

Sociology 110 Organizations

UC Berkeley | Spring 2015

Instructor: Linus Huang

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Final Exam: Exam Group 11, Wednesday, May 13, 2015 3:00-6:00 PM

Course Overview

Organizations are everywhere! We work within them, get an education within them, and buy other goods and services within and from them. Even when we're at home, our apartments/condos/homes are filled with products made by organizations. Also, our apartments/condos/homes are themselves likely constructed by, inspected by, and bought and sold (or rented, or leased) through organizations. But how do organizations behave? What are their objectives? What are the consequences of organizational behavior for people within them, or who procure goods and services from them? How can organizations be changed?

A sociology of organizational behavior does two things. First, it draws our attention to the role that organizations play in society at all, as opposed to approaching society from the perspective of individual consumers (i.e., us) who choose between organizations, leaving the organization itself unexamined. Second, it adopts a *social* perspective that moves beyond an understanding of organizational behavior as a reflection of the behavior of individuals within organizations. The organizational world is vast and cannot be comprehensively surveyed within the course of a semester (or a lifetime). But to make the theoretical perspectives we will consider concrete, we will explore in-depth a select few organizational settings of special concern to us: the fast food industry, social movements, Corporate America, the federal government, and U.C. Berkeley itself.

Grading

Your course grade will be determined by two midterm exams, weighted at 35% each, and a final exam weighted at 30%. The two midterm exams will each be take-home in format. The initial plan for the final exam is that it will be in-class during the University's official timeslot for this course.

The grading scale is as follows. All scores are significant to the second digit after the decimal. '[' means including, and ')' means excluding, so '[83-87)' for example means everything from 83.00 up to but not including 87.00.

A+	[99+)	A	[95-99)	A-	[90-95)
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)		

Note: Logistics subject to modification during the course of the semester.

Note: There are no other discretionary considerations that factor in to the calculation of your course grade. Whether for instance you demonstrated improvement (or, for that matter, decline) over the semester won't factor into your grade, and in any case does not mean much when there are only three total assignments. I absolutely do not offer extra credit beyond that which I offer to the entire class.

As the course progresses, you can calculate your performance for yourself, given the weightings indicated above, and determine exactly what you need to do on subsequent graded assignments to get X grade.

International Students + Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must have their statuses verified by the DSP office by the end of the third week of the course (including partial weeks). Electronic copies of these letters are automatically sent to me; I do not require a paper hardcopy of them.

The course will require a modest degree of English writing proficiency during the three examinations. If you are an ESL student for whom this may prove difficult, accommodations can be made provided you get in touch with me at the beginning of the semester.

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. 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.

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.

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Reading/Exam Schedule

All readings, both **required** and **recommended**, are available in PDF format on the bCourses site, under the READINGS folder of the Files section. **Required** readings are to be completed **prior** to the class meeting by which they are listed.

Recommended readings are provided for those who may have deeper interest about particular subjects. In most cases, I will present material from recommended readings in class; you can read these either in tune with class, or at your own leisure. Everyone is responsible for the material that I do present in class. However, doing the recommended reading itself should not be necessary to perform well on the exams.

Jan	21	Wed	Introduction
			<i>Required readings: none</i>
			<i>Recommended, but not required, reading: N. Fligstein, "Organizations: Theoretical Debates and the Scope of Organizational Theory"</i>
	23	Fri	(cont'd)
	26	Mon	(cont'd)
	28	Wed	The population ecology perspective
			<i>Required readings: none</i>
			<i>Recommended readings:</i>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M. Hannan & J. Freeman, "The Population Ecology of Organizations" • G. Carroll & A. Swaminathan, "Why the Microbrewery Movement?"
	30	Fri	(cont'd)
Feb	2	Mon	(cont'd)
	4	Wed	The relational perspective
			<i>Required reading: none</i>
			<i>Recommended readings:</i>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J. Pfeffer & G. Salancik, <i>The External Control of Organizations</i> ch 3, 10 • V. Alexander, "Pictures at an Exhibition: Conflicting Pressures in Museums and the Display of Art"
	6	Fri	(cont'd)
	9	Mon	(cont'd)

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Feb 11 Wed The institutionalist perspective
Required reading: P. DiMaggio & W. Powell, “The Iron Cage Revisited”
Recommended readings:

- J. Douglass, “From Chaos to Order and Back? A Revisionist Reflection on the California Master Plan for Higher Education @ 50 and Thoughts About Its Future”
- N. Fligstein, “Markets as Politics”
- F. Dobbin, S. Kim & A. Kalev, “You Can’t Always Get What You Need”
- ... *and lots, lots more*

