This course is designed to introduce students to the social science literature on formal organizations, from its origins in the work of Weber through its more modern strains in sociology, business, and economics. During the semester, we will consider a number of issues in organization theory, including (but not limited to) the problem of authority and compliance in bureaucratized settings; the relation of organization to environment and the structure of the environment itself; the ways in which the organization and its managers try to adapt to and manage internal and external problems; why organizations work and why they fail; and how decisions are made and goals set in organizations. Although this is not a course in applied management, we will want to use conceptual and empirical material from the readings to begin to think about and analyze actual organizations.

**Course Readings**
Course readings can be downloaded from the course website on Learn@UW. Required readings for all students are in the “Readings” module/folder on the upper left-hand side of the main page under the “Content Browser”. When you click on the file, it will allow you to download a zip folder with all readings. You have to unzip the file after it is downloaded to be able to read them! You can also download the zipped file of all readings from: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/jp0btuw5m9h8027szf1fkbfv6e8tz11

If any students are interested in purchasing a course packet containing the readings, you can do so at the Social Science Copy Center (6th floor or William Sewell Hall, aka Social Science Building). However, the course packet will be created on demand only. (This means that you must pay them in advance, and then it will take 24 to 48 hours for them to make a copy.) The course packet does not include readings assigned only to grad students.

**Course Requirements**
Please note that this course is open to both undergraduate and graduate students. Requirements vary depending on whether you are an undergrad or a graduate student.

**A. Attendance and Participation**
All students must attend class and participate. This will be 10% of your grade, regardless of whether you are an undergrad or graduate. The course will be run primarily as a lecture. If there is a sufficiently large number of grad students, we may set up an additional discussion section for graduate students that will meet once a week in addition to scheduled course times.

**B. Readings**
All students must do the core readings before the class meets. On average, this is from 50-100 pages per week for undergraduates. Some of the readings are difficult. Don’t let this worry you too much, as they should become clearer in lecture.

For most weeks, graduate students will have additional reading to do. Graduate student reading averages more like 125-150 pages per week. Such is the life of an intellectual (and/or the ideological portion of the ruling class, if you prefer Marx’s categorizations).
C. Written Requirements

Undergraduates
There will be three written take-home assignments. The nature of the assignments will vary. The dates that the papers will be handed out and/or due are noted on the syllabus. Each paper constitutes 30% of your grade. The papers should be considered take-home exams. It is extremely unlikely that you will be able to do a good job on the papers if you do not attend class. For all papers, I require that you turn in both: a) a hard copy (typed) of the paper; b) a computer file version of the paper (preferably in Word RTF format). The latter can be emailed to me. YOU WILL RECEIVE NEITHER CREDIT NOR A GRADE FOR THESE ASSIGNMENTS UNLESS AND UNTIL YOU TURN IN BOTH COPIES -- HARD COPY AND COMPUTER FILE!!!!

Graduate students
The default requirement for graduate students is that you will submit three short (8-10 pp.) paper assignments each worth 30% of your grade. Each paper will involve critical reflection and engagement with issues raised in core readings and lecture. These papers must include discussion of at least some of the “graduate only” reading. The exact nature of the papers is up to you, but they should not be summaries of the readings. Rather, they should take critical issue with (some portion of) the readings, develop ideas, and engage the arguments/authors we are covering. To steal a sentence from Erik Wright, the paper “can be written as if it were designed to be a published ‘commentary’ in a journal, or a book review, or a substantive essay in its own right dealing with the issues in the reading.”

Note, however, that if you have other ideas for what you would like to do as a written assignment, I am flexible. If you have specific things you want to achieve or that would be more useful to you we can discuss ways to make these part or all of the official writing assignment. However, if you plan to do something other than the default assignment, you MUST talk to me about this during the first three weeks of classes, i.e., prior to September 27.

Due dates for default paper assignments are as follows:
  Paper #1 (Readings from Weeks 1-5): Thursday, October 8
  Paper #2 (Readings from Weeks 6-10): Thursday, November 12
  Paper #3: (Readings from Weeks 11-15): Thursday, December 20

Graduate students are also required to turn in both a hard copy and an electronic copy of paper assignments.

Statements of Symbolic Compliance to Institutional Rules
As befitting a course on formal organizations, points D-H cover a number of rules and directives promulgated by the university and higher-level institutions that regulate the classroom. (Except for point H, which is entirely mine.) For a discussion of the origins and functions of such rules, see Meyer and Rowan (1977). Note that their discussion of decoupling is sometimes apposite.

