

Soc/OrgStudy 215: Organization and Society

Fall, 2009

Lecture: Monday & Wednesday, 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. 1202 SEB

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Course Description:

A society is much more than the sum of its people. Explicit and tacit rules for coordinating action, lasting social organizations that emerge from collective activity, and formal organizations designed to accomplish social or economic goals shape the world we live in. Human action can sometimes alter these larger features of the social world, but more often the organizational context of society trumps individual effort. This class is designed to introduce you to a distinctively organizational approach to understanding human action and outcomes. In addition to developing facility with basic ideas and conceptual tools drawn from sociology and organizational theory, you will learn to apply an organizational mindset to the analysis of particular fields of endeavor.

This course is organized into two modules. Module 1 introduces you to the idea that any human endeavor can be understood in terms of its organizing principles, social organization, and formal organizations. This segment of the class highlights key forms of human organization; markets, hierarchies, networks, and institutions and emphasizes the ways in which these different arrangements convey power, influence, and authority to the people who occupy them. Module 2 turns makes those abstract ideas concrete by applying them to analyses of different arenas of human activity. Each week we will examine and discuss a different field. Our goal will be to identify examples of organizing, organization, and organizations discussed in the first segment of the class.

Readings:

Online Materials: All assigned articles and book chapters are available in electronic format on the ctools course site.

One case study should be purchased by students.

Harvard Business School Cases (1) (REQUIRED): Available at university bookstores.

Gucci Group N.V. (A). HBS Case #9-701-037

Please read all materials in preparation for lecture on the day they are assigned.

Assignments & Evaluation:

Course Goals:

This class seeks to help you develop:

- (1) A firm understanding of the key social science concepts needed to think organizationally
- (2) An ability to apply those concepts to the analysis of a real field of human activity

Accomplishing those goals will require consistent engagement with readings as well as attendance and participation in lectures and discussion sections. Thus your performance in class will be evaluated on three dimensions.

Dimension 1: Attendance and Participation

25% of your final grade will be based on your work in section and will be *wholly determined by your GSI*.

10% of your final grade will be based on lecture attendance and in class exercises. I will not take attendance every day, nor will I use a seating chart, but at least once per week there will be a graded or ungraded quiz or writing exercise that will count toward your participation grade. If I call roll and you are not present (or do not answer) your absence will be reflected in this portion of your grade.

Dimension 2: Testing Conceptual Knowledge

30% of your final grade will be based on an exam to be given at the conclusion of the course's first module. The exam will be administered IN CLASS on Monday 11/02/09. The test will use a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions to evaluate your knowledge of the material covered through that day. You will be responsible for material in readings, section, lectures, and class discussions.

Dimension 3: Applying Organizational Thinking (DUE by 5pm on 12/15/09)

The remainder of your final grade will be based on a group project that will evaluate your ability to conduct secondary source research on an organizational field and to apply concepts from module one to the phenomena you examine. Students will be randomly assigned to five person groups in section. Your first task as a group will be to identify a general area of social life you wish to examine. The topics we cover in Module 2 are examples of the kinds of "fields" or "domains" one could study. Over the course of several weeks your group will examine the field you choose to study with an eye toward identifying important organizing principles, social and formal organizations.

A detailed description of final project requirements will be handed out and discussed in class, but your final written project will include (1) A description of the field you choose emphasizing its key participants and the way it works as a system, (2) an analysis of the field's organizing principles, social and formal organizations, (3) A discussion of the field's important sources of power and influence. The final assignment will take the form of a short, 7-10 page paper but must also include a complete bibliography of sources you used in your research and a set of at least three 'exhibits,' specific examples that you reference and discuss in your paper to illustrate key actors, organizations, principles, or arrangements in your fields.

30% of your final grade will be based on instructor evaluation of your group project. All group members will receive the same grade.

5% of your final grade will be based on a peer evaluation of your contribution to your group's research and final project.

