

SOCY 5970: Complex Organizations

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course provides students with an overview of theories of organization found in sociology, economics, political science, and management studies. While we will focus on formal and complex organizations, I also encourage students to see informal organization in the world around them. We will use a metaphorical approach to understanding the structure and function of complex organizations. Readings and discussions will include attention to public, for-profit and non-profit sectors; their similarities, differences, and increasing interconnections. Students will leave the course with a basic knowledge of organizational theory and with skills for analyzing organizational structure and its implications for organizational function. We will consider the role of changing technology in shaping organizations, the effects of shifts in theories of management on the experience of workers, power in organizations, and **the ethical dilemmas facing modern organizations**. I will present several real cases as examples and/or topics of discussion throughout the semester and we will use *The 9/11 Commission Report* for a more detailed, extended case study.

BOOKS

The books listed below are required for this course and are available for purchase at the campus bookstores. I have also placed a copy of *Images of Organization* on Closed Reserve at the University Library (RBD).

(1)*Images of Organization* by Gareth Morgan (1997 SAGE).

(2)*The 9/11 Commission Report: A Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*. (2004 W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.)

**The 9/11 Commission Report* is available on-line as it is a public document of the Federal Government.

READING

THE READING LOAD FOR THIS COURSE IS NOT TERRIBLY HEAVY, BUT IT IS COMPLEX. I EXPECT YOU TO SHOW UP FOR CLASS HAVING READ THE MATERIAL. WE WILL USE CLASS TIME FOR SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL, GROUP EXERCISES, VIDEOS, AND DISCUSSIONS.

COURSE FORMAT

Lecture/Discussion: Class will be devoted to lecture and discussion of the assigned reading. I come out of a small liberal arts college tradition of seminar formats. This means that my lectures tend to be interactive. If you have done the reading, you will find this to be a useful format as you are able to ask and answer questions effectively as we build the day's lecture/discussion together. I value your participation; questions and comments are always welcome and encouraged. In upper division courses, I lecture very little. We progress quickly from understanding new concepts to application, analysis, evaluation and, if we do really well, the generation of new ideas.

Discussion: I will use dyads, triads and larger discussion groups to allow for peer interaction, group analysis, and interactive discovery. Discussions will cover the readings, provide case studies for the application of theories, ask for you to bring personal experience to bear on your understanding of course material and will pull in current events pertaining to the issues covered in this course.

Videos: We will watch several excellent films designed to further explore or illustrate concepts covered in the readings. These videos are part of the course curriculum and their content will be covered on exams and may be included in writing assignments.

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. *Read this syllabus.* A syllabus is a contract. Make sure you understand course requirements, policies, assignments and your responsibilities as a student. Requirements are not up for re-negotiation at the end of the semester. Ask questions if you are confused about anything on the syllabus.
2. *Attendance:* Attendance above and beyond what is necessary to fulfill course requirements is not mandatory. You are responsible for all material covered in classes you may have missed, including lecture notes, assignments, discussions, videos, and schedule changes. **Regular attendance is highly recommended and guaranteed to positively affect your grade.**
3. *Help:* If you have questions or need help, please come and see me! Do not wait until the last week of the semester if you are having trouble. There is little either of us can do at that point.
4. *Cheating:* Plagiarism and any other form of cheating will not be tolerated. Anyone found to be engaging in these activities will fail the course. If you are unsure about what constitutes cheating, I'll be glad to clarify it for you. **If you plagiarize, or otherwise cheat, on any assignment, you will be turned in to the University Academic Honesty Committee (See p. 80 of the Tiger Cub Handbook for details).**
5. *Library Use:* The Department of Sociology expects students in all courses to use library privileges and materials in a responsible manner. Defacing, concealing, removing sections of, or stealing books, periodicals, or videos (including items placed on reserve) indicate lack of respect for the educational process and the rights of others in the university community. **Any student found to be engaging in these behaviors as they relate to materials used for this course will fail the class.**
6. *Late Papers or Exams:* **Papers will lose one letter grade for each day that they are late.** This policy is non-negotiable. You know what your schedule looks like; if you need to turn a paper in late then you need to accept the consequences of your tardiness. Papers are to be handed in during class, in person, on the day they are due. **Papers will not be accepted via e-mail.**
7. *Make-Ups:* No make-up exams will be given unless there is a certified emergency (e.g. **death**

in the family, serious illness, etc.) or the student is participating in an off-campus, university-sponsored activity (e.g. athletics). These are the only valid excuses. If you miss receiving an exam and have a valid excuse, you must notify me no later than the class session after I distribute the exam. If you fail to do so, you will receive no credit for the test.

