

# Organizational Analysis (Winter 2024)

MACS 30617 | SOCI 30337 [20585] | PBPL 23002  
EDSO 30617 | MAPS 30617

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**Office** ..... Room 217 (1155 E. 60th St.)

**Office Hours** ..... By appointment: <https://calendar.app.google/tCKs9hmVdkQnKVq49>

In addition, if the sign on the office door is set to 'Please Knock' then by all means feel free to drop in. (This also applies during office hours, just be mindful that in the event of a conflict, priority will go to the student who made a prior appointment.)

Though office hour times will vary from week to week, I will make an effort to regularly schedule office hours on Tuesdays, between 12:30pm and 2:30pm.

**Location** ..... 1155 Building, Room 295

**Meeting Time** ..... Tue: 3:30pm – 6:20pm

## ***Course Overview***

Modern social interaction and exchange is largely mediated through and shaped by organizations. This course will provide a grounding in the sociological literature on the study of organizations with an emphasis on the development of the field and the emergence of new analytical paradigms. This course will cover rational, ecological, resource-based, neo-institutional approaches, and others. Our goal will be to critically examine both the successes and challenges that attend these different paradigms, thereby developing a generative perspective encompassing how such approaches conflict, complement, and contextualize each other.

We will explore how organizations function, their internal dynamics and structures, as well as the interface with their social, exchange, and competitive environments. In doing so, we will engage with literature that covers a wide array of organizational forms: NGOs, corporations, schools, social movement organizations, governmental bodies, as well as others. Given such diversity and variation, we will ask whether common dynamics emerge that can help explain whence and wherefore organizations arise, how they function, when they 'succeed' or 'fail', what factors influence what they do, and their social consequences.

The goal of the course is not to provide students with a unified theory of organizational form and function; rather, it is to equip students with a variety of tools that can be used to examine organizations as well as the understanding of when and why such tools might be usefully deployed.

Lastly, this course will encourage students to think of how the tools and insights developed by scholars of organizational analysis can be used to explain other forms of collective (inter)action

and exchange. At the completion of the course, students will apply what they have learned to a final project. In consultation with the instructor, students will have the opportunity to select a topic/focus as well as the format for the final project.

### ***Course Learning Objectives:***

- Develop familiarity with and understanding of the major paradigms within the study of formal organizations.
- Recognize the motivation behind and significance that attaches to major paradigm shifts and arguments within the field.
- Develop an understanding of course concepts that:
  - is sufficiently abstract to facilitate *portability*,
  - is sufficiently concrete to enable *application*, and
  - enables productive and generative critique of these concepts.
- Apply the concepts, theories, and paradigms covered in the course to designing an original research proposal, generating a case study analysis, or producing a focused literature review.

### ***Course Structure:***

Class sessions will consist of lecture along with both whole and small group discussions. These main modes will be largely interspersed throughout the time block. While class time will be spent on critiquing as well as clarifying the assigned readings, the expectation is that students have read the material ***prior*** to class. The structure of the class will assume as much and failure to come prepared will impede your ability to participate and learn, as well as your grade. I firmly believe that learning is a collaborative activity. My role as the instructor is a privileged one but it is certainly not one of totalitarian control. (The reasons why that is necessarily so will be a central Week 1 theme). Both individually and collectively, what you get out of the class will greatly depend on what you put into it.

Whether whole or small group, discussions are meant to allow you and your peers to critique the readings, raise areas requiring clarification, and further develop your perspectives as scholars. In addition, everyone in the classroom has had experiences with organizations – both as insiders and outsiders. We will all benefit from the insights gleamed from the multiplicity of those real-world experiences and I invite students to bring them into the classroom discussions.

By Thursday morning of each week, I will post a question or prompt on Canvas; student responses will be due by 11:59pm on Sunday of the same week. These short submissions should be around 300 words in length.

Finally, the Canvas course site will provide access to all course readings ('Primary Texts' are also listed below) and is also where you will find assignments and should submit work.

