MWF 12:45-1:50  
CRN 43735  
Cramer Hall 269  
Instructor: Joshua Bass

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Email: bassj@pdx.edu  
Phone: 503-725-3927  
Office Hours: MW 11:30-12:30 & by appointment

TEXTS:  

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will investigate the structuring of contemporary American society using Ritzer’s theoretical model of McDonaldization. The goal is to understand how modern society is structured around patterns of production and consumption. McDonaldization is a description of the ways that social activity is structured in a highly rationalized manner that emphasizes efficiency, predictability, calculability, and social control. This structure shapes our behavior in the economy as workers and consumers. Ritzer’s main thesis is that McDonaldization is increasingly becoming the dominant mode of organization in our society, affecting not only the institution of the economy but also the institutions of the state, education, health care, and family. We will take a close look at Ritzer’s update of Max Weber’s concepts of rationalization, the irrationality of rationalization, and the Iron Cage.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: Students should complete the assigned readings prior to each class, bring the textbooks to class and be prepared to engage in thoughtful discussion regarding the readings. Regular attendance will benefit the dedicated student since exams will cover lecture material not included in the texts. Participation in class exercises and discussions will be factored into your grade. D2L will be a small component of this course, so make sure you can log in to your account at https://d2l.pdx.edu/

CLASS CONDUCT: In an effort to make this class a learning environment for everyone, please be considerate of the other students in class. Please try to get to class on time and refrain from leaving before class is done. Turn off all electronic devices. This includes iPods, phones, and laptops. If you want to have a chat with your classmates, do it outside. We will be discussing topics that may be controversial, so it is very important that we all maintain respect for the diversity of opinions represented in the class. This is an educational environment, so ideas may be questioned and critiqued but personal attacks will not be tolerated. If you have a disability and are in need of academic accommodations, please notify me immediately to arrange needed supports.

ACCESS & INCLUSION: PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, https://www.pdx.edu/drc.

- If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations.
- Students who need accommodations for tests and quizzes are expected to schedule their tests to overlap with the time the class is taking the test.
- Please be aware that the accessible tables or chairs in the room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not useable.
- For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the Fire and Life Safety webpage (https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety) for information.

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. Please be aware that federal, state, and PSU policies require faculty members to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. Similarly, PSU faculty are required to file a report if they have reasonable cause to believe that a child with whom they come into contact has suffered abuse, or that any person with whom they come into contact has abused a child. If you would rather share information about these experiences with an employee who does not have these reporting responsibilities and can keep the information confidential, please contact one of the following campus resources (or visit this link):
Women’s Resource Center (503-725-5672)
Queer Resource Center (503-725-9742)
Center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC): 1880 SW 6th Ave, (503) 725-2800
Student Legal Services: 1825 SW Broadway, (SMSU) M343, (503) 725-4556

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Academic honesty is a cornerstone of meaningful education and a reflection of maturity and integrity. Portland State University is committed to the highest standards of academic honesty. The Student Conduct Code prohibits all forms of academic cheating, fraud, and dishonesty, but not limited to plagiarism, buying and selling of assignments for others, unauthorized disclosure and receipt of academic information and other practices understood to academically dishonor. Copies of the Student Conduct Code may be obtained by contacting 503-725-4422, or by visiting room 433 in Smith Memorial Center. Any class work found to be academically dishonest would receive no points and a referral to the appropriate authority.

CONTACT INFO: The best way to contact me is via email. Please be sure to put “Soc 310” in the subject line so I can find your email amidst the spam. If you don’t include that phrase, I might not read your email. Please use my PSU email and not the D2L email.

EXAMS: There will be a midterm and a final exam. Exams will cover readings, lectures, discussions and films. You must take both exams to pass the class. Exams are considered a required part of the class so make your schedule clear NOW for the exams.

IN CLASS ASSIGNMENTS: There will be 3 scheduled in class assignments. These will take the form of group discussions and activities. In class assignments cannot be rescheduled or made up. Each assignment is worth 20 points. There will be a 20-point quiz on Friday of Week 2.

ETHNOGRAPHIC PRESENTATION: Beginning in Week 7, students will begin presenting their ethnographic research into McDonaldization. This will be based on original fieldwork done with a partner or as a solo project. Presentations will be approximately 20 minutes and will be worth 40 points.

GRADES: Final grades will be based on the standard scale (90%+ = A, etc.)
In class assignments - 60 points
Quiz - 20 points
Ethnographic Presentation – 40 points
Midterm exam -100 points
Final exam- 100 points
Participation- 20 points.
You start the quarter with 0 points and accumulate them with each successful project.

CLASS SCHEDULE (a work in progress, subject to change)
M= McDonaldization of Society, F= Fast Food Nation (M1= Chapter 1 of McDonaldization of Society, F2= Chapter 2 of Fast Food Nation)

Week 1: Introduction & syllabus, M1:2, F intro & 1
Week 2: M3-4, F2, QUIZ on Friday, 1/19. NO CLASS Monday, 1/15.
Week 3: M5-6
Week 4: M7, F4, In Class Assignment 1 on Friday, 2/2
Week 5: M8, F5, MIDTERM EXAM on Friday, 2/9
Week 6: M9, F6, In Class Assignment 2 on Friday, 2/16
Week 7: F7, Presentations begin.
Week 8: F8, In Class Assignment 3 on Friday, 3/2
Week 9: F9
Week 10: F10, Epilogue & Afterword, Loose Ends

The final exam is Monday, March 19 at 12:30. This is a mandatory part of the course.