UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
Department of Sociology
SOC 5030: Complex Organizations
Chilton Hall, Room 126

Dale E. Yeatts, Ph.D.
Office hrs:
Tues/Thurs. 11:00-12:30
and by appointment

Chilton Hall, Suite 390A
Phone: 940-565-2238
email: yeatts@unt.edu
http://courses.unt.edu/yeatts

I. Learning Objectives

A. To become familiar with the development of organizational theory, including the major paradigms that have and are being used to explain organizational behavior and performance.

B. To become an "expert" in a chosen area of complex organizations. This might include for example: (1) developing an expertise in a workplace issue such as organizational commitment, empowerment, or turnover or (2) developing an expertise in factors affecting organizational performance or behavior.

C. To write a paper approaching publishable quality (expectations will vary based on the degree being sought, i.e., MA or PHD).

II. Learning Components

A. Readings: To help meet the objectives, the following books are required reading:

Handel, Michael J. (2003, editor). The Sociology of Organizations: Classic, Contemporary, and Critical Readings, SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA

Perrow, Charles (1986, 3rd edition). Complex Organizations. Randon House: New York, New York.

Norgaard, Mette (2005). The Ugly Duckling Goes to Work. American Management Association: New York.

B. Class time: will be focused on the objectives through class discussions, and when it can be arranged professionals speaking to the class.

C. Assignments: These include developing discussion questions for each class, leadership of a weekly class, a research paper, and participation in class discussions.

III. Course Policies

A. Class attendance: regular and punctual class attendance is expected. Three absences from a three-hour class will reduce the student's grade one letter-grade (no excuses accepted–three absences is one-fifth of the semester). Each additional three-hour class missed will reduce the grade one additional letter-grade. Two tardies to class or leaving class early will equal one absence.

B. Academic integrity: as the student guidebook points out, academic integrity is required. Plagiarism and cheating will result in failure and a report to the Dean.

C. Special Needs: appropriate adjustments and auxiliary aid are available for persons with disabilities. See Dr. Yeatts and/or call 940-565-2456 (TDD access 1-800-735-2989).

D. Cell Phones: please turn off phones before coming to class. They should not be on during class.

E. Grading: final grades will be based on the following:

1.	Weekly discussion questions/leadership of one class	40%
2.	First sections of paper (due Sept 22nd; see attached)	20%
3.	Completed paper (due Oct 27th; see attached)	20%
4.	Revised completed paper (due Nov 24th)	20%
5.	Final Exam/Extra Credit, revision of revised paper	

IV. Schedule of Class Topics and Reading Assignments

<u>Week 1</u> (August 25)

A. Introduction of students and professor to one another
B. Overview of Course
C. Review of research project
D. Review of how to write a scientific paper

<u>Week 2</u> (September 1)

A. Read Handel pages 1 – 76 (scientific management, contingency theory)
B. Identify research topic
C. Class does not meet due to Labor Day Holiday

<u>Week 3</u> (September 8)

A. Discuss Handel pages 1 – 144 (human relations, employee involvement)
B. Six students individually present a journal article she/he plans to replicate (at least to some extent). Give a copy of the article to the professor and ideally a copy to each class member. Identity the dependent and independent variables you will examine.

<u>Week 4</u> (September 15)

A. Discuss Handel pages 145 – 204 (social systems, informal organizations, rational vs irrational organizations)
B. Revisit how to write first paper
C. Six students individually present a journal article she/he plans to replicate (at least to some extent). Give a copy of the article to the professor and ideally a copy to each class member. Identity the dependent and independent variables you will examine.

