University of St.Gallen

# Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2025

# 8,020: Managing Behavioral Visibility

# ECTS credits: 3

## Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)
decentral - Written examination, Analog, Individual work individual grade (100%, 90 mins.)
Examination time: Term time

## Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer
8,020,1.00 Managing Behavioral Visibility -- English -- Grisold Thomas

## Course information

### Course prerequisites

This course is assigned to the profile «Business Development» but can also be taken without selecting a specialisation.

### Learning objectives

- Understanding core questions, issues and opportunities related to the management of behavioral visibility
- Being aware of organizational dynamics that can result in response to behavioral visibility in organizational contexts
- Developing awareness of desired and undesired implications of behavioral visibility (e.g., privacy violations)
- Understanding how various data sources lead to different forms of behavioral visibility
- Developing skills to translate behavioral visibility-based insights into managerial actions
- Understanding the relationship between behavioral visibility and related concepts, such as digital surveillance and algorithmic management

### Course content

As more and more work-related activities in organizations are performed with digital technologies, we see an increasing prevalence of **behavioral visibility**. In short, behavioral visibility implies that organizations have more and more means to record, store and analyze data that reflect the behavior of organizational actors (e.g., employees). Visible behavior, in turn, can be used to evaluate work performance and inform managerial actions.

Recent arguments in academia and practice stress how the prevalence of behavioral visibility fundamentally challenges management practices. Because managerial insights and decisions can be grounded in data-based evidence, organizations are considered to be in a better position to assess and evaluate work performance. For example, visible behavior of organizational actors can be analyzed with sophisticated data analysis tools (e.g., AI-based), which can infer patterns about employees' behaviors and make predictions about future work performances. At the same time, behavioral visibility has been associated with serious issues and threats, such as privacy violations or broader organizational resistance. For example, increasing levels of behavioral visibility can lead to digital surveillance, which causes stress and initiates resistance on the side of those whose behavior is analyzed.

This course aims to offer a comprehensive introduction into the management of behavioral visibility in organizational contexts. To this end, it pursues three central goals: First, it discusses the basics of behavioral visibility (e.g., what are its implications for management; what kinds of data reflect which aspects of work behavior). Second, it presents research that has been studying behavioral visibility in organizations (e.g., how behavioral visibility changes management practices; how behavioral visibility initiates expected and unexpected dynamics in organizations). Third, it conveys skills for managing

behavioral visibility in organizations by creating awareness around desired and undesired implications (e.g., ethical problems and privacy violations; connections to digital surveillance and algorithmic management).

## Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

The course is taught in weekly sessions. There will be content-related lectures, interactive discussions and hands-on exercises.

The overall goal is to approach the topic of behavioral visibility from two angles. On the one hand, it will convey factual knowledge, that is, knowledge related to "what" behavioral visibility is and what it implies for management. On the other hand, it will convey hands-on knowledge, that is, knowledge related to "how" behavioral visibility can be used and applied for managerial practices.

Additional information regarding course structure and teaching:

- This course counts 3 credits. Accordingly, the total workload for students is 90 hours. This includes self-study, campus time and all examinations.
- The structure of the contact study is planned as follows: 19 hours of lectures in a weekly rhythm.
- The structure of the self-study is intended as follows: 20 hours of preparation time for the lectures and 51 hours for the examination.
- The course is conducted in presence in St. Gallen.

## Course literature

Aaltonen, A., & Stelmaszak, M. (2023). The Performative Production of Trace Data in Knowledge Work. *Information Systems Research* (forthcoming).

Ananny, M., & Crawford, K. (2018). Seeing without knowing: Limitations of the transparency ideal and its application to algorithmic accountability. *new media & society*, *20*(3), 973-989.

Badakhshan, P., Wurm, B., Grisold, T., Geyer-Klingeberg, J., Mendling, J., & Vom Brocke, J. (2022). Creating business value with process mining. *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, *31*(4), 101745.

Bernstein, E. S. (2012). The transparency paradox: A role for privacy in organizational learning and operational control. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *57*(2), 181-216.

Bowell, P., Smith, G. J., Pechenkina, E., & Scifleet, P. (2023). 'You're walking on eggshells': exploring subjective experiences of workplace tracking. *Culture and Organization*, 1-20.

