

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Sociology 495-3
Social Networks
Mark Mizruchi
Winter 2006

Office: 1225 S. University, room 242; 764-7444
Office Hours: Wednesday, 2:00-3:00, or by appointment
Email address: mizruchi@umich.edu
Homepage: <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mizruchi/>

The term “social networks” has become a buzzword in popular culture. People now routinely talk about “networking” to advance their careers, that we are connected by “six degrees of separation,” and that it’s “who we know” rather than “what we know” that matters. The *study* of networks as a social phenomenon has been around for decades, however. Dating back to the work of J. L. Moreno in the 1930s, this approach emerged on a significant scale in the 1960s and has expanded geometrically since that time. In this class we will treat the concept of social networks as an approach to the study of social structure. We will begin by discussing the role of structural sociology within the larger context of sociological theory. We will then examine the study of networks as a branch of structural sociology. After providing a theoretical foundation, we will apply the network approach to a range of substantive questions.

The course will be run as a seminar, in which we cover a particular topic each week. On Tuesday I will provide a background lecture on the topic. On Thursday (except for the first two weeks) we will have a class discussion of the week’s materials, led by students (probably in groups of two). Students will choose their topics during the first or second week of class and will meet with the instructor prior to their presentation.

Requirements: In addition to the presentation and one’s overall contribution to class discussion, the grade will be based on two criteria: an in-class final examination, and a series of weekly reaction papers (of approximately two pages in length), in which students comment on the readings for that week. The paper is waived in the week(s) that the student leads the discussion. Students are also allowed two additional “weeks off” of their choosing. All of the assignments and requirements will be described in more detail in class.

Readings: A list of required readings is presented in the course outline below. With three exceptions, all of the readings for the course will be available on-line on the class CTools site. The remaining readings will be drawn from three books (available at the Shaman Drum Bookstore, 313 South State Street), the purchase of which is strongly recommended:

Barabasi, Albert-Laszlo, *Linked* (Plume, 2003)
 Gladwell, Malcolm, *The Tipping Point* (Little, Brown, & Co., 2000)
 Granovetter, Mark, *Getting a Job* (2nd edition, University of Chicago Press, 1995)

In addition to the books, I recommend that you order a copy of the network analysis program UCINET. This program is available for a student price of \$40 from <http://www.analytictech.com/ucinet.htm>. For those of you for whom this is a financial burden, there is a DOS version of the program available for free (click on "Home," then click "misc free").

COURSE OUTLINE (All readings, except for those from the three books listed above, are located on the class CTools site)

January 5: Introduction to the Course

January 10, 12: What is Social Structure?

Readings: Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, pp. 1-13; Barry Wellman, "Structural Analysis: From Method and Metaphor to Theory and Substance," in Wellman and Berkowitz, *Social Structures: A Network Approach*, pp. 19-61 (read closely to 35; skim the remainder); Mark S. Mizruchi, "Social Network Analysis: Recent Achievements and Current Controversies," *Acta Sociologica*, 1994, 37:329-343; Peter M. Blau and Joseph E. Schwartz, *Crosscutting Social Circles*, Preface.

January 17, 19: Social Structure and Intergroup Relations

Readings: Georg Simmel, "The Expansion of the Dyad," pp. 135-144 in Kurt H. Wolff (ed.), *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*; Judith R. Blau and Peter M. Blau, "The Cost of Inequality: Metropolitan Structure and Violent Crime," *American Sociological Review* (hereafter *ASR*), 1982, 47:114-129; James Moody, "Race, School Integration, and Friendship Segregation in America," *American Journal of Sociology* (hereafter *AJS*), 2001, 107:679-716; Scott L. Feld, "Why Your Friends Have More Friends than You," *AJS*, 1991, 96:1464-1477.

Recommended: Miller McPherson, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and James M. Cook, "Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2001, 27:415-444.

January 24, 26: Collective Action and Social Movements

Readings: Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*, pp. 3-29; Mark Granovetter, "Threshold Models of Collective Behavior," *AJS*, 1978, 83:1420-1443; Doug McAdam, "Recruitment to High Risk Activism," *AJS*, 1986, 92:64-90.

January 31, February 2: Tie Strength and Small Worlds: An Introduction to Network Analysis

Readings: Barabasi, *Linked*, pp. 1-54; Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *AJS*, 1973, 78:1360-1380; "Gans on Granovetter's 'Strength of Weak Ties,'" "Granovetter Replies to Gans," and Gans Responds to Granovetter," *AJS*, 1974, 80:524-531.

