

**SOCA 304**  
**Complex Organizations**  
**Fall 2017**

**Class Meeting:** Tuesday & Thursday: 11:30pm-12:45pm in Oglebay Hall 103

	<b>Office:</b>	<b>Office Hours:</b>	<b>E-mail address:</b>
Professor Corcoran	400-D Knapp	TTh 9:30am-10:30am	<a href="mailto:kecorcoran@mix.wvu.edu">kecorcoran@mix.wvu.edu</a>
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**Course Description:**

Organizations are the foundation of modern society. All areas of life—economic, social, political, and cultural—are influenced by formal organizations. In this course, we will investigate sociological theories of organizations that seek to answer the following questions: What are organizations, and for whom and how are they organized? Who has power in organizations and how is that power maintained? Are organizations affected by their environments and in what ways? How and why do organizations change? We will explore these theoretical questions in the context of numerous case studies that will allow us to examine how sociological theories of organizations play out in the real-world.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe sociological theories of organizations
2. Apply sociological theories of organizations to organizational case studies
3. Critically analyze and compare sociological theories of organizations
4. Provide examples of organizations that illustrate sociological concepts
5. Identify factors affecting organizational structure, policy, and power-relations

**Required Text:**

Handel, Michael (editor). 2003. *The Sociology of Organizations: Classic, Contemporary, and Critical Readings*. Los Angeles: Sage Press.

All readings marked “\*” on the syllabus are on our E-CAMPUS website (under month, date, then author’s last name). I cannot help with technical problems. If you experience technical problems, please contact the ITS service desk at 304-293-4444 or email [itshelp@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:itshelp@mail.wvu.edu). Technical problems do **not** earn extensions on assignments or excuse failure to do the assigned readings for the day.

## GROUND RULES:

- You are expected to attend all class sessions.
- Due dates are not flexible.
- There is no curve, so grades are not competitive.
- Grades are never negotiable; submit extra credit if you are concerned about your grade.
- Complete readings and assignments early. Technological issues, lost papers, and failed disks do not earn extensions.
- Video and audio recording in class is prohibited, unless requested by Disability Services.
- Students may not use cell phones, tablets, mp3 players, or PDAs during class and may only use their laptop for taking notes, unless I say otherwise (see electronic device policy below).
- Bring your textbook and online readings to every class.
- I expect to have your undivided attention.

## Class Format and Participation:

Class periods will consist primarily of interactive lecture, discussion, and both individual and group activities. I expect you to relate your own experiences as workers, students, and members of organizations (clubs and sports teams, fraternities and sororities, political parties, churches and temples, social movements, non-profits, *etc.*) to the material so you get a clearer sense of how organizations shape your lives. Active participation is required, which entails doing the readings and coming to class prepared to discuss them. If you are not in class, you cannot participate. Just showing up to class, does not count as participating. It is very important to consistently come to class and stay for the whole class period. **We will often be working directly with the texts, so you should bring them to every class period.**

## Active Learning Activities:

Research shows that students learn more and receive higher grades when they engage in active learning, particularly in groups. As such, this course will have active learning opportunities, typically requiring group work, during nearly every class period. **If you are not interested in learning in this manner, you should not take this course.** In-class activities **cannot be made up** unless the absence was due to a university-sanctioned event or a documented emergency. If you have a university-sanctioned absence, you must tell me at least one full week in advance of the class you will miss. If you present documentation of a university-sanctioned absence or emergency, you are allowed to complete the **activity within one week. Your two lowest activity grade will be dropped**, which takes into consideration that you might have to miss two classes for a reason that is not documented. **Because of this, do not ask to make up activities without documentation.** In addition to the in-class activities, you will have two at-home activities on Thursday, October 5 and Thursday, November 16 in lieu of class, which will be due at the beginning of the next class. Turning the at-home activity in late will result in a 10% deduction per day; after class on the day it is due counts as one day late. If you know you will miss class for any reason, including a university-sanctioned absence, you must turn this activity in early.