Cousineau, L., Ollier-Malaterre, A., & Parent-Rocheleau, X. (2023). Employee Surveillance Technologies: Prevalence, Classification, and Invasiveness. *Surveillance & Society*, *21*(4), 447-468.

De Vaujany, F. X., Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, A., Munro, I., Nama, Y., & Holt, R. (2021). Control and surveillance in work practice: Cultivating paradox in 'new'modes of organizing. *Organization Studies*, *42*(5), 675-695.

Faraj, S., Pachidi, S., & Sayegh, K. (2018). Working and organizing in the age of the learning algorithm. *Information and Organization*, *28*(1), 62-70.

Grisold, T., Kremser, W., Mendling, J., Recker, J., Vom Brocke, J., & Wurm, B. (2023). Generating impactful situated explanations through digital trace data. *Journal of Information Technology*, 02683962231208724.

Hansen, H. K., & Flyverbom, M. (2015). The politics of transparency and the calibration of knowledge in the digital age. *Organization*, *22*(6), 872-889.

Justesen, L., & Plesner, U. (2023). Visibility Management: New Managerial Work in Digitalized Organizations. *M@ n@ gement*, *26*(3), 36-51.

Kolb, D. G., Dery, K., Huysman, M., & Metiu, A. (2020). Connectivity in and around organizations: Waves, tensions and trade-offs. *Organization Studies*, *41*(12), 1589-1599.

Leonardi, P. M., & Treem, J. W. (2020). Behavioral visibility: A new paradigm for organization studies in the age of digitization, digitalization, and datafication. *Organization Studies*, *41*(12), 1601-1625.

Lumineau, F., Long, C., Sitkin, S. B., Argyres, N., & Markman, G. (2023). Rethinking control and trust dynamics in and between organizations. *Journal of Management Studies*, *60*(8), 1937-1961.

McAfee, A., Brynjolfsson, E., Davenport, T. H., Patil, D. J., & Barton, D. (2012). Big data: the management revolution. *Harvard business review*, *90*(10), 60-68.

Mettler, T. (2023). The connected workplace: Characteristics and social consequences of work surveillance in the age of datification, sensorization, and artificial intelligence. *Journal of Information Technology*, 02683962231202535.

Reischauer, G., & Ringel, L. (2023). Unmanaged Transparency in a Digital Society: Swiss army knife or double-edged sword?. *Organization Studies*, *44*(1), 77-104.

Tsoukas, H. (1997). The tyranny of light: The temptations and the paradoxes of the information society. *Futures*, *29*(9), 827-843.

Wajcman, J., & Rose, E. (2011). Constant connectivity: Rethinking interruptions at work. *Organization studies*, *32*(7), 941-961.

## Additional course information

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# Examination information

## Examination sub part/s

## 1. Examination sub part (1/1)

### Examination modalities

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|---|---|
| Examination type | Written examination |
| Responsible for organisation | decentral |
| Examination form | Written exam |
| Examination mode | Analog |
| Time of examination | Term time |
| Examination execution | Synchronous |
| Examination location | On Campus |
| Grading type | Individual work individual grade |
| Weighting | 100% |
| Duration | 90 mins. |

### Examination languages

Question language: English
Answer language: English

### Remark

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### Examination-aid rule

Closed Book

The use of aids is prohibited as a matter of principle, with the exception of pocket calculator models of the Texas Instruments TI-30 series and, in case of non-language exams, bilingual dictionaries without any handwritten notes. Any other aids that are admissible must be explicitly listed by faculty members in the paragraph entitled “Supplementary aids” of the course and examination fact sheet; this list is exhaustive.

Procuring any aids, as well as ensuring their working order, is the exclusive responsibility of students.

### Supplementary aids

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## Examination content

The design of the exam will be based on all contents that have been covered in the lecture. This pertains to slides, readings and hands-on exercises. Please note that discussions and reflections during the lectures will also be relevant for the exam.

## Examination relevant literature

The relevant literature will be based on the literature recommendations and will be further specified over the progression of the course.

## Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.
Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW21) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 13 (Monday, 25 March 2025) are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 04 (Thursday, 23 January 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 17 March 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 14 (Monday, 31 March 2025);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before ending with de-registration period in CW 15 (Monday, 07 April 2025).