

**San José State University**  
**POLS/MPA Program**  
**PADM 217, Organization Theory, Spring 2018**

**January 25 to May 10, 2018** S Leonard Lira

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<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tue & Thur @ 3-5 PM or by appointment
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Thursdays, 6-8:45 pm
<b>Classroom:</b>	Clark Building 306

### **Course Description:**

This course is, as the title implies, is about organizations and the theories that help us understand them. Despite the term “theory” being embedded in the course title, the aim of the course is to introduce professional practitioners to some of the foundational ideas about organizations: how they work, how people and groups behave within them, why they change and why they sometimes do not change when they should, etc. We will cover some of the classical readings of organization theory, as well as delve into examples of latest research in organizational theory. Theory is not an end in itself. Rather we use theory as a way to explain the world, and in turn, we use empirical research to extend theory and develop a more complete picture of that world. The hope is that by the end of the course you will come to know many of the core concepts of the field, the basic-building blocks – used to explain why organizations behave as they do – to help you become what is known in the field as a “pracademic,” which is someone who is both an academic and an active practitioner in their subject area. After all, this is the essence of public administration – constant learning of thought for constant improvement of action.

The course is organized as a seminar. Students will be responsible for completing all of the assigned readings and being prepared **leading** general discussions about the session topic as well as in-depth discussion about a

# **Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives**

## **GOAL:**

To educate public administration and non-profit professionals in the critical use of theory as it applies to their practitioner and professional careers.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

Through the material in this cour

## **Required Texts/Readings**

### **Textbooks**

Required:

Daft, Richard L. *Organization Theory and Design* (12th edition). Lexington, KY: Cengage Learning, 2016.

Shafritz, J. M., J. S. Ott, and Y. S. Jang (2016). *Classics of Organization Theory*. 8th ed: Wadsworth.

Recommended:

Rainey, H. G. (2014). *Understanding and Managing Public Organizations* (5th ed.), San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 9781118583715

**Other Readings as assigned by the professor will be posted to Canvas or available at King Library.**

### **Library Liaison**

Paul Kauppila. [Paul.kauppila@sjsu.edu](mailto:Paul.kauppila@sjsu.edu) If you need research help.

### **CANVAS Messaging**

Canvas will be used extensive in this course. Course materials

<b>Course Requirements</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Participation &amp; Contribution to Class Learning</b>	<b>20 %</b>
Discussion Points and Questions 10 of 11 (10 points each)	100 Points
Plagiarism Tutorial	5 points
Contribution to class discussion & learning & responses to Online Discussions	100 points
<b>Assignments:</b>	<b>30%</b>
Analytical Memos x 2	100 points
<b>TEAM Research Project:</b>	<b>20%</b>
Annotated Bibliography on Organization Theory Literature	100 points
<b>Individual Research Project</b>	<b>30%</b>
Presentation	100 points
Written Research Proposal	100 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Discussion Points and Questions:**

For each class I want you to think of two comments and two questions from the textbook (or all required readings) that you would like to discuss and ask in class. You will then post them to the course's discussion board (on the Canvas site) **the night before class**. You should even submit questions if you plan on missing class. We will use those questions to aid our class discussion that day. You do NOT need to submit discussion questions the first week of class. Your comments should be critical in nature (but not a criticism) of the articles posted. E.G., what and why you agreed or disagreed with the author. Or where the author may have gotten it wrong and why, etc. Or how you connected the ideas of the article to another experience you had. Your discussion questions need to be thought-provoking. Avoid questions that would simply require someone in the class to summarize something from the reading. "Why" or "how" questions are good. Try to make connections between the current reading and something we've discussed in an earlier class, or to your professional experience.

Students will break up the divide articles equally among each other and prepare to lead a discussion on their selected article/chapter during the class meeting.

### **Analytical Memos:**

On the first day of class each student will choose two article readings on which he or she will write memos. Memos are one to two pages long and provide an opportunity for the student to concisely discuss an interesting implication of the reading and to develop theory further. I suggest the following format for a memo. 1) Begin by stating a theoretical proposition from the article/chapter. A proposition is a statement about a causal relationship between two concepts. A very specific proposition is a hypothesis. 2) Discuss how that proposition might be extended or applied to a different case, another context, or a different



The format of the Annotated Bibliography should be in essay format and follow the following structure:

Introduction = 150 words

Book AB (4-5 Books) = 600 to 750 words

4 x top 2 Org Theory Journals each (8 total) = 1,200 words

4 x top 2 PA Journals (8 total) = 1,200 words

Conclusion=150-250 words

Total word count 2,500 to 3,500'ish words. Total word count should be divided by the number of members in research group

The introduction will introduce the titles of the books and journals and reason for selection. The conclusion will describe the latest trends in research on organization theory and a short analysis of how it applies to the policy and practice of the field of public administration.

Each group will present and discuss the results of their annotated bibliography research.

### **Individual Research Project Proposal:**

At the end of the course each student should finish a 10-12 page research proposal. The research proposal should be more than just an essay. You should seek to advance theory in the proposal and come up with a plan for carrying out the research and an empirical analysis. The ideal proposal would suggest new hypotheses or come up with new theoretical propositions, and, more generally, refine our theoretical understanding of organizational theory. Moreover, you should use the proposal to develop an empirical test of your theoretical argument. Although I don't require you to gather data or do an actual analysis, I expect you to think seriously about the kind of data you need, about operationalizing constructs, and about the kind of evidence you need to substantiate your argument. You should not use the research proposal to summarize the material covered in class. Lay out your theoretical argument in the first 5-7 pages of the proposal, and then spend the rest of the proposal discussing details of how you plan to conduct a research project. Some of the readings for the class you will notice include both purely theoretical pieces and empirical studies that test hypotheses. These serve as g

## **Grading Policy**

### **Grade Values**

A+	98 and above
A	92-97
A-	90-91
B+	88-89
B	82-87
B-	80-81
C+	78-79
C	75-77
D	70-74
F	69 and below

## **Make-up Policy**





Week	Date	Topics	Readings
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**\*Bold = Everyone reads**

not bolded = divided equally by class groups

1. Gullick – Notes on Organizational Theory, in *Classics of Org Theory*
2. Selznick – Foundations of the Theory of Organizations, in *Classics of Org Theory*



<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b> * <b>Bold = Everyone reads</b> not bolded = divided equally by class groups
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Week	Date	Topics	Readings
10	Mar 29	****SPRING BREAK NO CLASS MEETING****	<p><b>*Bold = Everyone reads</b></p> <p>not bolded = divided equally by class groups</p> <p><b>***Extra credit for anyone that starts a new discussion</b></p>