There is no set number of activities as the number might change due to university closures for inclement weather and the speed at which we cover the material. Given this, while your activity grade is worth 20 points, that does not mean we will necessarily complete 20 activities. Instead,

each activity is graded from 0-100%. Your activity scores are averaged and that percent of 20 represents your score. This means that as we complete more activities your activity grade can **go up or down**. For example, if you score 80% on Activity 1 and 100% on Activity 2, e-campus will show your TotalActivity grade as 18. This is because the average of 80% and 100% is 90% and 18 points is 90% of 20. However, if you score 100% on Activity 3, then your TotalActivity grade will be 18.67 as the average of 80%, 100%, and 100% is 93.33% and 93.33% of 20 is 18.67.

Activity1	Activity 2	TotalActivity Grade
80%	100%	18

Activity1	Activity 2	Activity 3	TotalActivity Grade
80%	100%	100%	18.67

**Attendance Policy:** I do not take attendance formally. However, attendance is expected and strongly encouraged. **We will have an in-class activity, quiz, or occasionally both on nearly every class period. Therefore, if you miss class, you will miss the points associated with the activity and/or quiz.** If you miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining notes from another student. **I do not give out my power point slides for ANY reason that includes university sanctioned absences.** Once you have carefully gone over notes from another student, any material listed on the website, and the readings, I will be happy to discuss the material with you during office hours.

You are required to know any announcements given in class or sent through email. You are therefore responsible for checking your MIX mail account or making sure that it is forwarded to an account that you do check.

**Readings:**

Students must complete the course readings before the assigned class period and come to class ready to participate. **All readings marked with “Case Study” will involve either an individual or group in-class activity. You should make sure to read those texts carefully and bring them to class.**

**Introduction Assignment:**

Students are required to complete an introduction assignment that is due at the beginning of class on **Thursday, August 24th. Assignments and exams will NOT be graded until the introduction assignment is fully completed and submitted.** You cannot pass the course without submitting this assignment.

**Ritzer Assignment:**

This assignment requires students to read an excerpt from *The McDonaldization of Society* by George Ritzer, **observe interactions at a fast-food restaurant**, and respond to assignment questions in a 3-4 page paper (minimum 2 full pages and maximum 7 pages). You are required to submit a hardcopy in class **and** an electronic copy through TurnItIn on E-campus. Further details are provided in the assignment sheet,

**Exams:**

There will be three exams in this class, two during the semester and a **cumulative final exam during finals week**. Exams will involve objective questions, such as multiple choice, True/False, and/or matching. **The exams build on each other; some material from Exam 1 will be on Exam 2.** The final will cover material from the entire semester. Exams will be based on readings, lectures, discussion, assignments, videos, and activities.

**Quizzes:**

You may only make-up a quiz if you have a documented emergency or university-sanctioned absence. If you have a university-sanctioned absence, you must tell me and our TA at least one full week in advance of the class you will miss. However, there will be at least seven quizzes and one quiz score will be dropped. This allows you to miss one quiz without penalty. Quizzes may be short answer, multiple choice, or both. **You will need to complete the course readings prior to coming to class in order to do well on the quizzes.** On e-campus, you will see your score for each individual quiz as well as a TotalQuiz score. The TotalQuiz score will add together the scores you received on each quiz. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped at the end of the semester, so the TotalQuiz score will not reflect that until after all the quizzes have been completed.

**Late assignments, activities, and exam policy:**

Late assignments are **NOT accepted**. All assignments must be turned in at/by the beginning of class on the day they are due for credit unless you have a documented emergency or university-sanctioned absence. **After class on the date the assignment is due is late and will not be accepted.** I do not accept assignments over email unless I have approved it beforehand. Late in-class activities are **NOT accepted** unless you have a documented emergency or university-sanctioned absence. If you have a university-sanctioned absence, you must tell me and the GTA at least one full week in advance of the class you will miss. **Your two lowest in-class activity grades will be dropped.**

