

## **Sociology 110 | Organizations and Institutions**

Instructor: **Linus Huang**

Office Hours: **Mondays, 11:30 AM-12:30 PM; Wednesdays, 12:30-1:30 PM, 434 Barrows**

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Final exam: **Group 7; Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 3:00-6:00 PM**

Readers: **TBA**

### **Introduction**

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.

### **Required Texts**

There is one required text for this course: Karen Ho, *Liquidated: An Ethnography of Wall Street*. The text is available at the ASUC bookstore.

The remainder (and majority) of course readings will be available in PDF format on bCourses under the READINGS folder in the FILES section of the site.

### **Grading**

Your course grade will be determined by the following, and nothing else:

- Two take-home midterm examinations, weighted at 40% each (80% total). Each midterm will consist of 3 or 4 questions, each of a “short essay” type nature.
- One final examination, in-class, weighted at 20%. The final exam will be cumulative, and multiple choice. It will be administered during the University's officially scheduled timeslot for our course.

The grading scale I use is as follows. ‘[‘ means including, and ‘)’ means excluding. So, ‘[83-87]’ for example means everything greater than or equal to 83 and less than but not including 87.

A+	[99+	A	[93-99)	A-	[90-93)
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)				

During the course of the semester, all scores will be recorded to two significant digits after the decimal. When it comes time to compute overall course grades, however, I will round the course score (not each individual exam score) to the nearest whole number to determine your letter grade.

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**

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.

For many, but not all, readings, I will leave guidelines for doing the reading within the ASSIGNMENTS entry (accessible through the SYLLABUS section of the site) online. Make sure to look for this before beginning any of the readings.

Jan	20	Wed	<b>Course introduction</b> <i>Readings:</i> none
	22	Fri	(cont'd; no readings)
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	25	Mon	(cont'd; no readings)
	27	Wed	(cont'd; no readings)
	29	Fri	<b>Population ecology</b> <i>Reading:</i> M. Hannan & J. Freeman, “The Population Ecology of Organizations” but only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section I beginning through p. 933 2<sup>nd</sup> ¶</li> <li>• Section II, p. 934 4<sup>th</sup> ¶ through p. 935, 4<sup>th</sup> ¶</li> <li>• Section IV all of it (it’s short)</li> <li>• Section V beginning through p. 940, 2<sup>nd</sup> ¶</li> </ul>
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Feb	1	Mon	(cont'd; no new readings)
	3	Wed	<b>Population ecology: resource partitioning</b> <i>Reading:</i> G. Carroll & A. Swaminathan, “Why the Microbrewery Movement?” but only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• p. 715 to p. 735 (stop at “Data and Methods”)</li> <li>• p. 749 (starting with “Discussion”) to p. 752 (stop at “Size and Impact”)</li> </ul>
	5	Fri	(cont'd; no new readings)
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Feb	8	Mon	<b>Relational perspective</b> <i>Reading:</i> J. Pfeffer & G. Salancik, <i>The External Control of Organizations</i> ch 3 (chapter entitled “Social Control of Organizations”)
	10	Wed	(cont’d; no new readings)
	12	Fri	(cont’d; no new readings)
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	15	Mon	<b>***** PRESIDENTS’ DAY: NO CLASS *****</b>
	17	Wed	<b>The institutionalist perspective</b> <i>Reading:</i> P. DiMaggio & W. Powell, “The Iron Cage Revisited” but only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• p. 147 through p. 154 (up to “Predictors of Isomorphic Change”)</li> <li>• p. 156 (starting with “Implications for Social Theory”) to end</li> </ul>
	19	Fri	(cont’d; no new readings)
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	22	Mon	(cont’d; no new readings)
	24	Wed	<b>How do you get social change in organizations?</b> <i>Reading:</i> N. Fligstein, “The Intraorganizational Power Struggle” but only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pp. 44-50 + first four lines of p. 51</li> </ul>
<b>TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM #1 DISTRIBUTED WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2016</b>			
	26	Fri	(cont’d; no new readings)
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	29	Mon	(cont’d; no new readings)
<b>TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM #1 DUE MONDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2016</b>			
Mar	2	Wed	<b>Social movements</b> <i>Reading:</i> K. Voss & R. Sherman, “Breaking the Iron Law of Oligarchy” but only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• p. 310 to p. 341 (up to “Conclusion”)</li> <li>• <i>Note:</i> just skim the tables.</li> </ul>
	4	Fri	(cont’d; no new readings)
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	7	Mon	<b>What is “shareholder value”?</b> <i>Reading:</i> K. Ho, <i>Liquidated</i> ch 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Optionally</u>, read <i>Liquidated</i> introduction, especially pp. 1-13 and pp. 22-27. The introduction provides an overview of Ho’s project that you might find useful.</li> </ul>
	9	Wed	(cont’d; no new readings)

Mar	11	Fri	(cont'd; no new readings)
	14	Mon	<b>Who goes to work on Wall Street and why?</b> <i>Reading: K. Ho, Liquidated ch 1</i>
	16	Wed	(cont'd; no new readings)
	18	Fri	<b>What is the work of investment banking?</b> <i>Reading: K. Ho, Liquidated ch 2</i>
	21	Mon	***** <b>SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS</b> *****
	23	Wed	***** <b>SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS</b> *****
	25	Fri	***** <b>SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS</b> *****
	28	Mon	(cont'd: "What is the work of investment banking?"; no new readings)
	30	Wed	<b>How did shareholder value diffuse across Corporate America?</b> <i>Readings: none</i>
Apr	1	Fri	(cont'd; no new readings)
	4	Mon	<b>What effect has financialization had on employment?</b> <i>Reading: K. Lin &amp; D. Tomaskovic-Devey, "Financialization and U.S. income inequality, 1970-2008" but only:</i> • pp. 1284-1295
	6	Wed	(cont'd; no new readings)
	8	Fri	(cont'd; no new readings)
<b>TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM #2 DISTRIBUTED FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 2016</b>			
	11	Mon	<b>Financialization at the University of California</b> <i>Reading: C. Eaton, J. Habinek, M. Kumar, T. Stover &amp; A. Roehrkaase, "Swapping Our Future"</i>
	13	Wed	(cont'd; no new readings)
<b>TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM #2 DUE WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2016</b>			
	15	Fri	<b>The State as a set of organizations</b> <i>Reading: C. Cooper &amp; R. Block, Disaster ch 4</i>
	18	Mon	(cont'd; no new readings)

Apr	20	Wed	<b>What is the Department of Homeland Security’s mission and what is it <u>not</u>?</b> <i>Reading:</i> C. Cooper & R. Block, <i>Disaster</i> ch 6
	22	Fri	<b>Social networks: organizations embedded within networks</b> <i>Reading:</i> R. Burt, “Structural Holes and Good Ideas” <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus on the theoretical question Burt asks, what the “independent” and “dependent” variables are, and the results and implications of his study.</li><li>• My suggestion is to not focus so much on the data and methods.</li><li>• I would skim the tables and other graphics, but do take a longer look at Tables 2 and 3.</li></ul>
	25	Mon	(cont’d; no new readings)
	27	Wed	<b>Social networks: networks embedded within organizations</b> <i>Reading:</i> M. Small, <i>Unanticipated Gains</i> ch 1, 2
	29	Fri	<b>Course wrap-up and evaluations</b>
May	2	Mon	***** <b>READING,</b>
	4	Wed	***** <b>RECITATION, and</b>
	6	Fri	***** <b>REVIEW (no class)</b>
May	10	Tue	<b>FINAL EXAM IN-CLASS MAY 10, 2016 3:00-6:00 PM</b>