Sociology of Occupations and Professions
Sociology 643, Spring 2014

Time: 2:30-3:45pm, Tuesday/Thursday
Location: Van Hise 474
Instructor: Professor Sida Liu
Office: 8142 Sewell Social Sciences
Office Hours: 4:00-5:00pm, Tuesday
Phone: (608) 262-2082 (office)
Email: sidaliu@ssc.wisc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers an introduction to theories and empirical studies on occupations and professions. With the increasing division of labor in modern society, professions have become dominant forces in bringing knowledge to the service of power. Using theories and case studies of lawyers, doctors, accountants, factory workers, firefighters, economists and other occupational groups, this course examines the historical change, social structure, market competition, lifestyles, career path, workplace interaction, and other aspects of occupations and professions from the late nineteenth century to the age of globalization.

REQUIREMENTS

The course is designed as an advanced-level seminar, and therefore both careful reading and active class participation are important. Every student is required to do a reading presentation at one class and lead the discussion in that class during the semester. The instructor reserves the rights to take class attendance randomly and to call individual names for answering questions concerning the readings. Please communicate with me if you become ill or emergencies arise so that I will be aware of your circumstances. Reading and class participation account for 10% of your final grade.

Every student is required to submit a one-page summary each week of all of that week’s readings (except for Week 1 and Week 8) to the “Communication → Discussion” forum at Learn@UW by 2:00pm on Tuesday. These summaries account for 20% of your final grade. (You have the option to skip summaries for up to 3 weeks without losing your grade, i.e., the minimal number of your summaries must reach 10 by the end of the semester.)

A take-home mid-term exam is scheduled in the week of March 10-14, 2014 (Week 8) and it accounts for 30% of your final grade. The exam will be a combination of concept identification, essay question, and library research. Specific information about the mid-term exam will be given at least a week before the exam.
There is no final exam. Instead, a 10-page (double-spaced) final paper is required, in which each student is required to use the theoretical perspectives learned in class to analyze a substantive problem concerning one or two occupations. Although the course readings are centered on a few high-status professions (e.g., law and medicine), you are strongly encouraged to write on other occupational groups that are not well documented in the readings (e.g., journalists, architects, actors, artists, football players, flight attendants…). The paper cannot be merely a summary of the course readings; instead, it must start from an empirical question regarding the occupation you are writing about and then apply the theories to explain it. The paper is evaluated according to four criteria: (1) valid research question; (2) knowledge of the readings; (3) quality of the analysis; and, (4) innovation.

Every student is required to submit a one-page paper outline for my approval before the April 29, 2014 (Tuesday) class, which accounts for 10% of your final grade. The final paper is due by email to sidaliu@ssc.wisc.edu by 5:00pm on May 15, 2014 (Thursday). The final paper accounts for 30% of your final grade.

Percentage distribution of the final grade:

- Reading and participation – 10%
- Summaries – 20%
- Mid-term exam – 30%
- Paper outline – 10%
- Final paper – 30%

**READINGS**

*Textbook:*

The course has only one required textbook (Abbott, *The System of Professions*), which is available for purchase at the University Bookstore. All the other readings are available in electronic format at Learn@UW. After logging in to the course website, please click on the “Materials” button and then select “Content”. All the readings are in PDF format under the “readings” folder.
READING SCHEDULE

Week 1: The Division of Labor in Society
January 21 (Tuesday)
Course introduction – no reading.
January 23 (Thursday)

Week 2: What is a “Profession”?
January 28 (Tuesday)
January 30 (Thursday)

Week 3: Professional Status and Professionalization
February 4 (Tuesday)
February 6 (Thursday)

Week 4: Professions as Monopoly: Market Control Theory
February 11 (Tuesday)
February 13 (Thursday)

Week 5: Professions as Ecology: Jurisdictional Conflict Theory
February 18 (Tuesday)
February 20 (Thursday)

Week 6: Professionalism: The Endogenous View
February 25 (Tuesday)
February 27 (Thursday)
Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-84)

**Week 7: Professionalism: The Exogenous View**

**March 4 (Tuesday)**

**March 6 (Thursday)**

**Week 8: Mid-Term Exam**

**March 11 (Tuesday)**
Library research for mid-term exam – no reading.

**March 13 (Thursday)**
Take-home mid-term exam – no reading.

-------- Spring Break --------

**Week 9: History of the Professions**

**March 25 (Tuesday)**

**March 27 (Thursday)**

**Week 10: Culture and Lifestyles**

**April 1 (Tuesday)**

**April 3 (Thursday)**

**Week 11: Professional Career**

**April 8 (Tuesday)**

**April 10 (Thursday)**


**Week 12: Expertise and Artifacts**  
**April 15 (Tuesday)**  

**April 17 (Thursday)**  

**Week 13: Workplace Interaction**  
**April 22 (Tuesday)**  


**April 24 (Thursday)**  

**Week 14: Professions and the State**  
**April 29 (Tuesday)**  


**May 1 (Thursday)**  

**Week 15: The Globalization of Professions**  
**May 6 (Tuesday)**  


**May 8 (Thursday)**  