

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORIES OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS (Soc 1030)

Meetings: Sept. 1 – Dec. 3, 2010; MWF 1:00-1:50pm – Barus & Holley 166

Instructor: Professor Bridwell- Mitchell

Instructor Office Hours: Wednesday 2:30pm-5:30pm; by appointment

Contact Information: 406 Maxcy Hall; T: 863-1977; e-mail: e_bridwell-mitchell@brown.edu

Teaching Assistants: Seol Han (Seol Han@brown.edu)

Mim Plavin (Miriam_Plavin@brown.edu)

TA Office Hours: TBD

Course Description

Organizational Theories of Public and Private Sectors is a general introduction to the study of organizations from a macro-sociological perspective. Rather than examining the attitudes, actions, and interactions of individuals inside organizations, this course focuses on the conceptual underpinnings of organizational systems and structures, their environments, and their significance in society. Topics include social, cultural, political and economic processes in organizations, issues of organizational learning, change and life cycles, inter-organizational dynamics such as alliances, and organizational networks, and topics related to power, equity and diversity.

The overarching goal of the course is to provide students with the broad conceptual tools needed to analyze organizations and their operations. By the end of the course students will be able to: (1) identify important organizational phenomena, (2) explain the organizational systems and structures that produce these phenomena, and (3) assess the design and impact of organizations. Students will accomplish these objectives by completing classic and contemporary theoretical readings, participating actively in class discussions, assessing their mastery of the material through quizzes and in-class presentations.

Course Requirements and Assessment

The course has two required texts: *Classics of Organization Theory* edited by Jay M. Shafritz, J. Steven Ott, and Yong Suk Jang and *Organizations and Organizing: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems Perspectives* by W. Richard Scott and Gerald F. Davis. Both texts are available at the Brown University Bookstore. There are also a number of recommended readings which are available on-line or on Mycourses, as indicated on the syllabus. The readings listed on the syllabus correspond to each topic being covered in a particular week. Ideally, each set of readings would be completed before the beginning of a topic.

Students are expected to attend ALL class sessions ON TIME. Frequent absence, lateness, or leaving class early (e.g. occurring more than 4 times – nearly 10% of the sessions) will be reflected in your final grade. Extenuating circumstances must be discussed in advance with the professor via e-mail. All students are expected to participate fully in cooperative class activities, as judged by peer and instructor evaluations. All written assignments must be typed on neat

8.5" x 11" paper, free of grammar and spelling errors and composed in 12-pt Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins and double-spacing. I do not accept late assignments. I do not provide 'make up' assignments (again, extenuating circumstances must be discussed in advance). Your overall performance will be based on 100 possible points, assigned as follows:

- I. **3 Quizzes** [60 pts - 20pts each]: There are three in-class, independent, closed-book quizzes related to recent course material, which are indicated on the below schedule of instruction. The quizzes are designed to assess your knowledge of the readings and ability to synthesize knowledge from the readings with content covered in lectures. The quizzes are generally designed so that students must select the best short answer to a question from multiple alternative short answers that may also be correct but not entirely complete or accurate.

- II. **"Two Takes" Presentation** [25 pts]: Because much of the course material is highly conceptual it is important that students be able to make an explicit link to real world organizational phenomena. Your ability to do this will be assessed in a 20-minute **team presentation** that identifies a real-world organizational phenomenon and explains how that phenomenon illustrates the current topic being covered in the course. The strength of your presentation will be compared to a second team presenting on the same day. The team judged by the instructor and the class to have made the strongest presentation will be awarded an additional 5 bonus points (e.g. 30 total points for the assignment).

- III. **Class Participation** [15pts]: Your participation will be judged based on your steady attendance and punctuality in class. Additionally, I will be evaluating the extent to which you are prepared for class based on your ability to thoughtfully participate in class discussions by asking and answering questions or posing insightful comments. Your participation will also be determined by the peer feedback you receive from your team for the Two Takes presentation. However, the greater proportion of your participation will be based on peer assessment. Team members who have received exceptionally positive, null or negative peer feedback will have their contribution appropriately reflected in their final participation grade.

For students taking the course for a grade, as a general rule I consider 90-100 points roughly equivalent to an A, 80-89 points, roughly equivalent to a B, and 70-79 points roughly equivalent to a C. For student taking the course pass fail you must earn at least 75 points to earn a passing grade.

