Overview

Organizations are heterogeneous social creations that take on a wide variety of forms and perform many different functions. They can include things like corporations, government agencies, humanitarian groups, labor unions, churches, terrorist networks, social movements, social-networking sites, and much more. We are all embedded within a complex network of organizations that shapes our lives in profound ways, determining—for instance—what our jobs are like, whether our neighborhoods are polluted, how we access public services, or whether we can communicate meaningfully with friends.

Rather than being isolated units, organizations are nested within larger social systems and operate as political entities. All organizations are imbued with ideologies, or hidden belief systems, that provide a script for decision-making and action. These ideologies also bleed into wider society, influencing what people value and what they see as possible.

This course will take a social-science approach to understanding organizations in their larger social and cultural contexts. The emphasis will be on analyzing the ideologies, cultures, interdependencies, and roles of organizations in society. Additionally, we will explore alternative organizational forms that strive to challenge dominant belief systems and achieve social justice outcomes.

Attendance

This class will be conducted with a focus on in-class discussions and activities. Because of this format, you are expected to attend all classes for the full scheduled time. Excessive tardiness will be counted as an absence. You can miss up to two classes throughout the semester without penalty, but you must turn in assignments ahead of time and arrange to get notes from a colleague. Your final grade will go down by 5 points (out of 100) for each additional class missed.

Laci Baker Section-04
laci.j.baker@vanderbilt.edu

This is the link to all of the Powerpoint presentations.

Also note that all emails and assignment correspondence should be with your TA. Depending on what section you are it will be either:

Leah Roberts Section-02
leah.m.roberts@vanderbilt.edu
Reading Complete all readings (and other assignments) prior to the class meeting for which they are scheduled. You must bring your book or copies of the readings to each class. See the course outline below for details on weekly readings.

Participation Through communication, ideas are formed, revised, borrowed, and developed. It is through argument, description, explanation, and improvisation – within a community – that individual learning flourishes. This course requires full participation (including active listening, facilitating, note-taking, and question-asking) to create an environment of open and shared learning. An effective participant is someone who reliably offers thoughtful insights that help others to learn.

Technology Laptop computers and other portable technologies should be used in class only as learning-facilitation tools. During class, it is not acceptable to play games, answer email, surf the web, answer cell phones, text message, or engage in other non-class-related activities. Your participation grade will be penalized if you break this rule by 5 points (out of 100) for each transgression.

Academic Honesty In order to avoid plagiarism, your assignments must provide full citations for all references: direct quotes, summaries, or ideas. While you are encouraged to develop your thinking with your peers, you cannot use their material without citing it. Work from other courses will not be accepted in this course. Allowing your writing to be copied by another student is also considered cheating. Please review the Honor Code for complete guidelines on academic honesty: http://studentorgs.vanderbilt.edu/HonorCouncil/.

ESL/LD Students Course requirements can be adjusted to serve the needs and capabilities of ESL and LD students. Please speak with the professor during the first two weeks of class to make arrangements. Students may be advised to attend additional sessions during the professor’s office hours so they can draw comparable value from the course.

Gender-Fair Language Language structures thought and action. Biases in language can (and do) naturalize inequalities. Imprecise language also signifies un-interrogated values and sloppy thinking. For all of these reasons, the use of gender-fair language is expected in this course. For example, do not use words like “mankind” or “men” when referring to people in general; alternate between “she” and “he” instead of always using “he,” or construct sentences in the plural instead of the singular so you can use “they” or “them” and avoid the problem altogether.

Grading & Assignments

Exams (80%) There will be four exams throughout the semester. These will contain multiple choice, short answer, and one essay question.

Final Paper (20%) Throughout the semester you will develop a project to complete by the end of the class. Instructions can be found by clicking these bolded link: Final Paper and a Rubric. You will present your papers in class during the last three weeks.

Class Schedule

Week One: Framing Organizations Thursday, August 25th

● Review syllabus, class expectations, and complete a group exercise.


Week Two: Organizational Theory
Tuesday, August 30th

- Thompson, G. 2016. Fordism, Post-Fordism and flexible system of production.

Thursday, September 1st


Week Three: Organizational Theory
Tuesday, September 6th


Worksheet #1

Thursday, September 8th


Week Four: Managerial Visions
Tuesday, September 13th


Worksheet #2

Thursday, September 15th Exam #1

Week Five: Organizational Culture
Tuesday, September 20th


Thursday, September 22nd


Worksheet #3

Thursday, September 29th


- Work as the contemporary limit of lie: Capitalism, the death drive, and the lethal fantasy of ‘work-life balance’

Week Six: Dysfunctions
Tuesday, September 27th


Worksheet #4

Thursday, September 29th

- Functions of Dysfunction: Managing the Dynamics of an Organizational Duality in a Natural Food Cooperative
Week Seven: Globalization and Organizations
Tuesday, October 4th

Thursday, October 6th

Week Eight: Exam Time
Tuesday, October 11th Exam #2

Week Nine: Fair Trade Organizations
Tuesday, October 18th
- Consumer-Producer Links in Fair Trade Networks
- Postcards from the Edge: Maintaining the alternative character of Fair Trade

Worksheet #5

Thursday, October 20th
Paper activity #1 – bring your two-page final paper write-ups and be prepared to share them with the class.
- Social Enterprise Typology

Week Ten: Social Enterprise
Tuesday, October 25th
- Buying into Development? Brand-Aid Forms of Cause-Related Marketing

Worksheet #6

- The Legitimacy of social Enterprise

Thursday, October 27th
In-class Debate/Discussion: Social Enterprise

Week Eleven: Nonprofits
Tuesday, November 1st

Thursday, November 3rd

Worksheet #7

Week Twelve: Alternative Organizational Structures
Tuesday, November 8th
- Worker Cooperatives in the United States
- It takes an Ecosystem: Rise of Worker’s Cooperatives in the U.S.
● Worker Cooperatives as an Organizational Alternative

Worksheet #8

● In-class Video: Renaissance Community Coop,
  Look at web site for overview:
  http://renaissancecoop.com/

Thursday, November 10th
● Mondragon and Global Capitalism

● Mondragon: Spain’s Giant Cooperative

● “Yes, there is an alternative to capitalism:
  Mondragon shows the way”

Worksheet #9

Week Thirteen
Tuesday, November 15th

Paper Assignment #2 is due this day. Remember to email it to the TA (teaching assistant).

● Worker Cooperatives: Pathways To Scale

Worksheet #10

● The Challenge for Mondragon

Thursday, November 17th Exam #3

Week Fourteen: Final Project Presentations

Week Fifteen: Presentations & Final Exam

Final Exam Last Day Of Class on December 8th