

Sociology 110
Formal Organizations and Bureaucracy

Classroom: 313 Dey Hall
Class Hours: 9:45-11:15 MTWRF

Instructor: Junpeng "J.P." Li
Office: 218 Hamilton Hall
Office Hours: 11:30 AM-12:30 PM MTWR and by appointment
E-mail: jpli@email.unc.edu
Course website: blackboard.unc.edu

Purpose of the Course

This is a survey course in the sociology of organizations intended for advanced undergraduate students. The field of organizations has grown to be a large and multidisciplinary pursuit, drawing researchers from psychology, political science, and management departments, as well as sociology. A single course cannot hope to cover all of the important developments, but this course provides a solid introduction to most of the topics central to the sociological understanding of organizations. Students from other fields, such as economics, political science, and business may also find this course relevant.

The readings represent a wide range of topics and viewpoints. Some are related to management theory, others are critical of existing organizations and the power they wield, and many fit into neither of these categories. Most people would consider almost all the works included here central to the subfield of organization studies.

Rules of the Road

1. We start and end class on time.
2. Turn off cell phones, pagers, and beepers.
3. Check your email account and Blackboard daily.

Honor Code

The University Honor Code will be in effect through all exams, quizzes, and written assignments. Please read carefully the provisions of the Honor Code, make certain you understand and adhere to them, and ask me to clarify any questions you have regarding the Code. The Code is a long and valuable tradition at UNC—protect it! Here is the link to the Code: <http://honor.unc.edu/honor/code.html>.

Texts

1. Michael J. Handel, ed. 2003. *The Sociology of Organizations: Classic, Contemporary, and Critical Readings*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
2. There are some additional articles that can be downloaded from Blackboard.

Requirements

Class participation and active learning are vital to the success in this course. Participation includes attending class regularly, and completing the readings prior to class. You are expected to keep up with

the reading, to think critically at all times, to participate in class discussions, and to ask and answer questions.

There will be a **mid-term (9:45-11:15 AM May 30 Tuesday)**, **final exam (8-11 AM June 19 Monday)**, and several short unannounced **quizzes**.

The quizzes will precede class discussion on the days they are given. The lowest score or a single missed quiz will be dropped from calculating final grades. There will be no makeup quizzes other than for those with a legitimate medical excuse or family emergency.

The exams will mostly require short answers that should demonstrate understanding of the central points of the readings and lectures. Exams that draw thoughtfully on specific examples from the readings will receive more credit than light summaries of lectures, which will not receive full credit. Doing the readings and attending class regularly will almost certainly improve your grade.

Components of your grade

Mid-term	40%
Final	40%
Quizzes	20%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

A = 93-100 A- = 90-92.9 B+ = 87-89.9 B = 83-86.9 B- = 80-82.9 C+ = 77-79.9
C = 73-76.9 C- = 70-72.9 D+ = 67-69.9 D = 63-66.9 D- = 60-62.9 F= Below 60

Course Outline

May 16 (Tuesday): Introduction, Definitions, and Scope

- The place of organizations in society
- Defining organizations and their purposes
- Overview of theories of organizations

Assignment:

- Write your own “organizational autobiography” in terms of the organizations that have shaped your life (one page).

May 17 (Wednesday): Classic Statements on Organization and Management

Handel. “Organizations as Rational Systems I: Classic Theories of Bureaucracy and Administration—A. Early Definitions of Organization and Management.” (Pp. 5–13)

Max Weber. 1924. “Bureaucracy and Legitimate Authority” (Pp. 17–23)

Robert K. Merton. 1957. “Bureaucratic Structure and Personality” (Blackboard)

Study Questions:

- What are three of the most significant characteristics of modern bureaucracy according to Weber?
- How does this differ from traditional and charismatic forms of authority?
- Why is bureaucracy efficient, according to Weber, and in some ways inefficient, according to Merton?

May 18 (Thursday): Scientific Management and the Treatment of Labor

Handel. “Organizations as Rational Systems I: Classic Theories of Bureaucracy and Administration—B. Scientific Management and the Position of Labor.” (Pp. 13–16)

Frederick W. Taylor. 1916. “The Principles of Scientific Management” (Pp. 24–31)

Harry Braverman. 1974. “The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century” (Pp. 32–37)

Barbara Garson. 1990. “Electronic Sweatshop” (Blackboard)

Study Questions:

- What are the main differences between Taylor’s philosophy of Scientific Management and previous methods of management?
- What are time and motion study, restriction of output, and rate cutting?
- What are Braverman’s criticisms of Scientific Management?

