

**SOCIOLOGY 0311: 501 COMPLEX ORGANIZATIONS  
FALL 2013 SEMESTER**



Dr. Zengie Mangaliso

Meeting Time: on-line

Virtual Office Hours: All day weekdays till 9 pm

Physical Office Hours: MW 12-1pm; T 4-5 pm, and also by appointment

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**Text**

*The Sociology of Organizations: An anthology of Contemporary Theory and Research*, authored by Amy S. Wharton. Roxbury Publishing Company 2007.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

Modern society is dominated by organizations. All of us are born in organizations, educated in, and by organizations, and spend much of our everyday lives working for organizations. Put succinctly aside from our families, we live in an “organizational” society. Since organizations play such a dominant yet taken for granted role, their purposes thus need to be examined and understood. In organizations we acquire knowledge that if used well make us invaluable contributors to the society we live in; we receive monetary and psychological rewards that confer our socio-economic status and give us a sense of worth; and part of our self identities for better or for worse are shaped by our participation and/or positions in particular organizations.

In this course we will analyze various types of organizations ranging from economic organizations or business industries, media enterprises, educational, government and the military, the ecclesiastics, and various types such as not-for-profit voluntary organizations. We will analyze these organizations utilizing a sociological theoretical base. In other words, our understanding of organizations in action in a modern society will be informed by classical and contemporary sociological paradigms and research. We will do an expose analysis of how organizations are created, sustained, and if necessary changed. We will uncover different kinds of leadership styles and why/how these are (in) effective in achieving organizational goals including the shaping of our organizational self identities.

Lastly we will learn that organizations themselves do not function in a vacuum, but are influenced to a large degree by the social and physical environments they are embedded in. By the end of the semester we will be prepared to tackle even the most “formidable” organization!

### **Learning outcomes**

By the end of the semester the following will be accomplished:

1. Clearly understand the concept of complex organizations, and their common classification.
2. Gain an understanding of diverse organizations and their impact on society and self.
3. Know the various theories that explain organizational types, processes, outcomes, and changes.
4. Clearly understand the various methodological tools that are used to investigate organizational structures, processes, and outcomes.
5. Develop a critical understanding of organizational structure and its impact on internal organizational members, external clientele, and communities.
6. Communicate with clarity own research of an organization of choice in written form.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There will be three on-line exams. In addition, there will be a 10 page research paper. Detailed instructions on the research paper appear in the next page of this syllabus. The exams will cover material in the assigned readings, posted lectures and on-line discussions. Class participation is encouraged. Class participation includes regular involvement in on-line class discussions. The final course grade will be computed in the following manner;

First exam	20%
Second exam	20%
Third exam	20%
Research Paper	25%
Class participation	15%
Total	100%

**MAKE A PRECISE NOTE OF EACH OF THE EXAMINATION DATES. IT IS THE STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY TO BE PRESENT FOR CLASS LECTURES AND FOR EXAMS. MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE ARRANGED ONLY UNDER EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES.**

The grading scheme in this class is as follows:

94+	=A	77-79	=C+
91-93	=A-	74-76	=C
88-90	=B+	70-73	=73
84-87	=B	60-69	=D
80-83	=B-	<60	=F

## RESEARCH PROJECT: INSTRUCTIONS

The intent of the research project and exercise is to allow you to gain a broader understanding of the inner workings, and complexities of organizations. If you plan on starting your own enterprise in the future be it a for profit, or not-for profit, or participating in one, this exercise gives you an opportunity to start thinking about, and engaging your mind on some of the issues germane in organizational life.

The research project can be on any topic in complex organizations that is of empirical or theoretical interest to you. The project can be based on first hand observations and interviews of participants or of an informant in an organization of your choice. The project can also be a theoretical discussion of a topic of interest utilizing secondary library sources. I have below some general topics that may interest you. You are not mandated to pick any of the topics cited below. By all means feel free to pick your own topic. If you are uncertain about a topic you are thinking about, I encourage you to get in touch with me and bounce some of your ideas by me.

1. Leadership and followership
2. Organizational culture
3. The role of rituals and ceremonies in organizations
4. Investors as central stakeholders in organizations
5. Workers/labor as central stakeholders in organizations
6. Churches as business enterprises
7. Voluntary organizations as agents of change
8. Organizations and social responsibility
9. Deviance in organizations
10. Informal networks within organizations
11. Changing technologies and their impact on work
12. The meaning of work

In your research paper do make reference to some of the sociological theories discussed in the text and in the on-line class. In particular indicate how the theory explains the issues, inner dynamics, and processes discussed and uncovered in your research project.

## SUBMISSION AND DUE DATE

1. The paper should be submitted by **Wednesday 18, 2013 via Plato**. A drop off window for the submission will be created.
2. The length of the research paper should be 10 pages including the bibliography, be double spaced, using the APA or MLA writing styles.

## NOTE ABOUT PLAGIARIZING

As you know plagiarizing is cheating. Plagiarizing is defined by the University as using intellectual work done and written by others without giving the necessary acknowledgment and

attribution. For details on what constitutes plagiarizing refer to the on-line Academic Honesty Policy appearing in the Manual found under Odyssey in the President's office. For your information it is very easy for Professors to detect whole passages, and paragraphs that have been plagiarized. To spare yourself grief, do attribute any ideas that are not originally yours, by citing the source.