

EOL 479: The Organization of Higher Education

Educational Organization and Leadership University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Spring 2004

Professor: Michael N. Bastedo
Office: 329 Education
Email: bastedo@uiuc.edu (highly preferred)
Phone: 333-4382
Hours: Monday 2-4pm and by appt.

Course Description:

How do administrators manage modern postsecondary organizations? And how should they? How does organizational purpose get defined? How do context and environment influence the way we think about the structure and function of an organization? Why is organizational change so difficult? Why are management and change strategies effective in one organizational setting and futile in another? How do power and inequality influence an organization? These questions, and a multitude of similar thoughts, are central to the content of this class.

It is useful for those involved in postsecondary institutions to understand what organizations are, how they function (and dysfunction), and why. Therefore, this course intends to provide you with insights into the functioning of educational organizations by exposing you to a wide range of viewpoints in the literature that portray colleges and universities as complex organizations. This is not a class on how to do your administrative or faculty job; this is a class on how to understand the context in which you work.

To do this, we will delve into a variety of scholarly literatures, examining a variety of theories and concepts as tools for understanding academic environments. We will argue and discuss the merits of these ideas and theories for describing and explaining the reality of colleges and universities as we understand and experience that reality. In the process, we will engage in a dynamic learning process that involves most basically our own understandings of postsecondary environments. That is to say, all of us already use theories to guide our actions and shape our understandings; some are quite explicit but others are implicit. These personal "mental models" must become part of the conscious discussion in the class. No matter what your purpose is in taking the course, one outcome will be a deeper understanding of your own (possibly changing) viewpoint and a better appreciation of others' views.

Objectives:

1. To provide students with a systematic and critical understanding of organizational theory and research, and the factors involved in the functioning and analysis of postsecondary institutions, particularly colleges and universities, as complex organizations.
2. To show how these ideas serve as tools for the analysis of organizational situations. The topics covered in the course are chosen to allow students to make connections to various academic contexts, both to encourage students' reflective understanding and critical analysis, and to provide an improved basis for action.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation. As in any doctoral course, including a core class, everyone needs to be co-owners of the class and collectively responsible for its quality and outcomes. I take responsibility for the overall design and direction of the course and for the academic requirements, but it will be facilitated as a seminar or inquiry in which we hold ourselves 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. Students who miss more than three sessions must withdraw from the course. Participation is worth 20% of your final grade.

Case Study Report. At various times throughout the semester, we will be using case studies to offer the opportunity for applying theory to practice. You will also prepare a written analysis of one of these cases as fulfillment of this portion of the course grade. You will need to write 6-8 pages analyzing the case, to be turned in on the day the case will be discussed. Evaluation will be based on your ability to identify case issues, critically analyze the scenario from the perspectives of the theories or metaphors being introduced in class, and link theory to practice. This component is worth 20% of the final grade.

Final Case Development and Analysis. The intent of this assignment is to give you a chance to prepare your own case drawn from some organizational aspect or issue in postsecondary education. In small teams, you will write about the case in similar fashion to those examples used in class. The final report calls upon you to provide a complete case description that will be shared with the class. Work on case development and analysis will proceed in the following manner:

1. A preliminary identification of the group and a very brief description of the topic will be due **February 9**.

2. An outline of the major aspects of the case is due **March 8**. Students should not change their case topic after this time.

3. For the final case design, you are asked to craft a strong central "story line" describing the key aspects of the case problem. Sufficient detail is necessary for others to make sense of the case problem, but, as authors, the team needs to balance the level of discrete detail with the conceptual threads necessary for the case to be comprehended by the reader. It is important that the case be complex enough to suggest multiple analytic perspectives without becoming too context-specific as to be only understood by those who wrote the case e.g., watch "insider" language and jargon. More conversation about the drafting of cases will take place throughout the term. Relevant accompanying documentation [attachments, memos, system drawings, etc.] should be turned in with the final case, if you choose to use them, as appendices. Complete cases are due for distribution on **April 26**. (30% of grade)

Criteria for evaluating the final case assignment have two parts. The first is the writing of the actual case. Cases will be evaluated for the clarity and professionalism with which the report is presented, the comprehensive care with which the case situation is described and analyzed, and the complexity and relevance of the case. Final cases should be about 15 pages, not including appendices or references.