May 19 (Friday): Empirical Research on Bureaucracy: Contingency Theories of Organizational Structure

Handel. “Organizations as Rational System II: Contingency Theory and the Discovery of Organizational Variation.” (Pp. 39–44)

Tom Burns and G. M. Stalker. 1963. “The Management of Innovation” (Pp. 45–51)

Joan Woodward. 1965. “Technology and Organization” (Pp. 52–65)

D. S. Pugh. 1973. “The Measurement of Organization Structures” (Pp. 66–75)

Study Questions:

- What are the main differences between mechanistic and organic organizations and under what circumstances is each most efficient?
- What are the three main kinds of technological systems discussed by Woodward and what are their implications for organizational structure?
- According to Pugh, what is the most important condition affecting organizational structure?

May 22 (Monday): Organizations as Human and Social Systems: A. Human Relations

Handel. “Organizations as Human and Social Systems I: The Impulse to Reform Work.” (Pp. 77–84)

George C. Homans. 1941. “The Hawthorne Experiments” (Pp. 85–96)

Dana Bramel and Ronald Friend. 1981. "Hawthorne, the Myth of the Docile Worker, and Class Bias in Psychology" (Pp. 97–107)

Study Questions:

- According to Homans, what did previous researchers believe were responsible for variations in productivity?
- What were two or three of the actual causes of higher productivity among the women in the Relay Assembly Test Room and output restriction in the Bank Wiring Observation Room?
- How do Bramel and Friend differ in their interpretation of the results of the Hawthorne experiments?

May 23 (Tuesday): Organizations as Human and Social Systems: B. Humanistic Management

Douglas McGregor. 1957. "The Human Side of Enterprise" (Pp. 108–113)

Richard E. Walton. 1985. "From Control to Commitment in the Workplace" (Pp. 114–122)

Saul A. Rubinstein. 2002. "A Different Kind of Company: From Control to Commitment in Practice" (Pp. 123–130)

Laurie Graham. 1993. "Inside a Japanese Transplant: A Critical Perspective" (Pp. 131–143)

Study Questions:

- What are two or three differences between Theory X and Theory Y philosophies of management, according to Douglas McGregor? Why does McGregor believe that Theory Y should replace Theory X?
- What specific management reforms does Richard Walton advocate and how do they relate to McGregor's ideas?
- What are the consequences of implementing such reforms in the Japanese-owned auto plant that Laurie Graham studies in Indiana?

May 24 (Wednesday): Organizations as Human and Social Systems: C. Informal Organization

Handel. "Organizations as Human and Social Systems II: Informal Organization as Shadow Structure." (Pp. 145–148)

Melville Dalton. 1950. "Conflicts between Staff and Line Managerial Officers" (Pp. 149–156)

Robert Jackall. 1988. "The World of Corporate Managers" (Pp. 157–169)

Study Questions:

- What are two or three of the reasons for the conflict between line and staff departments in the plant that Dalton studied?
- How do relations among managers differ from the bureaucratic ideal, as describe by Max Weber, in the companies that Jackall studied?

May 25 (Thursday): Decision Making Theory

Handel. "Rationality and Non-Rationality in Organizational Decision Making." (Pp. 181–184)

Barry M. Staw and Jerry Ross. 1989. "Understanding Behavior in Escalation Situations" (Blackboard)

Craig S. Galbraith and Gregory B. Merrill. 1996. "The Politics of Forecasting: Managing the Truth" (Blackboard)

Study Questions:

- What are two reasons why managers might persist in a failing course of action, according to Staw and Ross?
- In theory, why do firms engage in forecasting? What accounts for departures for why the actual practice of forecasting might depart form this ideal, according to Galbraith and Merrill?

May 26 (Friday): Organizations and Power

Handel. "Power inside Organizations." (Pp. 205–209)

Robert Michels. 1915. "Organizations and Oligarchy" (Pp. 211–223)

Study Questions:

- What are two reasons why democratic organizations tend toward oligarchy, according to Michels? Is this desirable or not?

