Organizations and Entrepreneurs

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SUMMER 2009
T/TH 1-2:30 PM
TBA

Course Description
Organizations play a critical role in sorting and rewarding individuals within our society. In the United States, there are over 20 million for-profit and over 1 million non-profit organizations. Almost 90 percent of the labor force work for someone else in an organization. This class initially explores how these organizations begin. Main class questions are: What are the risks that new organizations face? Why do some organizations disappear, while others last? How do these processes differ across places and over time? We will address these and other questions in this course.

This class is intended for upper-division undergraduates who have some knowledge of basic sociology. This course involves intensive readings, multi-media presentations, and regular writing exercises. All of these learning approaches build towards a cumulative final project – a business plan for a new organization.

Teaching Philosophy
This course is distinctive in several ways:

I believe that we can learn cooperatively – my role as the instructor is to facilitate the process. We will use a number of techniques in order to accomplish this learning. As a result, be prepared to play an active role every class. I look forward to listening and learning from you.

Given the range of topics we will encounter in the course, at times, we may not find the right answers, or all the answers. What is important, however, is the process of learning – taking new concepts, integrating them into a coherent framework and being able to use the framework to critically analyze issues.

I would like for each of you to find our discussion topics relevant to your lives. We will draw upon specific case examples as a starting point for many of the concepts we will cover in this class. Furthermore, these examples will be helpful in developing your final project.

Goals of this class
We have several goals in this class:

Content
• Learn the basic concepts of organizational theory, with a special emphasis on organizational emergence

Learning Process
• Conduct thought-provoking discussion where all classroom participants are able to share and receive ideas, with the instructor facilitating the interchange.
• Make connections between the world of ideas and concepts with their day to day issues and concerns. Where possible, encourage/highlight/expose new connection points where none exists (e.g., “I never thought of it that way…”)
• Develop team work and presentation skills.
**Rules of the Road**

1. We start and end class on time
2. Turn off cell phones, pagers, and beepers
3. Check your email account regularly
4. Check the course Web page regularly

**Contacts**

You can reach me by email at jon.westover@gmail.com. For simple questions, that is the fastest and quickest way to reach me. For more difficult questions, please set up an appointment. I encourage you to stay in contact with me regarding any issues concerning the requirements of this course.

**Things you need to know how to do to succeed in this class:**

- Come to class and participate in the discussions
- Prepare for class by completing the assignments
- Ask questions when necessary
- Learn how to use the library and other available resources
- Stay engaged with current events and be prepared to discuss them
- Anticipate potential problems or other obstacles and react quickly to them

**Honor Code:**

The University Code ([http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual8/8-10.html](http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual8/8-10.html)) will be strictly enforced for all exams, written assignments, and research proposals in this class.

**Accommodations for Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement:**

Students with disabilities requiring special accommodations to meet the expectations of this course are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible. Written documentation of the disability should be submitted during the first week of the quarter along with the request for special accommodations. Contact the Center for Disabled Student Services (160 Union, 581-5020) to facilitate requests.

**Texts**

We will use the following text in this course. Please purchase or borrow a copy for your use during the semester. Other readings will be available through e-reserve or links provided here-in. We will also make use of other media forms, such as audio/video segments online. I refer to the book by the authors’ initials below.


**Format**

This class will require your participation in several ways. We will spend a majority of class time in discussion with one another. Your contributions to class discussions will be more effective if you prepare in advance by completing the required reading assignments. Plus, the course is designed to allow you to work on your final project systematically throughout the semester.
We will also have regular quizzes and writing exercises. If you complete the assignments for the class and actively participate in class discussions, you should be well prepared for these exercises. We will also spend time learning how to give public presentations.

**Attendance**

If you know you’ll be out of town and have to miss a class, please let me know ahead of time. Also, if a family emergency comes up, please let me know.

**Preparing for Class**

My goal is to make our class enjoyable and informative. Since a good portion of the class will be discussion based, I recommend completing the reading assignments prior to coming to class. Bring your notes to class and be prepared to engage with your classmates in small group discussions. In addition to completing the required assignments, I recommend keeping up-to-date with current events, especially on topics related to our course.

Our class is 60 minutes in length – I suggest that you set aside at least the same amount of time before each class for the assignments. Preparation can take on several different forms. Careful reading and note taking, reviewing previous discussion materials, and thoughtful reflection of the upcoming class topics should be included in your preparation.

