

SOCIOLOGY SOCI 420

ORGANIZATIONS

Monday, 9:35-11:25
Leacock 14

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Office hours: by appointment

Fall 2017-2018

INTRODUCTION

Delivering health care, producing most goods, distributing pension checks, securing control of a government, and most of the other things that people seek, require that the activities of people be coordinated - sometimes of large numbers of people. This course is about how, why, and with what effects, one or another method gets chosen. The bulk of the course will deal with private businesses; but, where appropriate, there will be comparisons with other kinds of organizations.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS

I will lecture for much of each class. At the same time, I will encourage and expect discussion of the material presented. I expect students to keep up with the readings so that, if I address a question on a reading to the class in general, or to a particular student, I can expect to get an answer. There is a component of the final grade that will be based on your oral performance: partly in the presentations in my office discussed below, partly in your responses to questions that I address in class time to the class as a whole.

Your grade will be based on the following:

- # an in-class essay examination on Monday 23rd October worth 25% of your final grade;
- # an examination in the final examination period, worth 60% of your final grade;
- # 15% for a combination of i) class participation and ii) an oral summary in my office of one, or part of one of the readings. You will have a *maximum* of five minutes to present your summary. A sign-up list for readings to present and of presentation times will be provided early in the semester.

READINGS

1. Problematic contracts: A case study

P.W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press (2003): Chapter 10.

Daphne Eviatar, "Contract with America: Hard terms for the soldier of fortune." *Harper's Magazine*, 315 (October, 2007): 74-77. (Available from MyCourses.)

2. Contractual relations

Oliver Williamson, *The Economic Institutions of Capitalism: Firms, Markets, Relational Contracting*. Free Press (1985): Chapter 3.

3. The elements of organization

Chester Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*. Harvard University Press (1938): Chapter XII.

Gary J. Miller, *Managerial Dilemmas: The Political Economy of Hierarchy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1992): Chapter 1.

4. Models of decision-making

Martin Lodge and Kai Wergrich, "The rationality paradox of nudge: Rational tools of government in a world of bounded rationality." *Law and Policy* 38 (2016): 250-267.

Martin Reeves, Knut Haanæs, and Janmejaya Sinha, *Your Strategy needs a Strategy: How to Choose and Execute the Right Approach*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press (2015): Chapter 2.

5. Growth in the size of organizations

Edith Penrose, *The Theory of the Growth of the Firm*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (1995): Chapter IV.

Oliver Williamson, *Markets and Hierarchies: Analysis and Antitrust Implications. A Study in the Economics of Internal Organization*. New York: The Free Press (1975): Chapter 2.

The Economist, "Free exchange: Land of corporate giants." November 3rd, 2012: 76. (Available from MyCourses).

Jonathan Knee, Bruce G. Greenwald, and Ava Seave, *The Curse of the Mogul: What's Wrong with the World's Leading Media Companies*. New York: Portfolio (2009): Chapter 12.

6. Decentralization

Sanford M. Jacoby, *Modern Manors: Welfare Capitalism since the New Deal*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press (1997): Chapter 2.

7. Ownership and control

Frank H. Easterbrook and Daniel R. Fischel, *The Economic Structure of Corporate Law*.
Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press (1991): Chapter 1.

Steven J. Mandis, *What Happened to Goldman Sachs? An Insider's Story of Organizational Drift and its Unintended Consequences*, Boston: Harvard Business Review Press (2013):
Chapter 8

READINGS

The assigned readings are available in a course pack and as articles to which you have on-line access from MyCourses. The course pack and the book are available in the bookstore.

SENATE POLICIES

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Student Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.