May 29 (Monday): No Class Meeting!

May 30 (Tuesday): Mid-term

May 31 (Wednesday): Organizations and Their Environments: Resource Dependency and Institutional Theories

Handel. "Organizations as Open Systems: Organizations and Their Environments – A. Resource Dependency Theory B. Institutional Theory." (Pp. 225–230)

Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salancik. 1978. "The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective" (Pp. 233–242)

Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields" (243–253)

Study Questions:

- What are the conditions under which some organizations have power over others? How might organizations with less power respond to this situation?
- What are coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphism, and how do they differ from the efficiency concerns of rational systems theories?

June 1 (Thursday): Organizations and their Environments: Organizational Ecology

Handel. "Organizations as Open Systems: Organizations and Their Environments—C. Organizational Ecology." (Pp. 230–231)

Glenn R. Carroll and Michael T. Hannan. 2000. "Density-Dependent Processes" (Pp. 254–261)

Study Questions:

- What do Carroll and Hannan mean by "density-dependent processes?"
- What two principal density-dependent processes determine the growth rates of populations of organizations, according to Carroll and Hannan?

June 2 (Friday): Economic Theories of Organizations

Handel. "Economic Theories of Organizations." (Pp. 263–267)

Michael C. Jensen and William H. Meckling. 1976. "Theory of the Firm: Managerial Behavior, Agency Costs and Ownership Structure" (Pp. 269–275)

Oliver Williamson. 1981. "The Economics of Organization: The Transaction Cost Approach" (Pp. 276–287)

Charles Perrow. 1981. "Markets, Hierarchy, and Hegemony" (Pp. 288–293)

Study Questions:

- What are bounded rationality, opportunism, and asset specificity, according to Williamson?
- Why do they lead to the substitution of hierarchies for markets when found in combination?
- What other factors lead to the growth of hierarchies, according to Perrow?

June 5 (Monday): Rise of Big Business

Handel. "The Evolution of Modern Business Organization: From Big Business to Post-Fordism?" (Pp. 295–301)

Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. 1984. "The Emergence of Managerial Capitalism" (Pp. 303–314)

Study Questions:

- What were the conditions that lead to the emergence of big business in the United States in the late-nineteenth-early twentieth centuries, according to Chandler?
- What made big business more efficient under these circumstances?

June 6 (Tuesday): Theories of Post-Bureaucratic and Post-Fordist Alternatives to Big Business

Michael Storper. 1997. "Rise and Fall of Mass Production Methods in Hollywood" (Blackboard)

Annalee Saxenian. 1994. "Lessons from Silicon Valley" (Blackboard)

Walter Powell. 1990. "Neither Market nor Hierarchy: Network Forms of Organization" (Pp. 315–330)

Bennett Harrison. 1994. "Lean and Mean: The Changing Landscape of Corporate Power in the Age of Flexibility" (Pp. 331–345)

Study Questions:

- How has the organization of film making in Hollywood evolved, according to Storper? What are the differences between firms in Silicon Valley and Route 128?
- How does this relate to the general evolution of American business as described by Powell?
- In what ways does Harrison disagree with this assessment and in what direction does he see American business moving?

June 7 (Wednesday): Organizational Culture

Handel. "Organizational Culture." (Pp. 347–350)

Gideon Kunda. 1992. "Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation" (Pp. 351–369)

Study Questions:

- What are three or four features of the corporate culture at Tech?
- How is the culture instilled in Tech's workforce?
- Why would an organization spend its energy on shaping its culture in this way? What are the advantages and disadvantages of Tech's culture from the employee's point of view?

June 8 (Thursday): Gender and Race in Organizations

Handel. "Organizations and Society: Gender, Race." (Pp. 371–375)

Rosabeth Moss Kanter. 1977. "Men and Women of the Corporation" (Pp. 381–396)

Sharon Collins. 1997. "Black Mobility in White Corporations: Up the Corporate Ladder But Out on a Limb" (Pp. 397–407)

Study Questions:

- What does Kanter mean when she says that female managers are tokens in the corporations that she studied?
- What are two or three consequences of tokenism for women?
- What are some of the career consequences of being a black manager in white corporations, according to Collins?
- Why did the corporations that Collins studied make the decisions about black managers' career paths that they did?

