

# Social Organization (ANTH 1757)

## (Master Syllabus)

Tuesday 6:00 – 8:30, WWPH 3301

Instructor: Alexander J. Martín

**Office Hours:** 3106B WWPH, 2:00-3:00pm Wednesday, or by appointment (Note: Office hours are not for going over material that you have missed because of an absence, but rather to clarify concepts or get help with exercises that you had trouble with during regular class time).

Classroom key code: 4152

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The first part of the course explores the various ways in which societies have organized themselves from early to modern times, and how different forms of organization are the result of specific human biological, economic, social, or political needs. The second part of the course explores how these structural factors influence human behavior and culture in more general ways, from religious institutions to how warfare is carried out. The course tries to cover a wide variety of human societies, from early prehistory to contemporary city life, with the hopes of clarifying which facets of human society and behavior are shared across human-kind, as well as which ones differ and why. A mayor component of the class is assessing how organizational variables affect human behavior and culture. To this end, the course also includes introductory lessons on the use of linear regressions to assess these relationships. Several labs allow students to put these newly acquired skills to the test and to draw conclusions about class readings and lectures based on empirically assessed evidence.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Throughout the semester we will be working towards achieving 3 mayor objectives. By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Understand the development of basic economic, political, religious, and military structures throughout human history.
2. Understand how different forms of social organization might pressure human behavior and culture in specific ways.
3. Use quantitative analytical tools to support or reject relationships between different variables of social organization and human culture.

### READINGS AND REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

There are no required textbooks for this class. Select readings will be handed to students at the discretion of the instructor as they pertain to weekly topics.

### TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Module	Date	Topic (first hour of class)	Assigned Readings and Movies	Readings for Professor	Labs
1	8/28	<b>Intro (part 1)</b> Evolution, biology, and social organization.		Dunbar 2003; Roberts, et al. 2008	
2	9/4	<b>Intro (part 2)</b> -Households and communities within bands, chiefdoms, states, and empires.		Flannery 1972	-Biased observation of phenomena and the scientific method
3	9/18	<b>Intro (part 3)</b> -The industrial revolution and the nuclear family in modern states			-A scatter plot -Algebraic linear relations -Best fit straight line -Predictions and residuals <u>Lab 1:</u> Predicting values from Linear relations.

4	9/25	<b>Production (prehistory)</b> <u>Food and Craft production</u> -For home (DMP 1) -For the state (DMP 2)		Trigger 2003:279-394	-Correlation coefficients ( $r^2$ ); -EXCEL Tutorial: Scatterplots, trendlines, and producing $r^2$ ( <a href="#">Excel</a> video on YouTube)  <u>Lab 2</u> : Scatterplots, trendline, and $r^2$ on the areal extent and population of villages.
5	10/2	<b>Production (modern)</b> <u>The global south</u> -Production in the countryside -Production in the cities <u>The global north</u> -Modern agricultural production in the first world, -Manufactured goods in the first world. -Global division of Labor	Movie segments -Industrial production excerpt from "Food INC"		Lab 3: Predicting behavior. Measuring the correlation between happiness and GDP, and of happiness and inequality.
6	10/16	<b>Political Organization (prehistoric)</b> <u>Hierarchical organization and taxation</u> -The rise of Political entities -The Teotihuacan example		Steponaitis 1981; Trigger 2003:264-275	Lab 4: Using categorical information within scatterplots: Steponaitis correlation between size of town and catchment zone using type of town.
7	10/23	<b>Political Organization (modern)</b> Democracy, theocracy, bureaucracy Capitalism, socialism, communism			
8	10/30	<b>Social Organization and Warfare (prehistoric and modern)</b> <u>Ancient Warfare</u> -Practical, guerilla, not ritualized <u>Modern Warfare</u> -Full of impractical tactics, formal battles, ritualized <u>Modes of Production</u> -People don't go to war, it is their modes of production that go to war.	Have read Keeley 1996 Chapters 2 and 3	Keeley 1996:25-58	Lab 5: Military expenditures. Students are asked to take military expenditures and figure out Defense as % of GDP, Active forces per 100,000 people, and total forces per 100,000.
9	11/6	<b>Social Organization and Warfare (prehistoric and modern)</b> -The question of Causes.	Have listened to RADIOLAB Podcast (The Good Show Part 3: a story about WWI)	Keeley 1996:Chapters 8 and 9	
10	11/13	<b>Social Organization and Religion (prehistoric)</b> -Early shamanism -The origin of institutionalized religion -Religious authority in supra-local societies: justifying authority and the social order. -The growth and independence of religious institutions.		Trigger 2003:409-521, 670-672	Additional Lab Lecture: Controlling of other Variables
11	11/20	<b>Social Organization and Religion (modern)</b> -Cultural evolution and religious prosociality. -Testing social behavior: Model expectation, experimental tests, and results.	Norenzayan and Shariff 2008	Brenner 2011; Norenzayan and Shariff 2008	Lab 6: Correcting for a third variable: Religiosity and GDP, correcting for religious tradition.
12	12/04	<b>Social Organization and Kinship (prehistoric and Modern)</b> <u>Variety in Kin types</u> -Variety in Kin types according to socioeconomic -The Kofyar example	Natchez religion and death of Tattooed Serpent	Dunbar 2003; Roberts, et al. 2008; Stone 1992	Final Lab Preparation:

