COURSE DESCRIPTION: Sociology studies social behavior at four main levels of analysis: interpersonal interactions, groups, organizations, and societies. The principles of organizations, therefore, are core sociology and are basic to the understanding of almost all substantive fields of sociology. This course will present the main principles of organizations and will require that each student use them in analyzing an organization of their choice. The main focus is on organizational effectiveness and figuring out which factors make organizations more or less effective. It also examines how these factors change in different contexts. Since most people spend most of their lives participating in organizations, these principles will help students be more effective in their organizational roles.

COURSE OBJECTIVE: To enable students to make the principles of organizations a part of their mental framework and to analyze, understand and run organizations and in terms of them.

REQUIRED TEXT: All readings will be on ELMS and emailed to the class.

COMPONENTS OF THE GRADE: The grade will be based on 1) the midterm (25%), 2) the final (25%), 3) 12 written assignments (25%), and 4) a paper (25%). The tests will be entirely essay exams (make up exam will be given one week after the midterm and by special arrangement for the final). You are required to complete 12 of the 14 written assignments based on your field research on your O and the readings. Assignments 1, 2, 6, and 13 are required. The reading assignments are listed in the course outline and the written assignments are listed and described after the course outline. The listed dates are when both readings and written assignments are expected. However, your research schedule may not synchronize with those dates because the timing may be wrong. You are to turn in any 6 assignments by 10/2 and a second 6 by 11/11. The written assignments are for you. They are your workbook from which you will write your paper. The first one asks you to evaluate all the key variables (in my and Harrison’s theories) for your organization. Because it should be done in the first week it will be superficial but it gets you started and should alert you to all the major problems (you should upgrade it later if necessary before turning it in). Assignments 1 and 13 are long and may require 5 or more pages to report. Most of the other assignments will normally require around two pages. The purpose of the assignments is to make you look carefully at all important aspects of your organization and judge whether they are done well or badly and why.

The paper will be your report using the course framework and the organizational diagnosis that you have performed. It is due on the last day of class 12/11.

5/13 (no special style is required; late papers and sets of working assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade). You will get more instructions later on how to write the paper.
COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

9/2 Introduction - Course layout and a discussion of systems theory and research methods.


9/9 B) Harrison Ch 2 Harrison also covers many methods issues.

9/11 A2 Hage and Finsterbusch contingency theory, Ch 2 from book

9/16 A3 Hall Ch 2 Organizational Structure: Forms and Outcomes (complexity, formalization & centralization considering both positive and negative effects of same)

9/18 Hall Ch 4 Power and Power Outcomes (what power does each position or person have?)

9/23 A4 Hall Ch 6 decision Making; Ch 7 Communication (how well are decisions carried out?)

9/25 A5 Harrison Ch 3 Assessing Individual and Group Behavior: Diagnosing, evaluating, and explaining organizational performance (what makes groups and people do better?)

A6 Field work on an O meeting.

9/30 A7 Harrison Ch 4. System Fits and Organizational Politics (organizational structure and processes). Focus on misfits, i.e., problems

10/2 A8 Holbeche, The High Performance Organization. Six assignments are due

10/4 A9 Stephen Robbins Management by Objectives and SWOT; Richard Daft MBO and Decision Making (basic O doctrine and analysis goal)

10/7 A10 The Theory and Practice of Integrated Management Systems. Lee Ch 1. This reading presents one view of good management practices

10/9 The Challenge of Intransigent Organizations, Lee Ch 7. This chapter applies the theory to government agencies

10/14 A11 Osborne Reinventing Government. 10 principles for making government effective

10/16 MID TERM TEST

10/21 A12 Knauft Profiles of Excellence p1-29 Build your theory of effectiveness of non profit NGOs.

10/23 Knauft Profiles of Excellence p31-58 Further build your theory of effectiveness of non profit NGOs. These readings present case studies that will be used in class discussions from here on out.

10/28 A13 Informant Interview. Informant interviews and investigating O issues. Study the questions.

10/30 A14 Bertocci Leadership in Organizations. Compare leaders and managers

11/4 A14 Leslie Crutchfield Forces for Good

11/6 A14 Peter Drucker Leadership and People in Non-Profits

11/11 A14 Leadership and Motivation: 5 emails. Six assignments are due for total of 12 of 14

11/13 Identification of weaknesses, problems, and issues, the keys of all analyses

11/18 Ritzer the Mcdonaldization of Society: Ch 3 Efficiency

11/20 Ritzer Ch 4 Calculability

11/25 Ritzer Ch 5 Predictability

12/2 Ritzer Ch 6 Control. The application of the McDonaldization model

12/4 [Post fact sheets on Canvas] The role of relationships and networks for individuals and Os

12/9 Class suggested topics plus analysis of secrecy, deviance, cheating, and accountability
12/11  Overall Review. Management theories, systems theory, and appropriate structures  **Papers are due**

**FINAL EXAM: Friday December 19, 1:30 to 3:00 (1 ½ hours for the exam)**
DESCRIPTION OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Writing assignments (A): (try to do these assignments by the date specified. Do the reading by that date for discussion in class. Do the assignment when appropriate.)

