

SOC 345
Sociology of Organizations
Professor Becky Richards
Winter 2010
M, T, W, Th, F
Jan 4-Jan 8, 2010
8:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Social Science 362

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Office Hours:

by appointment

Course Objectives:

What are organizations? A working definition of organizations holds that they are enduring formal structures that direct human action, shape decision-making, channel wealth, concentrate power and institutionalize the ways in which people act in all spheres of society. Organizations are ubiquitous parts of contemporary life in economics and business, politics, the law, science, education, entertainment, the media, and leisure. People live most of their lives in various organizations. But beyond being “formal structures”, what are organizations? Where do they come from? How do they work? Why are they so important in contemporary life?

This class is organized in two stages based on a sociological, analytic framework that will help us understand these questions. First, we begin by examining the sources, arrangements, and functions of organizations and the analytical models by which we can understand them. Next, we step back to consider the organizations themselves by addressing the ways they grow and change and their interactions with their environments in larger society.

Each stage relies on a combination of textbook readings and empirical case studies, often in video format. The readings will introduce you to the theories that have shaped sociological understanding of organizations, while the cases provide empirical context for understanding and discussing those concepts.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, you should be able *in oral discussion and written examinations* to:

- 1. Identify, describe, and discuss the main theories and concepts in organizations. This includes demonstrating both a familiarity with the main issues and debates in the field and an ability to critically evaluate the assumptions underlying theories and concepts.**
- 2. Use the theories and concepts above in summarizing the arguments of assigned reading and applying these in your own analysis of an organizational case study of a particular issue and/or problem. This includes demonstrating an awareness of the methodological and theoretical limitations in fully explaining such issues and/or problems.**

3.

****Prerequisites****

Sociology 110 (Principles of Sociology) is highly recommended.

Expectations and Requirements:***Participation and Attendance***

This course consists of lectures, films, discussion, class exercises and exams. Since the course requires **ACTIVE** and **PREPARED** class discussion (see Schedule), you will be assessed on your class participation, especially in class exercises. You will frequently be expected to enter into class discussion with informed comments. This requires knowledge of social methods based on the literature rather than just personal or popular opinion. The quality of your exams and assignments will inevitably reflect the contributions you make, and receive, from informed class and group discussion. Participation on the scheduled class and assignment days is expected.

Late Arrivals and Early Departure

Both are disruptive to the class and should be minimized at all times. Let me know if you have circumstances that will cause you to come late or leave early. I reserve the right to deduct points from your class attendance/participation (as described above) if I believe late arrivals and/or early departures have become a problem. Since this course meets only once a week, it is imperative that you be here on time and stay for the duration of the class.

Wintersession Attendance Requirement

This course meets only 5 days a week for 1 week. Therefore, I expect you to attend **all** class sessions on time with **no late arrivals or early departures**. Complete attendance is absolutely mandatory. If you miss **part or all of a day of class** for any reason (including emergencies), **I will give you an incomplete**. If family, health, work or other problems prevent you from attending the full 5 days, you should plan to drop the course now and take it during the regular academic year. If family, health, work or other problems arise during wintersession, I will advise you to withdraw to avoid an incomplete. If you are late to class or leave early, I will also give you an incomplete unless we mutually agree upon satisfactory arrangements **before class begins**.

University Reminder

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>.

Required Texts

The following required text is available in the UM Bookstore:

Morgan, Gareth (Second Edition). 2006. *Images of Organizations (Updated Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

You need to read the assigned material prior to coming to class. We have one textbook and the reading assignments are organized so that you can reasonably complete the reading on the schedule as assigned. Given the intensity of wintersession, you should plan on doing the assigned reading several hours before or after class each day.

Course Requirements**Exams**

There are 4 exams consisting of multiple choice, definitions, and essay questions. The first 3 exams are worth 100 points and the final exam is worth 160 points for a total of 460 points. Exams will be based on lectures, readings, and small group assignments (see below).

There are no makeup or otherwise early or late exams.

Organizational Analysis Case Study Small Group Assignments

There will be 7 organizational analysis assignment small group assignments. These consist of video/DVD case study questions that you will discuss in your group and then complete on your own as a written assignment to be handed according to the schedule. Each small group assignment is indicated on the schedule below. Each small group assignment is worth 20 points for a **total of 140 points**. Exercise writeups are graded on completeness, composition (coherence), and accuracy. **There are NO makeup small group assignments and late assignments will not be accepted.**

Course Requirements:

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Exam 1 | 100 |
| Exam 2 | 100 |
| Exam 3 | 100 |
| Final Exam | 160 |
| Small Group Assignments | 140 |
| Total | 600 |

Your grade will be calculated on a straight percentage basis (100% base of **600** points possible). I do not give final letter grades with pluses or minuses.

| | |
|---------------|----|
| 90% and above | =A |
| 80 to 89% | =B |
| 70 to 79% | =C |
| 60 to 69% | =D |
| 59% and below | =F |

No extra credit will be offered!

At any point, you can calculate your grade by adding the number of points to date, dividing by the total number of points possible to date, and obtaining your percentage grade to date. Please note this syllabus may be changed as needs arise.

Communicating

I check e-mail regularly and I encourage you to use it (see e-mail address above). I also encourage you to see me before or after class. Be aware that unless your return address is clearly you and you have a clearly relevant-to-the-course subject line that I may delete your message as junk mail spam. Be clear in e-mail!

The Course Schedule

The *Course Schedule* follows.

| | Mon | Tues | Weds | Thu | Fri |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| | Jan 4 | Jan 5 | Jan 6 | Jan 7 | Jan 8 |
| 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. | Overview of the Course Lecture: Morgan Chs 1 and 2 Introduction to Organizations as Machines Discussion | Small Group Assignment: Organism Case Study #1 <i>Video: Mr. Sears' Catalog</i> | Lecture: Morgan Ch 5 Culture | Lecture: Morgan Ch 7 Psychic Prisons | Small Group Assignment: Domination Case Study #6 <i>Video: Cola Conquest</i> |
| 10:10 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. | Reading: Morgan Chs 1 and 2 | Writeup: Case Study #1 | Small Group Assignment: Culture Case Study #3 <i>Video: Code Rush</i> | Small Group Assignment: Psychic Prisons Case Study #5 <i>Video: Fred Smith and Federal Express</i> | Writeup: Case Study #7 |
| 11:10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. | Lecture: Organizations as Machines (Morgan Ch 2) Discussion/ Review | Exam 1 (Chs 1-3) | Writeup: Case Study #3 | Writeup: Case Study #5 | Whole Group Assignment: <i>In-Class Video Comparisons #7</i> |
| 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. | Practice Case Study: <i>The Factory System</i> | Lecture: Morgan Ch 4 Brains | Exam 2 (Chs 4-5) | Exam 3 (Chs 6, 7) | Writeup: In-Class video Comparisons #7 |
| 1:40 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. | Lecture: Organizations as Organisms (Morgan Ch 3) | Small Group Assignment: Brains Case Study #2 <i>Video: Fire on the Mountain</i> | Lecture: Morgan Ch 6 Political Systems | Read Morgan Ch 9: Domination | Final Exam Review |
| 3:10 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. | Reading: Morgan Ch 3 | Writeup: Case Study #2 | Small Group Assignment: Political Systems Case Study #4 <i>Video: The Power Game</i> | Lecture: Morgan Ch 9 Domination | Final Exam |
| <i>Homework</i> | Read Morgan Ch 4 Study Sheets | Read Morgan Chs 5 and 6 Study Sheets | Writeup: Case Study #4 Read Morgan Ch 7 | Read Morgan Ch 10, 11 | |