

ORGANIZATIONS, Spring 2010
920:524:01
920:492:04
A-256 Lucy Stone Hall, Livingston Campus
Mondays 4:10-6:50

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I have two main goals in this course. The first is to survey basic issues in organizational theory. The second is to analyze some of the key current topics and arguments in social scientific thinking on organizations and organizationally relevant issues. "Organizationally relevant" means this: there are a lot of important debates and currents of thought in social science that depend in one way or another on organizations. For example, micro-level analyses about how people make choices among jobs must take account of how organizations set the menu of choices from which they choose. Or, to take a macro example: it's not possible to understand how western culture shapes prevailing conceptions of rationality without understanding how organizational politics gave rise to those conceptions, and defeated others.

It is almost always a waste of time to lecture in graduate courses. Because this course is a seminar, it is important that everyone participate in the discussions. It will be impossible to participate intelligently without having done the reading, so please do it before the class in which we'll be discussing it. As a device to facilitate discussion, a discussion leader (or leaders) will assume primary responsibility for leading the discussion. Leaders should prepare a set of crucial questions about the readings for the day. Regardless of whose week it is to lead discussion, everyone is responsible for reading the material. We will arrange the schedule on the first day of class. I'll also give some tips on how to digest what might appear to be a large amount of material.

There are 3 requirements for the course. First is participation. Second, there are two short (3 pages maximum length) critical analyses, the dates of which appear below. I will give you some guidelines on how to do a good critical analysis; I'll also show you an example. Last is a proposal, paper, or chapter. I am flexible about this, so that students have a choice that will work best with their intellectual agenda. Of course, the specific topic can be of your own choosing, but you should clear it with me first. If your proposal is built upon or might feed into a dissertation proposal, please see me before developing it. Toward the end of the course, you will present your work to the class, for friendly, constructive feedback.

I don't give incompletes.

The following books are required, and are available at the Livingston Bookstore. All are in paper, and will be cheap:

- Charles L. Bosk, *Forgive and Remember: Managing Medical Failure*, second expanded edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003 [1979]. ISBN: 0226066789
- Lee Clarke, *Mission Impossible: Using Fantasy Documents to Tame Disaster*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999. ISBN-10: 0226109429

- Gerald F. Davis, *Managed by the Markets: How Finance Re-Shaped America*, Oxford University Press, 2009
- Dana Britton, *At Work in the Iron Cage: The Prison as Gendered Organization*, NYU Press.

There are also readings. I've put the readings on Sakai.

Generally, the naming convention I used is lastname_significant word.pdf. So, for example, the first reading is entitled "weber_bureaucracy.pdf."

We'll talk about how to get the other readings on the 1st day of class.

A few of the readings are Word documents. Let me know if that's a problem for you and I'll send it to you in another format. Most are PDF files.

List of readings, by week.

1. January 25. Introductions. The relevance of organizational analysis; importance of the perspective; place of organizational sociology in the field. Why I chose the books, and so on.

2. February 1. Some fundamentals

Here the point is to flesh out what it means to say "organizational analysis," while giving some intellectual history along the way.

- Weber, Max. "Bureaucracy," *Economy and Society*, Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, editors, Volume 2, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.
- Perrow, Charles, *Why Bureaucracy*, Chapter 1, in *Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay*, 3rd ed., NY: Random House, 1986).
- Frederick Winslow Taylor, *Principles of Scientific Management*. (NY: Norton, 1947, pp. 5-29.
- Roethlisberger, F.J., and William J. Dickson. *Management and the Worker*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939 Pp. 3-18 and Chapter 24.
- Dana Bramel and Ronald Friend, Hawthorne, *The Myth of The Docile Worker, and Class Bias in Psychology*, *American Psychologist*, 1981, 36:867-78.
- NB: You are not required to read the following, but they're good to know: Was there a Hawthorne effect?, Stephen R.G. Jones, *AJS*, 1992, 98(3):451-468. Worker interdependence and output: the Hawthorne studies reevaluated, *ASR*, 1990, 176-190.
- Neil Fligstein, *Organizations: Theoretical debates and the scope of organizational theory*, *Handbook of Sociology*.

3. February 8. What makes organizations do what they do? The institutionalist answer. Usual answers to that question involve efficiency or some other functional reason that makes sense. These authors come up with other answers altogether, and it matters for

what organizations look like and how they act. Of course, all theories leave out things so be on the lookout for what is missed here.

- Charles Perrow, *Complex Organizations: A Critical Essay*, NY: McGraw Hill, 1986, Chapter 5.
- Paul Dimaggio and Walter Powell, *The iron cage revisited: institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organization fields*, 1983, 48(2):147-160.
- Walter Powell and Paul Dimaggio, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1991. Introduction.
- Mizruchi, Mark S. and Lisa C. Fein. "The Social Construction of Organizational Knowledge: A Study of the Uses of Coercive, Mimetic, and Normative Isomorphism." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 1999, 44:653-683.
- John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan "Institutional organizations: Structure as myth and ceremony, *AJS* 83 (1977): 340-63. Reprinted in Powell and DiMaggio, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*.