Grading and Policies:

Grading

Your grade will be based on a total of 500 points apportioned as follows

<i>Section Participation</i>	(25%)	125 points
<i>Lecture Attendance/Participation</i>	(10%)	50 points
<i>Midterm Exam</i>	(30%)	150 points
<i>Field Analysis Project</i>	(30%)	150 points
<i>Peer Evaluations</i>	(5%)	25 points

Letter grades will be based on the total points you earn. I do not grade on a curve, if all of you do work sufficient to merit an A+, you will all receive an A+. By the same token, grades will not be rounded. A total of 469 points will be awarded an A-.

Letter grades will be assigned for the following point totals.

A+	490-500	C+	380-399	E	<300
A	470-489	C	365-379		
A-	450-469	C-	350-364		
B+	430-449	D+	330-349		
B	415-429	D	315-329		
B-	400-414	D-	300-314		

Extra Credit. Opportunities for extra credit (questions on the exam, classroom exercises etc.) will be offered at various points during the semester. Collectively, all extra credit opportunities will amount to no more than 2% (10 points) of total points for the class.

Class Policies

- Lecture begins at 2:40. If you must arrive late do so quietly, students who disrupt class by arriving late to lecture will be asked to leave.
- Cell phones and pagers may not be used in class.
- We will make every reasonable allowance to allow you to carry out your religious observances without academic penalty. It is your responsibility to inform your GSI and instructor of any conflict with class activities before they arise.
- Late assignments will be accepted but a penalty equivalent to 10% of the assignment's total value will be deducted for each day it is late.
- Students are expected to adhere to LS&A standards of academic integrity. Incidents of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the relevant assignment or exam. For more information please consult <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity>
- We will make every effort to respond to appropriate e-mail correspondence within 24 hours. All e-mails regarding this class must have the course number ("SOC 215" or "OS 215") in the subject heading. E-mails that lack this subject heading may not receive a response.
- Please take advantage of office hours. You should, however, raise your questions with GSIs before bringing them to me.

Course Schedule & Readings:

Week I

W 09/09/09 – Preliminaries

MODULE 1: CONCEPTS AND TOOLS

Week II

M 09/14/09 – Overview: Markets, Institutions, Networks & Organizations

Readings: None

W 09/16/09 – Markets

Readings:

1. Carruthers, Bruce & Sarah Babb. (2000). *Economy/Society: Markets, Meaning and Social Structure*. Pp. 1-12 (Ch 1).
2. Zaloom, Caitlin. *Out of the Pits: Traders and Technology from Chicago to London*. Pp. 93-111 (Ch 4).

Week III

M 09/21/09 – Markets

Readings:

1. Becker, Gary. (1992) “The Economic Way of Looking at Life.” Nobel Prize Lecture. (http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/economics/laureates/1992/becker-lecture.pdf). SKIP APPENDIX.
2. Wolfers, Justin & Eric Zitzewitz. (2004) “Prediction Markets.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. READ Pp. 107-109.

W 09/23/09 – Networks

Readings:

1. Small, Mario Luis. (2009) *Unanticipated Gains: The Origins of Network Inequality in Everyday Life*. Pp. 3-22.
2. Podolny, Joel. (2005) *Status Signals: A Sociological Study of Market Competition*. Pp. 10-22.

Week IV

M 09/28/09 – Networks

Readings:

1. Barabasi, Albert-Laszlo. (2002). *Linked: The New Science of Networks*. Pp. 199-217.
2. Couzin, Jennifer. (2009) "Friendship as a Health Factor" *Science*. 323: 454-457.

W 09/30/09 – Organizations

Readings:

1. Scott, W. Richard & Gerald F. Davis. (2006) *Organizations and Organizing: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*. Pp. 1-34 (Ch 1)

Week V

M 10/05/09 – Organizations.

Readings:

1. Venkatesh, Sudhir & Steven Levitt "Are we a family or a business? History and Disjuncture in the Urban American Street Gang" *Theory and Society* 29(4): 427-462.