<u>Week 5</u> (September 22)

A. Discuss Handel pages 205 – 262 (power, open systems, resource dependency theory)
B. Consideration of statistics to be used in paper
C. Turn in first paper

<u>Week 6</u> (September 29)

A. Spend time in the computer lab learning how to work with data

Week 7 (October 6)

A. Discuss Perrow pages 1 – 46 (Why bureaucracy?)
B. Discuss Handel pages 263 – 294 (economic theory)
C. Discussion of first papers returned to students, their strengths and weaknesses

Week 8 (October 13)

A. Discuss Perrow pages 47 – 118 (human relations)
B. Discuss Handel pages 295 – 346 (post-Fordism)
C. Discuss progress in writing second paper
D. Re-visit of data analysis techniques to be used in paper

Week 9 (October 20)

A. Discuss Perrow pages 119 – 156 (decision-making, conflict, technology)
B. Discuss Norgaard XI – 98
C. Review what should be included in full research paper, how it should be formatted, etc.; preparation of letter to "editor"

Week 10 (October 27)

A. Discuss Perrow pages 157 – 218 (institutional school, environment)
B. Discuss Norgaard 99 – 185
C. Turn in full research paper

Week 11 (November 3)

A. Discuss Perrow pages 219 – 278 (economic theory)
B. Discuss Handel pages 347 – 432 (organizational culture, gender, race, class, politics)

Week 12 (November 10)

A. Discuss Handel pages 433 - 516
C. Any questions regarding revised paper, group discussions?

Week 13 (November 17)

A. Group presentation of social theorists and organizations

Week 14 (November 24)

A. Group presentation of social theorists and organizations
B. Turn in revised paper

Week 15 (December 1)

A. Group presentation of social theorists and organizations

WEEKLY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND GROUP PRESENTATION (40%)

At least one discussion question should be developed for each reading/chapter assignment for a given week. This will result in multiple discussion questions each week. The discussion questions should be designed to bring out varying opinions/ideas on a particular issue(s) reviewed in the readings so that a discussion of ideas is facilitated. The discussion questions should also help demonstrate that you have read the assignments. We will rotate around the room with each student presenting a discussion question to be considered. In terms of formatting, you should turn in one or more typed pages that list each assigned chapter for the week as a heading and then one or more discussion questions should be indented underneath that particular heading/chapter. For example, see handout.

In addition, each student will be paired up with one person and responsible for leading a portion of one of our classes. Each pair will be assigned a theorist. The pair will be responsible for identifying how that theorist viewed complex organizations. The pair should identify a single article or chapter that does a good job of showing how the theorist viewed organizations. This article or chapter should be provided to the instructor at least three weeks before the theorist will be discussed in class. The instructor will make a copy of the article/chapter for each student in the class. All students will be responsible for reading it prior to the day the theorist is presented by the pair. During class, the pair should present an overview of the theorist's work as it relates to organizations and then focus more specifically on the article/chapter that everyone has read. Each student in the class should provide at least one discussion question per article/chapter to be turned in. The pairs leading the discussion can call on students to provide their discussion questions.

RESEARCH PROJECT

Each student will conduct a research project. The result of the research project will be the research paper. Each student will choose a research topic from those that have been included within Dr. Yeatts'/Cready's data set. A list of the concepts measured within the data set will be provided (see handout). The data were collected by surveying employees (and more specifically nurse aides) working at 10 nursing homes in the metropolitan area (e.g., Fort Worth, Denton, Gunter, Weatherford, Flower Mound).

Once selecting a research topic, the student will conduct a brief literature review of that topic. For example, if the student chose "employee absenteeism" as his/her topic, the student would conduct a brief literature review to identify scientific articles that have examined employee absenteeism in nursing homes. From these articles, the student will decide whether to treat absenteeism as a dependent or independent variable. If it is treated as a dependent variable then the student would identify the factors believed to cause an employee to be absent from her or his job. If it is treated as an independent variable, then the student would identify the factors that absenteeism affects.

The next step is to determine which of the concepts found from the literature review are measured in the Yeatts/Cready data set (you may want to have a meeting with the professor to help you figure this out). Once it is clear which factors are measured in the data set, these are the factors that should be the focus of your research paper (see below for exactly how to write the first paper). Each student should also identify an article that appears to be replicable from the Yeatts/Cready data set. This article should be provided to the professor and the student should mirror her/his paper after this one to the degree possible.