8. *Grading Disputes:* At one time or another, you may disagree with how I grade your exam or assignment. Unless the disagreement is about a mistake in my adding of points, you should submit grade disagreements in writing after a 24-hour "waiting period." The written disagreement must include three things: (1) what you want me to re-examine (e.g. question number), (2) why you think it was graded incorrectly, and (3) the reason(s) why your answer should receive more points. I require you to wait one day before contesting a grade so you have time to consult the text/notes and re-read the question and answer.

8. *Class Etiquette:* Please respect other students and the professor by arriving on time and staying until the class is over. If circumstances require you to arrive late or leave early, please inform me beforehand and enter or exit as unobtrusively as possible. Please turn off all cell phones and pagers. Do not have conversations with other students during class.

9. *Course Schedule:* Although we will try to adhere to the course outline as described below, we may occasionally need to deviate from this schedule. I will announce all changes in class. You are responsible for staying informed of any changes to the schedule.

10. *Reasonable Accommodations:* Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternate time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by E-mail. Bring a copy of your Accommodation Memo and an Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. If you do not have an Accommodation Memo but need accommodations, make an appointment with The Program for Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

11. *E-mail Communication:* I do not check my work e-mail over the weekend or on holidays. In addition, I do not monitor incoming e-mail throughout the day. I commit to respond to e-mail within 24 hours of receiving it during the week. Weekend e-mails will receive a reply no later than Tuesday morning. Generally, however, I prefer that you talk with me before or after class or during my office hours.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

1-PAGE THINK PIECES

Writing is one of the ways that we learn. “Writing synthesizes new understanding for the writer” (Johnson et al. 2006). I firmly believe that you will learn and remember more if you write about the course material. For this reason, I ask you to write a lot and your writing comprises a significant portion of your grade. “Think Pieces” are NOT to exceed one side of one piece of paper. The font size should be no less than 11 point and margins should be one inch. In this page, I want you to address a key issue in the week’s readings—summarize the authors argument on the issue, how it is supported, its implications, and strengths and weaknesses you see with the argument or line of reasoning.

Assessing Think Pieces

Students will turn in “Think Pieces” for weekly summarized feedback.

Four of the 10 “Think Pieces” will be graded on a 25 point scale according to the rubric laid out in the grading sheet included in this syllabus. On weeks when you are not receiving full graded feedback, these writing assignments should be clean and well-organized, but are not expected to be error free. I will provide general feedback on your writing so that you can work on problem areas in between “Graded” Think Pieces. Turning in “non-graded” Think Pieces that cover the material, reflect effort at organization and clean writing, and are submitted on the date indicated in the syllabus will be worth 10 points toward your final course total.

When you are writing for a full 25 points, your “Think Piece” should be clear, well-organized, and fully edited. In other words, these are final drafts that must be virtually free of mistakes.

CASE STUDY ASSIGNMENT

We will work in groups to apply organizational theory to the middle sections of the 9/11 report.

Group Presentation

Each group will be responsible for presenting to the class the information contained in their section of the book, along with their organizational analysis of the material presented in those chapters. Details will be distributed in class.

Individual Paper

Students will turn in an individual paper on their group’s section of the *9/11 Report*. The paper should include a summary of the concerns presented in the chapters of the report for which your group is responsible, key organizational issues presented in those chapters, and the application of organizational theory to understanding the terrorist threat and/or U.S. response. Details for managing the analysis will be distributed in class.

WRITTEN TAKE-HOME EXAMS

Your understanding of the material for this course is not a matter of recall, memorization or regurgitation. I am most interested in your ability to explain the assumptions, advantages, and disadvantages of different theoretical perspectives and your ability to apply theories and metaphors to actual cases. You will have 2 take home exams during the term and the final exam for a total of 3 exams. **I do not accept late exams.**

PARTICIPATION

In order to learn how to use organizational theory, you must practice. We will use class time for group exercises and discussion.

*Please note that the practice of organizational theory is most often found in consulting occupations and in other business, government and nonprofit occupations where much of the work is done in teams. We will work to develop collaborative skills through in-class exercises as well as the group portion of the *9/11 Report* project.