Other relevant readings, not required for class but key to further understanding the institutional perspective:

- Paul J. DiMaggio "Constructing an organizational field as a professional project: U.S. art museums, 1920-40," pp. 267-92 in Powell and DiMaggio *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*.
- Frank Dobbin and John Sutton, "The Strength of a Weak State: The Rights Revolution and the Rise of Human Resources Management Divisions." *AJS* 104 (1998): 441-76.
- Lauren B. Edelman, C. Uggen, H. Erlanger. "The Endogeneity of Legal Regulation: Grievance Procedures as Rational Myth." *AJS* v. 105 (1999): 406-54.
- Ezra Zuckerman, "The Categorical Imperative: Securities Analysts and the Illegitimacy Discount." *AJS* 104 (1999): 1398-1438.
- Lynne Zucker, "The role of institutionalism in cultural persistence," pp. 83-107 in Powell and DiMaggio, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*.
- Stephen Brint and Jerome Karabal. 1991. "Institutional Origins and Transformation: The Case of American Community Colleges", pp. 337-60 in Powell and DiMaggio, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*.
- Philip Selznick, "Institutionalism 'old' and 'new.'" *Administrative Science Quarterly* 41 (1996): 270-277.
- Frank Dobbin and Erin L. Kelly, *How to stop harassment: professional construction of legal compliance in organizations*, *AJS*, 1007, 112(4):1203-1243.

4. February 15. Gender is everywhere. So is organization. Here's a clever place that they meet. Dana Britton, *At Work in the Iron Cage: The Prison as Gendered Organization*, NYU Press.

5. February 22. Organizational contexts & social networks
 More arguments about the social structures that shape people's life chances in various ways. Consider the continuities with Martin's work. Look at the trust writings in that light.
 - Mark Granovetter, *Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness*, *American Journal of Sociology*, 1985, 91(Nov.): 481-510.
 - Brian Uzzi. 1997. "Social Structure and Competition in Interfirm Networks: The Paradox of Embeddedness." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 42:35-67.
 - Neil Fligstein, *Markets as politics: a political-cultural approach to market institutions*, *American Sociological Review*, 1996, 61(4):656-673.
 - Neil Fligstein and Peter Brantley Bank control, owner control, or organizational dynamics: who controls the large modern corporation?, *AJS*, 1992, 98(2), 280-307
 - Val Burris, *Interlocking Directorates and Political Cohesion among Corporate Elites*, *AJS*, 2005, July.
 - Trust
 - Lynne Moulton, *Divining value with relational proxies: how moneylenders balance risk and trust in the quest for good borrowers*, *Sociological Forum*, 2007, 22(3):300-330.
 - Dmitry Khodyakov, *The complexity of trust-control relationships in creative organizations: insights from a qualitative analysis of a conductorless organization*, *Social Forces*, 2007, 86(1):1-22.

 - First critical essay due this week.

6. March 1. New Organizational Forms
 - Arthur Stinchcombe, *Social structure and organizations*, *Handbook of Organizations*.
 - Lazerson, Mark, *A New Phoenix? Modern putting out in The Modena Knitwear Industry*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1995, 40(1):34-59.
 - Walter W. Powell. *Neither Market Nor Hierarchy*, in *Research in Organizational Behavior v. 12: 295-336*, ed. Barry Staw and L.L. Cummings (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1990).
 - Karen Lee Ashcraft, *Organized Dissonance: Feminist Bureaucracy as Hybrid Form*, *Academy of Management Journal*, 2001, 44(6):1301-1322.
 - Paul DiMaggio, *Making Sense of the Contemporary Firm and Prefiguring Its Future*, Chapter 1, *The Twenty-First Century Firm*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

7. March 8. Organizational and System Performance
 Is there anything organizations can say about the recent economic meltdown? Gerald

Davis thinks so:

- Managed by the Markets: How Finance Re-Shaped America, Gerald F. Davis, Oxford University Press, 2009
8. March 22. Accidents, Mistakes, and Chance
- Charles Perrow, Normal Accidents: Living with High Risk Technology, Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1999. Chapter 3 & Postscript on Y2K
 - Charles Perrow, The Next Catastrophe: Reducing our Vulnerabilities to Natural, Industrial, and Terrorist Disasters, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007, Chapter 7, Disastrous Concentration in the National Power Grid.
 - Scott D. Sagan, The Limits of Safety, Chapter 4, Redundancy and Reliability: The 1968 Thule bomber Accident, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
 - Editors (1994). "Systems, organizations and the limits of safety: a symposium." Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management 2(4): 205 - 240. The selections begin with "JCCM"
 - Lee Clarke, Max Headroom and the Efficiency Worshipers, Sociological Forum.
 - Columbia Accident Investigation Board, Chapter 7, "The accident's organizational causes," and Chapter 8, "History as Cause":
http://caib.nasa.gov/news/report/pdf/vol1/full/caib_report_volume1.pdf
9. March 29. Organizational Performance: Success and Failure
- Diane Vaughan, Dark side of organizations, Annual Review of Sociology 25 (1999) 271-305.
 - Karl Weick, The vulnerable system: an analysis of the Tenerife air disaster, Journal of Management, 1990, 16, 571-593.
 - Gregory A. Bigley and Karlene H. Roberts, The Incident Command System: High Reliability Organizing For Complex and Volatile Task Environments, Academy of Management Journal, 44(6):1281-1299.
 - Steven F. Freeman, Larry Hirschhorn, and Marc Maltz, Moral purpose and organizational resilience: Sandler, O'Neill & Partners in the aftermath of September 11, 2001.
 - Barry C. Lynn, Break the chain: the antitrust case against Wal-Mart, Harpers, 2006, July, 29-36.
 - James B. Stewart, Eight Days, New Yorker, 2009, September 21, 58-81.
10. April 5. Moral Games in Organizations (what is a game, anyway?)
- a. Charles L. Bosk, Forgive and Remember: Managing Medical Failure, second expanded edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003 [1979]. ISBN: 0226066789
11. April 12. Organizations and inequality

A huge amount of the important stratification in modern society happens inside and because of organizations. Yet they are often neglected. Here we wonder what purchase is gained by bringing organizational analysis to bear in inequalities, and vice versa.

- Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Some Effects of Proportions in Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women. *American J. of Sociology* 82 (1977): 965-90.
- Reskin, Barbara F. and Debra Branch McBrier. 2000. "Why Not Ascription? Organizations' Employment of Male and Female Managers." *American Sociological Review* 65:210-223.
- Joel Podolny and James Baron, Resources and relationships: social networks and mobility in the workplace, *American Sociological Review*, 1997, 62:673-693.
- Joan Acker, Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: <http://www.susans.org/reference/gendorga.html>
- Dana M. Britton, The epistemology of the gendered organization, *Gender & Society*, 2000, 14(3):418-434.
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- Extra relevant readings
- Mark Granovetter, Small is Bountiful: Labor markets and establishment size, *ASR*, 1984, 49(3)
- Ibarra, Herminia and Lynn Smith-Lovin. 1997. "New Directions in Social Network Research on Gender and Organizational Careers." In C.L. Cooper and S.E. Jackson, eds., *Creating Tomorrow's Organization: A Handbook for Future Research in Organizational Behavior*. Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons.
- Biggart, Nicole Woolsey. 1990. "Introduction" (pp. 1-19) and "Family, Gender, and Business" (pp. 70-97) in *Charismatic Capitalism: Direct Selling Organizations in the United States*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1990.
- The social organization of the American business elite, Michael Useem, *ASR*, 1979, 44(4)
- Michael Useem. 1982. "Classwide Rationality in the Politics of Managers and Directors of Large American Corporations in the U.S. and Great Britain." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 27: 199-226.
- Pathways to top corporate management, Michael Useem and Jerome Karabel, *ASR*, 1986, 51(2)
- Calvin Morrill, Conflict Management, Honor, and Organizational Change, *AJS*, 1991, 97(3):585-621.

12. April 19. Organizational production of culture

The fundamental point here is that organizations make and use symbols. But what are the mechanisms? Why do they make the symbols as they do? What are the alternative arguments? Extra credit for anyone who can identify the connections with classical organization theory.

- Lee Clarke, *Mission Improbable: Using Fantasy Documents to Tame Disaster*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

13. April 26. Special topics: what does organizational analysis have to say about 9.11 and the response to 9.11?

- Richard Clarke, Evacuate the White House, Ch. 1 of Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror, Free Press, 2004.
- Tierney, K. J. 2003. "Disaster Beliefs and Institutional Interests: Recycling Disaster Myths in the Aftermath of 9-11." Pp. 33-51 in Lee Clarke (Ed.) Terrorism and Disaster: New Threats, New Ideas. Research in Social Problems and Public Policy, Vol. 11. Elsevier Science Ltd.
- William L. Waugh, Jr. and Richard T. Sylvester, Organizing the War on Terrorism, Public Administration Review, September 2002, Volume 62, Special issue, pp. 145-153.
- Nafeez Mossaddq Ahmed, Chapter 5, The Collapse of Standard Operating Procedures on 9-11, in The War on Freedom: How and Why America was Attacked, September 11, 2001. This one is available as a web page.
- Louis Comfort, Rethinking security: organizational fragility in extreme events, Public Administration Review, September 2002, Volume 62, Special issue, pp. 98-107.
- Graham Allison, Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis, American Political Science Review, 1969, 63(3):689-718
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- Second critical essay due this week.

14. May 3. Student presentations.