Exams must be taken during class on the date they are scheduled. If you have a documented emergency or absence you may make-up Exam 1 or 2 without penalty. All other students who miss Exam 1 or 2 will have their make-up exam score reduced by 10 percent. All make-up exams (for Exam 1 or 2) must be taken within 3 days of the scheduled exam unless you received prior approval from me. If you need to miss an exam due to a university-sanctioned absence, you must communicate this to me and our GTA as soon as you become aware of it. **There are NO make-ups for the final exam except for extreme emergencies (e.g., hospitalization).** If you miss a scheduled exam, you must contact me and our GTA to make arrangements for a make-up exam **by the end of the day of the scheduled exam** or you **will receive a score of zero**. **If you are unable to take the final exam at the time it is scheduled, you should drop the course.**

**GTA Responsibilities:**

Our GTA will post grades on the course e-campus gradebook. If you think a grade has been entered incorrectly, contact the GTA and show a hardcopy of the quiz or assignment with the correct grade. If you need to make-up a quiz or activity **and you have documentation**, email or show the documentation to the GTA and then schedule a make-up with him. If you need to make-up an exam, you must email both the GTA and me.

**Extra Credit:**

I reserve the right to offer extra credit opportunities. If I decide to offer them, they will be announced during class to those who are in attendance. If you are not in attendance, you will miss the announcement and likely miss the opportunity. Just turning extra credit in does not mean you will receive credit for it. The amount of credit will depend on the thoroughness, thoughtfulness, correctness, and completeness of responses. Extra credit cannot be made up. Late extra credit will not be accepted for any reason.

**Grades:**

Our GTA will regularly update the E-CAMPUS gradebook with your grades. Make sure to keep all of your returned assignments and exams in case you have questions regarding your grades. The grade breakdown is provided in the chart below. If your total score puts you within one point of a higher grade, I will round the grade **ONLY** if you completed all assignments and exams on time, participated in class, never violated the electronic device or classroom behavior policies, and completed some extra credit assignments. I will also consider improvement in the course when computing final grades. Grades are **NEVER** negotiable. I do not give you a grade, you **earn** your grade. If you want a particular grade, you need to make sure that you have the requisite number of points to receive it. I do **NOT** bump grades because you want a particular grade but did not put in the effort to earn it. **I reserve the right to make changes to any grade requirements if it benefits students' grades to do so.**

As the final is cumulative, I reward improvement on the final in the following way: If the percent you receive on the final is higher than the percent you received on one of your prior exams, I will average your final percent with the percent of your lowest exam score and replace your lowest exam score with that averaged percent. For example, if you receive a 70% on Exam 1, a 75% on Exam 2, and an 80% on the Final, I would average your Exam 1 percent with your Final percent and replace your Exam 1 grade with 75% (as Exam 1 is worth 66 points this amounts to 49.5 points).

*Original Grades*

Exam 1	Exam 2	Final
70% (46.2 points)	75% (49.5 points)	80% (52.8 points)

$$(70\% + 80\%) / 2 = 75\%$$

*Final Grades*

Exam 1	Exam 2	Final
<b>75% (49.5 points)</b>	75% (49.5 points)	80% (52.8 points)

<b>Grade Breakdown:</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Exam 1	66	22%
Exam 2	66	22%
Final Exam	90	30%
<i>Assignments/Quizzes</i>	48	16%
Introduction Assignment (3 pts total)		
Ritzer Assignment (15 pts total)		
Six quizzes (30 pts total)		
<i>Class Participation</i>	30	10%
In-class activities (20 pts total)		
Participating in discussion (10 pts total)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Point Scale</b>
A+	291 and above
A	279 to 290
A-	270 to 278
B+	261 to 269
B	249 to 260
B-	240 to 248
C+	231 to 239
C	219 to 230
C-	210 to 218
D+	201 to 209
D	189 to 200
D-	180 to 188
F	179 and below

### **Academic Integrity:**

I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University Academic Catalog at

<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification/#academicintegritytext>.

Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

### **Inclusivity statement:**

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services (293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.

**Special accommodations:**

Students requesting special accommodations for exams are required to inform me at least one full week in advance of the exam and provide documentation at that time.

