

# **SOC496H1F – LEC0101: SOCIOLOGY OF ORGANIZATIONS**

## **University of Toronto**

Term: Fall 2016 - Seminar Date/Time: Tuesday, 2-4 p.m. - Location: SS2114

**Instructor:** Professor Kim Pernell

**E-mail:** kim.pernell.gallagher@utoronto.ca

**Office:** Dept of Sociology, Rm. 392

**Office hours:** Tuesday 4:15 - 6 or by appointment

### **Course Description**

The course will be run as a seminar. This means that each session will be primarily a discussion rather than a lecture.

This course covers central issues in the field of organizational sociology. It explores different perspectives on why complex organizations look and operate the way that they do, and examines the social consequences of their behavior. The first part of the course focuses on the evolution of the modern firm. We will trace the history of different models of management and strategy, and evaluate their relative efficacy. The second part of the course examines how organizations shape, and are shaped by, their environments. The third part of the course will explore how organizational behavior influences social inequality, and how social inequality shapes the way that modern organizations function. We will make use of both social scientific analyses and Harvard Business School case studies.

The primary goal is for students to leave the course ready to critically evaluate popular organizational strategies and practices. Is bureaucracy really the best way to organize - and how do we define “the best” in the first place? Is Google successful because it has adopted superior management practices, or are these practices seen as effective because Google has been so successful? What are the causes and consequences of recent changes in the modern corporate form? Do diversity programs actually improve outcomes for female and minority employees? In discussing these questions and others, students will develop their capacities to view organizational behavior from multiple perspectives, and with a skeptical eye.

### **Prerequisite**

The prerequisite to take SOC496 is successful completion of a 300+ level SOC course. Students without the prerequisite can be removed at any time discovered, and without notice.

### **Requirements and Grading**

Your overall grade in this course will be based on the following assignments:

1. One take-home test, due October 11 at 5:00 p.m.: 25%
2. Seminar participation: 25%

- Weekly reading responses, attendance, active participation in seminar discussion
3. Paper 1, due in class November 1: 25%
  4. Paper 2, due in class December 6: 25%

### **Attendance and Participation**

Attendance is mandatory. Proper documentation (described below) is required to justify an absence. Students are responsible for all material presented in class, including the next week's assignment. Students who are unable to attend class should contact a classmate to obtain this information.

### **Weekly Reading Responses**

For 8 of the 13 weeks, students will be asked to write weekly responses to the assigned course material (600 words max) that consider the following:

- What did you see as the most important insights or ideas from the assigned readings?
- What are your critical reactions to the readings (strengths and weaknesses)?
- What issues would you particularly like to discuss in class?

*These responses must be submitted to the course website no later than noon on the day before class.* Each complete assignment is worth 2% of the total grade. Since the point is to prepare you for a good in-class discussion, late assignments will not be accepted. Please limit your responses to cover the non-case readings.

### **Take-Home Test**

There will be one take-home test, due to the course website at 5:00 p.m. on October 11, which will cover material from the readings up to the date administered. Late tests will not be accepted.

### **Papers**

Students will write two papers for this course. Each paper will count for 25 percent of the final grade. The first paper is due at the start of class on November 1. The second paper is due at the start of class on December 6.

Electronic copies of the paper will not be accepted—students must hand in a hard copy. Each paper should be no shorter than 6 pages but no longer than 8 pages in length, double-spaced, and in 12-point font. Essay prompts will be distributed two weeks before the paper is due.. Papers will be evaluated for the structure of their arguments, quality of supporting evidence, and presentation/grammar.

Students are asked to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site." For information about the terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service, go to

<http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/teaching/academicintegrity/turnitin/conditions-use.htm>

Assignments not submitted through Turnitin will receive a grade of zero (0 %) unless a student instead provides, along with their position paper, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting via Turnitin) is in place because, strictly speaking, using Turnitin is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

### **Late Work Penalty**

Unless submitted with proper documentation, late papers will incur an initial 5 point penalty (e.g. the highest possible grade a student can receive on a paper submitted after 2 p.m. on the due date will be 95 points). Five additional points will be deducted for each additional day that the paper is late (e.g.. the highest possible grade drops to 90 after two days, 85 after three days, etc.)

