Seminar (Master Level)

Firm Behavior and Development

Professor Dr. Guido Bünstorf and Dr. Stefan Krabel

Winter Term 2012/13

Time and Location: Tuesday, 14.15-15.45 (first session: October 23, 2012); Room 0211 (NP 6)

6 Credits (MSc Economic Behavior and Governance (Module 5); MA Wirtschaftswissenschaften; MA Wirtschaft, Psychologie und Management)

Questions and Registration for Presentations by E-Mail: krabel@uni-kassel.de

Scope and Format:
Why do firms exist? What factors shape and constrain the activities of firms? How do firms develop over time? These are some of the most basic questions faced by economists and management scholars (as well as researchers from neighboring disciplines such as psychology and sociology). In this seminar we will read and discuss some classic and contemporary contributions to the literature.

WARNING: This will be a reading-intensive course. We expect participants to have read the main article(s) discussed in each session and to actively participate in the classroom discussion (in English). In addition, each participant will be expected to give an introductory presentation about one or two of the course topics. This presentation should also take the complementary reading for the respective session into account. To keep the workload manageable, written assignments will be kept to a minimum.

Credit requirements (to be finalized when number of participants is known):
• 1 or 2 introductory oral presentations of 15-20 minutes
• 1 essay on a course topic (in English; 4-6 text pages; due date: February 28, 2013)
• Reading of the assigned course material (denoted as “mandatory reading” below) prior to each session
• Active participation in the classroom discussion

Background reading:
Syllabus (topics and assigned reading)

Week 1 (October 23, 2012): Introduction


Part I: Classic contributions

Week 2 (October 30, 2012): Transaction costs and the boundaries of the firm (1)


Week 3 (November 6, 2012): Transaction costs and the boundaries of the firm (2)


Week 4 (November 13, 2012): Property rights and the boundaries of the firm


Week 5 (November 20, 2012): Team production, measurement and agency problems within the firm

Part II: Knowledge and the theory of the firm

Week 6 (November 27, 2012): The Carnegie School


Week 7 (December 4, 2012): Evolutionary Economics


Week 8 (December 11, 2012): Resource- and Capability-Based Views


Part III: Theories of firm development

Week 9 (December 18, 2012): Regularities in Firm Development 1: Diversification


Week 10 (January 15, 2012): Regularities in Firm Development 2: Growth Crises


Week 11 (January 22, 2013): Replication of Organizational Practices


Week 12 (January 29, 2013): Spin-offs and the Reproduction of Capabilities across Organizations


Week 13 (February 5, 2013): Imprinting and Identity in Organizational Development


Week 14 (February 12, 2013): Organizational Isomorphism and Inertia