**NB:** This quarter, our class will meet only eight times; expect things to move at a fast clip. Additionally, please note that there are readings and activities assigned for the first week of the quarter despite our class not meeting that week. (If we discover that the pace of the course requires adjustment, then we may take up the issue as a class. Any changes would require class consensus.)

## **Evaluation**

### **Weekly Attendance and Engagement (10%)**

A major part of this course involves in-class discussion of the assigned readings, which will drive you to delve deeper into specific conceptual frameworks as well as how they might be applied to your own areas of inquiry and curiosity. As such, your attendance and engagement are paramount to the success of the class.

Unexcused absences will receive a 5% final grade penalty (this penalty may exceed the 10% allocated here to *Attendance and Engagement* in cases of more than two unexcused absences). For an absence to be excused: (i) you must make the request a reasonable period of time prior to the start of class, (ii) the reason must involve an illness or similar contingency that prevents your attendance, and (iii) you must receive instructor approval prior to the start of class. As appropriate, the instructor may assign makeup work. In all cases, students with excused or unexcused absences will be expected to attend office hours to discuss what was covered in class that week.

- **A caveat:** emergencies happen, and they often require our immediate and undivided attention. If you must miss class due to such circumstances, then I simply ask that you make contact when you are able to and, as well as the circumstances allow, explain what is happening. I will then work with you to develop a plan that addresses present needs while allowing you to fully benefit from the course. Such an absence will be considered excused, even if communication about it occurs after the fact.

In addition to attendance, this portion of the grade will also include your preparation for and participation in class discussions (inclusive of small group discussions). Your contributions to class discussions will not be evaluated based on ‘volume’, but rather on *quality*. A quality contribution is one which moves the discussion forward, either by raising a question about the texts/concepts or by introducing or extending a critical analysis of the same. In addition to engaging with the instructor and the readings, you will also be expected to engage with your peers.

### **Weekly Responses (40%)**

**Due Date:** *Weekly, before 11:59pm on Sunday.*

**Description:** Every week, I will post a question on Canvas by Thursday morning. These questions are meant to gauge how students are processing the material as well as what areas they are finding most/least productive and why. They are also meant to generate topics for future discussion and as opportunities for you to get comments on specific areas of interest.

Students will post their responses twice: first as a response to the question under ‘assignments’, and then as a post in that week’s discussion thread. Students are encouraged to engage with each other via such threads. Participation in those discussions is also another way of engaging within the course.

Submissions should be 300-500 words in length. They will be graded: No Credit |✓- | ✓ | ✓+, corresponding to a 0, 1, 2, 3 scale. The default grade will be ✓|2, which will be sufficient to earn

full credit. (In other words, a grade of ✓+3 represents superior work and extra credit, while a grade of ✓-1 indicates work that needs improvement.)

### ***Mid-Course Evaluation (10%)***

**Due Date:** *Before 11:59pm on Sunday, February 4, 2024.*

**Description:** We will discuss this in further detail as the date approaches, but this assignment is simply an opportunity for students to provide feedback to the instructor on how they are experiencing the course, as well as make suggestions about what elements of the course they would like to see further emphasized or de-emphasized. Submitting the survey will be both mandatory and anonymous. (This mid-course activity may be facilitated by an outside party. In that case, credit will be based on participation in that activity.)

### ***Final Assignment Proposal (10%)***

**Due Date:** *Friday of Week 7, by 11:59pm.*

**Description:** For the final assignment, you have the option of writing (i) a focused literature review, (ii) a research proposal, or (iii) a case study. (More detailed expectations for each of these options are available on Canvas.) For the final assignment proposal, you must submit a written pitch, between 500 and 750 words in length. Your pitch should: (i) specify which format of the final assignment you will complete, (ii) lay out the central question/goal of the project, and (iii) discuss which conceptual approaches you expect will be most useful for your chosen project. The final project will be between 3000 and 5000 words, exclusive of references.