W 10/07/09 – Institutions

Readings:

1. Scott, W. Richard. (2007) *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas and Interests*. Pp. 47-71 (Ch 3).
2. Gladwell, Malcolm. (2009) “How David Beats Goliath: When Underdogs Break the Rules.” *New Yorker*. May 11, 2009.

Week VI

M 10/12/09 – Institutions

Readings:

1. Rao, Hayagreeva. (2009) *Market Rebels: How Activists Make or Break Radical Innovations*. Pp. 1-17 (Ch 1) & 172-180 (Ch 8)

W 10/14/09 – Power/Influence/Authority

Readings:

1. Weber, Max. (1978) *Economy and Society*. Pp. 1111-1114 & 1121-1123
2. Pfeffer, Jeffrey. (1992) *Managing With Power: Politics and Influence in Organizations*. Pp. 71-81 (Ch. 4)
3. Morrill, Calvin (1995) *The Executive Way: Conflict Management in Organizations*. Pp. 199-208 (Case Studies)

Please come to lecture prepared to discuss the sources of power and influence used in at least one of the cases described in Morrill.

Week VII

M 10/19/09 – NO CLASS, FALL BREAK

W 10/21/09 – Corporate Leadership

Readings:

1. Khurana, Rakesh. (2002) *Searching for a Corporate Savior: The Irrational Quest for Charismatic CEOs*. Pp. 1-50 (Skim 1-19).

Week VIII

M 10/26/09 – The Power Elite

Readings:

1. Rothkopf, David. (2008) *Superclass: The Global Power Elite and the World They are Making*. Pp. 3-52 (Skim 3-21)

W 10/28/09 – Pirates

Readings:

1. Leeson, Peter T. (2009) *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates*. Pp. 176-196 (Ch 8, Epilogue)

Week IX

M 11/02/09 – Module 1 Exam

MODULE 2: ANALYZING FIELDS

W 11/04/09 – Field 1: Food

Readings:

1. Pollan, Michael. (2006) *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. Pp.1-15, 100-109, 134-140, 158-169

Week X

M 11/16/09 – Field 1: Food

Readings:

1. Fine, Gary Allan. (1996). *Kitchens: The Culture of Restaurant Work*. Pp. 219-233 (Ch 8)

W 11/18/09 – Field 2: Technology (creating social worlds)

Readings:

1. Castranova, Edward. (2005) *Synthetic Worlds: The Business and Culture of Online Games*. Pp. 100-125 (Ch 4)
2. Chaplin, Heather & Aaron Ruby. (2006) *Smart Bomb: The Quest for Art, Entertainment, and Big Bucks in the Video Game Revolution*. Pp. 156-191 (OPTIONAL)

Week XI

M 11/23/09 – Field 2: Technology (innovation in social worlds)

Readings:

1. Hargadon, Andrew. (2002) “Brokering and Knowledge: Linking Learning and Innovation.” *Research in Organizational Behavior*. Pp. 41-85.

W 11/25/09 – **NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Week XII

M 11/30/09 – Field 3: Finance

Readings:

1. Davis, Gerald F. (2009) *Managed by the Markets: How Finance Has Reshaped America*. Pp 1-28 (Ch. 1 – REQUIRED) & Pp 235-255 (Ch. 7 – OPTIONAL)
2. Surowiecki, James. (2007) “Subprime Homesick Blues” *New Yorker*, April 9, 2007. Pp. 26

W 12/02/09 – Field 4: Fashion

Readings:

1. Harvard Business School Case Study. *Gucci Group N.V. (A)*.

Week XIII

M 12/07/09 – Field 4: Fashion

Readings:

1. Crane, Diana. (2001) *Fashion & Its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, & Identity in Clothing*. Pp. 207-234 (REQUIRED), Pp. 171-206 (OPTIONAL)

W 12/09/09 – Field 5: Football

Readings:

1. Lewis, Michael (2007) *The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game*. Pp. 1-39. (Skim Introduction)

Week XIV

M 12/15/09 – Class Summary and Wrap Up (**Field Analysis Project Due TODAY at 5pm**)