



SOCIOLOGY 315
HOW ORGANIZATIONS WORK
SPRING 2023
MONDAY & WEDNESDAY, 2-3:20PM
MURRAY HALL ROOM 114

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OFFICE HOURS: MONDAYS 1-2PM
(BY APPT- PLEASE EMAIL ME FIRST, WE'LL MEET ON COLLEGE AVE)

Course Description: Organizations—businesses, schools, government departments, law firms, hospitals, non-profits, NGOs, religious groups, universities— are an essential part of many areas of our lives. The organizations in which humans constantly participate and act inform the most basic of our social experiences. Organizations structure what kind of work is available and what the nature of that work is. They influence the distribution of resources and of power both within and between organizations. They create roles and relations among organization members. They often shape individuals' subjective experience of the world.

This class will focus on formal organizations, which are entities that are driven by the pursuit of goals, have defined boundaries, and create sets of roles and activities for its members (Aldrich 1979). We will look at examples of these types of organizations— international oil companies, restaurants, hospitals, the YMCA, microbreweries, tech companies, toy stores, day care centers, corporations, casinos—to examine some of the basic questions about organizations. What makes an organization succeed or die? What makes an organization function well or poorly? How and when do organizations change? How are organizations influenced by politics and the need for resources? Why do organizations take the form that they do? How do organizations shape the lives of people who work in them or interact with them? How do organizations shape political processes and distribute resources? The course is organized in four sections: what happens within organizations, how the external world shapes organizations, how people interact with organizations they are not part of, and how organizations act on and shape the world. We will take a look at existing theories about organizations along the way.

Course Learning Goals:

At the end of this course, students should come away with:

1. A familiarity with the issues relevant to understanding organizations and the theories that inform those issues.
2. An ability to identify issues and apply theories of organizations to specific examples.
3. Ability to evaluate the evidence used to make an argument.

Department Learning Goals:

1. Students will understand the sociological perspective, a distinctive analysis of the ways people think, feel, and behave that focuses on how they are situated in historically, culturally, and socially specific environments.
2. Students will understand key questions addressed by the discipline and the ways in which social structure and social interaction shape human behavior.
3. Students will develop the skills necessary to read and evaluate social science research in an intelligent and critical manner.
4. Students will understand the role of theory in the construction of sociological inquiry. Majors will demonstrate a solid grasp of the central ideas of major classical and contemporary theorists.
5. Students will understand sociological methods of research.

Structure of the Course:

All readings/materials are REQUIRED and should be completed before class. I will provide background information on organizational theories, but in general, the class will be run as a discussion seminar, and everyone will be expected to contribute to the discussion. This will be much more difficult, and the class will be far less productive and interesting, if you have not done the reading. All reading material is either available on the Canvas site or online (links are provided below).

Requirements and Grading:

Attendance and Participation: Attendance and participation are required, mainly because the class will be more interesting if everyone regularly contributes and you will personally get more out of the class if you participate. We will be doing in-class activities to spur thinking and discussion, so everyone will be able to contribute. You can contribute to a discussion in many ways: by asking questions, by providing facts or your own observations, by stating opinions informed by readings and class discussion, by providing analysis of the readings.

Analytic Reading Responses: Each week, you will be responsible for submitting a reading response that will be due before class (ideally by noon) via Canvas (either Monday OR Wednesday). You are required to complete a reading response for seven of the weeks. You can pick whichever weeks you would like to skip responses. Please keep track of how many you have submitted, as you are responsible for submitting seven.

In the reading responses, you will answer a set of questions for the Monday and Wednesday readings that I will provide on Canvas. The goal of the reading responses is to get you thinking more deeply about the readings, and about how to analyze the cases we examine.

Choose Your Own Topics Assignment: As you will see, I've left the week of April 17 free of readings. We will fill in this week with readings related to topics that you as a class choose. The week of January 30, you'll submit to me suggestions for three types of organizational topics plus

a short paragraph about your interest in them and I'll put these together and choose readings to reflect your interests.

Inside Organizations Case Study Memo: In class on Wednesday, February 15, we will watch a documentary about an organization. You should take notes on the documentary, as it will be the basis for a take-home memo on Monday, February 20. The activity and memo will ask you to apply what we have learned about organizations up to that point to the case in the documentary.

Quiz on The World Outside of Organizations: We'll do a short, in-class quiz on the material in weeks six through eight on Wednesday, March 8. The goal of the quiz is to make sure that you understand the main concepts of those weeks—I will ask you to apply the concepts to an example. Quizzes and exams aren't everyone's favorite, but they are helpful for making you consolidate what you've learned so far through studying.

