The Course:

This undergraduate seminar examines social organization in all its forms, dynamics, and structures, and covers informal social groups, formal organizations, social institutions, and world systems. While appealing to an historical and comparative perspective, the direction of primary attention centers on contemporary forms of social organization with an emphasis on both classical and current theory and research.

Required Text:


Course Requirements:

Class attendance for this seminar is mandatory. Discussion of materials for assignments and papers take place in class. If you miss classes, it is your responsibility to obtain the materials and information yourself. Each member of the seminar is required to read each article contained in the text so they may participate in the seminar presentations and discussions. Each group will also prepare an annotated bibliography drawing from resources obtained at the UH Library. Each member of each group will prepare five annotations each (i.e., a total of 25 annotations from each group) focusing on their group topic. I will divide the seminar into five groups of five students each:

Group 1 will examine social groups and will cover readings 9-16 in Handel for summary and presentation to the seminar. A social group is simply a number of people who interact with each other on a regular basis. Group 1 will prepare an annotated bibliography of articles describing social groups and distribute their bibliography to the seminar. Group 1 will also prepare presentations to the seminar covering their assigned readings. Group 1 will have two sessions to present and discuss articles 9-16 (2/7 – 2/10/03).

Group 2 will examine formal organizations and will cover readings 1-8 in Handel for summary and presentation to the seminar. A formal organization is a large association of people who run on impersonal lines, set up to achieve specific objectives. Group 2 will prepare an annotated bibliography of articles describing formal organizations and distribute the bibliography to the seminar. Group 2 will also prepare presentations to the seminar covering their assigned readings. Group 2 will have two sessions to present and discuss articles 1-8 (2/12 – 2/14/03).
Group 3 will examine social institutions and will cover readings 17-23 in Handel for summary and presentation to the seminar. A social institution is a cluster of norms, values, beliefs, roles, statuses, and groups that guide social interaction toward the fulfillment on one or more of the basic needs of society. Group 3 will prepare an annotated bibliography of articles describing social institutions and distribute the bibliography to the seminar. Group 3 will also prepare presentations to the seminar covering their assigned readings. Group 3 will have two sessions to present and discuss articles 17-23 (2/19 – 2/21/03).

Group 4 will examine world systems and will cover readings 28-33 in Handel for summary and presentation to the seminar. World systems refers to theories of modernization that view the patterns of a nation’s development as largely dependent on its location in the world economy. Group 4 will prepare an annotated bibliography of articles describing world systems. Group 4 will also prepare presentations to the seminar covering the assigned readings. Group 4 will have two sessions to present and discuss articles 28-33 (2/24 – 2/26/03).

Group 5 will examine carceral organizations and will cover readings 24-27, 34-36 in Handel for summary and presentation. Carceral organizations are settings in which people are separated from the outside world and subjected to strict discipline (prisons or asylums). Group 5 will prepare an annotated bibliography of articles describing carceral organizations. Group 5 will also prepare presentations to the seminar covering the assigned readings. Group 5 will have two session to present and discuss articles 24-27 and 34-36 (2/28 – 3/3/03).

Individual paper presentations begin March 5, 2003 with the final presentation on May 7, 2003. Each individual will have one (1) session to present his or her paper. The order of individual paper presentations will begin with Group 5 and will continue through Group 4, Group 3, Group 2, and Group 1. Each group will determine the order of individual paper presentations (i.e., who goes first and who goes last).

Note that each group will receive a grade based on their preparation and distribution of the annotated bibliography (20 percent), and on how the group presents their topics to the seminar, and how well they guide class discussion (20 percent). As well, you will also evaluate your own contribution to the group and how the others contributed (10 percent each). Each individual will also prepare a research paper focusing on some aspect of social organization, which will be 20 percent of your total grade. There will also be one take-home examination written in essay format, which will be based on readings, the annotated bibliographies, and class discussions and presentations (20 percent). Finally, the last 10 percent of your grade will come from an individual presentation of your paper to the class.

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated bibliography</td>
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<td>Article presentations/class discussion</td>
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<td>Self-contribution</td>
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<td>Research paper</td>
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<td>Take-home exam</td>
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I will base the grades for this seminar on a class curve of students’ point totals at the end of the semester. The placement and cut-off points for letter grades will depend on the scores of the class and the quality of papers and discussion in class.

**Papers:**

An acceptable paper is required to complete this seminar. Papers may be theoretical or empirical. Student papers will follow the guidelines of the American Sociological Review for organization, citations, references, tables, etc. I suggest that each student obtain a copy of the ASR guidelines from the UH-Hilo library. Papers should be 12-15 pages in length, including the reference section, tables, graphs, etc. References should come from peer-reviewed journals (i.e., Social Forces, ASR, Gender and Society and similar publications). You may also draw from the annotated bibliographies for references. Papers should have an appropriate cover page with title and student name.

**Please Note:**

The Department of Sociology will not accept or tolerate instances of academic dishonesty or plagiarism among it students or faculty. Falsifying data, sources or experimental results, submitting other’s work as if it was yours, presenting the words or ideas of others without full and appropriate citation, and cheating on examinations are all instances of academic fraud. Students who knowingly commit any of these offenses will (1) receive a failing grade in the course, and (2) will receive a letter of reprimand from the professor, a copy of which will be placed in their files. A repeated instance of academic fraud will result in a petition to have the student permanently expelled from the university. Students who may be unsure as to whether or not their writing or other work may constitute academic fraud should seek the advice of their professor before formal submission or presentation. Plagiarism and academic fraud are the most serious of offenses but they are avoidable with a modicum of care and forethought.

Any student with a documented disability who would like to request accommodations should contact the University Disability Services Office at 933-0816 (V), 933-3334 (TTY), Campus Center Room 311, as early in the semester as possible.

**Note Again:**

If you do not like this class, please note that the last day to withdraw is March 7th.
Annotated Bibliography: Examples


This research documents the relationships between an organization's size and an individual's probability of experiencing inter-organizational mobility (i.e., quits and layoffs). Using a panel study design consisting of Norwegian organizations and their employees, the findings of this study suggest that larger private sector organizations are less likely to layoff employees and that employees are less likely to quit their jobs. Larger organizations apparently have lower quit-rates because they are more likely to be unionized. There was no relationship between size and quits in the public sector. The authors are cautious in drawing conclusions about the unionization-quits relationship, however, since this may result partly from selection effects in that people who attach high importance to job security may elect to join unions as well as to work in larger organizations. The results of the study underscore the importance of organizational size for processes of inter-organizational mobility.


According to the findings of this study, social networks have a direct effect on the stability of intimate relationships (i.e., couples). To be sure, perceptions of approval from a respondent's friends and approval from a respondent's family increase relationship stability. However, perceptions of approval from a respondent's family, overall encouragement to date, and closeness to a best friend decrease stability. Thus, the addition of just one person to a dyad dramatically change behavioral patterns and creates a triadic interaction structure that cannot be replicated in a dyad. The findings of Felmlee's study confirm the negative and positive roles of social ties and support the thesis that friendships can compete with romantic relationships. The authors also discuss the effects of stability when one partner joins another social network.