

Welcome to MGT 331

This is an elective course designed for students who want to learn more about formal organizations and the debates over how they should be designed and managed. Over the course of the 20th century large scale organizations became the most powerful force in industrialized societies. Now in the 21st century many would argue that large formal organizations, i.e., multinational corporations, are more powerful and influential in shaping the world than governments are. As most of us will live and work in 'shadow' of organizations, it is important for us to understand the logics of organization design and administration. Thus the course is focused on giving you tools for better understanding organizations, how they are created and designed, and how, in turn, organizations create us!

The course presents multiple perspectives: a managerially oriented perspective, as well as more political, cultural, and critical perspectives that do not privilege the managerial orientation. We will focus especially on issues of organization structure and design and issues of power, conflict and change.

Objectives: In addition to giving you information about organizations the course is concerned with building your analytical skills.

From Webster's dictionary, **Analysis** = 1. separation of a whole into its component parts, 2. an examination of a complex, its elements, and their relation.
Analyze = to study or determine the nature and relationships of the parts of something by analysis. To analyze suggests separating or distinguishing the component parts of something so as to discover its true nature or inner relationship. Synonym: dissect, break down.

The overall aim of the course is to expand your ability to understand and analyze organizational dynamics: to understand the 'what's' and the 'why's' of organizational situations.

Course materials. A course packet is available for purchase only at Collective Copies, 71S. Pleasant Street, Amherst. Other materials will be handed out or posted to the course website.

Course website. <http://intra.som.umass.edu/smircich/331sp08> The website has the syllabus for the class, the listing of assignments, posted readings, other feedback, etc. You are responsible for staying up to date with the course through the website.

The site is password protected; you'll get the password in class.

In class: Class sessions will include lectures to recap or elaborate aspects of the theoretical perspectives. However, more time will be devoted to specific cases and readings so that you will gain experience in applying the course material to concrete situations. Class activities are oriented toward helping you expand the ways you see, understand, and analyze organization. Material from class will be on the tests.

Working groups: Early in the class you will be formed into small working/learning groups to enhance communication and participation. Some of the work your group does will be turned in for grading. You will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the contributions the group members make to the work of the group.

Attendance: Attendance is expected. Learning the course material is facilitated by participation in class discussions. Also, your group will be depending on you. If you must be absent I'd appreciate knowing about it ahead of time: smircich@mgmt.umass.edu.

Evaluation:

Grades will be determined on the basis of several components:

Class participation/homework; an individual personal case analysis, group work/application assignments, tests. More details to follow soon. Assignments should be turned in on time.