This proposal pitch is meant as an opportunity for students to get feedback on their ideas relatively early in the process. To make that as productive as possible, students are encouraged to treat this as a low-stakes assignment that invites risk-taking. It will be graded in that spirit.

### ***Final Project (35%)***

**Due Date:** *3/7/2024, 11:59pm*

**Description:** See Canvas for more detailed information.

**Grade boundaries:** A (>93.9%), A- (>89.9%), B+ (>85.9%), B (>82.9%), B- (>79.9%), C+ (>74.9%). *Lower grades will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.*

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### **Statement on diversity, inclusion, and disability**

The University of Chicago is committed to diversity and rigorous inquiry from multiple perspectives. The MAPSS, CIR, and Computation programs share this commitment and seek to foster productive learning environments based upon inclusion, open communication, and mutual respect for a diverse range of identities, experiences, and positions.

The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring equitable access to our academic programs and services. Students with disabilities who have been approved for the use of academic accommodations by Student Disability Services (SDS) and need a reasonable accommodation(s)

to participate fully in this course should follow the procedures established by SDS for using accommodations. Timely notifications are required in order to ensure that your accommodations can be implemented. Please meet with your instructor to discuss your access needs in this class after you have completed the SDS procedures for requesting accommodations.

- Email: [disabilities@uchicago.edu](mailto:disabilities@uchicago.edu)
  - Phone: 773-702-6000
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### ***Primary Texts***

**NB:** All of the readings will be available on Canvas. You are welcome to buy the texts listed below, but you are not required to and will not be at a disadvantage if you do not buy them.

- W. Richard Scott and Gerald F. Davis. (2007). *Organizations and Organizing: Rational, Natural and Open System Perspectives*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, Inc. [**Hereafter Text.**]
  - Michael J. Handel (Ed.). (2003). *The Sociology of Organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., [**Hereafter Reader.**]
  - Ronald S. Burt. (2005). Brokerage and Closure. Oxford University Press.
  - Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio. (1991). *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
  - John F. Padgett & Walter F. Powell. (2012). *The emergence of organizations and markets*. Princeton University Press – 2012
  - Mahoney & Thelen. (2010). *Explaining institutional change: ambiguity, agency, and power*. Cambridge University Press – 2010
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### **Weekly Readings**

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#### **Week I – Introduction to Formal Organizations**

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- Syllabus and Assignments posted on Canvas.
- Weber, M. “Organizations as rational systems I: Classic theories of bureaucracy and administration” | **Reader** | pp. 5–23
- Merton, R.K. (1940). “Bureaucratic Structure and Personality,” *Social Forces*, 18(4): 560–568.
- Scott, W.R. & Davis, G.F. (2006). “The subject is organizations” | **Text** | pp. 15–42.
- Padgett, J.F. & Powell, W.W. (2012). “Chapter 1 – The Problem of Emergence” in *The Emergence of Organizations and Markets* | pp. 1–29.

### Further Readings:

- Abbott, A.D. (2014). “Reading” in *Digital Paper – A Manual for Research and Writing with Library and Internet Materials*. | pp. 129–148.†
- Padgett, J.F. & Powell, W.W. (2012). “Part 1 – Autocatalysis” in *The Emergence of Organizations and Markets* | pp. 31–32.
- Padgett, J.F. (2012). “Chapter 2 – Autocatalysis in Chemistry and the Origin of Life” in *The Emergence of Organizations and Markets* | pp. 33–69.

† This is a reading-heavy class. I encourage students to read this chapter precisely because it will make that task easier to tackle.

- DO: Respond to Week 1 prompt.

## Week II – Introduction to Formal Organizations (cont.)

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### *Authority & Coordination*

- Lincoln, B. (1994). “Chapter 1: Constructing Authority” in *Authority – Construction and Corrosion*. | pp. 1–13.
- Olson, M. (1965). “A Theory of Groups and Organizations” in *The Logic of Collective Action*. | pp. 5–52.
- Mayhew, L. (1970). “Ascription in Modern Societies” in *The Logic of Social Hierarchies*. | pp. 308–323.

