of Managers in Organizations

- **Topic 7 (H/R)**: Managers’ Impact on Organizational Performance
  Core references: Muehlheusser, Schneemann, Sliwka, and Wallmeier (2018)

- **Topic 8 (R/H)**: What Drives Differences in Management Practices?
  Core references: Bloom et al. (2019)

- **Topic 9 (R/H)**: CEO Behavior and Firm Performance
  Core references: Bandiera et al. (2017)
• **Topic 10 (H/R)** : Management and Digitalization  
  Core references: Bloom, Sadun, and Van Reenen (2012)

• **Topic 11 (H/R)** : Management of Bureaucrats and Public Service Delivery  
  Core references: Rasul and Rogger (2018)

IV. **The Impact of Organizational Structure on Performance**

• **Topic 12 (H/R)** : Face-to-Face Communication  
  Core references: Battiston, Blanes i Vidal, and Kirchmaier (2017)

References