GRADING

1 PAGE THINK PIECES (GRADED)	4 * 25 = 100
THINK PIECES	5 * 10 = 50
EXAMS	3 * 50 = 150
GROUP PRESENTATION	= 50
<u>9/11 WRITTEN ANALYSIS</u>	<u>= 50</u>
TOTAL	= 400 points

Final Grade

Points	Grade
360-400	A
320-359	B
280-319	C
240-279	D
Below 240	F

SOCY 5970: Complex Organizations

***You should walk into class having read the material indicated on the date indicated in the syllabus.**

Date and Topic	Reading	Assignments & Activities
01/09/07—Part I: An Overview	Introductions of students and professor, course overview, explanation of Dr. Fry’s approach to teaching and learning.	First Day of Class. Please be sure to purchase the Morgan book and <i>The 9/11 Report</i> .
01/11/07	Morgan Chapter 1— Introduction 9/11 Report, Preface	Think Piece #1 Due: first impressions of the course content
01/16/07—Part II: Some Images of Organization	Morgan Chapter 2, “Mechanization Takes Command: Organizations as Machines	
01/18/07 Bureaucracy in Action	<i>9/11 Report</i> , “We Have Some Planes,” pp.1-14	Think Piece #2 Due
01/23/07	<i>9/11 Report</i> , “We Have Some Planes,” pp.14-46 <i>Writing Workshop:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and editing the one page analytical synthesis • Proofreading and editing for classmates • What makes a paper good? 	DRAFT of Think Piece #3 Due at start of class (Graded Think Piece) Peer review. As a class, We will discuss the importance of providing useful feedback.
01/25/07	Seeing organizational concerns of the morning of September 11 th , 2001. Discussion and activity covering pp. 1-46 with Morgan in mind.	Revised Think Piece #3 Due in Class for a Numerical Grade

January 29th is the 15th day of classes. This is the last day to withdraw with no grade. Please be sure to contact Dr. Fry if you choose to withdraw from the course.

Date and Topic	Reading	Assignments & Activities
01/30/07	<i>9/11 Report</i> , “The Foundation of the New Terrorism,” pp. 47-70 Al Qaeda as an organization: recognize how history, economics, politics, religion, and culture shape the emergence of a terrorist network.	Class will lay out key organizational issues to watch in the 9/11 report. Groups will meet for pre-reading brainstorm on their part of the <i>9/11 Report</i>
02/01/07	Morgan, “Chapter 3: Nature Intervenes: Organizations	Distribute EXAM #1

	as Organisms”	Think Piece #4 Due in Class
02/06/07	Morgan, “Chapter 4: Learning and Self-Organization: Organizations as Brains”	Machines vs. Organism student activity
02/08/07	No reading—be working on exam.	<u>3 images of organization</u> compared and contrasted
02/13/07	Video: Wal-Mart: Is it Good for America?	Exam #1 Due in Class
02/15/07	Morgan, “Chapter 5: Creating Social Reality: Organizations as Cultures” pp. 119-152.	Think Piece #5 Due in Class
02/20/07	Morgan, “Chapter 6: Interests, Conflict, and Power: Organizations as Political Systems”	Draft of Think Piece #6 Due: Brief paper exchange and editing session in class
02/22/07	Culture and Power Recap and application: Reading the <i>9/11 Report</i> with our current toolkit in mind.	Think Piece #6 Due in Class Distribute Exam #2
02/27/07	Morgan, “Chapter 7: Exploring Plato’s Cave: Organizations as Psychic Prisons”	

February 28th is the 37th day of classes. The 28th is the last day to withdraw from a course with no grade penalty. Please notify Dr. Fry if you withdraw from Complex Organizations.

03/01/07	Video: Excerpts from “The Corporation”	Exam #2 Due in Class
03/06/07	Morgan, “Chapter 8: Unfolding Logics of Change: Organization as Flux and Transformation”	
03/08/07	Unpacking Logics of Change	Think Piece # 7 Due
03/13/07	Morgan, “Chapter 9: The Ugly Face: Organizations as Instruments of Domination”	Draft of Think Piece #8 Due in Class for peer review
03/15/07	Morgan, “Chapter 10: The Challenge of Metaphor” and “Chapter 12: Postscript”	Think Piece #8 Due in Class
03/20/07	Organizing for a Changing Society Hawken, Paul, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins. 1999. “Chapter 13: Making Markets Work.” Pp. 260- 284 in <i>Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution</i> . New York: Little, Brown and Company. *Available on-line.	Activity: Organizing sustainable markets
03/22/07	Hawken, Paul, Amory Lovins, and L. Hunter Lovins. 1999. “Chapter 14: Human Capitalism.” Pp. 285- 308 in <i>Natural Capitalism: Creating the</i>	Think Piece #9