**Evaluation**

Your course grade is based upon business plan final project, presentations, peer reviews, and examinations.

**Business Plan**

- This course gradually builds towards the business plan final project. For the business plan, you will have the opportunity to develop an idea for a new organization. You are encouraged to consider both for-profit and non-profit ventures. You also have the opportunity to work in teams or to develop the idea on your own. As the term progresses, you will be developing various ideas based on concepts introduced in class. The idea is to write in small portions systematically throughout the semester, rather than waiting until the end of the semester to write the entire paper. To aid you in this process, I will ask you to turn in portions of the business plan regularly.
- There are several milestones in this project:
  - You will need to develop three potential ideas for the new organization. This is due on **Tuesday June 2nd**. Going forward, with the final project in mind, we will spend each class period building towards the development of your business plan. Therefore, it is important that you spend adequate time early in the course thinking about your idea and be committed to an idea after selecting it.
  - I will organize your topics and structure a networking day on **Thursday June 11**. You will have the opportunity to meet and discuss your ideas with other classmates. During this time, you can explore the possibilities of working together on the final project.
  - I would like for you to finalize your organization idea and team structure by **Thursday June 18th**. From this point forward, most of your assignments will be based on your project idea and be completed in your teams (if you decide this format).
  - On **Thursday June 25**, I will ask for your team to prepare for the **Midway Checkup that includes Financial Plan and Strategy Formulation**. I will review the work you have completed thus far, with a special emphasis on your financial plan and strategy formulation.
  - On **Thursday July 16**, please turn in your marketing and legitimacy plan. This will be your last assignment to submit prior to the final draft of your business plan.
- For each class period, there will be assigned readings. A good strategy is to work through the readings with your topic in mind. Review the details for upcoming section in your business plan that is due and use the reading questions to begin work on the assignment.
The final version of the business plan will be due on the day of your Presentation (explained below), tentatively scheduled for **Tuesday July 28th**. Your assigned due date will be finalized once the teams are settled.

**Assignments are due at the beginning of class – no late assignments accepted.**

**Daily Reviews**
- During the semester, we will work together to learn and apply course concepts to our respective projects. To this end, each student will conduct two Daily Review briefings based on course concepts introduced in the previous class.
- At the beginning of class, one or two students will be responsible for the Daily Review. Each student will describe the key contents of the session for 10 minutes.
- One or two additional students will be paired with each presenter to serve as respondents. As a respondent, you will be responsible for preparing **two** questions to ask the presenter.
- Each presenter and respondent should turn in their notes and questions to the instructor by the beginning of class. These will be compiled as review notes for the final exam.

**Presentations**
- **Tuesday July 28th**, each new venture (solo or team) will have 10-15 minutes to conduct presentation to a board of potential financiers. Share highlights of your project during this time so that they will be interested in making an investment.

**Peer Reviews**
You will conduct two peer reviews of your classmate’s business plan:
- On **June 25th**, bring **two copies** of your work in progress business plan. You will share one copy with a classmate. Use this checkup as an opportunity to pull together progress made thus far and receive feedback from a classmate. Your first review is due on **July 7th**.
- The second peer review will occur during the Presentations (**July 28th**). You will need to evaluate all of your classmates’ presentations in order to get full credit.

**Examinations**
- **Short quizzes will be given at the beginning of the class period.** There will be 3 short quizzes throughout the term (each worth 6% of your final grade). Questions will be based on the reading assignments given for the week and recent class discussions. **No make ups will be allowed**

**Bonus**
- There is an opportunity to earn up to **five** extra percentage points towards your final grade, through applying the course concepts to current events in the media (worth 1% each, up to 5% total). This also provides an allowance for missed assignments due to illness or other commitments. **As a result, no make ups on missed quizzes will be allowed.**
Components of your Grade:

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<td>&gt; 93</td>
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<td>90-92</td>
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<td>Daily Review</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Plan</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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Note: Fractions of a point will be rounded down (e.g., 89.9 = B+).
Note: Bonus 5% (see above for criteria).
Course Calendar and Readings (Subject to Change)

Week 1:

May 19:

**Introduction to each other & the course**

*Topic (1): What are the course goals and requirements?*
*Assignment:* Review syllabus and other course materials on class website.

