

Winter 2008
Soc 347
Complex Organizations
4-5:20 Tuesdays and Thursdays

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Office Hours: Wednesday 9-10:30 am or by appointment

Course Objective- Complex Organizations are so commonplace that we take them for granted. But in fact, “rational” organizations are modern inventions created so that we may coordinate massive amount of information in order to accomplish complex objectives. This course will explore how organizations function and examine the extent to which organizations are actually “functional.” To do so, we will look at such variables such as size, life-cycle, structure, decision-making, leadership styles, processes and outcomes within organizations. Toward the end of this course we will explore how these structural factors make it possible for deviance within the organizational structure. At first glance, these concepts may sound mundane, but a main goal of this course will be to highlight how many of the issues we face daily are organizational in nature. A second major goal will be to provide students with the knowledge to effectively assess the organizations they will be a part of in the future, whether it is a large multi-national corporation or a local non-profit.

Texts:

Required:

Daft, Richard. *Organization Theory and Design*. 9th edition. Thomson Southwestern (7th or 8th edition will also work)

Ermann and Lundman. 2006. *Corporate and Governmental Deviance*. 6th Edition. Oxford University Press.

Ritzer, George. 2008 *The McDonaldization of Society*. 5th Edition. Pine Forge Press.

Recommended:

Durkheim, Emile. *Division of Labor in Society*.

Weber, Max. *Economy and Society*

Rules and Regulations-

1. CELL PHONES OFF! TRUST ME, IT CAN AFFECT YOUR GRADE

Student Workload:

20% Daily assignments

A major portion of your grade will depend on your participation in group and class discussions. Over the course of the term, there will be 8-15 daily assignments that will aid this discussion. Depending on the objectives for the day, you may be asked to prepare something prior to class or it might be something you write up during class. The directions will be explicit when the time comes and will be announced both in class and will be posted on blackboard if it is something to be finished prior to class. The purpose for these assignments is to encourage both participation and attendance. Much of the learning process will take place during class and is dependent on the participation of the students. Please take an active role in the process. Formal attendance will not be taken

and no make-up work will be accepted. A couple absences probably won't hurt you, but anything more than 3 absences probably will.

Midterm and Final exams

Exam policy: You will be given the entire class period to take the exam. You are not required to be on time, but the exam will not be given out after the first student has finished their exam and leaves the room. I recommend giving yourself plenty of time to take the exam. There will be no make-up exam, except for extreme circumstances. Please let me know as early as possible the reasons you will be unable to take an exam at the designated time. Note: Early Spring Break plans will not be accepted as a legitimate excuse.

20% Midterm exam.

In week 5 you will have a mid-term exam. The exam will not only test your general knowledge of organization theory, but also your ability to apply this knowledge to hypothetical scenarios. This will require higher-level thinking than just memorization alone. I will provide a more specific explanation closer to the exam date.

20% Final exam.

The Final Exam which will be held during Finals week on Tuesday March 18th at 1:00pm. The material for this exam will be on organizational deviance.

40% Research Paper

The research paper will be different than a traditional research paper. More specific directions will be given early in the semester, but the general requirements are these: Pick two people; they can be people you know very well, who work in an organization. You will be asked to interview them and obtain data related to the course material. You have the option of picking people from the same organization, which might provide a broader and more in-depth analysis of the organization, or you can pick people from very different organizations and compare and contrast how these different organizations work. Don't worry about selecting people who are managers or people who are well versed in the organization. It will be interesting enough to analyze the vantage point of the people you are interviewing. Another idea will be to pick people who work in organizations that you would like for in the future. This is an excellent opportunity to get your foot in the door for a future job. This will require more initiative but it will have greater rewards. You will also probably need to do other background research on their websites, etc. More information soon.

15% 1st Draft The first draft is not a rough draft. It is the first step in your analysis. You will be graded on your depth of analysis as you describe the organization in detail. The first draft will be examined very closely. I will be giving lots of constructive criticism and additional questions for you to answer. Do not be disheartened by the amount of comments, they are there to help you refine your second draft.

25% 2nd Draft The second draft will be graded on two things: (1) the incorporation of the comments on the first draft and (2), your evaluation of the organization. By this point in the term, you should be knowledgeable of organization theory and be able to analyze the effectiveness of the organization.

Please come to my office at any point to discuss your paper (except the day before, or the day its due. That would be too late).

Grading. I will use traditional scoring measures (For ex. A= 90%; C+ = 77%, etc.)

20% Daily Assignments

20% Midterm

20% Final Exam

40% Research Paper

100% Final Grade

Calendar

Week 1 January 8th and 10th

T: Introduction to Course, Syllabus

H: Basic Sociological Overview: Definition of Complex Organizations, Bureaucracy, Alienation, Functionalism

Week 2 January 15th and 17th

T: What is an Organization? Daft. Chapter 1

H: Organizational Purpose and Structural Design. Daft Part 2

Week 3 January 22nd and 24th

T: Internal Design Elements. Daft Chapters 7 and 9

H: McDonaldization

Week 4 January 29th and 31st

T: McDonaldization

H: Organizational Culture and Decision-making Processes Daft Chapters 10 and 12

Week 5 February 5th and 7th

T: Review of material

H: Midterm

Week 6 February 12th and 14th

T: Feminist Organizations Draft 1 of Paper Due

H: Total Institutions

Week 7 February 19th and 21st

T: Modernity, Risk and Normal Accidents

H: "The Corporation"

Week 8 February 26th and 28th

T: Corporate and Governmental Deviance Overview

H: Foundations of Deviance –Ermann and Lundman

Week 9 March 4th and 6th

T: Patterns of Deviance —Ermann and Lundmann

H: Frontline- Enron

Week 10 March 11th and 13th

T: Reactions of Deviance—Ermann and Lundman

H: Evaluations

Final Draft of Paper Due

Finals Week 1:00 Tuesday March 18th