The next step is to conduct a data analysis to determine whether the Yeatts/Cready data support the previous research that the student has found. Class time will be used to help students conduct the data analysis. The professor will also provide individual time to students as needed. The final research paper will be a combination of the first paper (introduction, review of lit., and methods) and added to this a description of the findings, implications for theory and practice, and conclusions (see below for discussion of final paper).

The Yeatts/Cready data are very unique and have a high probability of being published in a gerontology journal if (1) the topic is of interest (e.g., current journal articles are focusing on the topic), (2) the literature review is thorough, (3) the data analysis is sound, and (4) the paper is well written. Dr. Yeatts has designed the course and required papers to help the student develop data analysis skills and develop writing skills (e.g., you will have an opportunity to re-work your paper). In the past, some students have chosen to take an "independent study" course following this one with the purpose of further developing their paper for publication.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH PAPERS

The **grading of each paper** will be based primarily on how much effort has been put into the papers along with the students' classification (MA or PHD). Indications of effort will be number of references used, improvements made from one paper to the next, presentation of tables, organization of paper and use of sub-headings, writing style, thought put into the implications, etc.

<u>First Paper (20%)</u>: The first paper will consist of an (1) introduction, (2) a review of literature of the research topic you have selected, and (3) methods section describing how the data were collected, dependent and independent variables, etc. (see below). Dr. Yeatts will provide some of the information that goes in the methods section of your paper. In addition to this first paper you should also turn in a copy of the "Notice to Contributors" taken from a journal that publishes articles similar to yours (discussed more below).

Papers for publication typically begin with an **introduction** that "grabs" the reader and explains why the topic of the research paper is important so you should do the same. The introduction is typically between 1 and 2 pages and ends by stating the purpose of the research paper and the major sections that are about to be presented in the remainder of the paper, e.g., review of the literature, methodology, results, and implications (of course the first paper will only cover the first parts of a complete paper–the intro., review of lit., and methods sections).

The introduction section is followed by a **literature review** to explain what social scientists have found so far, regarding the topic. **Sub-headings should be used liberally when writing the literature review**. For example, you might note that there are 6 major independent variables (e.g., age, number of children) believed to influence a particular dependent variable (e.g., absenteeism). You might organize these 6 into three groups and have a sub-heading in your paper for each of the three groups. Or, you might choose to have six sub-headings within your literature review, one for each independent variable. Then, below each sub-heading (i.e., independent variable) you would discuss what social scientists have found regarding the relationship between the specific independent variable and the dependent variable.

The literature review might end by stating the purpose of your research paper as it relates to the literature review. Typically, the purpose is to test whether the findings from previous research are supported by the data collected from nurse aides. A **bibliography** that includes all the citations noted in the review of the literature and in the introduction should be attached at the end (same as found in published papers). <u>You should use the same bibliographic format as that used by the journal from which you took the "Notice to Contributors</u>."

Following the literature review should be the **methodology section.** This section should have the following sub-headings: Data Collection Methods (explains how the data were collected), Dependent and Independent variables, Analysis Techniques Used, and Limitations of the Study. Again, some of this data collection information will be provided by Dr. Yeatts since you were not involved in the data collection.

Thus, the first paper will include the introduction, review of the literature, methods section, and bibliography. The literature review is expected to be around 5 pages and the methods section somewhere around 3-4 pages. You are not expected to do an exhaustive review of the literature. Ideally, you will identify a few articles recently published that do a good job of reviewing the literature for you.

As noted above, along with your paper, you should turn in a "**Notice to Contributors**" taken from a journal that publishes articles similar to yours. Every journal has a one page "Notice to Contributors" that tells anyone interested in submitting a paper how the paper should be formatted for that specific journal. You should select a journal that publishes articles on your topic, make a copy of their "Notice to Contributors" and **turn it in with your paper.** Your paper should follow the format asked for in the Notice to Contributors when formatting your paper. This often includes how to do the headings and sub-headings as well as the bibliography. In this way, your final paper will be in the proper format to be submitted for publication to the journal you identified. The paper should be typed using a computer wordprocessor and double spaced (the SCS computer lab in Chilton Hall provides access to word-processing programs).