If you miss the paper deadline, do not contact the instructor unless you have followed the steps described here. In case of illness, you must supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness or Injury form (available at [www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca](http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca)). A doctor's note is not acceptable. The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work at class or during office hours, within seven days of the missed assignment. If a personal or family crisis prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar. The letter must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work in class or during office hours.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense with serious penalties. Plagiarism means presenting work done by another person or source as your own, or using the work of others without acknowledgment. Any assignment or essay that is plagiarized will be assigned a grade of zero. If you are in doubt as to whether you are plagiarizing, please consult the following tips on using sources from the University of Toronto webpage on writing:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

### **Readings**

We will have a course website hosted on Blackboard. This website will contain the course syllabus, links to all the readings except for cases, handouts, and course announcements. **Students will need to purchase case studies** in preparation for class on Week 3 (September 27), Week 4 (October 4), Week 8 (November 1), Week 10 (November 15), and Week 12 (November 29). These cases can be purchased online at: <http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/51149213> by creating a personal account, and adding the course to "My Courses."

Students are solely responsible for obtaining and reading all required materials before class. Please give yourself enough time to deal with any problems or delays accessing the

readings that may arise so you come to class prepared to discuss the materials. Problems accessing readings will not excuse failure to demonstrate having done the required readings.

### **Accessibility Needs**

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: [\\_disability.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:_disability.services@utoronto.ca) or [\\_http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility\\_](http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility) .

## ***Course Schedule and Readings***

### **PART 1: MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

#### **WEEK 1: September 13**

#### **An Organizational Perspective on Social Life**

What role do organizations (especially large corporations) play in social life? What are the three major perspectives for understanding organizations and organizational behavior?

Perrow, Charles. 1991. "A Society of Organizations." *Theory and Society* 20(6):725-762

Scott, W. Richard. 2003. *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems, Fifth Edition*. Prentice Hall. Pp. 25-29.

**\* No reading response due today \***

#### **WEEK 2: September 20**

#### **The Bureaucratic Firm**

What are the major characteristics of the bureaucratic firm, as described by Weber? Is bureaucracy the most effective way of organizing? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this model of organization?

Weber, Max. "Bureaucracy." 1978 [1968]. *Economy and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pp. 956-969

Biggart, Nicole Woolsey. *Charismatic Capitalism: Direct Selling Organizations in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, Introduction, pp. 1-19.

Perrow, Charles. 1999. *Normal Accidents: Living With High-Risk Technologies*. Princeton University Press. 3-31.

#### **WEEK 3: September 27**

#### **Models of Management: Simple, Technical, and Bureaucratic Control**

What are simple, technical, and bureaucratic models of controlling the workforce? What motivates workers under each of these model, and what are the major drawbacks and benefits of each approach?

Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*. Chapters 1-2. New York: Basic. P. 11 - 22 (introducing simple, technical, and bureaucratic control); 97 - 104 (on welfare capitalism and scientific management).

Pfeffer, Jeffrey and Robert I. Sutton. "Do Financial Incentives Drive Company Performance?" Pp. 109-133 in *Hard Facts: Dangerous Half-Truths & Total Nonsense*. Harvard Business School Press: Boston.

HBS Case 914044: "The Promotion Process at Chung and Dasgupta, LLP"

#### **WEEK 4: October 4**

#### **Models of Management: The Human Organization and Concertive Control**

What is the human relations school of management? How does concertive control operate, and how does theory of motivation underlying this model differ from other models already discussed? Do workers have more freedom within team-based workplaces?

Jaffee, David. 2000. "The Human Organization" Pp. 64-82 in *Organization Theory: Tension and Change*. McGraw Hill.

Barker, James, R. 1993. "Tightening the Iron Cage: Concertive Control in Self-Managing Teams." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 38: 408-414; 433-436.

HBS Case 2515BC: "Google: Aiming for An Evolutionary Advantage"

#### **WEEK 5: October 11**

**Work on Take-Home Test, due at 5:00 p.m. (No class)**

#### **THE EVOLUTION OF CORPORATE STRATEGY**

#### **WEEK 6: October 18**

#### **The Rise of the Conglomerate**

How has the form, and strategy, of the modern corporation evolved over time? Why do particular forms and strategies become popular, and what factors drive change?

