Course Description:

This is an advanced seminar in organization theory, with specific application to problems and issues in education. It is primarily intended for doctoral students, and will be particularly useful for students who intend to use organization theory as a conceptual framework for research studies and dissertation.

This course will cover the major strands of organization theory with application to education, including organizational structure, resource dependence, strategy, symbols, institutional theory, organizational culture, socialization, leadership and decision making.

An introductory course in organizations, such as ED761 or 752, is required prior to taking the course. It is also recommended that students participate in the ICOS seminar (Business Administration 840 or Information 702; Friday, 1:30-3:00) to become increasingly familiar with cutting-edge research in organizations, but this is not a requirement.

Objectives:

1. Identify and understand the major strands of research in organization theory.
2. Application of organization theory to research on social problems and issues, particularly those in education.
3. Writing a major literature review or conducting a research study in organizations.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation. As in any doctoral course, students and faculty need to be co-owners of the class and collectively responsible for its quality and outcomes. I will take responsibility for the overall design and direction of the course and for the academic requirements, but the course will be facilitated as a seminar or inquiry in which all participants hold themselves and each other accountable for a strong and rich intellectual enterprise and dialogue.

Your attendance is essential to a successful collective experience. The format of the class requires that each person come prepared to take an active role in class. This means not
only having read the assigned materials, but also being prepared to discuss the salient issues, questions, and problems emerging from the readings, to utilize your knowledge and professional experiences in addressing the readings and any class activities, case problems, etc. Class participation also involves opening oneself to challenge and to be challenged by the ideas and topics of the session. Please notify me by email in advance if you are unable to attend any class session. Students who miss four or more class sessions must withdraw from the course. The quality of your class participation is worth 20% of your final grade.

Class Presentations. Each week, students (approximately two each week) will be responsible for co-leading the course with the instructor, including presenting new information and facilitating discussion of the readings. Class leaders will meet with the instructor prior to the course to establish a plan for teaching. (20% of grade).

Research Paper. The intent of this assignment is to give you a chance to prepare your own analysis of an issue in organizations. There are a number of possibilities for this paper, including a literature review, pedagogical case study, or research project, quantitative or qualitative. This paper will be approximately 25 pages of text (double-spaced, not including appendices or bibliography). I will provide you with feedback throughout the process.

1. A brief description of the topic and approach will be due in class on **February 15**.
2. Students should seek out the instructor as needed through the paper-writing process.
3. The final paper will be due by **March 29**. Copies will be provided in class for all students in the course to read prior to the presentations (50% of grade).

Presentation. Each student will make a presentation to the class about the paper they have written and the major analytical issues that the paper addresses. These will be approximately 15 minutes each, with 15 minutes for questions, similar to an academic conference. (10% of grade)

Course Text:


Readings:

The course readings are available electronically through University Reserves. Please download and print out these articles at your own convenience. They are also available for purchase in an Excel coursepack. The URL is here:

Course Schedule

January 11: Introduction to the Course

Scott, *Organizations*, Chapters 1-5, especially 1&4

January 18: Structural Organization

Scott, *Organizations*, Chapters 6-8


January 25: Field-Level Structures

Scott, *Organizations*, Chapters 9-11


**February 1: Resource Dependence**

Scott, *Organizations*, Chapters 12-13


February 8: Institutional Theory


February 15: Field-Level Dynamics


February 22: Organizational Culture


Boland, and Howard Thomas (Eds.), *Managing Ambiguity and Change*. New York: John Wiley.


**WEEK OFF – SPRING BREAK**

### March 8: Organizational Socialization


WEEK OFF – MIKE IS OUT OF TOWN (SEE MAKE-UP)

March 22: Organizational Change


March 29: Politics and Political Institutions


April 5: Networks, Technology & Knowledge Production


**April 12: Leadership and Decision Making**


Make-Up Class: Organizational Learning  (Date TBD)


(Other topics are possible for this day, including organizational ecology, sensemaking & other social psychological approaches, group dynamics, & transaction cost economics.)

April 19: Presentations; wrap-up

Revised:  January 9, 2006