	<i>Next Industrial Revolution.</i> New York: Little, Brown and Company. *Available on-line.	Due in Class Activity: organizing for an investment in human capital in the U.S.
Spring Break March 24—April 01		
04/03/07	Applying Organizational Theory: Re-engaging September 11 th and Organizational Theory	
04/05/07	Group #1 Presentation	Presentation and Response
04/10/07	Group #2 Presentation	Presentation and Response
04/12/07	Group #3 Presentation	Presentation and Response 09/11 Commission Report Papers Due in Class
04/17/07	Group #4 Presentation	Presentation and Response
04/19/07	Group #5 Presentation	Presentation and Response
04/24/07	9/11 Report Chapters 11-13, “Foresight—And Hindsight,” “What To Do? A Global Strategy,” and “How to Do It? A Different Way of Organizing The Government”	Think Piece #10 Draft Due , Peer Review and Feedback
04/26/07	Honoring and Critiquing the Commission: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Organizational Analysis	Paper #4 Due in Class Final Exam Distributed
TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM		
DUE IN DR. FRY’S OFFICE BY 5:00 P.M. THURSDAY MAY 3RD		

**Writing Assignment
Grading Sheet**

_____ **Assignment Completion (5 points):** Did the student complete the assignment and hand in the assignment on time? Completing the assignment involves responding to the particular assignment within the parameters set forth in the syllabus (1 page limit, etc.). Papers not handed in on the due date are subject to deductions.

_____ **Content, Thinking, Mastery of Ideas (5 points):** Do you understand the material? Did you use relevant course material in supporting your claims. I am not looking for direct quotes as there really is not ample space for that in this one-page format. I do, however, expect you to use ideas and evidence from the readings to support your answers. Simply put the author's name, and a page number when relevant, in parenthesis at the conclusion of a sentence that draws directly on the author's ideas. You may also begin a sentence as follows: "DuBois argues..."

Did you offer an accurate representation of the author's discussion? Does your work represent a clear reading of the material? Are you able to see the implications of the perspective that you describe?

_____ **Organization, structure, guidance for readers (5 points):** Are your thoughts well-organized? Do you use paragraphs as pillars for organizing the ideas in your paper? Is there a logic to the content of each paragraph?

_____ **Mechanics (spelling, etc.) and correct citations (5 points):** Before anyone can assess the value of your ideas, they must be able to understand what those ideas are. For this reason, I do deduct for grammatical problems that impede the clarity of your discussion. I will be very thorough in this regard and you always have the opportunity to rewrite for a better grade.

_____ **Language: sentences, wording, voice (5 points):** Are your ideas presented clearly? This includes sentence structure, voice and issues of proper diction (do you use words correctly and/or do you choose your words well). Remember that the subject of your essays is the course content, not the physical "chapter" addressed in your paper.

_____ **Total**
25

General Feedback (for "Non-graded" Think Pieces)

	Unsatisfactory	OK	Excellent
Content, thinking, mastery of ideas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization, structure, guidance for readers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mechanics (spelling, etc.) and correct citations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language: sentences, wording voice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Some common errors and problems on papers trouble me. I want to explain why some of these errors and problems are so troubling to me, why they should be troubling to you, and how you can avoid them.

I. Introduction

The reader deserves to know from the start what you will discuss and how your discussion will be organized. Thus, you must provide immediately a clear and explicit statement of your purpose (e.g., a thesis to be analyzed or an hypothesis to be tested) and a brief indication of the topics that you will discuss along the way. Think of the paper as a voyage; you need to specify a destination and provide a map, or your readers may not want to join you on the trip.

For Fry's one page papers the first two or three sentences should function as a brief introduction.

II. Transitions

Paragraphs should be connected clearly and explicitly so that your overall argument is clear. Making these connections requires explicit transitional comments that tell the reader how the new paragraph relates to the previous one(s) and thus how it advances your argument. Having an explicit conclusion at the end of one paragraph can make the transition to the next one easier.

III. Paragraphs

The paragraph is the basic unit of a paper. Extremely long paragraphs often include more than one main idea and confuse the reader. Extremely short paragraphs often say too little or are incomplete. A good paragraph has *unity* (consistently develops one idea), *completeness* (provides enough information), and *coherence* (links sentences into an integrated whole).