13 Fri (cont’d)

16 Mon ***** **PRESIDENT’S DAY: NO CLASS** *****

18 Wed (cont’d)

20 Fri The emergence of the fast food industry
Required reading: E. Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation* ch 1, 2

MIDTERM EXAM #1 DISTRIBUTED ON BCOURSES FRI 20 FEB 2015

23 Mon (cont’d)

25 Wed The expansion of the fast food industry
Required reading: E. Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation* ch 4
Recommended reading: J. Combs, S. Michael & G. Castrogiovanni, “Institutional Influences on the Choice of Organizational Form: The Case of Franchising”

MIDTERM EXAM #1 DUE ON BCOURSES WED 25 FEB 2015

27 Fri (cont’d)

Mar 2 Mon (cont’d)

4 Wed The transformation of American agriculture
Required reading: E. Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation* ch 5, 6

6 Fri (cont’d)

9 Mon What happens inside organizations? Relational approaches
Recommended reading: J. Pfeffer, *Power in Organizations* ch 4

11 Wed (cont’d)

Mar	13	Fri	What happens inside organizations? Institutional approaches <i>Required reading:</i> N. Fligstein, “The Intraorganizational Power Struggle” pp. 44-50 + the first four lines of p. 51
	16	Mon	(cont’d)
	18	Wed	Social movements: organized labor <i>Required reading:</i> K. Voss & R. Sherman, “Breaking the Iron Law of Oligarchy”
	20	Fri	Social movements: what tactics are effective? <i>Required reading:</i> F. Rojas, “Social Movement Tactics, Organizational Change, and the Spread of African-American Studies”
	23	Mon	##### SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS #####
	25	Wed	##### SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS #####
	27	Fri	##### SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS #####
	30	Mon	(social movements, cont’d)
Apr	1	Wed	The rise of the shareholder value corporation <i>Required reading:</i> J. Heilbron, J. Verheul & S. Quak, “The origins and early diffusion of ‘shareholder value’ in the United States” <i>Recommended readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B. Wallace-Wells, “The Romney Economy” <i>New York Magazine</i> 23 Oct 2011 • H. Meyerson, “The failures of shareholder capitalism” <i>The Washington Post</i> 11 Jul 2012 • J. Yang, “Maximizing shareholder value: The goal that changed corporate America” <i>The Washington Post</i> 26 Aug 2013 • ... and lots, lots more
	3	Fri	(cont’d)
			##### MIDTERM EXAM #2 DISTRIBUTED ON BCOURSES 3 APR 2015 #####
	6	Mon	The rise of the Enron Corporation <i>Required reading:</i> B. McLean & P. Elkind, <i>The Smartest Guys in the Room</i> selections TBD
	8	Wed	(cont’d)
			##### MIDTERM EXAM #2 DUE ON BCOURSES WED 8 APR 2015 #####

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Apr	10	Fri	The Enron model of making money <i>Required reading:</i> B. McLean & P. Elkind, <i>The Smartest Guys in the Room</i> selections TBD
	13	Mon	(cont'd)
	15	Wed	Financialization and inequality in the U.S. <i>Required reading:</i> K. Lin & D. Tomaskovic-Devey, "Financialization and U.S. Income Inequality, 1970-2008" pp. 1284-1295 <i>Recommended readings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C. Hanley, "Putting the Bias in Skill-Biased Technological Change?" • S. Vallas & E. Cummins, "Relational Models of Organizational Inequalities"
	17	Fri	(cont'd)
	20	Mon	Financialization at UC Berkeley <i>Required reading:</i> C. Eaton, J. Habinek, M. Kumar, T. Stover & A. Roehrkasse, "Swapping Our Future: How Students and Taxpayers are Funding Risky UC Borrowing and Wall Street Profits"
	22	Wed	(cont'd)
	24	Fri	Social networks, Part I <i>Required reading:</i> R. Burt, "Structural Holes and Good Ideas"
	27	Mon	(cont'd)
	29	Wed	Social networks, Part II <i>Required reading:</i> M. Small, <i>Unanticipated Gains</i> ch 2
May	1	Fri	Course wrap-up and evaluations
	4	Mon	##### READING,
	6	Wed	##### RECITATION, and
	8	Fri	##### REVIEW
	13	Wed	FINAL EXAM WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2015 3:00-6:00 PM

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