		Who is kin in the modern world Strong sense of family values in the developing world and the importance of nuclear family in the US.			
13		<b>Culture Patterns (Prehistoric and modern)</b> -The importance of family in Latin America and the US.	Read Gelfand, et al. 2011	Gelfand, et al. 2011	Additional Lab Lecture: Disproving Expectations

## METHODS OF EVALUATION

- 1) Labs.....80%
- There will be a maximum of eight labs during the course of the semester. Lab content and due dates will be announced during regular class time.
- Quantitative analysis of each lab is worth 50% of a lab grade.  
Written answer for each lab is worth 50% of a lab grade.
- 3) Attendance and participation.....20%

## Grading Policy

There is no extra credit available for this course. Handing in exercises late results in losing 10% for each day. Grades will be assigned according to the percentage of total points scored on the combined exams, typed field notes, and attendance. 97% and above = A+, 93-96% = A, 90-92% = A-, 87-89% = B+, 83-86% = B, 80-82% = B-, 77-79% = C+, 73-76% = C, 70-72% = C-, 67-69% = D+, 63-66% = D, 60-62% = D-, 59% and below = F.

## University Policies:

### Academic Integrity

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

### Disability Services

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](#) no later than the second week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call (412) 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Disability Resources and Services office is located in 140 William Pitt Union on the Oakland campus.

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## Statement on Classroom Recording

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

## Readings

- Brenner, Philip S.  
2011 Exceptional Behavior or Exceptional Identity? Overreporting of Church Attendance in the Us. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 75.
- Dunbar, R.I.M.  
2003 The Social Brain: Mind, Language, and Society in Evolutionary Perspective. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32.
- Flannery, Kent V.  
1972 The Origins of the Village as a Settlement Type in Mesoamerica and the near East: A Comparative Study. *In* *Man, Settlement and Urbanism*. P.J. Ucko, R. Tringham, and G.W. Dimbleby, eds. Pp. 23-53. London: Duckworth.
- Gelfand, M.J., et al.  
2011 Differences between Tight and Loose Cultures: A 33-Nation Study. *Science* 332.
- Keeley, Lawrence H.  
1996 *War before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Norenzayan, Ara, and Azim F. Shariff  
2008 The Origin and Evolution of Religious Prosociality. *Science* 322.
- Roberts, Sam G.B., et al.  
2008 Individual Differences and Personal Social Network Size and Structure. *Personality and Individual Differences* 44.
- Steponaitis, V.  
1981 Settlement Hierarchies and Political Complexity in Nonmarket Societies: The Formative Period of the Valley of Mexico. *American Anthropologist* 83.
- Stone, Glenn Davis  
1992 Social Distance, Spatial Relations, and Agricultural Production among the Kofyar of Namu District, Plateau State, Nigeria. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 11.
- Trigger, Bruce G.  
2003 *Understanding Early Civilizations: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.