4. Each team will make a group presentation to the class about the case description they have written and the major analytical issues that the case addresses. The presentation should, either through express discussion or the use of group activities, use the various theories learned throughout the course. Group presentations will be **May 3** and, if necessary, **May 10**. (10% of grade)

Final Exam. A two-hour, in-class final exam will take place on **May 10**. (20% of grade)

Course Texts:

Birnbaum, Robert. 1991. *How Colleges Work*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

March, James G. 1994. [*A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen*](#). New York: Free Press. [Suggestion: Buy cheap through Amazon.]

Articles:

The course reader is available at the T.I.S. Bookstore. Articles that are underlined are available for free online through the source indicated. Double-click and print the PDF file at your convenience. You will need to login to the UIUC server. Please let me know if there are any problems.

Course Schedule

January 26: Introduction to the Course

Skim Birnbaum, Chapters 1-3

February 2: Introduction to Structural Organization

Birnbaum, Chapter 5, “The Bureaucratic Institution”

Duryea, E.D. 1987. "Evolution of University Organization." Reprinted from James A. Perkins, *The University as an Organization*. New York: Carnegie Foundation.

Clark, Burton R. 1993. "[The Problem of Complexity in Modern Higher Education](#)." Pp. 263-70 in Rothblatt and Wittrock (eds.), *The European and American University Since 1800: Historical and Sociological Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mintzberg, Henry. “The Professional Bureaucracy.” Reprinted from *ASHE Reader*, pp. 53-75.

February 9: Structure, Part Deux

Birnbaum, Chapter 4, “The Collegial Institution”

Weick, Karl. 1976. "[Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems](#)." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 21: 1-19.

Birnbaum, Robert. 1989. “[The Latent Organizational Functions of the Academic Senate: Why Senates Do Not Work But Will Not Go Away](#).” *Journal of Higher Education* 60: 423-443.

Benjamin, Roger. 2003. “[The Environment of American Higher Education: A Constellation of Changes](#).” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 585: 8-30.

Case Study: Harriman College; **Brief Statement Due**

February 16: NO CLASS – WORK ON GROUP PROJECTS

February 23: Organizational Culture

Schein, Edgar H. 1990. "[Organizational Culture.](#)" *American Psychologist* 45: 109-119.

Tierney, William G. 1988. "[Organizational Culture: Defining the Essentials.](#)" *Journal of Higher Education* 59: 2-21.

Feldman, Martha S. and James G. March. 1981. "[Information in Organizations as Signal and Symbol.](#)" *Administrative Science Quarterly* 26: 171-86.

Case Study: [Olivet College](#) (X and Y only, NOT Z)

March 1: Organizational Socialization

Tierney, William G. 1997. "[Organizational Socialization in Higher Education.](#)" *Journal of Higher Education* 68: 1-16.

Lindholm, Jennifer. 2003. "[Perceived Organizational Fit: Nurturing the Minds, Hearts, and Personal Ambitions of University Faculty.](#)" *Review of Higher Education* 27: 125-49.

Adler, Patricia A. and Peter Adler. 1988. "[Intense Loyalty in Organizations: A Case Study of College Athletics.](#)" *Administrative Science Quarterly* 33: 401-417.

Adler, Peter and Patricia A. Adler. 1985. "[From Idealism to Pragmatic Detachment: The Academic Performance of College Athletes.](#)" *Sociology of Education* 58: 241-50.

March 8: Institutional Theory

Selznick, Philip. 1957. "Introduction." Pp. 1-28 in *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Clark, Burton R. 1972. "[The Organizational Saga in Higher Education.](#)" *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17: 178-184.

