

**Syllabus**  
**Social Change: Soc. 352-1002**  
Course Number: Lec 46627  
Summer 1, 2008

**Instructor :** William Foster, Ph.D.  
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Office Hours : By appointment

**Course Description:**

All would agree that our planetary society is changing rapidly in response to the forces of globalization and rationalization.

In the *McDonaldization of Society*, George Ritzer argues that social change is being driven by an attempt to impose efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control on the world. Social change is imposed.

In marked contrast, Steven Johnson in *Emergence*--his analysis of the connected lives of ants, brains, cities, and software--shows how intelligence can arise from the play of the parts without any hierarchical control. Social change can emerge from below.

We will use these two paradigms to explore challenges we as a society face and how we can envision them being resolved.

**About the Instructor**

William Foster, PhD. Has taught at ASU since 2001. His PhD is in Management Information Systems from the University of Arizona. His dissertation on *The Diffusion of the Internet in China* was published by CISAC at Stanford University. Dr. Foster also runs a management consulting company, Foster and Brahm. His books and articles as well as his resume are available at <http://www.FosterandBrahm.com>.

## **Course Texts:**

George Ritzer, "The McDonaldization of Society," (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2008) ISBN 978-4129-5430-3

Steven Johnson, "Emergence," (New York, NY: Scribner, 2001) ISBN-13: 978-0-684-86876-9 (Pbk).

### **1) Discussion questions: 15 points per forum (135 total)**

There will be two or more discussion questions each week. The discussion Forums are on Blackboard. Discussion questions will be posted the Sunday of the assigned week (responses must be posted by Wed. at midnight). The second discussion question of the week will be posted Wed. evening (responses must be posted by Sat. at midnight).

You will get up to 15 points on each discussion question, broken down as follows:

Contents-8 points (points will be given for knowledge of the reading, the ability to reference additional resources, and to think critically about the question as well as to think outside the box.

Baseline-4 points (you get 4 points just for posting on time. Please note that failure to post by due date will result in a zero point as late responses are not graded at all.)

Follow-up responses-3 points (You are expected to read and comment on other students' initial responses to each discussion question. You receive 3 points for posting at least two follow-up responses to each discussion question thread.

### **Short Essay 1: McDonaldization: 100 Points**

You will write a 1500 word essay that extends the text book "The McDonaldization of Society". Your essay should have a thesis that you build your argument around. There is no need to recapitulate the book. Submit the paper through SafeAssign.

## **Final Project: Social Change: 180 Points**

In a 3,000 - 5,000 word essay examine a social challenge through both the paradigms of Ritzer and Johnson. Explain how we have gotten into our present challenge and envision a solution. Topics could include, but are not limited to:

- Balancing the environment and the economy
- The global economy and the depreciation of the dollar
- Mitigating Climate Change
- Establishing World Peace
- Creating jobs in America
- Creating jobs and prosperity in the world
- Creating Health in America
- Creating Global Health

All literature, including websites, that you use to shape your thinking should be cited using footnotes. All quotations should be in quotes and cited as below.<sup>1</sup> Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic full letter grade deduction.

The paper should be submitted via SafeAssign.

Instead of writing a paper you can do a video (such as on Youtube).

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<sup>1</sup> Author, Title, <http://www.host.com/page> (current June 1, 2008).

Discussion beginning	Assigned reading	Assignment Due
June 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2008	“Perfect Storm” from Wikinomics. This chapter is available under class documents.	Discussion 1: Introduce yourself by discussing your prospective on the most important social change for the planet of the next decade  Discussion 2: Perfect Storm
June 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2008	Ritzer Chap 1 and Chap 2 McDonaldization and rationalization	Discussion 3:
June 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2008	Ritzer Ch. 3, Ch. 4, Ch 5 Ch. 6 Efficiency, Calculability, Predictability, Control	Discussion 4:
June 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2008	Ritzer Ch. 7 The Irrationality of Rationality Ritzer Ch. 8 Globalization and McDonaldization Ritzer Ch. 9 Dealing with McDonaldization	Discussion 5:
June 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2008		No discussion question: Short Essay 1 due June 18 <sup>th</sup> at midnight.
June 18th	Emergence: Introduction and Part One (pages 1-72)	Discussion 6
June 22nd	Emergence: Part Two (pages 73-194)	Discussion 7
June 25th	Emergence: Part Three	Discussion 8

	(pages 195-234)	
June 29th	Emergence and Social Change	Discussion Question 9
July 2 <sup>nd</sup>		Final Project due July 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2008