

## Sociology 110 Organizations & Institutions

Fall 2017 | UC Berkeley

**Instructor:** Dr. Linus Huang

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 2:30-4:00 PM, 487 Barrows

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**Readers:** Aaron Platt, Alisa Szatrowski & Marilyn de la Cruz

**Final Exam:** Tuesday, December 12, 2017, 7:00-10:00 PM

### What will this course be about?

There is a curiosity to organizations in society today: they are utterly ubiquitous, and yet there is little formal theory about how they operate. We generally think about what happens in the world in terms of individual choices—our own choices, the choices of others; good choices, bad choices; selfish choices, selfless choices, etc. Organizations become nothing other than instruments of different types of individual choices.

The mission of sociology in general is to provide an understanding of what happens in the world as being shaped by more than just individual choice. The subfield of organizational sociology aims to show how social structure—and not just individual will—shapes what organizations do, and why. Toward this end, we will examine a number of different ways that organizational sociologists have abstractly conceptualized what “social structure” means, and make these abstractions concrete in case studies.

### Readings

All course readings are available in PDF format on the bCourses site.

### Grading

Your course grade will be determined by:

- Two **take-home midterm exams**, each 35% of the course grade. They will be “short essay” style in nature (further details to be given later).
- An **in-class final exam**, administered during the University’s officially scheduled timeslot for the course, on Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017, from 7:00-10:00 PM. The final exam will be cumulative and multiple choice. The final exam is worth 30% of the course grade.

The course grading scale is as follows:

A+	97+	A	93-96	A-	90-92
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	67-69	D	63-66	D-	60-62
		F	0-59		

\*\*\*\*\* SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION \*\*\*\*\*

When it comes time to compute overall course grades, I will round to the nearest whole number using standard rounding conventions. It doesn't really matter what the letter grade on the individual assignments are.

There are no other discretionary considerations that will factor into your grade. Furthermore, I do not offer extra credit beyond that which I may build in to the midterm and final exams.

There are no surprises in how I calculate course grades. The GRADES section on bCourses incorporates the weightings above and will accurately keep you apprised of your course progress. During the semester, with a little arithmetic, you can figure out how you need to do on subsequent exams to earn a particular grade.

### **Academic Honesty, Classroom Conduct**

Violations of academic honesty have unfortunately been on the rise at UC Berkeley over the past few years, prompting among other things the posting of plaques in general classrooms around campus re-emphasizing the code of academic conduct. The general rule of thumb behind the code is: act in such a way that no one could possibly question your conduct.

Plagiarism—copying someone else's work and presenting it as your own—has been the central problem. Copying off either another student or off the readings (whether the readings are on or outside of the syllabus) both constitute plagiarism. We will use TurnItIn software to detect any instances of plagiarism on submitted assignments. All instances of plagiarism will be punished by an immediate **-0-** on the *entire* assignment in question, plus a report to the Office of Academic Affairs at my discretion.

Forming studying groups on your own is highly encouraged, especially since there are no discussion sections to accompany this course. If these groups are used to struggle through ideas or debate topics (both are also good uses of class time, by the way!), then the effort expended can be very rewarding. However, if groups are used simply to memorize a classmate's notes by rote, to subsequently recite on exams, **this is effectively another form of plagiarism** as far as I am concerned. I use this specific example because it recently popped up in one of my courses.

Study group meetings should be suspended while a take-home exam is being taken. They can begin again after the exam due date has been reached.

*Use of laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc. in class.* I use my laptop for virtually everything and do not expect students not to utilize the various digital technologies we have at our disposal today. However, if you are texting, Twittering, watching Netflix, or some other such thing in class, you are likely distracting others and I will ask you to leave.

### **Reading/Exam Schedule**

All readings for this course are available on bCourses in the READINGS folder of the FILES section.

\*\*\*\*\* SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION \*\*\*\*\*

Readings associated with a date are to be completed prior to the class meeting on that day. What follows may best be considered a preliminary plan. It may become necessary to adjust the reading schedule as the semester unfolds. If this happens, I will make the change(s) on bCourses—check the SYLLABUS section online to see the most up-to-date schedule. I will not change this PDF file.

