

SOCIOLOGY 485: Organizations and Everyday Life

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Please note: the information below is subject to change.

Course Description & Objectives:

Sociology 485 will use qualitative research on organizations to demonstrate how organizational theories and perspectives allow us to understand everyday life within “real” concrete organizations. The course will emphasize linkages between individual experiences, organizations, and institutions. It will also pay special attention to organizational culture, emotion, and identity, as well as to the physical sites of organizational life. We will begin with a brief history of organizational ethnography and an introduction to the methods used to do qualitative research in organizations. After that, we will read and assess several book-length organizational ethnographies. These texts will serve to provide richly detailed examples of organizational settings. Each book will be discussed on a number of levels, including: 1) research methods, 2) thesis and arguments, and 3) the book’s contributions to organizational theory. We will compare and contrast the texts, particularly in relation to their methods and conclusions.

In particular, we will examine the application of constructionist and interactionist perspective to topics such as service work, organizational culture, voluntarism, and labor and the global economy. These applications allow the authors in question to theorize about the relationship of organizational life and social interaction to such issues as emotions, gender, identity, and culture.

Required Reading

Texts TBA.

Tentative Course Assignments

Paper #1, 2, 3, 4: 20% each

Reading Responses 20%

(subject to change)