Perrow, Charles. 1986. "The Institutional School." Pp. 157-77 in *Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay*. New York: Random House.

DiMaggio, Paul J. and Walter W. Powell. 1983. "[The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields.](#)" *American Sociological Review* 48: 147-60.

March 15: Organizational Change

Clark, Burton R. 1998. "Entrepreneurial Pathways of University Transformation" and "The Problem of University Transformation." Pp. 3-10 and 127-48 in *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities: Organizational Pathways of Transformation*. New York: Pergamon Press

March, James G. 1981. "[Footnotes to Organizational Change](#)." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 26: 563-77.

Birnbaum, Robert. 2000. "[The Life Cycle of Academic Management Fads](#)." *Journal of Higher Education* 71: 1-15.

Case Study: Curriculum Change at Babson College (A)

WEEK OFF – SPRING BREAK

March 29: Power and Politics in Organizations

Birnbaum, Chapter 6, "The Political Institution"

Pfeffer, Jeffrey. 1992. "[Understanding Power in Organizations](#)." *California Management Review* 34: 29-50.

Pfeffer, Jeffrey. 1992. "The Importance of Being in the Right Unit" and "Individual Attributes as a Source of Power." Pp. 147-88 in *Managing with Power: Politics and Influence in Organizations*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Case Study: Issacson, Walter. 1992. "[Harvard: The Ambitious Student, 1947-1955](#)." Pp. 59-81 in *Kissinger: A Biography*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

1. What was the context or environment at that time, both in the country generally and in the political science department at Harvard, at the time Kissinger was a student? What opportunities did this environment present?
2. What were Kissinger's apparent goals while he was at Harvard, first as an undergraduate student and then as a doctoral student? What was he trying to accomplish?
3. What did Kissinger **do**, what specific actions did he take, how did he spend his time, with what effects? Why were his actions apparently so effective?
4. What bases of power was Kissinger able to develop?
5. What personal strengths and weaknesses did Kissinger have? How self-aware was he of them? What did he do to capitalize on his strengths and mitigate his weaknesses?

6. What is your personal learning from Kissinger's experience at Harvard? How do you feel about your use of your time at the UI when you think of what Kissinger did?

April 5: Power and Politics in Action: Academic Retrenchment

Gumport, Patricia J. 1993. "[The Contested Terrain of Academic Program Reduction.](#)" *Journal of Higher Education* 64: 283-311.

Slaughter, Sheila. 1993. "[Retrenchment in the 1980s: The Politics of Prestige and Gender.](#)" *Journal of Higher Education* 64: 250-82.

Gumport, Patricia J. 1993. "Fired Faculty: Reflections on Marginalization and Academic Identity." Pp. 135-54 in Daniel McLaughlin and William Tierney (eds.) *Naming Silenced Lives: Personal Narratives and the Process of Educational Change*. New York: Routledge.

AERA – WEEK OFF – Work on Group Projects

April 19: Presidential Leadership

Guest: Stan Ikenberry

Birnbaum, Chapter 7, "The Anarchical Institution"

Cohen, Michael D. and James G. March. 1974. "[Leadership in an Organized Anarchy.](#)" Pp. 195-229 in *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President* (2nd Ed.). Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Birnbaum, Robert. 1992. "[Will You Love Me In December As You Do In May? Why Experienced College Presidents Lose Faculty Support.](#)" *Journal of Higher Education* 63: 1-25.

Tierney, William G. 1989. "[Symbolism and Presidential Perceptions of Leadership.](#)" *Review of Higher Education* 12: 153-66.

April 26: Decision Making

March, James G. 1994. "Limited Rationality" and "Rule Following." Pp. 1-102 in *A Primer on Decision Making: How Decisions Happen*. New York: Free Press.

Final Group Projects Distributed

May 3: Case Study Presentations

Reading: Group Case Studies

May 10: Final Exam