### Further Readings:

- Austen, J.L. (1962). “Lectures 1 and 9” in *How to Do Things with Words*. | pp. 1–11, 109–120.

### *Perspectives on Organizations*

- Scott, W.R. & Davis, G.F. (2006). “Organizations as rational systems,” | **Text** | pp. 45–64.
- Scott, W.R. & Davis, G.F. (2006). “Organizations as natural systems,” | **Text** | pp. 66–89.
- Scott, W.R. & Davis, G.F. (2006). “Organizations as open systems” | **Text** | pp. 91–108.

### Further Readings:

- Scott, W.R. & Davis, G.F. (2006). “Combining perspectives” | **Text** | pp. 110–125.
- Allison, G.T., “Conceptual models and the Cuban Missile Crisis” | **Reader** | pp. 185–203

## Week III – Spread of Organizational Forms & Embeddedness

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### *Bureaucratic Spread, Managerialism, and Growth*

- Chandler, A.D., Jr., “The emergence of managerial capitalism” | **Reader** | pp. 303–314.
- Scott, W.R. & Davis, G.F. (2006). “The rise and transformation of the corporate form” | **Text** | pp. 319–341.
- Fligstein, N. (1985). “The Spread of the Multi-divisional Form Among Large Firms, 1919–1979.” *American Sociological Review*, 50(5): 377–391.

- Evans, P. & Rauch, J.E. (1999). “Bureaucracy and Growth: A Cross-National Analysis of the Effects of “Weberian” State Structure on Economic Growth.” *American Sociological Review*, 64(5): 748–56.
- Harrison, B. “Lean and mean: The changing landscape of corporate power in the age of flexibility” | **Reader** | pp. 331-346.

#### **Further Readings:**

- Bendix, R. (1956). “Chapter 4: The bureaucratization of economic enterprise” in *Work and Authority*. | 60 pages.

#### ***The Embeddedness of Organizations***

- Granovetter, M. (1985). “Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness.” *American Journal of Sociology*, 91(3): 481–510.
- Uzzi, B. & Lancaster, R. (2004). “Embeddedness and Price Formation in the Corporate Law Market.” *American Sociological Review*, 69(3): 319–344.
- Zuckerman, E. W. (1999). “The Categorical Imperative: Securities Analysts and the Illegitimacy Discount.” *American Journal of Sociology*, 104(5): 1398–1438.
- Podolny, J. M. (1993). “A Status-Based Model of Market Competition.” *American Journal of Sociology*, 98(4): 829–872.

#### **Further Readings:**

- Ben-Porath, Y. (1980). “The F-Connection: Families, Friends, and Firms and the Organization of Exchange.” *Population and Development Review*, 6(1): 1-30.

### **Week IV – Control and Structure within Organizations**

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#### ***Control***

- Scott, W.R. & Davis, G.F. (2006). “Goals, power, and control.” | **Text** | pp. 178–208.
- Gorski, K. (2023). “‘You selling?’: Snack Sales and the Construction of Deviance in a High School.” *Youth and Society*, 55(6): 1136–1154.
- Jensen, M.C. & Meckling, W.H. “Theory of the firm: Managerial behavior, agency costs and ownership structure.” | **Reader** | pp. 269–275.
- Williamson, O.E. “The economics of organization: The transaction cost approach.” | **Reader** | pp. 276–287.
- Burns, T. & Stalker, G.M. “The management of innovation” | **Reader** | pp. 45–51.
- Vaughan, D. “Rational choice, situated action, and the social control of organizations: The challenger launch decision” | **Reader** | pp. 443–456.
- Ingersoll, R.M. (2003). “Rules for Teachers” in *Who Controls Teachers’ Work: Power and Accountability in America’s Schools*. | pp. 96-135.