**Inclement Weather:**

While unlikely, if I need to cancel class due to inclement weather, I will send an email to your MIX account by 9:00am on the day of the canceled class (or sooner if possible).

**Intellectual Property Policy:**

All course materials, including lectures, your class notes, quizzes, exams, handouts, and other materials provided to students for this course are protected intellectual property. As such, the unauthorized purchase, sale, or distribution of these materials may result in disciplinary sanctions under the Campus Student Code.

**Electronic Devices Policy:**

Students may not use cell phones or other electronic devices (including but not limited to tablets, PDAs, MP3 players, and so on) during class except laptops for the purposes of taking notes only, unless told otherwise by me; all prohibited devices must be turned off and placed out of sight until the class has concluded. **A student's first violation of this policy will result in a verbal warning (one verbal warning per semester), and each subsequent violation even during the same lecture will result in a 1% deduction in the student's overall course grade.** Using laptops for any purpose other than taking notes will result in the same penalties. If I or our TA see electronic devices during quizzes or exams, this will be considered cheating and I will enforce West Virginia University's academic integrity policy.

**Classroom Behavior Policy:**

I will not tolerate inattention or incivility to me or to other students in the class. When I am speaking to you and to the class, I expect to have your undivided attention. When another student is speaking, I expect you to give him/her your undivided attention. If you have a question, raise your hand and I will be happy to answer it. You should arrive to class on time; coming to class late disrupts everyone. You should stay for the entire class period unless you made prior arrangements with me. Do not get up and leave during class sessions (this includes when we watch video clips and when we are doing in-class activities), unless you are ill or have spoken with me prior to the class. Do not get up and leave in order to make/receive a phone call or text message. Do not read newspapers, magazines, or any other material during class unless it pertains to what we are doing. Do not sleep during class. If you are going to sleep, text message, read newspapers, surf the web, do work for other classes, or be disruptive, do not come to class. **A student's first violation of this policy will result in a verbal warning (one verbal warning per semester), and each subsequent violation even during the same lecture will result in a 1% deduction in the student's overall course grade.**

**Course Schedule:**

The course schedule is subject to change. I will announce any changes to the schedule in class and through MIX email.

Date	Topic	Readings	Due
<b>Section I: The Sociological Study of Organizations</b>			
Thursday, August 17	Syllabus, Class Policies, Introduction: What are Organizations?	Optional: <b>Scott, Richard W.</b> “The Subject is Organizations.”*	
<b>Section II: Organizations as Rational Systems: Classic Theories of Bureaucracy and Administration</b>			
Tuesday, August 22	<i>Bureaucracy and Scientific Management</i>	<b>Scott, Richard W.</b> “Organizations as Rational Systems.” (Pgs 33-38)* <b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pgs 17-31.	
Thursday, August 24	<i>Contingency Theory and Organizational Variation</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pgs 39-51. <b>Case Study.</b> Acme and Omega Electronics. (From Daft, Richard, Organizational Theory and Design.)*	Introduction Assignment
Tuesday, August 29	<i>The McDonaldization of Society</i>	<b>Ritzer, George.</b> Chapters 1-2. Excerpt from The McDonaldization of Society.*	Ritzer Assignment
Thursday, August 31	<i>McDonaldization Case Studies</i>	Excerpts from the McDonaldization of Society: A Reader. <b>Case Study: Robinson, Matthew B.</b> “McDonaldization of America’s Police, Courts, and Corrections.”* <b>Case Study: Bryman, Alan.</b> “McDonald’s as a Disneyized Institution.”*	
Tuesday, September 5	<i>Critique of Rational Systems approaches</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pgs 32-37. <b>Marx, Karl.</b> Excerpt on Alienated Labor.*	
<b>Section III: Organizations as Human and Social Systems I: The Impulse to Reform Work</b>			



