Emory University

BUREAUCRATIC ORGANIZATION

Soc 514; Spring 2014

Wednesdays 5:30-8:30 pm; 206 Tarbutton Hall

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 4:00-5:30
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Despite the unfortunate course title, this seminar is not singularly focused on bureaucracy. Instead, the seminar offers an introduction to key themes within organizational sociology and / or organizational studies. Theoretically, the seminar will focus somewhat on Weberian theory and, especially, on Weberian “off-shoots” (e.g., neo-institutionalism, Bourdieusian field theory, cultural industry systems), as well as on theories that link creative work to its organizational context. Methodologically, we will engage both qualitative and quantitative approaches, as well as historical and contemporary cases. Substantively, we will grapple with such questions as the following: Why have particular organizational elements (e.g., bureaucracy) spread across so many organizations and domains? Is bureaucracy more about efficiency or the aura of efficiency? Why do so few organizations dominate a given industry or market – and what are the consequences of this? How do innovations spread across organizations – and who are the actors driving such diffusion processes? How do workers fare in the midst of recent organizational and industry change? These questions will be explored by our consideration of organizations in music, media and the arts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course is organized as a seminar, which entails the combination of a fair amount of reading, class discussion, and an empirical paper. Given this organization, you are expected to attend each class and to participate.

A) Attendance

If you must miss a class, please inform me ahead of time so that we can make arrangements. Note that unexcused absences will negatively affect your final grade.

B) Class Participation and Discussion

Active participation requires adequate preparation. You therefore must read the assigned material before class and develop your own assessment of this material. Such careful preparation will
improve the quality of class discussion. Of course, class discussion should be both informed and respectful; moreover, it should be a forum wherein all can raise questions, explore ideas, and express misgivings. Most of all, this discussion should be fun. Class participation comprises 20% of your final grade.

C) Weekly Memos

You will prepare a 3-page memo for each week's readings (typed and double-spaced). You should regard these memos as ideas in progress rather than as finished products. Use them to digest each week's readings and to respond with questions, criticisms, and new ideas. Please bring your memo to class and submit it at the end of the evening. The weekly memos comprise 30% of your final grade. (Auditors will not need complete these memos, but they are nonetheless welcome to submit them).

D) Final Paper

You will complete a theoretically informed paper with an empirical component. This paper will be at least 15-pages in length (typed and double-spaced), and it will represent the first step in your efforts to submit a work for an honor’s thesis, conference presentation and / or journal review. While the paper topic is left to your discretion (subject to my approval), the default paper will consist of survey analysis – most likely involving one of the surveys located at the Cultural Policy and the Arts National Data Archive (see http://http://www.cpanda.org/cpanda/data). Of course, you have the option of proposing an alternative to this default of survey-analysis. (Here again, auditors are not required to complete a final paper).

I ask that you discuss your topic with me by February 26 and submit an outline by March 26. The final paper is due on May 5 and comprises 50% of your final grade.

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COURSE RESOURCES

As the semester progresses, class materials will be posted on the Blackboard site for SOC 560 (see http://classes.emory.edu/). Each week, for example, I will post a “Questions to Ponder” document that addresses the current readings. These questions should give you a starting point for approaching the reading materials and subsequent class discussion.

The assigned readings are drawn from many sources, so there is no textbook. Instead, the required readings are available at our Blackboard site and at Woodruff electronic reserves (see https://ereserves.library.emory.edu/index.php).

Note that the readings for this class augment – but do not duplicate – those found in the Sociology of Culture (SOC 560), Sociology of the Arts (SOC 561) and Sociology of Mass Media (SOC 562) graduate seminars. As a result, you may wish to peruse these syllabi for additional
culture readings; they are located on my faculty webpage (see http://sociology.emory.edu/home/people/faculty/dowd-tim.html).

If you have any special needs, please contact me at the beginning of the semester and we will discuss the necessary arrangements (for additional information, visit the Emory Office of Disability Services website; see http://www.ods.emory.edu/).

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

(*Subject to Revision*)

**January 15:** Introductions

**January 22:** The Widespread Organization of Social Life: The High Culture Example


**January 29:** Authority and Control in (Bureaucratic) Organizations


February 5: Isomorphism in Organizational Fields: Stability and Change


February 12: Institutional Logics & Organizational Fields: Stability & Change Revisited


**February 19:**  *The Production of Culture: Diversity / Innovation & Organizations*


**February 26:**  *Organizational Ecology: Density-Dependence & Resource Partitioning*


**DUE DATE FOR FINAL PAPER TOPICS**
March 5: From Organizational Ecology to Classifications


March 12: SPRING BREAK (No Class)

March 19: Fields of Cultural Production: Bourdieusian Approaches


March 26: No Class Meeting (Due to the Couch-Stone Symposium in Texas)

DUE DATE FOR FINAL PAPER OUTLINES
April 2:  

Fields of Cultural Production: Large-Scale versus Restricted


April 9:  

Cultural Industry Systems


April 16:  

Work and Careers in Creative Industries


**April 23: Creative Work, Organizations, and the Import of Networks**


**May 5: FINAL PAPER DUE**