A1. Evaluate your study organization (O) on a scale of 1-7 (and explain your scores, especially the low scores) on 1) its overall degree of **effectiveness**, 2) Finsterbusch’s 12 factors causing effectiveness, and 3) 3 Harrison variables: 13) environmental predictability, 14) environmental competition, and 15) dependency/autonomy of O on the environment. Harrison Ch 2 greatly overlaps the Finsterbusch framework and can be consulted for further descriptions of these variables. The scale that you should use is 1=very low, 2=low, 3=somewhat low, 4=average, 5=somewhat high, 6=high, 7=very high. Use a two step process to select your score. First figure out whether your O is average, above average, or below average. Then decide whether your O is just a little above/below average, very much above/below average, or moderately above/below average. In explaining your scores, at least name the major factor(s) which you think accounts for the high or low performance. For your paper you should also identify (but not score) O priorities; major coordination mechanisms; structure of power on key activities; the main high level decision making practices; and major areas of conflict. In the paper you should provide an analytical discussion of your O’s strengths and weaknesses which have been identified in the above evaluation. In the process you should develop your own systems theory for analyzing Os. A1 is a long assignment which should begin right away before much research to really get you going and set up your study. Later, after much research you should revise it and finalize your evaluations. [9/9]

A2. Classify your O in terms of Hage and Finsterbusch’s four organizational types and analyze what its strengths and weaknesses are in terms of these types and whether it needs to move more toward the ideal or further away. Should it employ some of the characteristics of the other types of Os? Use this framework to discuss how efficient/inefficient your O is and how adaptive or innovative it is. You should begin to develop your own contingency theory about organizations. [9/11] Note: almost all Os are craft Os because they are small (under 1000) & low technology/knowledge T/K

A3. Discuss O structure using Hall. With the help of Hall Ch 2 analyze the dimensions of O structure: complexity, formalization, and centralization and describe and score your O on them (relative both to Os in general and to other Os of the same type). Analyze what is right and what is wrong about these dimensions for your O. Judge whether it has too much or too little of the components of the three structural dimensions. Also use Ch 4 to analyze how power is distributed in your O and what are the advantages and disadvantages of that distribution of power. Ideally, you are beginning to develop your own theory of organizational structure and the distribution of power. [9/16,18]

A4. Hall Ch 6 and 7. Analyze your O in terms of decision making and communication. Distinguish between strategic or policy level decisions and task decisions and how each type are made. Notice whether decisions are made at the appropriate level and when not, why not? What
decisions are left unmade and why? Develop your own theory of the ideal decision making and communication processes. [9/23]

A5 Harrison Ch 3: Evaluate the effectiveness of individual and group behaviors (+ & -) guided by Harrison’s model, figures, lists, tables, and methods. Select the most important dimensions for your O and evaluate how well they contribute to O effectiveness. Be sure to evaluate abilities, training and education, accountability, motivation, and links between performance and rewards for individual performance and extent of rules, decision procedures, control procedures, coordination mechanisms, cohesiveness, cooperation/conflict, supervisory supportiveness, and clarity of goals for group performance. Note the criteria for effectiveness Harrison p40f and score your O on effectiveness. [9/25]

A6 Attend a work group meeting and analyze it (suggestions on this will be emailed). You might have to postpone this assignment to an appropriate time. [9/25]

A7 Harrison Ch 4: Systems fits and Organizational Politics. Identify key factors that contribute to high organizational performance and apply them to your O. [9/30]

A8 Holbeche. Apply Holbeche’s theory of the requirements for high performance to your O. How well does your O score on his 5 key dimensions? How detrimental are your O’s shortcomings on the 5 dimensions to your O’s success? How relevant is Holbeche’s theory to your O? [10/2]

A9 Analyze your O in terms of SWOT and Management by Objectives. If it does not use MBO, how does it handle goal setting for individuals and with what degree of success? [10/4]

A10 Discuss Lee’s Theory of Integrated Management Systems as it applies to your O. Be sure to assess the extent that your O truly pursues performance improvement and the methods by which it does so. Lee maintains that his prescriptions fit both profit making and non profit Os. [10/7,9]

A11 Apply at least 6 of the following concepts to your O from Osborne: 1) gaining O’s objectives by involving non O people, 2) empowering rather than serving workers or clients, 3) injecting more competition into the O or the O’s providers, 4) get workers focused on the mission rather than the rules, 5) fund or reward outputs rather than inputs, 6) focus on the needs of the customer or client, 7) reward making money and spending as little as possible, 8) focus on prevention rather than cures, 9) reduce hierarchy and increase participation, i.e, decentralization of authority, and 10) invent ways to use markets to solve problems. [10/14]

A12 Use Knauft’s theory and the lessons of his cases to discuss leadership and accountability as it applies to your O. [10/21,23]

A13 Conduct an Informant Interview (emailed file which you should revise to better fit your organization) and present your analysis of the results. This also is a long assignment. You are to conduct this when you know enough about your O to ask the right questions and advance your understanding of the O and its problems and issues. When you modify the emailed informant interview file you should drop the questions that do not fit your O, add new questions, and revise other questions. Probably this will be the major source of information to base your analysis upon. [10/28]
A14  Analyze leadership in your O using the perspectives of Bertocci, Crutchfield, Drucker, and the emails [10/30-11/11]