Introduction to an Organization OR Pandemic-Organization Memo: During the semester, you'll complete a memo (about 1500 words) using your experiences with an organization you have frequent contact with and applying the concepts from the class to analyze your experiences. You could choose an organization because you were a customer, an employee, a student, a leader, etc. The memo will be written in the form of a brief to new organizational members, documenting what they need to know about how the organization works. The other option for this assignment is to apply the concepts in the class to your experiences with organizations during and through the pandemic. This will be due via Canvas on Friday, April 21. We will discuss your memos the following week.

Organizations in the World Exam: An exam, held in class on May 1, will ask you to apply the information learned in weeks ten through fifteen. It will be an essay exam.

Summary of Assignments and Dates:

- Attendance and Participation
- 7 Reading Responses
- Choose Your Own Topic (Week of January 30)
- Case Study Memo (Weeks 1-5) (February 20)
- Quiz: Weeks 6-8 (March 18)
- Intro to Organization Memo (due April 21)
- Exam Two: Weeks 10-15 (May 1)

We will discuss and establish the weighting of each of these assignments in the first weeks of the course.

Class Policies

Because much of this class is discussion-based, to encourage the free exchange of ideas, the classroom should be safe, supportive, and productive. To facilitate such an environment, all class participants, students and faculty, must act with mutual respect and common courtesy.

Texting, using social media, and using the internet for things unrelated to class decreases the quality of the class for everyone, and are not permitted. You will get far more out of the class if

you don't have your laptop in front of you during class except for looking at the readings (taking notes by hand increases comprehension anyway).

If you are sick or have a family emergency and need to miss class, that is fine. Please let me know and report the absence here: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>

If you are in need of disability accommodations, please let me know and register for accommodations with the Office of Disability Services: <https://ods.rutgers.edu>

Please be familiar with the Academic Integrity Policy of Rutgers:
<http://nbacademicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

Resources

Some resources that Rutgers has available for students to support your academic work and well-being.

- Student Success Essentials: <https://success.rutgers.edu>
- Student Support Services: <https://www.rutgers.edu/academics/student-support>
- The Learning Centers: <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/>
- The Writing Centers (including Tutoring and Writing Coaching): <https://writingctr.rutgers.edu>
- Rutgers Libraries: <https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/>
- Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services: <https://veterans.rutgers.edu>
- Student Health Services: <http://health.rutgers.edu/>
- Counseling, Alcohol and Other Drug Assistance Program & Psychiatric Services (CAPS):
<http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>
- Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance: www.vpva.rutgers.edu/

Week One Introduction: Organizations and why we study them

Reading for Wednesday January 18:

- No reading
- Choose your own topics Assignment, due Monday, January 30

Week Two Looking Inside Organizations: Management & Roles

Reading for Monday January 23:

- Susan Orlean. 2018. *The Library Book*. New York: Simon & Schuster. Chapter 6, pp. 59-78.
- Selection from Max Weber, *Bureaucracy*

Reading for Wednesday January 25:

- Rosabeth Moss Canter. 1977. *Men and Women of the Corporation*. Ch. 3: Managers and Ch. 4: Secretaries, pp. 47-103.

Week Three Looking Inside Organizations: Work

Reading for Monday January 30:

- Christine L. Williams. 2006. *Inside Toyland: Working, Shopping, and Inequality*. Chapter 3: The Social Organization of Toy Stores, pp. 48-91.

Reading for Wednesday February 1:

- Sallaz, Jeffrey. 2002. "The House Rules: Autonomy and Interests among Service Workers in the Contemporary Casino Industry." *Work and Occupations* 29: 394-427.

Week Four Looking Inside Organizations: Culture

Reading for Monday February 6:

- Gary Alan Fine. 2009. *Kitchens: The Culture of Restaurant Work*. Chapter 1: Living the Kitchen Life, pp.17-54.
- Angele Christin. 2016. "The Hidden Story of How Metrics Are Being Used in Courtrooms and Newsrooms to Make More Decisions." *Ethnography Matters*, "Co-Designing With Machines" Special Issue.

Reading for Wednesday February 8:

- Gideon Kunda. 2006. *Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation*. Chapter 3: Ideology: Tech Culture Codified, pp. 50-91.

Week Five Looking Inside Organizations

Reading for Monday February 13: Work in the New Economy

- Peter Waldman and Kartikay Mehrotra. December 29, 2017. "America's Worst Graveyard Shift is Grinding up Workers." *Bloomberg.com* <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-12-29/america-s-worst-graveyard-shift-is-grinding-up-workers>
- Dani Carrillo et al. 2017. "Instability of Work and Care: How Work Schedules Shape Child-Care Arrangements for Parents Working in the Service Sector." *Social Service Review*, 422-455.