*Topic (2): What do you need to do to be successful in this class?*

May 21

**Assembling the Organizational Theory Took Kit**

*Topic (3): What are organizations? Why study them?*
*Assignment:* Read [AR] Chapter 1

Week 2:

May 26

*Topic (1): Organizations Evolving*
*Assignment:* Read [AR] Chapter 2: Pp. 16-27

May 28

*Topic (2): The language of studying organizations – Terminology*
*Assignment:* Read [AR] Chapter 2: Pp. 28-33
Read “The Population Ecology of Organizations”
Michael T. Hannan; John Freeman
*The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 82, No. 5. (Mar., 1977)
*Read only* pp. 933-936.

*Topic (3): Who are Nascent Entrepreneurs?*
*Assignment:* Read [AR] Chapter 4: Pp. 61-68

Week 3:

June 2

**QUIZ #1: Assembling the Organizational Theory Took Kit**

*Video:* “Startup.com”
*Turn in Ideas for your New Organization*

June 4 Finish Movie
Week 4:

June 9

Getting Started: A Look at Nascent Entrepreneurs

**Topic (1): What is a Business Plan?**

**Assignment:**

**Topic (2): Teams and Networks I**

**Assignment:**
Read [AR] Chapter 4: Pp. 68-75
Brian Uzzi and Shannon Dunlap, “How to Build Your Network.”

June 11

**Topic (3): Teams and Networks II – Networking Day**

**Assignment:**

Prepare one page of short description of your business plan.

Week 5:

June 16

**Topic (1): $$$ - Financing the new venture**

**Assignment:**
Read [AR] Chapter 4: Pp. 83-91

**Topic (2): Brains behind the operations – Organizational knowledge**

**Assignment:**
Read [AR] Chapter 4: Pp. 75-83

June 18

**QUIZ #2: A Look at Nascent Entrepreneurs**

Coming Together: Populations of Organizations

**Topic (3): Studying Organizational Populations – Terminology**

**Assignment:**
Read [AR] Chapter 9: Pp. 179-186
Chapter 10: Pp. 208-212

[Turn in Selected Idea, Name, Team Structure, Process for your New Organization]

Week 6:

June 23

**Topic (1): Density Dependence I**

**Assignment:**
June 25

**Topic (2): Density Dependence II – Strategy Formulation**

**Assignment:** Read [AR] Chapter 10: Pp. 220-238

[Turn in material for Midway Checkup, Financial Plan & Strategy Formulation]

Week 7:

June 30

**Topic (1): Legitimacy of New Populations – Cognitive Style**

**Assignment:** Read [AR] Chapter 9: Pp. 187-198


July 2—No Class. Enjoy a long Independence Day weekend and work on your organization ideas

Week 8:

July 7

**Topic (1): Legitimacy of New Populations – Sociopolitical Style**

**Assignment:** Read [AR] Chapter 9: Pp. 198-205

Business Week articles on spyware (June 28 2004, Pp. 94, 96)
- Business Week, “Guess What -- You Asked For Those Pop-Up Ads” By Ben Elgin
  http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/04_26/b3889095_mz063.htm
  http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/04_26/b3889102_mz063.htm
- The New Yorker article on pay-per-call “976-GONE” April 12, 2004, Pg. 29, by Nick Paumgarten
  http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/04/12/040412ta_talk_paumgarten

[Turn in Peer Review #1]

July 9

**Topic (2): Marketing for legitimacy**

**Assignment:** Read [AR] Chapter 11: Pp. 240-258

Video: “Who Killed the Electric Cars?”

Week 9:

July 14 Finish Video

July 16

**Topic (2): Who are the people in your neighborhood? – Communities of organizations**

**Assignment:** Read [AR] Chapter 11: Pp. 258-266

[Turn in Marketing and Legitimacy Plan]
**Week 10:**

**July 21**

*Topic (1):* Getting Older - Age Effects, Period, and Cohort Effects  
*Assignment:* Read [AR] Chapter 8

**July 23**

**QUIZ #3: Populations of Organizations**

*Topic (2):* Paradigms – Revisiting Organization Theories  
*Assignment:* Read [AR] Chapter 3: Pp. 34-60

**Week 12:**

**July 28**

Sharing our work: Presentations  
[Business Plans Due Day of Presentation]

**July 30**

**Additional Topics in Sociology of Organizations:**

*Topic (1):* Corporations and Externalities  
*Video:* “The Corporations”

*Topic (2):* Social Capital, Ethnic Communities, and Entrepreneurship  

**Week 13:**

**August 4**

**Catch up/Review**

*Note: The schedule is subject to change. Students will be notified.*