

# Social and Complex Organizations

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY/ANTHROPOLOGY  
EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

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Sociology 3660: Social Organizations  
Spring 2009: W: 2:00-4:30, BH 2165  
Instructor: Max Kashefi, Ph.D.  
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*It is your responsibility to read this syllabus carefully. It answers most of your questions and informs you on the rules and assignments of the course.*

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If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible. Here are: [Disabilities, building fire, medical emergency, and tornado statements.](#)

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## COURSE OBJECTIVE:

**Social organizations surround our life space. We are born in them and usually die in them. They are just impossible to escape. Therefore, they play central roles in our everyday lives--affecting our social and family relationships, personalities, thoughts, feelings, mental health, life satisfaction, world view, political ideology, etc. One major purpose of this course is to enhance the students' knowledge on the following organizational issues:**

- **What is the substantive significance of understanding social organizations?**
- **What are the structure and major characteristics of complex organizations?**
- **What impact the socioeconomic environment has on the structure and characteristics of complex organizations?**
- **How and in what ways relationships within a complex organization differ from one type to another?**
- **What are the sources of tension, conflict, and change?**
- **What are the leadership roles and decision making process in a social organization?**
- **What are the strengths and the weaknesses of the theories of complex organization?**

**The other important purpose of this course is to apply the basic concepts, principles, and theoretical issues discussed in class to explain one social organization.**

**Special attention will be given to complex organizations such as industrial corporations. These organizations have been the subject of so much research and discussion and are very important to society. Though the course does concentrate on the complex organizations, the issues examined in the course are applicable to other social organizations.**

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#### **REQUIRED TEXT:**

1. Kashefi, Max. 2007. Complex Organizations Online. Posted on "WebCT." Eastern Illinois University.
2. Tolbert, P. & Hall R. 2009. *Organizations, Structures, Processes, and Outcomes*. (10th edition). NJ: Prentice Hall.

#### **Recommended Readings:**

3. Jaffee, David. 2001. *Organization Theory: Tension and Change*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Publication.
  4. Scott, Richard. 2004. *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*. NJ: Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
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#### **Course Evaluation:**

**The course consists of lectures, discussions, class presentation, and some library work. The course highly demands an active class participation. [The requirement of class environment](#)**

1. **Five multiple choice/short-answer examinations. The exams cover materials from class discussions, videos that you will see in class, and the assigned readings. (Each one of the first four exams 15%, plus 20% for the final exam; Overall: 80%).**
2. **Term paper and its class presentation (20%). For the guideline of writing your paper and its presentation see the WebCT.**

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## **TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE**

**Whenever possible films or guest speakers will supplement the regular course lectures and discussions.**

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### Week 1, 2 and 3: Introduction to complex organization

- Orientation and Organization.
  - Definitions of social organizations: Hall, Haas, Morgan, and Scott.
  - Problematic issues in Organizational Definition.
  - The Outcomes of Organizations: Individual, Community, and Society
  - Why Complex Organizations are so Attractive?
  - Paradoxes in Complex Organizations.
  - Types of Social/Complex Organizations.
  - Membership, Boundary, and Organizational Environment.
  - (A few videos on social organizations)
  
  - Read: "WebCT," Section 1 & Tolbert, Ch. 1
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### **The first examination**

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### Week 4, 5, and 6: Organizational Structure

- Organizational structure:
  - Organizational complexity: Horizontal, Vertical, and Spatial Differentiation.
  - Formalization: Meanings of Formalization and Functions of Formalization.
  - Centralization and Decentralization.
  - Tensions in Complex Organizations:
  - The underling Source of Organizational Tensions.
  - (A few videos on social organizations)
  
  - *Students' presentations.*
  - Read: "WebCT," Section 2, Jaffee, Ch. 2, & Tolbert Ch. 2
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### **The second examination**

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## Week 7, 8, and 9: Organizational theories

- Classical Sociologists and Complex organizations:
  - What we mean by Organizational Theory.
  - Marx, Durkheim, and Max Weber's rational theory: Criticism.
  - Taylorism: Propositions and criticism.
  - The Human relation theories: propositions and criticism.
  - The natural system perspectives: propositions and criticism.
- Contemporary theories of complex organizations:
  - Population-Ecology Model.
  - Resource Dependency Model.
  - The Rational Contingency theory.
  - The Transaction-Cost theory.
  - The institutional theory.

### *Students' presentations.*

- Read: "WebCT," Section 3 & Tolbert, Ch. 10

## **The third examination**

## Week 10, 11, and 12: Organizational Processes

- Leadership in social organizations.  
Theories of leadership.
- Decision making process in complex organization:  
Factors affecting decision making process.
- Organizational Communication.  
Factors affecting communication.

### *Students' presentations.*

- Read: "WebCT," Section 4 & Tolbert, Ch. 5, 6, & 7.

## **The fourth examination**

## Week 13, 14, and 15: Humanizing complex Organizations

- Organizational Effectiveness.
- Optimizing and humanizing complex organizations:

- Employment Stocks Ownership Plan (ESOP).
- Dr. Edward Deming's model.
- Organizational flexibility: Functional and Numerical

*Students' presentations.*

- Read: WebCT, Section 5 & Tolbert , Ch. 11.

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**The final examination (see the EIU final exam schedule).**

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