- Eli Friedman. Nov. 13, 2015. "The Future of Work: The Guest Worker- Use and Discard." *Pacific Standard Magazine*. <https://psmag.com/economics/the-future-of-work-the-guest-workeruse-and-discard>

Reading for Wednesday February 15: Case Study: Movie

- In class: View documentary on an organization

Week Six Inside Organizations: Case Study & The World Outside Organizations Reading for Monday February 20: Case Study: Activity and Memo – NO CLASS, TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENT

- During class period, take-home: Analysis of video and organizational case study memo
- No new readings

Reading for Wednesday February 22: The World Outside Organizations

- Mayer N. Zald and Patricia Denton Wallace. 1998. "From Evangelism to General Service: The Transformation of the YMCA." *Qualitative Studies of Organizations*. Pp. 223-239.
- "How to (seriously) Read a Scientific Paper": <http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2016/03/how-seriously-read-scientific-paper>

Week Seven The World Outside of and Between Organizations

Reading for Monday February 27: The World Outside Organizations

- Melissa Wooten. 2016. *In the Face of Inequality: How Black Colleges Adapt*. Albany: SUNY University Press. Chapter 1: "The Black Higher Education Field", pp. 20-43.

Reading for Wednesday March 1: The World Between Organizations

- Erin Kelly and Frank Dobbin. 1999. "Civil Rights Law at Work: Sex Discrimination and the Rise of Maternity Leave Policies." *American Journal of Sociology* 105: 455-492.

Week Eight The World Between Organizations

Reading for Monday March 6:

- Glenn R. Carroll and Anand Swaminathan. 2000. "Why the Microbrewery Movement? Organizational Dynamics of Resource Partitioning in the U.S. Brewing Industry." *American Journal of Sociology*. Read: pp. 719-735 & 749-754.

Reading for Wednesday March 8:

- No new reading
- Review of concepts and Quiz, Weeks 6-8

Week Nine Spring Break

Week Ten Interacting with Organizations: Getting In

Reading for Monday March 20:

- Malcolm Gladwell. Oct. 10, 2005. "Getting In: The Social Logic of Ivy League Admissions." *The New Yorker*.
- Scott Jaschik. 2007. "Who Gets In—and Why." *Inside Higher Ed*.
<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2007/09/07/class>

Reading for Wednesday March 22:

- Katherine Newman. 1999. *No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the Inner City*. Chapter 3: Getting a Job in the Inner City, pp. 62-85.
- Cathy O'Neil, September 1, 2016. "How Algorithms Rule Our Working Lives." *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2016/sep/01/how-algorithms-rule-our-working-lives>

Week Eleven Organizations Acting in the World: Inequality

Reading for Monday March 27:

- Mario Small. 2009. *Unanticipated Gains: Origins of Network Inequality in Everyday Life*. Chapter 1 (pp. 1-26) and Chapter 7 (pp. 157-174).

Reading for Wednesday March 29:

- Celeste Watkins-Hayes. 2011. "Race, Respect, and Red Tape: Inside the Black Box of Racially Representative Bureaucracies." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*.
- Annie Waldman, Dec. 27, 2017. "How Hospitals are Failing Black Mothers." *Propublica.org*.
<https://www.propublica.org/article/how-hospitals-are-failing-black-mothers>

Week Twelve Organizations Acting in the World: Shaping Politics

Reading for Monday April 3:

- Nicole P. Marwell. "Privatizing the Welfare State: Nonprofit Community-based Organizations as Political Actors." In *Politics and Partnership: The Role of Voluntary Associations in America's Political Past and Present*. Pp. 209-236.

Reading for Wednesday April 5:

- David Gelles. August 19, 2017. "The Moral Voice of Corporate America" *New York Times*
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/19/business/moral-voice-ceos.html>

Week Thirteen Organizations Acting in the World: Shaping Politics and Justice

Reading for Monday April 10:

- Coll, Steve. 2012. *Private Empire: Exxonmobile and American Power*. Prologue and chapter 1. Pp. 1-41.
- Geoffrey R. Stone. March 24, 2010. "Explaining *Citizens United*." Huffington Post.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/geoffrey-r-stone/explaining-citizens-unite_b_433140.html

Reading for Wednesday April 12:

- Sarah Brayne, Alex Rosenblat, and Danah Boyd. 2015. "Predictive Policing." *Data & Civil Rights: A New Era of Policing and Justice*.

***INTRODUCTION TO ORGANIZATION MEMO or PANDEMIC JOURNAL, DUE FRIDAY,
APRIL 21***

Week Fourteen Student Choice—Readings & Discussion of Memos

Reading for Monday April 17:

- Reading TBA

Reading for Wednesday April 19:

- Reading TBA

Week Fifteen When Organizations Don't Work and The Future of Organizations

Reading for Monday April 24:

- Diane Vaughan. 1997. "The Trickle-Down Effect: Policy Decisions, Risky Work, and the Challenger Tragedy." *California Management Review* 39: 80-102.

Reading for Wednesday April 26:

- Shirky, Clay. 2008. *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations*. Ch. 1 & 2 (pp. 1-54).
- Exam Review

Week Sixteen

Monday May 1: Exam Two