#### **Further Readings:**

- Feduzi, A., Runde, J., & Schwarz, G. (2022). “Unknowns, Black Swans, and Bounded Rationality in Public Organizations.” *Public Administration Review*, 82(5): 958–963.
- Van de Ven, A., Dalbecq, A.L., and Koenig, R. (1976). “Determinants of Coordination Modes within Organizations.” *American Sociological Review*, 41: 322–338.
- Weick, Karl. (1976). “Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems.” *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21: 1–19.

### **Networks**

- Burt, R.S. (2005). “Introduction”, “The Social Capital of Structural Holes”, and “Closure, Trust, and Reputation” in *Brokerage and Closure*. | pp. 1–58, 93–162.
- “Charlotte Beers at Ogilvy and Mather Worldwide”, (HBS case 9-495-031) | pp. 1–18.
- “Managing Xerox’s Multinational Development Center”, (HBS case 9-496-047) | pp. 1–15.

### **Further Readings:**

- Burt, R.S. (2005). “Closure, Echo, and Rigidity” in *Brokerage and Closure*. | pp. 167–222.
- Krajewski, A.T., DellaPosta, D., & Felmlee, D. (2022). “Vertical organizations, flat networks: Centrality and criminal collaboration in the Italian-American Mafia.” *Social Networks*, 68: 127–138.

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## **Week V – Workers, Privilege, and Precarity**

### **Labor**

- Homans, G.C. “The Hawthorne experiments” | **Reader** | pp. 85–96.
- Bramel, D. & Friend, R. “Hawthorne, the myth of the docile worker, and class bias in psychology” | **Reader** | pp. 97–107.
- Burawoy, M. “Manufacturing consent: Changes in the labor process under monopoly capitalism” | **Reader** | pp. 170–180.

### **Further Readings:**

- Sørensen, J. & Sørenson, O. (2007). “Corporate Demography and Income Inequality.” *American Sociological Review*, 72(5): 766–783.

### **Bias and Diversity**

- Castilla, E.J. (2011). “Bringing Managers Back In: Managerial Influences on Workplace Inequality.” *American Sociological Review*, 76(5): 667–694.
- Owens, J. (2022). “Double Jeopardy: Teacher Biases, Racialized Organizations, and the Production of Racial/Ethnic Disparities in School Discipline.” *American Sociological Review*, 87(6): 1007–1048.
- Yang, T. & Aldrich, H. E. (2014). “Who’s the Boss? Explaining Gender Inequality in Entrepreneurial Teams.” *American Sociological Review*, 79(2): 303–327.
- Gorski, K. (2020). “My Voice Matters: High School Debaters’ Acquisition of Dominant and Adaptive Cultural Capital.” *American Journal of Education*, 126: 293 – 321.

### **Further Readings:**

- McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Cook, J. M. (2001). “Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks.” *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27: 415–444.
- Kanter, R.M. “Men and women of the corporation” | **Reader** | pp. 381–396.
- Ferguson, J.P. & Koning, R. (2018). “Firm Turnover and the Return of Racial Establishment Segregation.” *American Sociological Review*, 83(3): 445–474.

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## **Week VI – Organizational Ecology**

### ***Resource Dependency & Population Ecology***

- Pfeffer, J. & Salancik, G.R. "The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective." | **Reader** | pp. 233–242.
- Hannan, M. & Freeman, J. (1977). "The population ecology of organizations." *American Journal of Sociology*, 82(5): 929–64.
- Young, R.C. (1988). "Is population ecology a useful paradigm for the study of organizations." *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(1): 1–24.

### **Further Readings:**

- Carroll, G.R. & Swaminathan, A. (2000). "Why the Microbrewery Movement? Organizational Dynamics of Resource Partitioning in the U.S. Brewing Industry." *American Journal of Sociology*, 106(3): 715–762.

### ***Organizations in Their Environment***

- Podolny, J. & Page, K. (1998). "Network Forms of Organization," *Annual Review of Sociology*, (24): 57–76.
- Scott, W.R. & Davis, G.F. (2006). "The dyadic environment of the organization" | pp. 210–316.
- Scott, W.R. & Davis, G.F. (2006). "Organization of the environment" (selection) | pp. 233–244, 261.

