

Cultural Motifs:
ORGANIZATIONS, POWER, AND SOCIAL CHANGE
Anthropology/Sociology (ANSO) 300-Section 2
Spring 2002, TTh 1-2:30, Clough 100

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course offers an interdisciplinary approach to the study of organizations and social and political change. We begin with an introduction to the general field of study, major theoretical perspectives, historical variations and applied research on organizations. Drawing on insights from sociology, anthropology, political science and history, we discuss basic structures and dynamics of modern organizations and the role they play in societal changes. We examine the relationship between organizations and change through case studies of social movements, states, religions, voluntary associations, international institutions, corporations and other examples. Participants in the class choose a research topic around one of these themes and develop an expertise in an organization. Students with organization-related research projects already underway, and those with service learning/internship experiences, are especially encouraged to attend. By the end, students will have developed conceptual and theoretical, as well as real-life and practical, knowledge of organizations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- (1) **Punctuality, Attendance and Participation** – A good portion of the work we do is in the classroom, during lectures and discussion, so regular punctuality, attendance and participation are required. Make sure to arrive for class on time so as not to disturb others by coming in late. Attendance is taken at the beginning of class. It is your responsibility to alert me of your presence (at the end of class) if you do arrive late, otherwise you will be marked absent. Participation takes many forms including asking and answering questions, commenting on readings and lectures, contributing to a discussion. Active participation requires that you come to class prepared. Your attendance, punctuality and engaged presence are **essential** for the course and count for 20% of your final grade.
- (2) **Exercises/Assignments** – Frequently, I assign brief writing exercises to be done outside of class. Make sure to complete them by the due date indicated. They correspond to the issues treated that week and help you to digest them. Handing assignments in late defeats the purpose. I mark them with a √ (approx A range) √+ (approx B range) √- (approx C range). They count for 20% of your final grade.
- (3) **Organizational Dossier** – Each of you will create a dossier of one particular organization of your choice (see Project description). The dossier and its contents count for 20% of your grade.
- (4) **Essays/Exams** – Mid-term and final essays count for the remaining 40% of your semester grade (each @ 20%).

Required books:

Purchase these books at the bookstore. I will announce and distribute any additional readings.
Mary Jo Hatch, Organization Theory: Modern, Symbolic, and Postmodern Perspectives, 1997
Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish
Diane Singerman, Avenues of Participation: Family, Politics, and Networks in Urban Quarters of Cairo
Robert Putnam, Bowling Alone

Recommended Reading:

William Hollingsworth, The Organization Man
Amitai Etzioni, Modern Organizations
Albert Hirschman, Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States
C. Fred Alford, Whistleblowers: Broken Lives and Organizational Power

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS:

1 – Introduction to the Course

Jan 10 Discuss syllabus and projects

2 - What are organizations? Why study organizations? How do we study them?

Jan 15 Hatch, Part I: Chpts. 1 and 2

Jan 17 Discussion of selected organizations

3 - Organizational Goals and Strategies

Jan 22 Hatch, Part II: Chpt. 4

Jan 24 Exercise/discussion

4 - Organizational Environments, Boundaries, and Physical Structure

Jan 29 Hatch, Part II: Chpt. 3, 8

Jan 31 Articles from New York Times, “The New Business Class”; Exercise/discussion

5 - Organizational Social Structure and Culture

Feb 5 Hatch, Part II: Chpts. 6, 7; Max Weber, “Bureaucracy”, in Gerth and Mills, From Max Weber

Feb 7 Exercise/discussion

6 - Power, politics, control

Feb 12 Hatch, chpts. 9, 10, 11

Feb 14 Guest speaker

7 – Information, technology, and media

Feb 19 Hatch, chpt. 5

Feb 21 Fieldtrip

8 – Mid-term assessment

Feb 26 Film Brazil

Feb 28 Mid-term essays due

Spring Break

9 – Organizations and Diversity

Mar 12,14 Group exercise in class.

10 – Organizational power: the top-down

Mar 19,21,26 Foucault, Discipline and Punish

Mar 28 No class

11 – Organizational power: the bottom-up

Apr 2,4,9 Singerman, Avenues of Participation

12 – Organizations, Community and the Individual

Apr 11,16,18 R. Putnam, Bowling Alone, student presentations

13 – Reflections

Apr 23 Organizational change, Hatch chpt. 12

Apr 25 Discussion, hand out final essay

Final essays due: Saturday May 4

PROJECT ASSIGNMENT
Organization, Power, and Social Change
ANSO 300 – 2
Lizabeth Zack

Purpose. The purpose of this assignment is broad. Most importantly, the project engages you in practical ways in the analysis of organizations. It will help make the concepts and theories learned throughout the semester more meaningful as you apply them to your own experience and personal interests. It will also help to hone your analytical and writing skills. Upon completion of this project you will have a deeper knowledge of the structures and dynamics of organizations in general and you will have gained the ability to develop a sophisticated profile of a particular organization.

Choose an organization. There are three criteria for selecting an organization. First, pick one that will hold your interest over the course of the semester. You may choose one in which you are an active participant and/or have first hand knowledge, or one of which you know very little and have not had much first-hand contact. The important thing is that you are interested in learning about the organization. Second, pick an organization with a public profile, one that generates some media attention, so that you can track it in the popular press. The goal is to be able to get some analysis and information on the organization from independent sources (newspapers, magazines, scholarly journals and books, etc.). Types of suitable organizations include corporations, clubs, sports teams, schools, hospitals, political groups, government agencies, international organizations, non-profits, and voluntary associations, among others. Third, pick an organization outside of the Rhodes campus.

Sources of information. Consult a variety of sources for the analysis of your organization. First-hand knowledge and experience is a fruitful source, but you should compliment that with others. Gather the information throughout the semester, so you eventually build a sophisticated profile of this organization. Do not wait until the end of the semester! This will exhaust you when you cannot afford to be so. Working intermittently will make the writing assignments easier and it will leave you with less work to do at the end of the semester. Furthermore, procrastination will defeat our purpose of learning by experience.

Project-related assignments. **(a)** The first written assignment, due the second week of class, is a description of your organization and why you chose it. **(b)** For the first half of the semester, you write short weekly analyses of your chosen organization based on what you learn in the chapter readings and in class discussion. As you do the weekly reading, think about how the questions, concepts, themes and debates apply to your organization. Write a one-page analysis about it (1 page, double-spaced, typed). Make two copies; keep one for yourself in a folder and hand in the other to me at the beginning of class. **(c)** The mid-term essay synthesizes your conceptual knowledge of organizations and the empirical research on your individual organization. **(d)** After the mid-term, continue to collect current articles on your organization and put them into your dossier. Hand the dossier in at the end of the semester.

Any Questions??? If you have any questions about the project, don't hesitate to ask.