

Take home final

EDUC 250B, Spring 2025

1 Logistics

- Due Wednesday 6/11/2025 at 11:59pm
- Submit completed final exam here: [LINK](#)
 - **Note:** If clicking on the link above does not work for you, you may need to paste the URL above directly into your browser

1.1 Honor Code

- Please type your full name here: <YOUR NAME>
- By typing your name, you affirm that you did not receive help from anyone when completing this final exam, that you are using your own words (excluding quoted text), and that you do not enter question prompts into an artificial intelligence product.

2 Concepts

1 point each

Instructions

- For each question, (1) define the concept(s) (one-sentence definition per concept is fine; a few questions ask about two concepts) and (2) provide an example of the concept (one sentence is fine).
- *Note:* Most of these concepts, but not all, are defined in the lecture slides. You must define the concept in your own words rather than quoting lecture slides/readings; Provide an example that does not come from lecture slides

Concepts

1 point each; 25 points total

1. **Norms** (from 20th Century sociology (e.g., Birnbaum, 1991; Tierney, 1988))
2. **Organizational norms** (from 20th Century sociology (e.g., Birnbaum, 1991; Tierney, 1988))
3. **Strong organizational culture** (from 20th Century sociology (e.g., Birnbaum, 1991; Tierney, 1988))
4. **Heteronormativity**
5. **Queering** (as a strategy for change)
6. **Institution** (old institutionalism)
7. **Institution** (new institutionalism)
8. **Institutionalization** (old institutionalism)
9. **Institutionalization** (new institutionalism)
10. **Buffering** (from contingency theory; see lecture slides)
11. **Decoupling**
12. **“Solutions looking for problems”**
13. **“Decision made by flight”**
14. **Dependence** (either Emerson or Pfeffer and Salancik)
15. **Cooptation**
16. **Vertical integration** (from resource dependence theory)

17. *“Technical” vs. “institutional” reason for formal structure* (e.g., offices, policies; Meyer & Rowan)
18. *Symbolic adoption vs. substantive adoption*
19. *Competitive isomorphism*
20. *Mimetic isomorphism*
21. *Coercive isomorphism*
22. *Normative isomorphism*
23. *Predictive analytics* (Chun)
24. *Homophily*
25. *Racialized input* (Norris)

3 Short answers

4 points each

Answer each of the following questions in 2-5 sentences:

1. What is an “organizational field” from new/neo-institutional theory? Imagine it is one year from today. You are beginning an empirical research project motivated by the question, “why (or why not) did UCLA change its policy about investments and investment disclosure in response to the Palestine Solidarity student movement?” Who are the relevant groups of actors in the organizational field that are salient to this question? Usually, good empirical case studies focus on the actions/interactions of a small number of actors, while other relevant groups are given a secondary/supporting role (otherwise the project becomes an ocean wide or an inch deep). Which two or three groups of actors would you focus your research on and why these groups?
2. Prestige is a resource valued by research universities. UC-Berkeley (UCB) and UC-San Diego (UCSD) are both highly ranked (US News and other rankings systems) universities and both have highly ranked political science departments. Imagine these two political science departments have the same rank (i.e., they are tied) in US News and World Report Grad School Rankings, but UCB has more highly ranked departments than UCSD, and UCB is a more highly ranked university as a whole than UC-San Diego. According to resource dependence theory, which is likely to be greater: (a) the influence of UCB political science department over organizational decision-making within UCB or (b) the influence of UCSD political science department over organizational decision-making within UCSD? Why?

4 Essay

Answer the following essay prompt. Essay is worth 67 points [sorry not a very round number!]. Can place your essay at the end of this word document.

1. Develop the conceptual framework for a research question about a topic of your choosing by doing the following in some order: (A) state a research question on a topic of your choosing (one sentence); (B) provide brief background information (e.g., one paragraph) on the topic to acquaint the reader; (C) develop a conceptual framework to address this research question that is based on one theoretical perspective (e.g., new institutional theory) or that integrates two theoretical perspectives; (D) close by discussing the sort of data you think would be most appropriate for answering the research question.
 - On the conceptual framework
 - this is the heart of the essay, probably two-thirds of text.
 - Whatever theory(s) you choose, first lay out what the theory says, focusing on ideas/concepts that are most relevant to your study and show how these ideas/concepts are applied to your study
 - The conceptual framework should lay out – based on theory – which actors/relationships/processes the research should pay attention to
 - guidelines from google docs about conceptual frameworks will be helpful
 - * look for github issues with the label “craft”

- On the discussion of data source(s):
 - Here, try to minimize research methodology jargon.
 - Rather, speak plainly about why you think a particular data source(s) are useful for the sorts of actors/relationships/processes deemed important by the theories you are drawing from, why this data source would yield credible insights about the issue (e.g., be wary that administrators expert in public relations spin), and whether the data source could realistically be obtained.
- On choice of theory(s) for your conceptual framework
 - At least one of the theories, must be a theoretical perspective from this class (e.g., garbage can theory, old institutionalism, scholarship from sociology of race)
 - *Recommendation*: choose at least one theory that speaks to the *actions/behaviors* of actors you think are important for your research (e.g., by itself, “whiteness as property” doesn’t tell you how trustees will respond to demands by politicians to ban CRT).

4.1 Essay guidelines and recommendations

- Guidelines
 - Essay should be three to four pages (excluding references) double space, size 11 or 12 font, one inch margins all around
 - * A bit less than three pages is fine, but cannot be longer than five pages
 - Follow APA style
 - * Use citations when appropriate
 - * Any verbatim text from another source MUST be cited and quoted; failure to do this will be considered plagiarism and will result in no credit for the essay
- Recommendations on theory
 - Whenever you use a particular theoretical concept (e.g., “cooptation”), define the concept in general terms before you apply the concept to the particular question at hand
 - * And when applying this concept to a case, state how the concept is being operationalized in the case/issue being studied
 - Be selective about which elements of theory your essay focuses on
 - * Breadth is often the enemy of depth
 - Just as in good empirical scholarship, a good essay should develop deep insight rather than be “an ocean wide but an inch deep” [my most common critique on journal manuscripts I reject]
 - * A useful approach can be to provide a short, broad overview of the theory (e.g., 2-3 sentences) and then devote more substantial amount of space to discussing theoretical ideas/concepts that are most relevant to the case or focus of the essay
 - When applying theory to analyze a case, be selective about which actors/relationships from the case that your essay focuses on (e.g., can say something like “many important factors in this case/issue like X, Y, and Z, but my essay is going to focus on W and V”).
- Recommendations on writing
 - Create an outline to develop logical flow of ideas/argument
 - Strive for clear language that presents your ideas as simply as possible
 - Each paragraph should be about one idea/topic (could be big or small)
 - First sentence [“topic sentence”] of paragraph should tell reader what paragraph is about
 - Subsequent sentences flesh out the idea of topic sentence, develop logical argument and/or empirical evidence
 - Avoid introducing entirely new topics halfway through the paragraph. This confuses the reader and undermines the logical argument/evidence the paragraph is building. If you want to introduce a new idea, start a new paragraph.

5 References

Birnbaum, R. (1991). The collegial institution: Sharing power and values in a community of equals. In *How colleges work: The cybernetics of academic organization and leadership* (pp. 85–104). San Francisco:

Jossey-Bass.

Tierney, W. G. (1988). Organizational culture in higher education: Defining the essentials. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 59(1), 2–21.