<u>Second Paper (20%)</u>: The second paper will begin with a re-write of your first paper, i.e. an introduction, review of the literature, and methods sections based on comments you receive from Dr. Yeatts on your first paper. The second paper will also continue with sections for **findings, implications, a conclusion, and an abstract**. Each of these parts should be included in the paper as a separate section with its own heading. In other words, the second paper will begin with the same **introduction, review of the literature, and methods sections** as the first paper, but with revisions to these as suggested from the feedback you receive on the first paper (if you don't agree with some of the feedback that you get on the first paper, please let Dr. Yeatts know–sometimes he is not clear or he makes mistakes). Thus, this first portion of the second paper will be a rewrite of your first paper after obtaining comments from Dr. Yeatts.

The **findings section,** which follows the methods section, should provide a discussion of the findings from the data analysis. The data analysis results should be presented within tables. Typically, there is no interpretation of the data at this point, such as the implications of the findings. Instead, you simply provide a brief discussion of what has been found as shown in the tables. The tables presented should be neatly typed and look professional (just like a table you would see in a published paper). The table should **<u>NOT</u>** be a copy of some SPSS output!

Implications and conclusions sections follow. The implications sections should be sub-divided into theoretical implications and applied implications. <u>Theoretical implications</u> should discuss whether and to what extent your findings support previous research you reviewed in the literature. Thus, this "theoretical implications" section is closely tied to your earlier review of the literature section. Further, you should address what the findings mean for organizational theory (how does it increase our theoretical understanding of the topic). The <u>applied implications</u> section should examine what the findings mean for practitioners in the field. For example, if you have identified factors that cause work alienation, the applied implications would center around how managers might want to modify the work environment of their employees in order to reduce work alienation.

An **abstract** should be provided at the front of the paper. It is typically about 200-300 words (see Notice to Contributors for allowed length). Typically, the first sentence or two states the importance of the topic, the next sentence or two reviews the most relevant literature, the next sentence describes the methods used, and the final few sentences the findings and implications. See the "Notice to Contributors" for abstract guidelines. You can also review actual abstracts used in the journal you have selected for guidance.

<u>Third Paper (20%)</u>: The final paper will be a re-write of your second paper after receiving comments on your second paper. You must also turn in a "letter to the editor" describing how you have responded to the reviewer's comments (See example of such a letter). Typically, when you submit a paper for publication the editor will eventually respond by either accepting or rejecting your paper and by always sending you comments from those who reviewed your paper. If the editor wants to accept the paper, she or he will most often ask you to revise it based on the reviewers' comments. You must then send back to the editor not only the revised paper but a description of exactly what you have done to revise it. The reviewers typically number each of their comments/criticisms that are sent to you and when you respond to the editor you do the same by responding to each numerically and in order. This way, the editor can easily see how you responded to each of the comments without having to take hours studying the paper. Often times the editor then returns the revised paper, along with your letter, to the reviewers and asks them if the revised paper has addressed their concerns. We are following a similar procedure with Dr. Yeatts acting as the editor and as a reviewer and you acting as someone submitting a paper for publication.

Again, the **grading of each paper** will be based primarily on how much effort has been put into the papers along with the student's classification (MA or PHD).

SOC 5030: Complex Organizations

STUDENT INFORMATION

1. ____

   last name first middle

2. email address (write clearly):____________________________________

3. Address and phone number where you can be reached:

____

____

____

4. What degree (and emphasis) are you seeking and how far along are you in the program? How many courses are you taking this semester?

____

____

____

5. If there is a particular theorist you would like to be responsible for and/or a particular person in the class you would like to be paired with, provide that below. If there is any other information you want to share before being paired with someone, provide that below (use back if necessary).

____

____