Aug	23	Wed	<b>Introduction</b>
	25	Fri	(cont'd)
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	28	Mon	(cont'd)
	30	Wed	(cont'd)
Sep	1	Fri	<b>Population ecology</b> <i>Reading: G. Carroll &amp; A. Swaminathan, "Why the Microbrewery Movement?"</i>
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	4	Mon	◀◀◀ <b>LABOR DAY: NO CLASS</b> ▶▶▶
	6	Wed	(Population ecology, cont'd)
	8	Fri	(cont'd)
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	11	Mon	<b>Relational perspective</b> <i>Reading: J. Pfeffer &amp; G. Salancik, "The Social Control of Organizations"</i>
	13	Wed	(cont'd)
	15	Fri	(cont'd)
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	18	Mon	<b>Institutionalist perspective</b> <i>Reading: P. DiMaggio &amp; W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited"</i>
	20	Wed	(cont'd)
	22	Fri	(cont'd)
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	25	Mon	(cont'd) <b>Midterm #1 Distributed on bCourses Monday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 PM</b>
	27	Wed	<b>Emergence of the fast food industry</b> <i>Reading: E. Schlosser, Fast Food Nation ch 1, 2</i>
	29	Fri	(cont'd)
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Oct	1	Sun	<b>Midterm #1 DUE on bCourses Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 12:00 PM</b>

\*\*\*\*\* SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION \*\*\*\*\*

Oct	2	Mon	<b>Expansion of the fast food industry</b> <i>Reading: E. Schlosser, Fast Food Nation ch 4</i>
	4	Wed	(cont'd)
	6	Fri	<b>The re-organization of American agriculture</b> <i>Reading: E. Schlosser, Fast Food Nation ch 5, 6</i>
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	9	Mon	(cont'd)
	11	Wed	<b>Who should be the CEO of the large American corporation?</b> <i>Reading: N. Fligstein, "The intraorganizational power struggle"</i>
	13	Fri	(cont'd)
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	16	Mon	<b>The rise of the shareholder value corporation</b> <i>Reading: K. Ho, Liquidated ch 3</i>
	18	Wed	(cont'd)
	20	Fri	(cont'd)
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	23	Mon	(cont'd)
	25	Wed	<b>Financialization &amp; income inequality in the U.S.</b> <i>No readings.</i>
	27	Fri	<b>Financialization @ the University of California</b> <i>No readings.</i>
<b>Midterm #2 Distributed on bCourses Friday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 PM</b>			
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	30	Mon	<b>Class and college life</b> <i>Reading: E. Armstrong &amp; L. Hamilton, Paying for the Party ch 5, 6</i>
Nov	1	Wed	<b>Why do flagship state universities re-produce class inequality?</b> <i>Reading: E. Armstrong &amp; L. Hamilton, Paying for the Party intro + ch 2</i>
	2	Thu	<b>Midterm #2 DUE on bCourses Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 12:00 PM</b>
	3	Fri	(cont'd)
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	6	Mon	<b>Why do employers look for "pedigree" rather than merit?</b> <i>Reading: L. Rivera, Pedigree ch 1-3</i>
	8	Wed	(cont'd)
	10	Fri	<b>◀◀◀ VETERAN'S DAY: NO CLASS ▶▶▶</b>
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\*\*\*\*\* SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION \*\*\*\*\*

Nov	13	Mon	<b>Why did FEMA fail so badly during Hurricane Katrina?</b> <i>Reading: C. Cooper &amp; R. Block, Disaster ch 4</i>
	15	Wed	(cont'd)
	17	Fri	<b>What is the DHS's mission and what is it <i>not</i>?</b> <i>Reading: C. Cooper &amp; R. Block, Disaster ch 6</i>
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	20	Mon	<b>Social networks: organizations are embedded within networks ...</b> <i>Reading: R. Burt, "Structural holes and good ideas"</i>
	22	Wed	◀◀◀ <b>NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY: NO CLASS</b> ▶▶▶
	24	Fri	◀◀◀ <b>THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS</b> ▶▶▶
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	27	Mon	(Organizations are embedded within networks, cont'd)
	29	Wed	<b>Social networks: ... but networks are also embedded within organizations</b> <i>Reading: M. Small, Unanticipated Gains ch 1, 2</i>
Dec	1	Fri	(cont'd)
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	4	Mon	<b>READING,</b>
	6	Wed	<b>RECITATION, and</b>
	8	Fri	<b>REVIEW</b>
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	12	Tue	<b>Final Exam 7:00 PM-10:00 PM</b>