

Soc110 Sociology of Organizations and Institutions

Spring 2013

Instructor: **Dr. Linus Huang**

Office hours: **Mondays 4:00-6:00 p.m., location TBA**

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Final exam: **Group 8, Tuesday, May 14th, 2013, 7-10 p.m.**

Course overview

We live in “a society of organizations”, as the sociologist Charles Perrow says. More and more of social life today is shaped by organizations. For example, over the past 100 years, 90% of the U.S. population went from being self-employed to working for someone else in an organization. Therefore a key piece of understanding social life is understanding life inside organizations.

Organizational sociology seeks to understand how and why organizations behave, whose interests they serve, and under what conditions they can be changed. The organizational sociology subfield is a long-standing one characterized more than most by distinct theoretical paradigms. This course will serve as an introduction to this subfield. We will consider three major paradigms in this subfield—ecological, resource dependence, and institutionalist perspectives—and sample current research informed by them.

To enhance our understanding of how our lives are shaped by organizations we will also take an extended look at four case studies: the fast food industry, the shareholder value-driven capitalist enterprise, and our very own U.C. Berkeley. Regarding the observation from the first paragraph above, much of this change can be seen in the fast food industry, which we will examine through the book *Fast Food Nation*. A century ago, many Americans were self-employed as farmers; today many Americans work either in the lower rungs of large agribusiness organizations, or in the fast food chains which agribusiness is designed to serve.

Required readings

There are two required texts plus a course reader. The two texts are:

- Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*
- Bethany McLean & Peter Elkind, *The Smartest Guys in the Room: The Amazing Rise and Scandalous Fall of Enron*

Both of these texts are available at the ASUC Bookstore. If you have an earlier edition of *Fast Food Nation*, that will be fine.

The balance of the course’s readings will come from **a course reader**, soon to be available at **University Copy Services** at **2425 Channing Way**, two blocks south of campus in the arcade under the Durant-Channing garage. If you’re not sure where this is, just type “2425 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA” into Google Maps.

Course format

This is a lecture format course and I will indeed do a lot of lecturing. However, there will be ample opportunity for discussion. There are no discussion sections associated with this course, so I will expect you to use class time as an opportunity to initiate and participate in discussion.

Material during lecture will naturally touch upon the readings assigned for that date but will NOT simply be a recapitulation of those readings. I will also (a) bring in supplemental material pertaining to the current topic; and (b) connect material, especially if we are deep in the midst of a case study, back to the overall themes of the course. You will be responsible for both the readings AND additional material brought up in lecture. For this reason, REGULAR ATTENDANCE is instrumental for successful performance in the course.

Grading

Course grades will be determined by three components: two take-home midterm exams, and an in-class final exam.

- Two take-home midterms (30% each): Both midterms will be take-home examinations and will be short essay in format. You will have a week to do each.

The first midterm will be distributed on **Friday, February 15th** and will be due the following **Friday, February 22nd at 11:00 A.M.**

The second midterm will be distributed on **Friday, March 15th** and will be due the following **Friday, March 22nd at 11:00 A.M.**

Although you will have a week to do each midterm, the exams are not designed to actually take all that time. The course will not stop while you work on the exams and you will be expected to continue keeping up with the readings and attending and participating in class discussion.

- An in-class final exam (40%). It will be administered during the university-designated final exam group period. Soc110 is in Exam Group 8, which goes on **Tuesday, May 14th**, from **7-10 P.M.**

The grading scale is as follows. '[' means including, and ')' means excluding, so '[83-87)' for example means everything including 83 up to but **NOT** including 87.

		A	[94+	A-	[90-94)
B+	[87-90)	B	[83-87)	B-	[80-83)
C+	[77-80)	C	[73-77)	C-	[70-73)
D+	[67-70)	D	[63-67)	D-	[60-63)
		F	[0-60)		

I will use the “Assignments” tool on the course bspace site to keep a record of your scores, so as midterm scores are released, make sure that what is on bspace matches what is on your actual returned paper/exam. If there is a problem, report it immediately. Do not wait until the end of the semester to report an issue with either of the midterms.

Note: There are no other discretionary considerations that factor in to the calculation of your final grade. As the course progresses, you can calculate your performance and what you need to do exactly on subsequent graded assignments to get X grade.

Students with Disabilities

If you need accommodations for any disability, I need verification from the DSP office by **Friday, February 15th**.

Incompletes

Stuff happens. In a large lecture course like this, it is guaranteed that a handful of students will encounter issues they could not have foreseen. This is why there are incompletes. If unexpected circumstances arise, let me know and we can arrange something.

Lecture, Reading, and Exam Schedule

You must complete the readings associated with a given date **PRIOR** to the class on that date.

All readings except Schlosser (*Fast Food Nation*) and McLean & Elkind (*The Smartest Guys in the Room*) are in the course reader.

