Sociology 110 Organizations & Institutions   Fall 2018 | UC Berkeley

Instructor: Linus Huang
Office hours (drop-in): Wednesdays 12:15 PM – 2:15 PM, 487 Barrows
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Graduate Student Readers: Ogi Radic, Randall Tran & Alisa Szatrowski
Final exam: Monday, December 10, 2018 11:30 AM-2:30 PM

What will this course be about?

What do organizations do, why do they do them, and what implications do their practices have for society? Sociology has long directly or indirectly focused upon the role that organizations play in society.[1] Classical perspectives such as Marx's focus on the for-profit organization as a site of capitalist exploitation. Durkheimian perspectives might pay attention to social solidarity within the organization and/or the role that collective representations shared by organizational members play in organizational life. Weber developed the most systematic theory of organizations of the three; he understood the modern, bureaucratic organization as the principal instrument of the rationalization of social action that defines modernity. Subsequently, organizational sociology in the U.S. in the mid 20th century was concerned about explaining the gap between Weber's depiction of bureaucracy as the embodiment of efficiency and the observed reality of bureaucracies as hopelessly inefficient.

This course however will focus on sociological perspectives on organizations developed from the 1970s onward.[2] The ways organizations behave have changed, and so have the ways that sociologists think about how organizations behave. Contemporary organizational sociology tends to reject **macro**-level "grand" narratives about organizational behavior, but also rejects **micro**-level approaches such as those offered by symbolic interactionism or even microeconomics. Instead, we will focus on how different parts of the organizational world are shaped by different "local" orders (a **meso**-level approach). The foundation of the course, which will be laid out in the first weeks and leading up to the first midterm, will be three major, and different, conceptual approaches—the **population ecology**, the **relational**, and the **institutional** perspectives—for understanding what this meso-level order that shapes an organization's behavior is.

Concretely, the course will be built around case studies, each from a different part of the organizational world—public higher education, the fast food industry, the shareholder corporation, agencies in the federal government, and more. The purpose of each case study is to demonstrate the usefulness of contemporary sociological perspectives in illuminating what these organizations do, why, and what implications their practices have for society.

Readings

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

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[1] See Heather Haveman & Rachel Wetts, "Organizational Theory: From Classical Sociology to the 1970s", *Sociology Compass,* forthcoming.
[2] See Heather Haveman & Rachel Wetts, "Contemporary Organizational Theory", under review at *Sociology Compass.*

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 Monday, December 10th, 2018, from 11:30 AM-2:30 PM. The final exam will be <u>cumulative</u> and <u>multiple choice</u>. 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		

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

The UC Berkeley Honor Code states that "As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others" (https://teaching.berkeley.edu/berkeley-honor-code). I expect you will follow these principles. You may not copy specific text or ideas from others, whether from fellow students, from authors of our readings or other material you find, without specific attribution. To do otherwise is to plagiarize. You may not cheat on any of the exams by bringing in illicit outside material, copying from fellow students, or engaging in other dishonest practices. Violation of these rules will result in an immediate **-0-** on the *entire* assignment in question, plus a report to the Office of Academic Affairs at my discretion.

You may of course discuss the lectures and readings with your fellow students. Forming studying groups on your own is 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 has popped up in my courses before.

Study group meetings should be suspended during periods where a take-home exam is active. 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, Facebooking, watching YouTube or 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.

Readings associated with a date are to be completed <u>prior</u> to the class meeting on that day. 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 <u>not</u> change this PDF file.

| Aug | 22 | Wed | **Introduction** |
| | 24 | Fri | (cont'd) |

	27	Mon	(cont'd)
	29	Wed	(cont'd)
	31	Fri	**Population ecology**
			Reading: G. Carroll & A. Swaminathan, "Why the Microbrewery Movement?"

Sep	3	Mon	**##### LABOR DAY: NO CLASS #####**
	5	Wed	(Population ecology, cont'd)
	7	Fri	(cont'd)

	10	Mon	**Relational perspective**
			Reading: J. Pfeffer & G. Salancik, "The Social Control of Organizations"
	12	Wed	(cont'd)
	14	Fri	(cont'd)

Sep	17	Mon	**Institutionalist perspective**
			Reading: P. DiMaggio & W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited"
	19	Wed	(cont'd)
	21	Fri	(cont'd)

	24	Mon	(cont'd)
			Take-Home Midterm #1 distributed on bCourses Monday, September 24th, 12:00 PM
	26	Wed	**Emergence of the fast food industry**
			Reading: E. Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation* ch 1, 2
	28	Fri	(cont'd)

Oct	1	Mon	**Expansion of the fast food industry**
			Reading: E. Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation* ch 4
	2	Tue	**Midterm #1 DUE on bCourses Tuesday, October 1st, 12:00 PM noon**
	3	Wed	(cont'd)
	5	Fri	**The re-organization of American agriculture**
			Reading: E. Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation* ch 5, 6

	8	Mon	(cont'd)
	10	Wed	**How do organizations understand their biggest problems?**
			Reading: N. Fligstein, "The intraorganizational power struggle"
	12	Fri	(cont'd)

	15	Mon	**The rise of the shareholder value corporation**
			Reading: K. Ho, *Liquidated* ch 3
	17	Wed	(cont'd)
	19	Fri	(cont'd)

	22	Mon	(cont'd)
	24	Wed	**Financialization & income inequality in the U.S.**
			No readings.
	26	Fri	**Financialization @ the University of California**
			No readings.

| Oct | 29 | Mon | **Does college re-produce class inequality?** |
| | | | *Reading:* E. Armstrong & L. Hamilton, *Paying for the Party* intro + ch 2, 5, 6 |

Take-Home Midterm #2 distributed on bCourses Monday, October 29th, 12:00 PM

| | 31 | Wed | (cont'd) |
| Nov | 2 | Fri | (cont'd) |

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	5	Mon	**Why do employers look for "pedigree" rather than merit?**
			Reading: L. Rivera, *Pedigree* ch 1-3
	6	Tue	**Midterm #2 DUE on bCourses Tuesday, November 6th, 12:00 PM noon**
	7	Wed	(cont'd)
	9	Fri	**Why did FEMA fail so badly during Hurricane Katrina?**
			Reading: C. Cooper & R. Block, *Disaster* ch 4

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	12	Mon	**##### VETERAN'S DAY: NO CLASS #####**
	14	Wed	(Why did FEMA fail so badly during Hurricane Katrina?, cont'd)
	16	Fri	**What is the DHS's mission and what is it *not?***
			Reading: C. Cooper & R. Block, *Disaster* ch 6

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	19	Mon	**Social networks: organizations are embedded within networks …**
			Reading: R. Burt, "Structural holes and good ideas"
	21	Wed	**##### TURKEY BREAK: NO CLASS #####**
	23	Fri	**##### TURKEY BREAK: NO CLASS #####**

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	26	Mon	(Social networks: organizations are embedded within networks …, cont'd)
	28	Wed	**Social networks: … but networks are also embedded within organizations**
			Reading: M. Small, *Unanticipated Gains* ch 1, 2
	30	Fri	(cont'd)

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Dec	3	Mon	**READING,**
	5	Wed	**RECITATION, and**
	7	Fri	**REVIEW**

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| | 10 | Mon | **Final Exam 11:30 AM-2:30 PM** |