June 9 (Friday): Emotions in Organizations

Carol Burke. 1999. "Military Folk Culture" (Blackboard)

Theodore Sarbin and Kenneth Karols. 1988. "Nonconforming Sexual Orientations and Military Suitability" (Blackboard)

Laura Miller. 1993. "Fighting for a Just Cause: Soldier's Views on Gays in the Military" (Blackboard)

Francis X. Clines. 1999. "Killer's Trial Shows Gay Soldier's Anguish" (Blackboard)

Steven Lee Myers. 2000. "Army to Expand Inquiry in Death of Gay Private" (Blackboard)

Lawrence Korb. 1993. "Evolving Perspectives on the Military's Policy on Homosexuals: A Personal Note" (Blackboard)

Study Questions:

- What are two or three characteristics of the military's cultures as described by Burke?

- What do Sarbin and Karols conclude about the relationship between sexual orientation and suitability for military service?
- According to these articles, how has the military reacted to the issue of gays in the military? What accounts for this reaction? How should society respond?

June 12 (Monday): Organizations, Social Class and Politics

Handel. "Organizations and Society: Social Class, Politics." (Pp. 375–380)

Richard Edwards. 1979. "Segmented Labor Markets" (Pp. 408–422)

Dan Clawson, Alan Neustadt, and Denise Scott. 1992. "The Access Process: Loopholes as a System" (Pp. 423–431)

Study Questions:

- What are simple, technical, and bureaucratic forms of control according to Edwards?
- What are the secondary, subordinate primary, and independent primary labor markets and what is their relationship to the different forms of control, according to Edwards?
- What is the relationship between labor market segmentation and the broader structure of society?
- What is the pluralist theory of the relative political influence of organized groups on government and what are some alternatives?
- What are some of the sources of influence for corporate PACs other than any explicit trading of campaign donations for favorable votes on legislation?

June 13 (Tuesday): Organizational Deviance

Handel. "Organizational Deviance." (Pp. 433–436)

Kermit Vandivier. 1972. "Why Should My Conscience Bother Me?" (Blackboard)

Joseph L Badaracco, Jr. and Allen P. Webb. 1995. "Business Ethics: A View from the Trenches" (Blackboard)

Study Questions:

- What are some of the factors that account for why Goodrich was willing to build a defective airplane part?
- How did the participants in the Goodrich case defend their actions?
- Is this kind of organizational behavior exceptional or in some sense "normal" according to Badaracco?

June 14 (Wednesday): Cooperatives and Employee Ownership

Handel. "Democratic Alternatives to Capitalist Bureaucracy: Worker Ownership and Self-Management." (Pp. 457–460)

Joyce Rothschild-Whitt. 1979. "The Collectivist Organization: An Alternative to Rational-Bureaucratic Models" (Pp. 461–474)

William Foote Whyte, Joseph R. Blasi, and Douglas Lynn Kruse. 2002. "Worker Ownership, Participation and Control: Toward a Theoretical Model" (475–496)

Laurence Zuckerman. 2001. "Management: Employee-Ownership Experiment Unravels at United" (Blackboard)

WORT 89.9 FM – Madison's Listener-Sponsored Community Radio (www.wort-fm.org) (Check out this website!)

Study Questions:

- What are four of the differences between traditional bureaucracy and cooperatives, according to Rothschild-Whitt?
- What are some of the unique challenges facing cooperatives? How does the case of Madison radio's WORT illustrate some of these challenges and how have Spain's Mondragon system and Israel's Kibbutzim coped with them?
- How does employee ownership in America as described by Whyte, Blasi, and Kruse differ from cooperatives?

June 15 (Thursday): Non-profits and Government Human Services

Handel. "Government, Nonprofit Agencies, and Voluntary Associations." (Pp. 497–501)

Michael Lipsky. 1980. "Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services" (Pp. 503–518)

Study Questions:

- What are the dilemmas facing those working on the front line in government agencies? How do they manage these issues?
- What choices and strategies are available to recipients of these government services and their advantages and disadvantages?
- What accounts for the existence of some of the dilemmas surrounding government service provision?

June 16 (Friday): Course Wrap-up

June 19 (Monday) 8-11 AM: Final Exam at 313 Dey Hall