

Organizing Innovation

Sociology 3675
Department of Sociology, Columbia University

David Stark
Lecture: Tues/Thurs 10:10-11:25
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This course examines major innovations in organizations and asks whether innovation itself can be organized. We study a range of forms of organizing (e.g., bureaucratic, post-bureaucratic, and open architecture network forms) in a broad variety of settings: from food systems to the military-entertainment complex, from airline cockpits to Wall Street trading rooms, from engineering firms to mega-churches, from improv comedy to PowerPoint demonstrations, from scientific management at the turn of the twentieth century to collaborative filtering and open source programming at the beginning of the twenty-first. Special attention will be paid to relationship between organizational forms and new digital technologies. Basic concepts in organizational analysis – groups, projects, communities, knowledge, networks, search, collaboration, space, location, users, producers – are revisited when organizational design cannot be separated from design of the digital interface.

Discussion sections: Discussions sections will begin meeting during the second week. You should come to sections prepared to discuss the readings for a given week. During the second part of the course, sections will also be an opportunity to discuss your research for the final paper.

Requirements: Attend lectures; informed participation in class discussions based on the readings each week; open book mid-term exam; and research paper **or** take-home final exam. The topic and the format of the final paper are your choice, in consultation with the instructor. Our mutual goal is to find a topic and means of presentation that best meets your needs.

Readings: Books are available on library reserve, also for purchase at Book Culture, 112th St.

Sections:

Mondays 4:10-5pm	PUP 424
Mondays 5:10-6pm	PUP 424
Thursdays 3:10-4pm	IAB 418
Thursdays 4:10-5pm	IAB 418

Teaching Assistants:

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PART I

* *indicates required readings (other readings are recommended)*

Sept. 6th Introduction to the course

* David Stark, "The Organization of Dissonance." Chapter 1 in *The Sense of Dissonance: Accounts of Worth in Economic Life*, pp. 1-34.

And you'll be smart to get started on the readings for the coming week, e.g., Taylor, *Principles of Scientific Management*.

Sept. 13th Microtechnologies of power: Scientific management



* Frederick Winslow Taylor, [*The Principles of Scientific Management*](#), pp.1-85.

* Jodi Kantor and Davi Streitfeld, "Inside Amazon: Wrestling Big Ideas in a Bruising Workplace." *NYTimes Magazine* Aug 15, 2015 nyti.ms/1TfqcOG

* Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 135-194.

Max Weber, "Bureaucracy." *Economy and Society, vol II.* pp. 956-1005.

Testimony of Frederick W. Taylor at hearings before Special Committee of the House of Representatives, January, 1912.

Charlie Chaplin, [clip from Modern Times](#).

Sept 20th Extensions of scientific management and the loss of socio-diversity

* Michael Pollan, *Omnivore's Dilemma*. Chapters 2-5, pp. 32-99. Penguin Press, 2006.

* David Stark, "Work, Worth, and Justice in a Socialist Factory." Chapter 2 in *The Sense of Dissonance: Accounts of Worth in Economic Life*, Princeton University Press, 2009, pp. 35-80.

Carlo Petrini, *Slow Food: The Case for Taste*. Columbia University Press, 2001.



David Stark, "[Bending the Bars of the Iron Cage](#): Bureaucratization and Informalization in Capitalism and Socialism," *Sociological Forum*, vol 4, no 4, 1989:637-664.

Sept 27th From Hierarchy to Heterarchy



* Andrew Hargadon. 2003. *How Breakthroughs Happen*. Harvard Business School Press, Chapter 1-3, pp. 3-64.

* David Stark, "Creative Friction in a New-Media Start-up." Chapter 3 in *The Sense of Dissonance*, pp. 81-117.

John Seely Brown and John Hagel, "Productive Friction: How Difficult Business Partnerships Can Accelerate Innovation." *Harvard Business Review*, Feb 1, 2005.

W. Brian Arthur.. "The structure of invention." *Research policy* 36, no. 2 (2007): 274-287.

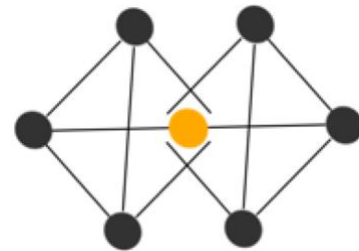
Richard Lester and Michael Piore, *Innovation: The Hidden Dimension*. Harvard University Press, 2004. Chapters 1, 2, 3, 7, and 8.

Oct 4th Network forms of organization

* Joel Podolony and Karen L. Page. 1998. "Network forms of organization." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 57-76.

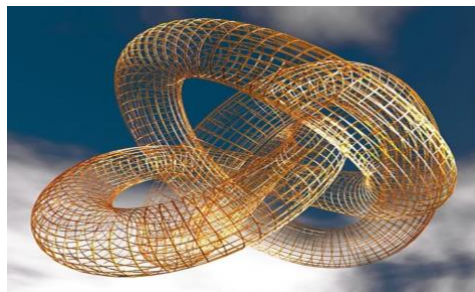
* Mathijs de Vaan, Balazs Vedres, and David Stark, "Game Changer: The Topology of Creativity." *AJS*. 120(4):1144-1194, January 2015.

* Walter Powell, "[Neither Market Nor Hierarchy](#): Network Forms of Organization." *Research in Organizational Behavior* 1990. 12: 295-336.



[The Tornado Project](#) (user-generated professional tornado data collection for chasers and meteorologists).

Oct. 11th From Scientific Management to Algorithmic Management



* Esposito, Elena. *Artificial communication: How algorithms produce social intelligence*. MIT Press, 2022. Introduction and Chapter 1.

