Instructor: Aseem Kaul
Office: 3-412 CSOM
Office Hours: By appointment
Class time: 1.15 – 4.15 pm; Thursdays (B term)
Class location: CSOM 3-377 (except Nov 21, when we’ll be in CSOM 3-166!)

Course Introduction and Objectives

This is a Ph.D. seminar in the field of nonmarket strategy, i.e., the strategies by which firms alter, influence, or adapt to their existing institutional environment in order to gain competitive advantage. Drawing on foundations in both institutional economics and institutional theory, the seminar examines a body of recent research in the field of strategic management that studies how and to what effect firms engage with political, legal, and social stakeholders. While the primary focus of the course is on the antecedents and consequences of such nonmarket strategies for firms, we shall also consider the impact of these strategies on social welfare, and the resulting implications for public policy.

The objective of the seminar is to provide a survey of the various streams of research within this important and growing literature. To that end, each week of the seminar discusses a key topic within this broader literature, covering both foundational pieces and current research, and examining both central theoretical arguments and the most advanced empirical findings. By exposing you to the work of some of the more prominent and productive scholars in the field, my goal is to not only provide an introduction to various aspects of nonmarket strategy research, but to help develop your critical appreciation of high quality research in this area.
Course Requirements

Readings and discussion

I have assigned a set of readings for each session. These readings are divided into three sets: a set of four *starred* readings that shall be the focus of a discussion led by you (see below), a set of other (non-starred) required readings, and a set of optional readings. Please note that **all readings other than those marked optional are required.** While our discussion may focus more on the starred readings, I expect you to have read and thought about all the readings for the day and to incorporate insights from them all in our classroom discussions. The readings I have starred are simply the easiest to build a discussion off; this is not to suggest that the other readings are somehow less useful or important. The optional readings are readings I suggest you read, especially if you’re interested in the day’s topic, but I’m not requiring you to do so.

In addition to going over the readings and coming prepared to discuss them in class, you will be individually assigned a specific paper on which you will lead the class discussion. A one-page (typed, single spaced, ≥ 11-point font) critical summary of the assigned paper will be required, which should typically include:

(a) a summary of the research question or problem the paper addresses,
(b) the paper’s strengths and limitations, and
(c) the contribution it makes to the field, and a couple of major obvious and non-obvious links to the other pieces in the session or the course

Please bring enough paper summaries to the class to distribute to all the participants. Please also email a copy of your summary to all participants before the start of the class. The paper summaries will not be graded separately but will contribute to the class participation grade.
Term paper

You will also be required to write a term paper. Please use the following to guide the structure of the paper.

- Identify a research question of interest.
- Develop a theoretical argument and derive *ONE* testable hypothesis related to this question.
- Sketch a research design of how you would test that question.

By research design I want to know (a) what you are measuring and (b) how you plan to invoke variance to facilitate your analysis. I do not need to know the specific data source or the statistical technique(s) that you would employ. These are things that you could flesh-out later if you wish to continue with this work. My evaluation of your term paper will focus on your ability to develop an interesting and potentially testable idea that addresses an important research question in the nonmarket strategy area.

Evaluation

Evaluation will be on the basis of the following weights:

- Class discussion and summaries: 50%
- Term paper: 50%
Week 1 Introduction and overview


Week 2 Corporate Political Activity


Week 3: Stakeholders


Week 4: Activists and social movements


**Week 5 Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility**


*Seo, H., Luo, J. & Kaul, A. (2019). Giving a little to many or a lot to a few? The returns to variety in corporate philanthropy. Working Paper


Week 6 Social impact


Week 7 – Alternate Organizational Forms


Battilana, J., & Lee, M. (2014). Advancing research on hybrid organizing—Insights from the study of social enterprises. *Academy of Management Annals, 8*(1), 397-441


