

Sociology 110 Organizations & Institutions

Spring 2018 | UC Berkeley

Instructor: Linus Huang

Office hours (drop-in): Wednesdays 3:15 PM - 4:45 PM, 487 Barrows

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Graduate Student Readers: Randall Tran, Aja Heisler & Alisa Szatrowski

Final exam: Exam Group 11, Wednesday, May 9, 2018 3-6 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 Wednesday, May 9th, 2018, from 3:00-6:00 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		

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.

Recommendation Letters

Writing recommendation letters for graduate programs or similar pursuits is part of my job and I am happy to do it. However, I am not inclined to write letters for people when all I know is what grade they earned in my course, even if it is a high grade. Students particularly from other countries may not be accustomed to talking to professors about their interests—be they academic, political, or otherwise—outside of class discussion. But, unless you are very vocal in class discussion (which would be great!), I'd advise you to visit me regularly in office hours if you are contemplating asking me for a letter of recommendation at some point in the future.

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 prior 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 not change this PDF file.

Jan	17	Wed	Introduction
	19	Fri	(cont'd)
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	22	Mon	(cont'd)
	24	Wed	(cont'd)
	26	Fri	Population ecology
			<i>Reading:</i> G. Carroll & A. Swaminathan, “Why the Microbrewery Movement?”
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	29	Mon	(cont'd)
	31	Wed	(cont'd)
Feb	2	Fri	Relational perspective
			<i>Reading:</i> J. Pfeffer & G. Salancik, “The Social Control of Organizations”
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	5	Mon	(cont'd)
	7	Wed	(cont'd)
	9	Fri	Institutionalist perspective
			<i>Reading:</i> P. DiMaggio & W. Powell, “The Iron Cage Revisited”
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Feb 12 Mon (cont'd)
 14 Wed (cont'd)
 16 Fri (cont'd)

Midterm #1 Distributed on bCourses Friday, February 16th, 1:00 PM

19 Mon **VETERAN'S DAY: NO CLASS**

21 Wed **Emergence of the fast food industry**

Reading: E. Schlosser, Fast Food Nation ch 1, 2

23 Fri (cont'd)

24 **Sat Midterm #1 DUE on bCourses Saturday, February 24th, 12:00 PM**

26 Mon **Expansion of the fast food industry**

Reading: E. Schlosser, Fast Food Nation ch 4

28 Wed (cont'd)

Mar 2 Fri **The re-organization of American agriculture**

Reading: E. Schlosser, Fast Food Nation ch 5, 6

5 Mon (cont'd)

7 Wed **Who gets power in the large American corporation?**

Reading: N. Fligstein, "The intraorganizational power struggle"

9 Fri (cont'd)

12 Mon **The rise of the shareholder value corporation**

Reading: K. Ho, Liquidated ch 3

14 Wed (cont'd)

16 Fri (cont'd)

19 Mon (cont'd)

21 Wed **Financialization & income inequality in the U.S.**

No readings.

23 Fri **Financialization @ the University of California**

No readings.

Mar	26	Mon	SPRING BREAK
	28	Wed	SPRING BREAK
	30	Fri	SPRING BREAK
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Apr	2	Mon	Does college re-produce class inequality? <i>Reading: E. Armstrong & L. Hamilton, <i>Paying for the Party</i> intro, ch 2, ch 5</i> Midterm #2 Distributed on bCourses Monday, April 2nd, 1:00 PM
	4	Wed	(Armstrong & Hamilton, cont'd)
	6	Fri	(cont'd)
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	9	Mon	Why do employers look for “pedigree” rather than merit? <i>Reading: L. Rivera, <i>Pedigree</i> ch 1-3</i>
	10	Tue	Midterm #2 DUE on bCourses Tuesday, April 10th, 12:00 PM
	11	Wed	(Rivera, cont'd)
	13	Fri	Why did FEMA fail so badly during Hurricane Katrina? <i>Reading: C. Cooper & R. Block, <i>Disaster</i> ch 4</i>
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	16	Mon	(cont'd)
	18	Wed	What is the DHS’s mission and what is it <i>not</i>? <i>Reading: C. Cooper & R. Block, <i>Disaster</i> ch 6</i>
	20	Fri	Social networks: organizations are embedded within networks ... <i>Reading: R. Burt, “Structural holes and good ideas”</i>
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	23	Mon	(cont'd)
	25	Wed	Social networks: ... but networks are also embedded within organizations <i>Reading: M. Small, <i>Unanticipated Gains</i> ch 1, 2</i>
	27	Fri	(cont'd)
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	30	Mon	READING,
May	2	Wed	RECITATION, and
	4	Fri	REVIEW
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	9	Wed	Final Exam 3:00 PM-6:00 PM