

Syllabus
Social Change: Soc. 352-1001
Summer 1 2009

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, rationalization, and technology.

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.

Tapscott and Williams in *Wikinomics* point out many examples of how the Internet has resulted in massive decentralized creativity.

We will use these different 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).

Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams, "Wikinomics," (New York, NY: Penquin, 2008) ISBN 978-1-59184-193-7.

1) Discussion questions: 15 points per forum

There will be two 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 the following Wed. at midnight) and on Wednesday (responses must be posted by the following Sat. night at mid-night).

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

8 points for addressing the discussion question. Points will be given for knowledge of the reading, and for thinking critically about the question. Thinking outside the box is encouraged.

2 points for making at least one reference to a website, video, or article that bears on the question at hand. It is important that you explain why you find the website or video is interesting to you and why we should view it.

2 points for making two comments on your classmates' posts. You are particularly encouraged to view or read the websites or videos that your classmates point to.

Baseline-3 points (you get 3 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.)

Short Essay 1: McDonaldization: 100 Points

You will write a one page essay that extends the text book “The McDonaldization of Society”. Your essay should have a thesis that captures the reader’s attention. You should build your argument around this thesis. There is no need to recapitulate the book. You should make reference to one outside source. Submit the paper through SafeAssign. The essay is due on July 2nd by midnight.

Final Essay Project: 200 Points

You will write a 1500 to 3000 word essay about an important theme in our changing society. Your essay should have a thesis that captures the readers attention. The ideal essay should take something that is changing in society and present a theory about what is driving the change and where it all is going. You should build your argument around this thesis. Submit the paper through SafeAssign.

Discussion beginning	Assigned reading	Assignment Due
June 1, 2009		Discussion 1: Introduce yourself by discussing your prospective on the most important social change for the planet of the next decade
June 3, 2009	Ritzer Chap 1 and Chap 2 McDonaldization and rationalization	Discussion 2:
June 7, 2009	Ritzer Ch. 3, Ch. 4, Ch 5 Ch. 6 Efficiency, Calculability, Predictability, Control	Discussion 3:
June 10 2009	Ritzer Ch. 7 The Irrationality of Rationality	Discussion 4: Essay on

	Ritzer Ch. 8 Globalization and McDonaldization Ritzer Ch. 9 Dealing with McDonaldization	“McDonaldization” at midnight on June 13th:
June 14th	Emergence: Introduction and Part One (pages 1- 72)	Discussion 5
June 17th	Emergence: Part Two (pages 73- 194)Emergence: Part Three (pages 195-234)	Discussion 6
June 21st	Wikinomics: Introduction, Wikinomics (Chap. 1), The Perfect Storm (Chap. 2)	Discussion Question 7
June 24	The Peer Pioneers (Chap. 3) Ideagoras (Chap. 4), The Prosumers (Chap. 5), The New Alexandrians (Chap. 6)	Discussion Question 8
June 28th	Platforms for Participation (Chap. 7), The Global Plant Floor (Chapter 8), The Wiki Workplace (Chapt 9), Collaborative Minds (Chap. 10), Enterprise 2.0 (Chap. 11)	Discussion 9 Final Essay due July 2 nd at midnight