

Course Outline

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Soci 3304

Kennesaw State University
Summer 2017

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Course Description: An introduction to social organization, ranging from primitive to complex structures. The emphasis, however, will be on modern complex organizations, with special stress placed on the nature of bureaucracy. A Weberian perspective will be used to analyze the role of power and authority, centralization vs. decentralization, and formal vs. informal structures within them. Also discussed will be rationality, professionalism, democracy, and the role of gender. Students will be encouraged to engage in first hand observations of organizations, with an eye toward learning how to survive within them. The course will attempt to explain why bureaucracy is necessary in modern mass society and why some of its more irritating aspects, such as red tape and rigidity, are as they are.

Required Texts:

Hall, R.H. and Tolbert, P.S. 2005. Organizations: Structures, Processes, and Outcomes. (Ninth Edition). Upper Swaddle River: Pearson/Prentice-Hall/

Howard, P.K. 1995. The Death of Common Sense: How Law Is Suffocating America. New York: Randon House

Recommended Texts:

Grusky, O, and Miller, G. (Eds.) 1981. The Sociology of Organizations: Basic Studies (Second Ed.) New York: Free Press.

Blau, P. 1963. The Dynamics of Bureaucracy (Revised Edition) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Adams, S. 1996. The Dilbert Principle. New York: Harper.

Boleman, L.G. and Deal T.E. 1991. Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Ritzer, G. 2000. The McDonaldization of Society. Thousand Oaks CA: Pine Forge Press.

Course Outline:

Week I. 5/30 – 6/1 Introduction: An overview of social organization. Overview of Weberian theory. From Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft; family bands to bureaucratic corporations. Overview of social organization continued. The cultural order and the structural order; their changing historical configurations. Bureaucracy in historical context. An increasing division of labor, larger social units, and a more efficient market. The need for effective social controls. An introduction to the Weberian model of bureaucracy. The Weberian model further explained. *Sine ere et studio* and the iron cage. Its pros and cons.

Readings: Hall Chpts, 1, 2, 4, 5.

Week II. 6/5 – 6/8 Power and authority. Leadership, hierarchy and compliance. Communication and authority. Who makes decisions? The political dimension of organizations. Succession in organizations; tests of strength Centralization vs. decentralization. The growth of professionalism.

Readings: Hall. Chpts 5, 6, 7

First Exam 6/8

Week III. 6/12 – 6/15 Special problems: 1) Is democracy possible in large organizations?: 2) the role of women in the organization. Scientific management and the limits of rationality. Informal organization and human relations. The inevitability of face-to-face relations. Organizational cultures.

Readings: Hall Chapt. 3, 6.

Presentations Begin 6/12

Paper Due 6/15 or later (depending on presentation dates)

Week IV. 6/19 – 6/22 Escaping organizational controls and the total institution. Informal rules and "theft." Rules, records, and control. Rationality and excessive specificity. Potential Reforms. Summing up the course

Readings: Hall Chapt. 8.: Howard

Final Exam 6/22

Research: Class Presentation and Paper

Students will be responsible for researching a specific organization of their choice. They will do an analysis of this organization based on concepts covered during the course; concepts such as "authority," degree of "centralization," or "formalism." They will then deliver a five to ten (5 - 10) minute presentation regarding their findings before the class. (Time will be strictly regulated.) Subsequently, this information must be written up in the form of a 12 - 15 paper (Times Roman 10 or 12 point font) that incorporates library research to complement the observational data. Grading criteria will include: organization, documentation, clarity of expression, persuasiveness, originality, and creativity.

The Class Grade will depend equally on two (2) examinations, the research paper, and classroom participation. (Value 25% each). Each examination will be awarded a letter grade

based on a normal curve distribution. For purposes of the final grade, letter grades will be translated into a four point system with A = 4.00, A- = 3.67, A-/B+ = 3.5, B+ = 3.33, B = 3.0, etc. Class attendance and participation will be monitored and may be factored into the final grade when the student's performance is on the cusp between grades. Attendance is further encouraged because the examinations will usually include some materials covered only in class.

I would appreciate hearing from anyone in this class who has a special need which may be the result of a disability. I am reasonably sure we can work out whatever arrangement is necessary, be it seating, testing, or other accommodation. Please see me after class, as soon as possible, if you have such a need.

Academic Integrity: Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the undergraduate and graduate Catalogs. Section II of this Code addresses the University's policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an "informal" resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct's minimum one semester suspension requirement.