SOC408H1F: ADVANCED STUDIES IN ORGANIZATIONS
LEC0101/LEC9101

University of Toronto

Term: Fall 2020 - Seminar Date/Time: Monday, 10-12 p.m. - Location: Online (Synchronous)

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Office hours: Posted to website each week
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Application Used for Online Delivery: Zoom (link on course Quercus page)

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 women and racialized 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 SOC408 is successful completion of 1.0 SOC FCE at the 300+ level. 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 to course website October 16 at 5:00 p.m.: 25%
2. Seminar participation: 25%
   - Weekly reading responses, attendance, Week 8 presentation, active participation in seminar discussion
3. Paper 1, due to course website November 12 at 5:00 p.m.: 25%
4. Paper 2, due to course website December 7 at 5:00 p.m.: 25%

Readings
We will have a course website hosted on Quercus. 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 28), Week 4 (October 5), Week 10 (November 16), and Week 13 (December 7). These cases can be purchased online at: https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/742115 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.

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 additional information about the next week's assignments. Students who are unable to attend class should contact a classmate to obtain this information. Classes will not be recorded.

The seminar will be conducted entirely online. Links to attend each week's class via Zoom will be posted to the course Quercus page before class begins.

Because this is a small, discussion-based course, students are **strongly encouraged** to leave their cameras on during class. Since a great deal of communication happens non-verbally, being able to see one another can really help in promoting an effective discussion. However, the use of cameras is not mandatory, and no student will be penalized for not keeping their camera on.

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?
   - How do the readings relate to each other: do they raise similar points, do they disagree with each other, or do they shed light on different aspects of an issue or

question?
- What are your critical reactions to the readings (strengths and weaknesses)?
- What issues did you find particularly interesting, or what would you like to discuss in class?

Since this is a 400-level course, I do not provide strict guidelines for the structure or content of the reading response – feel free to organize your response in any way that makes sense to you. However, each reading response must both include a brief summary of the central ideas or concepts from the readings and go beyond summary to include some analysis of the readings (e.g. the response should answer at least some of the questions outlined above). I will evaluate responses based on: (1) how well they identify (and demonstrate comprehension of) each reading's main points and (2) the quality of the analysis. Presentation and clarity of writing will also be considered.

These responses must be submitted to the course website no later than noon on SUNDAY (the day before class). 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.

To allow for some flexibility, each student is allowed one opportunity to submit their reading response late for full credit (e.g. after noon on Sunday but before the start of class on Monday). Although these reading responses will not receive personalized feedback from me, the student will receive full credit for submitting the response.

Take-Home Test (25%)
There will be one take-home test, due to the course website at 5:00 p.m. on October 16, which will cover material from the readings up to the date administered. Late tests will not be accepted.

Papers (25%, 25%)
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 5:00 p.m. on November 12. The second paper is due before the start of class (10 a.m.) on December 7. Please submit the papers to the course website. 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 each paper is due.

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 Paper Penalty
Unless submitted with proper documentation (see below), 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.).

This course follows university policy regarding documentation of valid reasons for late essays or tests:

If you are unable to turn in an assignment/or miss the test for medical reasons, you will need to **email me** and **also** declare your absence on ACORN.

If a **personal or family crisis** prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must ask your college registrar to contact me (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies) by emailing me directly. Your registrar must contact me before you write the make-up test.

If you miss a test for **accessibility reasons** (e.g. you miss the test for disability-related reasons and you are registered with accessibility services), you must contact your accessibility advisor about the circumstances and ask them to contact me. Your accessibility advisor must contact me before you write the make-up test.

Regrading Policy
If feel your grade on an assignment is unjustified, you must present your argument in writing and schedule a meeting with me within **one week** after the assignment is returned. This argument should respond substantively to feedback provided on the assignment: where and why you think that feedback is misjudged.

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. 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

Email
My goal is to answer emails from students on weekdays within 48 hours, with the

exception of those received on Fridays (these will be answered on Mondays or the next business day if the Monday is a holiday). Please include "SOC408" in the subject line of the email.

Office Hours
My office hours are **by appointment** and conducted via Zoom. This is to ensure students registered for this class get the opportunity for one-on-one consultations. You may use office hours as an opportunity to explore ideas and experiences related to the course material, discuss plans for a career in Sociology, or discuss other course and career-related matters. If you wish to schedule an appointment with me, please use the appointment slots made available weekly on Quercus: Click on the "Calendar" in the menu on the left-hand side, then go to "Find Appointments" on the right-hand side. After you sign up for a slot, I will send you a Zoom link to attend the meeting.

Accessibility Needs
The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility, and so am I. 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_ or _http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility_ .

Course Schedule and Readings

PART 1: MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

WEEK 1: September 14
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 21
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 28
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 models, 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. 1 - 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 5
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"

THE EVOLUTION OF CORPORATE STRATEGY

WEEK 5: October 12
Thanksgiving (no class)

* Take Home Test Due October 16 *

WEEK 6: October 19
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. 2001. "The Enduring Logic of Industrial Success" *Harvard Business Review*. March-April.

WEEK 7: October 26
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?

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.

PART 2: THE ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

WEEK 8: November 2
Resource Dependence and Networks
* Presentations – No Reading Response *

How does resource dependence shape organizational behavior? What are the advantages and disadvantages of relying on networks? How do popularity and status shape performance?

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

Brian Uzzi. 1996. "The Sources and Consequences of Embeddedness for the Economic Performance of Organizations: The Network Effect." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 42(1):35-67.

Kovacs, Balazs and Amanda J. Sharkey. 2014. "The Paradox of Publicity: How Awards Can Negatively Affect the Evaluation of Quality" *Administrative Science Quarterly* 59(1): 1-33.

WEEK 9: November 9
Fall Break (no classes)

* PAPER 1 DUE November 12 at 5:00 p.m. *

WEEK 10: November 16
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 23
Hiring, Promotion, and Evaluation

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

Rivera, Lauren A. 2015. "Beginning the Interview: Finding a Fit and Talking It Out: Deliberating Merit" Pp. 134 - 145; 211 - 251 in *Pedigree: How Elite Students Get Elite Jobs.* Princeton University Press.

Kang, Sonia K., Katherine A. DeCelles, András Tilcsik, and Sora Jun. 2016. "Whitened Résumés: Race and Self-Presentation in the Labor Market" *Administrative Science Quarterly* 61(3): 69-502.

WEEK 12: November 30
What To Do About Inequality Within Organizations I

> What should be done to ameliorate inequality within organizations?

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

Rivera, Lauren A. and Andras Tilcsik. 2019. "Scaling Down Inequality: Rating Scales, Gender Bias, and the Architecture of Evaluation." *American Sociological Review.* 84(2): 248-274.

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

Emerson, Joelle. 2017. "Don't Give Up on Unconscious Bias Training - Make it Better" *Harvard Business Review.* April 28.

WEEK 13: December 7
What To Do About Inequality Within Organizations II

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

Dobbin, Frank and Alexandra Kalev. 2017. "Training Programs and Reporting Systems Won't End Sexual Harassment. Promoting More Women Will." *Harvard Business Review.*

Pedulla, David. 2020. "Diversity and Inclusion Efforts That Really Work" *Harvard Business Review.* May 12.

HBS Case 9410024: Meeting the Diversity Challenge at PepsiCo.

* PAPER 2 DUE * (No reading response due today)