D. Academic honesty
As with all courses at the University of Wisconsin, you are expected to follow the University’s rules and regulations pertaining to academic honesty and integrity. The standards are outlined by the Office of the Dean of Students at http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/

According to UWS 14, academic misconduct is defined as:
• seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
• uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
• forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
• intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
• engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
• assists other students in any of these acts.

For a complete description of behaviors that violate the University’s standards as well the disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see the Dean of Students website. If you have questions about the rules for any of the assignments or exams, please ask your instructor or one of the TAs.

I take plagiarism and academic misconduct very seriously, and it is not uncommon for me to refer cases to the dean’s office, so please don’t do it!!

E. Accommodations. Please send the instructor an email by the end of the second week of the course if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. This may be the case if English is your second language or you experience a physical or psychological condition that makes it difficult for you to complete assignments and/or exams without some modification of those tasks. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the McBurney Center. Their website has detailed instructions about how to qualify: http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/.

Provide a copy of your accommodations request (VISA) to the instructor by the end of the second week of class. We try to reserve rooms and proctors by the third week in class, so we must know of all accommodations by then.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term. See the university’s web page for details: https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698

F. Departmental notice of grievance and appeal rights. The Department of Sociology regularly conducts student evaluations of all professors and teaching assistants near the end of the semester. Students who have more immediate concerns about this course should report them to the instructor or to the chair, 8128 Social Science (Pamela.oliver@wisc.edu).

G. Department learning objectives. Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content covered in this course, it has been designed to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of sociology:

• Critically Evaluate Published Research. Sociology graduates will be able to read and evaluate published research as it appears in academic journals and popular or policy publications.
• Communicate Skillfully: Sociology majors write papers that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner.
• Critical Thinking about Society and Social Processes: Sociology graduates can look beyond the surface of issues to discover the "why" and "how" of social order and structure and consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation, identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena, and develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.
• Prepare for Graduate School and the Job Market: Students use their social research skills to identify opportunities for employment or further study, assess their qualifications for these opportunities, and identify strategies for gaining the necessary knowledge and experience to improve their qualifications. Students are encouraged to develop and maintain portfolios of their written work and educational experiences to aid them in preparing applications and to learn how to present their.
H. Electronics:
I do not allow audio or video taping of lectures or discussions without express, written
permission. Under no circumstances are students allowed to post audio or video recordings on
the internet or third party websites.
Course Topics and Readings

**September 3 – Course Overview & a little bit of Weber**

**Week of September 8-10 — Organizations as Rational Systems**

Additional Reading for Graduate Students:

**Week of September 15-17 — Organizations as Natural Systems**
Alvin Gouldner. 1954. excerpt from *Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy*, pp. 59-85.

Additional Reading for Graduate Students:

**Week of September 22 – September 24 – The Carnegie School/Bounded Rationality**

Additional Reading for Graduate Students:

**Week of September 29 - October 1 – Contingency Theory – The Core Rational Adaptation Paradigm**

Additional Reading for Graduate Students:

**FIRST ASSIGNMENT HANDED OUT IN CLASS THURSDAY 10/1, DUE THURSDAY 10/8**
**Week of October 6-8 – Power and Resource Dependence**


Additional Reading for Graduate Students:


**Week of October 13-15 – Macro Organizational Structure**


Additional Reading for Graduate Students


Herbert Simon. 1991. “Organizations and Markets.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, v. 5, pp. 23-29. (7 pp.) **NOTE: Undergraduates are only required to read pp. 23-29; grad students are required to read the entire article.**


Additional Reading for Graduate Students


**Week of October 27-29 – Networks and Embeddedness**


Additional Reading for Graduate Students

**November 3-5 – Power in Networks: Structural Holes and Brokerage**


Additional Reading for Graduate Students


SECOND ASSIGNMENT HANDED OUT IN CLASS Thursday, 11/5, due Thursday, 11/12

Week of November 10-12 – New Trends in Organizing: Post-Bureaucratic Organizations, Knowledge, Learning


OTHER READING(S) TBA

Additional Reading for Graduate Students


Week of November 17-19 – The New Institutionalism


Additional Reading for Graduate Students


November 24 – Catch up; no readings assigned

November 26 – Thanksgiving holiday, no class!

Week of December 1-3 – Carnegie Goes to California (apologies to Woody Powell for stealing his title)


Additional Reading for Graduate Students

Week of December 8-10 – Complex Systems and Normal Accidents


December 15 – Catch up and Conclusion

THIRD PAPER ASSIGNMENT HANDED OUT IN CLASS 12/15 DUE 12/23 by 5 pm