Tell the reader what each paragraph is about (usually, in a topic sentence); provide sufficient explanation of conclusions you reach for the careful reader to understand the logic and evidence of your argument; take more time (and care) with arguments which are likely to be difficult or troubling for your readers.

IV. Citations

Citations help the reader to know the sources of your claims, to judge their reliability and validity, and to investigate those claims further. As the author of a persuasive argument (which you hope your paper is), you have a responsibility to cite sources for all claims, whether you quote directly or not. Neglecting this duty leaves you open to charges of laziness, inadequate scholarship, or plagiarism.

Pay attention to when sources were published, locate articles from journals as well as books, and be appropriately skeptical or critical of what those sources say. Do not rely disproportionately on one or two sources. Do not refer continually to the authors of your sources in the body of your text (e.g., Tiger and Fox report...), unless you want to focus your reader's attention on the authors, and not on what they say. Instead, cite the source at the end of the sentence (but include the citation within the sentence, before the period).

V. Reference form

Readers deserve to get citations offered in a standard format, one that includes all the relevant information. Your readers do not deserve idiosyncratic and inadequate formats, or incomplete listings. I prefer that you use the ASA format, but I will accept the APA style (which is quite similar) or the MLA style (which is more traditional). In any case, cite all sources and punctuate quotations properly. For ASA style--<http://www.calstatela.edu/library/bi/rsalina/asa.sty/leguide.html>

VI. Use of "it," "this," and "there"

Never begin a sentence with a pronoun that has no clear referent. Using such a pronoun as the subject conceals the real subject of the sentence, confuses your reader and obscures your argument. You *can* find a subject hiding somewhere in that sentence, if you look long enough. Do not force your reader to waste time searching for the subject.

VII. Passive Voice

Passive voice conceals the actor(s) responsible for an action, including the writer's responsibility for what she/he writes. Use active voice.

VIII. I

Avoid circumlocutions like "the author says" when referring to yourself. Instead, be scrupulously careful about citing others' ideas so we realize that all remaining ideas in the paper are yours. Where you want to distinguish your own ideas more forcefully, use first person singular. You are the author and responsible for what you say in the paper: Be proud of, and assertive about your ideas!

IX. Qualifiers

Qualifiers, words like "perhaps" or "possibly" and phrases like "it seems that," weaken your prose and make you look like an intellectual coward. If you want to distance yourself from a claim, do so directly by crediting someone else with the idea (if it is theirs) and by explaining why you disagree. If qualifiers are necessary, use them, but sparingly.

X. Number Agreement

Ensure that people (or other fertile creatures) do not reproduce in the middle of your sentences: don't refer to "a person" at one point and "they" at another. Use the same number of people throughout an example so that your reader can more easily follow the example. A shift in number suggests to the reader a new referent for any pronouns you use, even though you may not have a new referent in mind.

XI. Tenses

Stick with one tense. In general, use the present tense, especially when discussing the results of research, even if the research was conducted years ago. Remember, most research takes years to get published, so even the most recent article is reporting 'old' research; but the research is presumably as valid as the day it was conducted. Since that research still "speaks to

us today," you should discuss it in the present tense. This use of the present tense is sometimes referred to as the "historical" or "anthropological" present.

If you are discussing historical change in a literature, however, and want to demonstrate that older results are no longer accepted, then you should use past tense for the older material. In any case, when you bring your reader on that trip (remember the map in the intro.), pitch your tense securely.

XII. Rewriting

Write a draft of every paper and rewrite each with enthusiasm. Your writing is never as clear as you first suppose; your reader is never as much like you as you may believe. Let each draft sit for a time before you reread it, so you can read it with greater objectivity. Read your paper aloud, or have someone else do so, and really listen to it. Get a friend to read your paper and tell you what you said in it (not whether the paper is "good"). Then rewrite.

XIII. Further Advice on Writing

For further advice on improving your writing, get an appointment to discuss a draft of your paper with a member of the Writing Center staff at least three days before the paper is due.

For more detailed insight into good writing, look at:

Strunk, William and E.B. White. 2000 [1979]. *The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Zinsser, William. 1998 [1976]. *On Writing Well, Sixth Edition*. New York: HarperPerennial.

Williams, Joseph M. 1990. *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Becker, Howard s. 1986. *Writing for Social Scientists*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