* Jenna Burrell and Marion Fourcade. "The society of algorithms." (2021). *Annual. Review of Sociology*. 2021. 47:213-37.

* Pasquale, Frank. *New laws of robotics: defending human expertise in the age of AI*. Belknap Press, 2020. Chapter 1.

Curchod, C., Patriotta, G., Cohen, L., & Neysen, N. "Working for an algorithm: Power asymmetries and agency in online work settings. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 2020. 65(3), 644–676.

Hatim A. Rahman, "The invisible cage: Workers' reactivity to opaque algorithmic evaluations." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 66.4 (2021): 945-988.

Kellogg, Katherine C., Melissa A. Valentine, and Angele Christin. "Algorithms at work: The new contested terrain of control." *Academy of Management Annals* 14.1 (2020): 366-410.

Stephen Vallas, & Juliet Schor, "What Do Platforms Do? Understanding the Gig Economy." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 46, 273–294.

Robert Prey, 2020. "Locating Power in Platformization: Music Streaming Playlists and Curatorial Power." *Social Media + Society*. April-June 2020:1-11.

Oct. 18th From Scientific Management to Management of the Self

* Catherine Turco, 2016. *The Conversational Firm: Rethinking Bureaucracy in the Age of Social Media*. New York: Columbia University Press. (Introduction, Ch. 1-3, 8-9)

* Andrew Ross, 2003. *No-Collar: The Humane Workplace and its Hidden Costs*. Temple University Press. (pp. 1-160 and 244-258).

Gideon Kunda, *Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation*. Temple University Press, 1992, pp. 1-25, 50-106, 154-216.

Oct. 25th Ratings, Rankings, and Identities



* William Davies, 2020. "Post-Liberal Competitions?: Pragmatics of Gamification and Weaponization." Pp. 187–207 in *The Performance Complex: Competition and Competitions in Social Life*, edited by D. Stark. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

* Robert Prey, "Nothing personal: algorithmic individuation on music streaming platforms." *Media, Culture & Society* (2017): 0163443717745147

* Gina Neff and Dawn Nafus. 2016. *Self-Tracking*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. (Ch. 2: "What is at Stake? The Personal Gets Political") (E-book available via CLIO).

Gary Shteyngart, [Super Sad True Love Story](#).

Nov 1st Mid-term review

Nov 3rd Mid-term exam

Nov 8th No class, election break

Part II

Nov 10th Topic: **The Experience Economy;** Setting: **The Megachurch**



* James B. Twitchell, *Branded Nation*. Chapter 2, "One Market Under God." Simon and Schuster, 2004, pp. 47-108.

NY Times article on [converting old shopping malls](#). February 6, 2012.

Nov. 15th Topic: **Simulation** Setting: **The Military-Entertainment Complex**

* Tim Lenoir, "[All but War is Simulation: The Military-Entertainment Complex.](#)" *Configurations*, 2000, 8:289-335.

* Lucy Suchman, "Sensing War at the Interface: Immersive Training Simulations and the Sense-able."

Dan Baum, "[Battle Lessons: What the Generals Don't Know,](#)" *The New Yorker*, January 17, 2005, pp. 42-48.



Tim Lenoir, "[Programming Theatres of War: Gamemakers as Soldier.](#)" In Robert Latham, ed., *Bytes, Bandwidth, and Bullets*, New York: The New Press, 2003.

On videogame simulations and sports see "Game Changers: How Videogames Trained a Generation of Athletes." *Wired* Jan 25, 2010. http://www.wired.com/magazine/2010/01/ff_gamechanger/

Bruce Sterling, "[War is Virtual Hell.](#)" *Wired* 1.01 March/April 1993.

Manuel DeLanda, *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines*. New York: Swerve Editions, 1991. Especially, Chapter 3, "Interface" pp. 217-231.



Paul M. Leonardi, *Car Crashes Without Cars: Lessons About Simulation Technology and Organizational Change From Automotive Design*, 2012, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

Liliana Doganova and Fabian Muniesa, "Capitalization devices: business models and the renewal of markets." In *Making Things Valuable*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Nov 22nd Technotopias

* Lee Vinsel, & Andrew L. Russell. *The innovation delusion: How our obsession with the new has disrupted the work that matters most*. 2020 (selections).

* Richard Barbrook & Andy Cameron. "The californian ideology." *Science as Culture* 6, no. 1 (1996): 44-72.

Apolline Taillandier. "From Boundless Expansion to Existential Threat: Transhumanists and Posthuman Imaginaries." (2021): 333-348.

Apolline Taillandier. "'Staring into the Singularity' and other Posthuman Tales: Transhumanist Stories of Future Change." *History and Theory* 60, no. 2 (2021): 215-233.

Nov 24th Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)

Topic: **Constraints** Setting: **Filmmaking**

[Five Obstructions](#) directed by Jorgen Leth and Lars von Trier



Nov 29th Everyone a Performer, Everyone a Judge



* Hans-Georg Moeller & Paul D'Ambrosio, *You and Your Profile: Identity after Authenticity*. Columbia University Press, 2021. (Selections).

*Carolyn Gerlitz and Anne Helmond, "The like economy: Social buttons and the data-intensive web." *New Media & Society* 15.8 (2013): 1348-1365.

* Rachel Botsman, "Big data meets Big Brother as China moves to rate its citizens." *Wired*. Oct 21 (2017).

Dec 6th Student presentations

Dec 8th Student presentations

Deadline for research paper (to be announced).

Take-home final exam (to be announced).