### **Further Readings:**

- Scott, W.R. & Davis, G.F. (2006). "Networks in and around organizations" | pp. 263–290.
- Dixon, M. & Martin, A. W. (2012). "We Can't Win This on Our Own: Unions, Firms, and Mobilization of External Allies in Labor Disputes." *American Sociological Review*, 77(6): 946–969.

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## **Week VII – Neo-Institutionalism and Field Effects**

- DiMaggio, P. & Powell, W.W. (1991). "Introduction" in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. | pp. 1–38.
- Meyer, J.W. & Rowan, B. (1991). "Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony" in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. | pp. 41–62.
- Friedland, R. & Alford, R.R. "Bringing society back in: Symbols" in *The New Institutionalism*. | pp. 232–263.
- DiMaggio, P.J. & Powell, W.W. "The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields." | **Reader** | pp. 244–253.
- Rowan, B. (2006). "The New Institutionalism and the Study of Educational Organizations" in *The New Institutionalism in Education*. | pp. 15-32.

### **Further Readings:**

- Knorr-Cetina, K. & Bruegger, U. (2002). "Global microstructures: The virtual societies of financial markets." *American Journal of Sociology*, 107(4): 905–50.

## **Week VIII – Organizations, the State, and Social Movements**

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### ***The State***

- Novak, W.J. (2015). “The Concept of the State in American History” in *Boundaries of the State in US History.* | pp. 325–249.
- Collins, R. (2011). “Patrimonial Alliances and Failures of State Penetration: A Historical Dynamic of Crime, Corruption, Gangs, and Mafias.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 636: 16–31.
- Jacobs, A.M. (2010). “Chapter 4 - Policymaking as Political Constraint. In *Explaining Institutional Change*” in *Ambiguity, Agency, and Power* | pp. 94–131.

### ***Social Movements***

- Snow, D. A., Rochford, E. B., Worden, S. K., & Benford, R. D. (1986). “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation.” *American Sociological Review*, 51(4): 464–481.
- Bail, C. A., Brown, T. W., & Mann, M. (2017). “Channeling Hearts and Minds: Advocacy Organizations, Cognitive-Emotional Currents, and Public Conversation.” *American Sociological Review*, 82(6): 1188–1213.
- Kentikelenis, A. E., & Seabrooke, L. (2017). “The Politics of World Polity: Script-writing in International Organizations.” *American Sociological Review*, 82(5): 1065–1092.
- Wang, D. J., Rao, H., & Soule, S.A. (2019). “Crossing Categorical Boundaries: A Study of Diversification by Social Movement Organizations.” *American Sociological Review*, 84(3): 420–458.

### **Further Readings:**

- Bail, C.A. (2012). “The Fringe Effect: Civil Society Organizations and the Evolution of Media Discourse about Islam since the September 11th Attacks.” *American Sociological Review*, 77(6): 855–879.
- Gould, R.V. (1995). *Insurgent Identities: Class, Community, and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune*. University of Chicago Press.
- Andrews, K. T. & Caren, N. (2010). “Making the News: Movement Organizations, Media Attention, and the Public Agenda.” *American Sociological Review*, 75(6): 841–866.

## **Week IX – Organizational Change**

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- Hall, P.A. (2010). “Chapter 7 – Historical Institutionalism in Rationalist and Sociological Perspective” in *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power* | pp. 204–223.
- Mahoney, J. & Thelen, K. (2010). “Chapter 1 – A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change” in *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power* | pp. 1–37.
- Selznick, P. (1953). *TVA and the Grass Roots: A Study in the Sociology of Formal Organization*. (selections) | 122 pages
- Padgett, J. F. (2010). “Open Elite? Social Mobility, Marriage, and Family in Florence, 1282–1494.” *Renaissance Quarterly*, 63(2): 357–411.
- Rowan, B. (2006). “The School Improvement Industry in the United States” in *The New Institutionalism in Education*. | pp. 67-85.