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## Mark Suchman

Professor of Sociology

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Mark Charles Suchman has blazed a path through many of the Ivies and now has found his way to Brown.

His sociology career began with a *summa cum laude* bachelor's degree at Harvard, a J.D. at Yale (editor of the *Law Journal*), then a master's and Ph.D. in sociology from Stanford. Recently, Suchman has been a visiting professor of law at Cornell Law School, conducting teaching and research in corporations law and sociolegal studies.

Suchman says his sociological teaching interests include formal organizations, the sociology of law, economic sociology, and technology and entrepreneurship. His legal interests include intellectual property and criminology. But why the combination of sociology and the law?

"In sociology, I was attracted to the study of organizations and law because they both embody a persistent tension between uniform rules and idiosyncratic exceptions, and between formal principles and informal practices," Suchman says. "Often in our modern world, laws and organizations seem to be at odds – yet the social and cultural tasks that they seek to accomplish are often quite similar."

His research background is equally impressive, including grants from the National Science Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for his innovative studies of the organizational, professional and legal challenges of new information technologies in health care.

"I love finding new patterns, organizing ideas in new ways, and trying to explain the social world in terms that other people (and my students, in particular) will find clear and memorable," Suchman says. "I'm always interested in getting to that 'Aha!' moment, when suddenly the world seems a little different from how it had seemed before. I cherish those 'Aha' moments whenever I experience them myself, and I try to share that experience with my students in my teaching and with my colleagues in my scholarship."

In his work at Brown, Suchman is looking forward to the development of the COE program, and he's also hoping to draw together Brown students and faculty who are interested in legal studies.

– Molly de Ramel