

INSTRUCTOR'S NAME: Philip Howard

DEPARTMENT-COURSE #-SECTION #: Sociology 302, Section 16

COURSE TITLE: Sociology of Organizations

SEMESTER/YEAR: Winter 2002

EVENING: Thursdays

TIME 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

CAMPUS: Chicago

COURSE CONTENT

Social organization takes many sizes and forms. Most organizations pursue some kind of collective good but have different degrees of success in doing so. In this course we will look at how bureaucratic organizations are established, how they affect our behavior, and why some survive and others fail. Students in management or industrial relations may be interested in the relationship between structure and technology on an organization's effectiveness and efficiency. Those with experience in the service industry may be interested in how organizations are embedded in complex networks of incentives and obligations. Other students interested in politics and social action may be interested in how states, firms, or civic groups learn and adapt. This course will be run as a workshop in which students are encouraged to share their organizational experiences to help all of us understand specific theoretical problems. This class has several specific goals:

- to teach students about the major theoretical models for organizational analysis in contemporary social science literature;
- to teach students about the range of methods available for organizational research;
- to have students apply these theories and methods in the political, economic, or cultural organizations in which they belong.

Although this course has no formal prerequisites, students with at least one other course in a social or political science – or other research experience – will be best prepared for the pace and expectations of this course.

TEACHING METHOD

This class will be a workshop in which the instructor, students, and guest lecturers can present ideas about organizational behavior. We will often talk about current events in class, so you should start listening for news items related to course topics. Each class will probably start off with people sharing relevant clippings or news stories read (New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Economist Magazine recommended) or heard (NPR or BBC recommended) during the week. Students will be responsible for leading discussion during the last hour of each class meeting, and will finish the course with a good reference packet of notes, reviews, and other handouts. E-mail will be frequently used to conduct class business and carry on debates outside of class time. Since irregular attendance will disrupt our learning community, unexplained absences will affect your grade.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated by class participation and short position papers (30%), two short quizzes on keywords and concepts (10%), and a personal research project (60%).

REQUIRED READING

The following texts are required for the course. Additional readings may be assigned for particular classes. Several video documentaries will be shown in class.

Klein, Naomi. (2000). *No Logo: Taking Aim at Brand Bullies*. New York: Picador USA.

Ritzer, George. (2000). *The McDonaldization of Society*. New York: Pine Forge Press.

Scott, Richard. (1997). *Organizations: Rational, Natural and Open Systems*. New York: Prentice-Hall.