<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Due</b>
Thursday, September 7	<i>The Early Human Relations School</i>	<b>Scott, Richard W.</b> "Organizations as Natural Systems." (Pgs 56-61).* <b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pgs 77-96.	
Tuesday, September 12	<i>Humanistic Management</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pgs 108-113 & 123-130.	
Thursday, September 14	<i>Critique</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pgs 131-142. <b>Case Study: Virgin Media.*</b>	
Tuesday, September 19	<b>Review: Exam 1</b>	No readings, extra credit opportunity in class.	
Thursday, September 21	<b>Exam 1</b>	Bring a scantron and two pencils	<b>EXAM 1</b>
<b>Section IV: Organizations and Human Social Systems II: Power and Informal Organization</b>			
Tuesday, September 26	<i>Power Inside Organizations</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pg 205-209. <b>"Power and Conflict"</b> (pgs 129-157).*	
Thursday, September 28	<i>Informal Organization</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pg 145-148 & 157-169. <b>Scheff, Thomas J.</b> "Control over Policy by Attendants in a Mental Hospital."*	
Tuesday, October 3	<i>Gender</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pp. 371-395.	
<b>Section V: Organizational Culture</b>			
Thursday, October 5	<i>Organizational Culture</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pg 347-350. <b>Schein, Edgar H.</b> "What is Corporate Culture Anyway?""* <b>Schein, Edgar H.</b> "What is Corporate Culture Built On?""*	
Tuesday, October 10	<i>Organizational Culture Case Studies</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pg 351-369. <b>Case Study: Google and Facebook.*</b>	
<b>Section VI: Organizational Deviance</b>			

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Due</b>
Thursday, October 12	<i>Organizational Deviance 1</i>	<b>Iadicola, Peter.</b> 2014. "Economic Crime: The Challenges of Regulation and Control." Economic Forum.*	
Tuesday, October 17	<i>Organizational Deviance 2</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pg. 443-454.	
Thursday, October 19	<b>Review: Exam 2</b>	No readings, extra credit opportunity in class.	
Tuesday, October 24	<b>Exam 2</b>	Bring a scantron and two pencils	<b>EXAM 2</b>
<b>Section VII: Organizations as Open Systems: Organizations and Their Environments</b>			
Thursday, October 26	<b>No Class, complete activity.</b>		
Tuesday, October 31	<i>The Environment</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pg 225-(top of) 226. "Chapter 11: The Environment." *	<b>Activity from October 26<sup>th</sup> due.</b>
Thursday, November 2	<i>Institutional Theory Part 1:</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pg 227-(top of) 230 & 243-251.	
Tuesday, November 7	<i>Institutional Theory Part 2:</i>	<b>Meyer, John W. and Brian Rowan.</b> "Institutionalized Organizations."*	
Thursday, November 9	<i>Resource Dependence Theory &amp; Collaborative Network Theory</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pg 226- (top of) 227 & 233-242. <b>Daft, Richard L.</b> Excerpt from Organizational Theory and Design.*	
Tuesday, November 14	<i>Organizational Ecology</i>	<b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pg 230-231 & 254-261. <b>Case study: Netflix.*</b>	
Thursday, November 16	<b>No Class, complete activity.</b>		
Tuesday, November 21	<b>Fall Recess</b>		
Thursday, November 23	<b>Fall Recess</b>		

Date	Topic	Readings	Due
Tuesday, November 28	<i>Societal Culture</i>	<p><b>Gesteland, Richard R.</b> 2005. Excerpt from Cross-cultural Business Behavior.*</p> <p><b>Case Study:</b> Apple.*</p>	<b>Activity from Nov. 16th due.</b>
Thursday, November 30	Types of Organizations	<p><b>Handel, Michael.</b> Pp. 497-517.</p> <p><b>Budrys, Grace.</b> 2012. Chapter 2 from How Non-profit s Work: Case Studies in Nonprofit Organizations. Rowman &amp; Littlefield.*</p>	
Tuesday, December 5	<b>Review: Final</b>	No readings, extra credit opportunity in class.	
<b>Tuesday, December 12, 8am- 10am</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>	Bring a scantron and two pencils.	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>