February 7, 9: Centrality and Power

Readings: Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*, pp. 30-88; Mark S. Mizruchi and Blyden B. Potts, "Centrality and Power Revisited: Actor Success in Group Decision Making," *Social Networks*, 1998, 20:353-387; Wayne E. Baker and Rober R. Faulkner, "The Social Organization of Conspiracy: Illegal Networks in the Heavy Electrical Equipment Industry," *ASR*, 1993, 58:837-860.

Recommended: Phillip Bonacich, "Technique for Analyzing Overlapping Memberships," *Sociological Methodology*, 1972, 4:176-185.

February 14, 16: Cohesion and Structural Equivalence

Readings: Herbert Menzel and Elihu Katz, "Social Relations and Innovation in the Medical Profession: The Epidemiology of a New Drug," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1955, 19:337-352; Ronald S. Burt, "Social Contagion and Innovation: Cohesion versus Structural Equivalence," *AJS*, 1987, 92:1287-1335 (read to 1318, and 1326-1328); Mark S. Mizruchi, "Cohesion, Structural Equivalence, and Similarity of Behavior: A Theoretical and Empirical Assessment," *Social Networks*, 1993, 15:275-307 (read closely to 284; skim the remainder).

Recommended: Joseph Galaskiewicz and Ronald S. Burt, "Interorganization Contagion in Corporate Philanthropy," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1991, 36:88-105.

February 21, 23: Labor Markets and Structural Holes

Readings: Granovetter, *Getting a Job*, pp. 3-50; Ronald S. Burt, *Structural Holes*, pp. 8-38; Mark S. Mizruchi, "The Stability of the American Business

Elite: Discrimination, Competence, or Connections?" *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 2000, 9:545-554.

Recommended: Trond Petersen, Ishak Saporta, and Marc-David Seidel, "Offering a Job: Meritocracy and Social Networks," *AJS*, 2000, 106:763-816.

February 28, March 2: Vacation

March 7, 9: Market Relations and Embeddedness

Readings: Mark Granovetter, "Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness," *AJS*, 1985, 91:481-510 (also in Granovetter, *Getting a Job*, pp. 211-240); Wayne E. Baker, "The Social Structure of a National Securities Market," *AJS*, 1984, 89:775-811.

March 14, 16: Networks and the Corporate Elite

Readings: Gerald F. Davis, Mina Yoo, and Wayne E. Baker, "The Small World of the American Corporate Elite, 1982-2001," *Strategic Organization*, 2003, 1:301-326; Barabasi, *Linked*, pp. 199-217; Mark S. Mizruchi, "What Do Interlocks Do? An Analysis, Critique, and Assessment of Research on Interlocking Directorates," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1996, 22:271-298.

Recommended: Duncan J. Watts, "Networks, Dynamics, and the Small-World Phenomenon," *AJS*, 1999, 105:493-527.

March 21, 23: Corporate Networks and Politics

Readings: Dan Clawson, Alan Neustadt, and James Bearden, "The Logic of Business Unity," *ASR*, 1986, 51:797-811; Mark S. Mizruchi, "Similarity of Political Behavior among Large American Corporations," *AJS*, 1989, 95:401-424; Val Burris, "Interlocking Directorates and Political Cohesion among Corporate Elites," *AJS*, 2005, 111:249-283.

March 28, 30: Critique of Network Theory I: Rational Choice Theory

Readings: Michael Hechter, *Principles of Group Solidarity*, pp. 1-14, 40-47; Peter Hedstrom, "Rational Choice and Social Structure: On Rational-Choice Theorizing in Sociology," typescript; James S. Coleman, "Free Riders and Zealots: The Role of Social Networks," *Sociological Theory*, 1988, 6:52-57.

April 4, 6: A Network Theory of Action

Readings: John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell, "Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434," *AJS*, 1993, 98:1259-1319.

April 11, 13: Critique of Network Theory II: The Role of Culture

Readings: Steven Brint, "Hidden Meanings: Cultural Content and Context in Harrison White's Structural Sociology" *Sociological Theory*, 1992, 10:194-208; Harrison C. White, "Reply to Steven Brint," *Sociological Theory*, 1992, 10:209-213; Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *ASR*, 1986, 51:273-286.

April 18: Final Examination