Jan	23	Wed	Introduction to Organizational Theory <i>Readings: none</i>
	25	Fri	Introduction (cont'd) <i>Readings: none</i>
	28	Mon	Introduction (cont'd) <i>Readings: none</i>
	30	Wed	Population Ecology <i>Reading: M.T. Hannan & J. Freeman, “The Population Ecology of Organizations”</i>
Feb	1	Fri	Population Ecology (cont'd)
	4	Mon	Resource Dependence <i>Reading: J. Pfeffer & G.R. Salancik, “Social Control of Organizations”, ch 3 from <i>The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective</i></i>

Feb	6	Wed	Resource Dependence (cont'd) <i>Reading:</i> V.D. Alexander, "Pictures at an Exhibition: Conflicting Pressures in Museums and the Display of Art"
	8	Fri	Resource Dependence: the privatization critique of U.C. Berkeley <i>Readings:</i> none
	11	Mon	Resource Dependence (cont'd)
	13	Wed	Institutionalism <i>Reading:</i> P.J. DiMaggio & W.W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields"
	15	Fri	Institutionalism (cont'd)

TAKE-HOME MIDTERM #1 DISTRIBUTED FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH, 2013
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18	Mon	***** ACADEMIC/ADMINISTRATIVE HOLIDAY: NO CLASS *****
20	Wed	Institutional Entrepreneurship <i>Reading:</i> J.A. Douglass, "From Chaos to Order and Back? A Revisionist Reflection on the California Master Plan for Higher Education@50 and Thoughts About Its Future"
22	Fri	Institutional Entrepreneurship (cont'd)

MIDTERM #1 DUE FRIDAY 11 A.M., FEBRUARY 22ND, 2013
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Putting organizational theory to use: examining the fast food industry

	25	Mon	Emergence of the fast food industry <i>Reading:</i> E. Schlosser, <i>Fast Food Nation</i> ch 1, 2
	27	Wed	Emergence of the fast food industry (cont'd)
Mar	1	Fri	Expansion of the industry <i>Reading:</i> E.Schlosser, <i>Fast Food Nation</i> ch 4
	4	Mon	Expansion of the industry (cont'd)
	6	Wed	The reorganization of American agriculture <i>Reading:</i> E. Schlosser, <i>Fast Food Nation</i> ch 5, 6, 7
	8	Fri	The reorganization of American agriculture (cont'd)

- Mar 11 Mon Marxist approaches to the capitalist enterprise
Reading: R. Edwards, Contested Terrain ch 1, 2
- 13 Wed The labor process in the fast food industry
Reading: E. Schlosser, Fast Food Nation ch 3, 8
- 15 Fri The labor process in the fast food industry (cont'd)

TAKE-HOME MIDTERM #2 DISTRIBUTED FRIDAY, MARCH 15TH, 2013

Social Movements

- 18 Mon Organizational change: social movements in organizational theory
Reading: M. Gladwell, "Small Change: Why the revolution will not be tweeted" The New Yorker 4 Oct 2010
- 20 Wed Social movements (cont'd)
Reading: K. Voss & R. Sherman, "Breaking the Iron Law of Oligarchy: Union Revitalization in the American Labor Movement"
- 22 Fri Social movements (cont'd)

MIDTERM #2 DUE FRIDAY 11 A.M., MARCH 22ND, 2013

- 25 Mon ***** **SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS** *****
- 27 Wed ***** **SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS** *****
- 29 Fri ***** **SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS** *****

Social Networks

- Apr 1 Mon Social Networks and Organizational Theory
Reading: W.W. Powell, "Neither Market Nor Hierarchy: The Network Form of Organization"
- 3 Wed Social Networks (cont'd)
Reading: M.L. Small, Unanticipated Gains: Origins of Network Inequality in Everyday Life ch 1, 2
- 5 Fri Social Networks (cont'd)

The Shareholder Value Corporation

- 8 Mon The Rise of the Shareholder Value Corporation
Reading: "The Romney Economy" New York Magazine 23 Oct 2011

Apr	10	Wed	Shareholder Value (cont'd) <i>Reading: M. Useem, Executive Defense: Shareholder Power and Corporate Reorganization ch 1, 2</i>
	12	Fri	Shareholder Value (cont'd)
	15	Mon	The rise of the Enron Corporation <i>Reading: B. McLean & P. Elkind, The Smartest Guys in the Room: The Amazing Rise and Scandalous Fall of Enron ch 1-3</i>
	17	Wed	The rise of Enron (cont'd)
	19	Fri	The Enron model of making money <i>Reading: B. McLean & P. Elkind, The Smartest Guys in the Room ch 4-7, 15</i>
	22	Mon	The Enron model of making money (cont'd)
	24	Wed	The flaws in the Enron model <i>Reading: B. McLean & P. Elkind, The Smartest Guys in the Room ch 8-11</i>
	26	Fri	The flaws in the Enron model (cont'd)
	29	Mon	What effect did shareholder value have on employment? <i>Reading: A.L. Kalleberg, "Economic Transformation and the Decline of Institutional Protections" ch 2 from Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: The Rise of Polarized and Precarious Employment Systems in the United States, 1970s to 2000s</i>
May	1	Wed	Shareholder value and employment (cont'd)
	3	Fri	Course wrap-up and evaluations
	6	Mon	READING/
	8	Wed	RECITATION/
	10	Fri	REVIEW

May	14	Tue	FINAL EXAM Group 8 7-10 P.M.
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