Fligstein, Neil. 1990. *The Transformation of Corporate Control*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapter 1 and Chapter 9.

Chandler, Alfred D. Jr. 1988. *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business*. Introduction and Chapter 3.

#### **WEEK 7: October 25**

## **The Shareholder Value Firm**

What is the shareholder value model of corporate governance? When, how, and why did it emerge, and what have been its effects? What happened to the conglomerate?

Davis, Gerald F. 2009. *Managed by the Markets: How Finance Re-Shaped America*. Oxford University Press. Pp. 59-101.

Dobbin, Frank and Jiwook Jung. 2010. "The Misapplication of Mr. Michael Jensen: How Agency Theory Brought Down the Economy and Why it Might Again." *Markets on Trial: The Economic Sociology of the U.S. Financial Crisis*, Pp. 29-64.

Khurana, Rakesh. 2002. "The Curse of the Superstar CEO," *Harvard Business Review*, September: 3-8.

## **PART 2: THE ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **WEEK 8: November 1**

#### **Resource Dependency and Networks**

How does resource dependency shape organizational behavior? What are the advantages and disadvantages of relying on networks?

Pfeffer, Jeffrey, and Gerald R. Salancik. 1978. *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*. New York: Harper and Row. Chapter 3.

Saxenian, Annalee. 2001 "Inside-Out: Regional Networks and Industrial Adaptation in Silicon Valley and Route 128." Pp. 357-374 in *The Sociology of Economic Life. Second Edition*. Edited by M. Granovetter and R. Swedberg. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Brian Uzzi. 1997. "Social Structure and Competition in Interfirm Networks: The Paradox of Embeddedness." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 42(1):35-67.

HBS Case 700047: Strategic Outsourcing at Bharti Airtel Limited

**\* PAPER 1 DUE IN CLASS \* (No reading response due today)**

### **WEEK 9: November 8**

**Fall Break (no classes)**

### **WEEK 10: November 15**

#### **Institutions and Legitimacy**

How do institutions and social pressures shape organizational behavior? What are coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphism? How do organizations shape the institutional environment?

DiMaggio, Paul J. and Walter W. Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields" *American Sociological Review* 48(2): 147-160.

Dobbin, Frank. 2009. "Regulating Discrimination: The Paradox of a Weak State" Pp. 1 - 21 in *Inventing Equal Opportunity*. Princeton University Press.

HBS Case 315139: "Uber and Stakeholders: Managing a New Way of Riding"

### **PART 3: ORGANIZATIONS AND INEQUALITY**

#### **WEEK 11: November 22**

##### **Hiring, Promotion, and Evaluation**

How do organizations hire, promote, and evaluate employees? How do these practices reproduce, reinforce, or mitigate social inequality?

Becker, Gary S. 2008. "Human Capital" *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*. Second Edition.

Rivera, Lauren A. 2015. *Pedigree: How Elite Students Get Elite Jobs*. Pp. 134 - 145.

Wingfield, Adia Harvey. 2010. "Are Some Emotions Marked 'Whites Only'? Racialized Feeling Rules in Professional Workplaces" *Social Problems* 57(2): 251-268.

Flaherty, Colleen. 2016. "New Analysis Offers More Evidence Against Student Evaluations of Teaching" *Inside Higher Education* 1-2.

#### **WEEK 12: November 29**

##### **Socialization at Work**

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. 1977. *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York: Basic. Chapters 6-8.

HBS Case 9410024: Meeting the Diversity Challenge at PepsiCo.

#### **WEEK 13: December 6**

##### **What To Do About Inequality Within Organizations**

What should be done to ameliorate inequality within organizations?

Carmichael, Sarah Green. 2015. "Why "Network More" Is Bad Advice for Women" *Harvard Business Review* February 26.

Boeckmann, Irene, Joya Misra, and Michelle Budig. 2016. "Motherhood Earnings Penalties and Work-Family Policies: Is More Always Better?" *Work in Progress*. May 10. 1-4.

Dobbin, Frank and Alexandra Kalev. 2016. "Why Diversity Programs Fail" *Harvard Business Review*. July-August.

Sandberg, Sheryl. 2013. "Why I Want Women to Lean In" *Time*. March 7.

**\* PAPER 2 DUE IN CLASS \* (No reading response due today)**