SCHEDULE OF INSTRUCTION***TOPIC: INTRODUCTION**

Required:	Scott & Davis Chpts. 14, 1, 13; Shafritz et. al Chpts. 1, ,5, 8		
Recommended:	Starbuck (2003) "The Origins of Organization Theory" (Mycourses)		
Week 1	Wed	1-Sep-10	
	Fri	3-Sep-10	
Week 2	Mon	6-Sep-10	NO CLASS: LABOR DAY
	Wed	8-Sep-10	
	Fri	10-Sep-10	

TOPIC: RATIONAL SYSTEMS

Required:	Scott & Davis Chpt. 2; Shafritz et. al Chpts. 5,7, 13 Cyert & March (1963) "A Summary of Basic Concepts in the Behavioral Theory of the Firm" (Mycourses)		
Recommended:			
Week 3	Mon	13-Sep-10	
	Wed	15-Sep-10	
	Fri	17-Sep-10	Two Takes 1

TOPIC: TECHNOLOGY & STRUCTURE

Required:	Scott & Davis Chpt. 6; Shafritz et. al Chpts. 19, 20, 21		
Recommended:	Schoonhoven (1981) "Problems with Contingency Theory" (On line: ASQ)		
Week 4	Mon	20-Sep-10	
	Wed	22-Sep-10	
	Fri	24-Sep-10	Two Takes 2

TOPIC: NATURAL SYSTEMS

Required:	Scott & Davis Chpt. 3; Shafritz et. al 9, 10, 15, 17		
Recommended Reading:	Roy (1952) "Banana Time" (Mycourses); Barker (1993) "Tightening the Iron Cage (On line: ASQ)		
Week 5	Mon	27-Sep-10	Quiz 1
	Wed	29-Sep-10	
	Fri	1-Oct-10	Two Takes 3

TOPIC: LABOR & STRUCTURE

Required:	Scott & Davie Chpt. 7; Shafritz et. al Chpt. 2; 43; 44 Dreher & Cox (2000) "Labor Market Mobility and Cash Compensation: The Moderating Effects of Race and Gender " (On line: AMJ)		
Recommended:			
Week 6	Mon	4-Oct-10	
	Wed	6-Oct-10	
	Fri	8-Oct-10	Two Takes 4

TOPIC: GOALS, POWER, CONTROL, & DECISION MAKING

Required: Scott & Davis Chpt. 8; Shafritz et. al 14; 28, 30; 31, 32
Cohen, March & Olsen (1972) "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice" (On line: ASQ); Weick & Roberts (1993) "Collective Mind in Organizations" (On

Recommended: line: ASQ)

Week 7	Mon	11-Oct-10	NO CLASS: FALL WEEKEND
	Wed	13-Oct-10	
	Fri	15-Oct-10	Two Takes 5
Week 8	Mon	18-Oct-10	
	Wed	20-Oct-10	
	Fri	22-Oct-10	Two Takes 6

TOPIC: OPEN SYSTEMS

Required: Scott & Davis Chpt. 4& 5; Shafritz et. al Chpts. 38; 39
Boulding (1956) "General Systems Theory" (On line: MS); Ashmos & Huber

Recommended: (1987) "The Systems Paradigm in Organizational Theory (AMJ)

Week 9	Mon	25-Oct-10	Quiz 2
	Wed	27-Oct-10	
	Fri	29-Oct-10	Two Takes 7

TOPIC: ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

Required: Scott & Davis Chpt. 9 & 10; Shafritz et. al Chpts. 24; 25; 40; 41
DiMaggio & Powell (1983) "The Iron Cage Revisited" (On line: ASR); Hannan &

Recommended: Freeman (1977) "The Population Ecology of Organizations" (On line: AJS)

Week 10	Mon	1-Nov-10	
	Wed	3-Nov-10	
	Fri	5-Nov-10	Two Takes 8
Week 11	Mon	8-Nov-10	
	Wed	10-Nov-10	
	Fri	12-Nov-10	Two Takes 9

TOPIC: NETWORK FORMS OF ORGANIZATIONS

Required: Scott & Davis Chpt. 11; Uzzi (1997) "Social Structure and Competition in Interfirm Networks" (ASQ)
Gulati (1993) "Alliances & Networks (On line: SMJ) ; Barney & Hoskins (1990)

Recommended: "Strategic Groups" (On line: MDE)

Week 12	Mon	15-Nov-10	
	Wed	17-Nov-10	
	Fri	19-Nov-10	Two Takes 10

TOPIC: STRATEGY, STRUCTURE, & PERFORMANCE

Required:	Scott & Davis Chpt. 12; Shafritz et. al 46; 47; 48		
Recommended:	Eisenhardt and Zabraki (1992) "Strategic Decision Making" (On line: SMJ)		
Week 13	Mon	22-Nov-10	Quiz 3
	Wed	24-Nov-10	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING
	Fri	26-Nov-10	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING
Week 14	Mon	29-Nov-10	
	Wed	1-Dec-10	
	Fri	3-Dec-10	

* **Note:** Recommended readings can be found on Mycourses, where listed or “On line”. This means that the article can be found through the Brown University Library electronic database of Journals by locating the journal and searching for the author name, paper title, and publication date. The full name for journals abbreviated by acronyms in the syllabus are as follows:

ASR: American Sociological Review
ASQ: Administrative Science Quarterly
AMJ: Academy of Management Journal
AJS” American Journal of Sociology
MDE: Managerial and Decision Economics
MS: Management Science
SMJ: Strategic Management Journal

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

1. Monday, September 27, 2010: **Quiz 1**
2. Monday, October 25, 2010: **Quiz 2**
3. Monday, November 22: **Quiz 3**

Note: Dates for class presentation will be assigned by lottery given students’ indicated, ordered preferences.