

**Sociology 302, Sociology of Complex Organizations**, Spring 2008. Professor Bruce Carruthers, #203, 1808 Chicago Avenue, 847-467-1251. Office hours: Tuesday 11-12:20. Email: b-carruthers@northwestern.edu

The reading requirements for this course are three books (The Executive Way: Conflict Management in Corporations, by Calvin Morrill; Moral Mazes: The World of Corporate Managers, by Robert Jackall; and Searching for a Corporate Savior: The Irrational Quest for Charismatic CEOs, by Rakesh Khurana) and a set of articles. The books are available at Norris, the readings can be accessed using the JSTOR search engine ([www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)), through the NU Library website electronic resources. The goal of the course is to gain some understanding of the origins, structure and dynamics of complex organizations, and their relationship to their environment. We will be focusing especially upon organizational decision-making through a series of 1-2 week topics (see below). The class format is lecture/discussion, and you are responsible for doing all the readings. There will be an in-class midterm (worth 40% of the final grade, and to be scheduled later) and a final exam (worth 60%). These will both test your knowledge of readings and lecture material. The final exam will be held in class at the regularly scheduled exam time (no exceptions). This syllabus may be changed as circumstances warrant, but under no circumstances will acts of academic dishonesty be tolerated.

### **1: Introduction.**

Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," in From Max Weber H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills ed., New York: Oxford, 1946, pp.196-204 (in Chapter VIII on Bureaucracy, sections 1 and 2). Available on Google Scholar.

Daniel Kahneman, "Maps of Bounded Rationality" American Economic Review 93: 1449-1475, 2003. (available on class blackboard)

Eric Johnson and Daniel Goldstein, "Do Defaults Save Lives?" Science 302: 1338-1339, 2003. (available on class blackboard).

### **2: Organizations as limited problem-solvers.**

Herbert Simon, "Rational Decision Making in Business Organizations," American Economic Review 69: 493-513, 1979. JSTOR.

Richard Cyert, Herbert Simon, and Donald Trow, "Observation of a Business Decision," Journal of Business 29: 237-248, 1956. JSTOR.

### **3: Informal vs. informal structure.**

Rosabeth Moss Kanter, "Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life," American Journal of Sociology 82: 965-990, 1977. JSTOR.

Margarete Arndt and Barbara Bigelow, "Professionalizing and Masculinizing a Female Occupation," Administrative Science Quarterly 50: 233-261, 2005 (on class blackboard).

Melville Dalton, "Unofficial Union-management Relations," American Sociological Review 15: 611-619, 1950. JSTOR.

Stuart Macaulay, "Non-contractual Relations in Business", American Sociological Review 22:

55-67, 1963. JSTOR.

Karl Weick, "Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems," Administrative Science Quarterly 21: 1-19, 1976. JSTOR.

Karlene Roberts, Suzanne Stout, Jennifer Halpern, "Decision Dynamics in Two High Reliability Military Organizations," Management Science 40: 614-624, 1994. JSTOR.

Rob Cross and Laurence Prusak, "The People Who Make Organizations Go- or Stop," Harvard Business Review June 2002 (available on class blackboard).

#### **4: Organizations as political arenas.**

Mayer Zald and Michael Berger, "Social Movements in Organizations," American Journal of Sociology 83: 823-861, 1978. JSTOR.

Calvin Morrill, The Executive Way

#### **5: NeoInstitutionalist Theory:**

Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell "The Iron Cage Revisited" American Sociological Review 48: 147-160, 1983. JSTOR.

John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan "Institutionalized Organizations" American Journal of Sociology 83: 340-363, 1977. JSTOR.

James D. Westphal and Edward J. Zajac, "The Symbolic Management of Stockholders: Corporate Governance Reforms and Shareholder Reactions" Administrative Science Quarterly, 43: 127-153, 1998. JSTOR.

#### **6: Organizations as Anarchies (the Garbage-Can model):**

Michael D. Cohen, James G. March and Johan P. Olsen "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice" Administrative Science Quarterly 17: 1-18, 1972. JSTOR.

Barbara Levitt and Clifford Nass, "The Lid on the Garbage Can: Institutional Constraints on Decision Making in the Technical Core of College-Text Publishers," Administrative Science Quarterly 34: 190-207, 1989. JSTOR.

James March and Johan Olson, "Organizing Political Life: What Administrative Reorganization Tells Us about Government," American Political Science Review 77: 281-296, 1983. JSTOR.

#### **7: Applications - Corporate Managers**

Robert Jackall, Moral Mazes.

#### **8: Applications - High Stakes Hiring of CEOs**

Rakesh Khurana, Searching for a Corporate Savior (don't read the appendix).

#### **9: Reading Week. Therefore no reading.**