This course will examine the structure of power in American society with an emphasis on the sociology of corporate and political elites. Topics include: the nature of the American ruling class; ownership and control of large U.S. corporations; director interlock networks; the role of money in the political process; ruling class control of the state and the mass media; the policy formation process; globalization and the formation of a transnational capitalist class.

The course will combine an overview of previous research on corporate power structure with instruction in methods of data collection and analysis that should prepare you to conduct original power structure research on your own topics of interest. Many of the resources we will use in the course can be found at the website *Who Rules? An Internet Guide to Power Structure Research* ([http://uoregon.edu/~vburris/whorules](http://uoregon.edu/~vburris/whorules)). Evaluation will be based on class participation and the submission of a term paper in the form of a research proposal.


This syllabus is preliminary and may be modified over the course of the term. A current copy of the syllabus can always be found at [http://uoregon.edu/~vburris/soc664/664syl.pdf](http://uoregon.edu/~vburris/soc664/664syl.pdf).

**Course Outline:**

**Introduction to Power Structure Research (March 31)**

Required Readings:

Recommended:
The Corporate Elite (April 7)

Required Readings:

Recommended:

Edward S. Herman, *Corporate Control, Corporate Power.*
David M. Kotz, *Bank Control of Large Corporations in the United States.*
Maurice Zeitlin, *The Large Corporation and Contemporary Classes.*
John Scott, *Corporations, Classes, and Capitalism.*
Tom Bottomore and Robert Brym, eds., *The Capitalist Class.*

The Upper Social Class (April 14)

Required Readings:
http://sociology.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/bohemian_grove.html.

Recommended:
Nelson W. Aldrich, Jr., Old Money.
Lewis H. Lapham, Money and Class in America.
Lawrence Graham, Our Kind of People: Inside America’s Black Upper Class.
Susan Ostrander, Women of the Upper Class.
E. Digby Baltzell, Philadelphia Gentlemen.
E. Digby Baltzell, The Protestant Establishment.
G. William Domhoff, The Bohemian Grove and Other Retreats.
Ronald Brownstein and Nina Easton, Reagan's Ruling Class.
Ferdinand Lundberg, America's Sixty Families.
Thorstein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class.

Interlocking Directorates (April 21, 28)

Required Readings:
G. William Domhoff, “Interlocking Directorates in the Corporate Community.”
http://sociology.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/power/corporate_community.html

Recommended:
Mark S. Mizruchi, The Structure of Corporate Political Action.


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**Foundations and Policy Planning Groups (May 5, 12)**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended:**

Joan Roelofs, *Foundations and Public Policy*.


Teresa Odendahl. *Charity Begins at Home*.


Jerome Himmelstein, *To the Right: The Transformation of American Conservatism.*

Mark A. Smith, *American Business and Political Power.*


Sar Levitan and Mary Cooper, *Business Lobbies: The Public Good and the Bottom Line.*


**Money and Politics (May 19, 26)**

**Required Readings:**


Dan Clawson, Alan Neustadtl, and Mark Weller, *Dollars and Votes*, chapters 1, 2, 3, and 5.


**Recommended:**


Michael Webber, *New Deal Fat Cats*.

Clifford Brown, Jr., Lynda Powell, and Clyde Wilcox, *Serious Money*.

Mark A. Smith, *American Business and Political Power*.


Thomas Edsall, *Power and Money*.

Kim McQuaid, *Big Business and Presidential Power*.


Frank Sorauf, *Money in American Politics*.

David Vogel, *Fluctuating Fortunes: The Political Power of Business in America*.

Global Corporations and the Transnational Capitalist Class (June 2)

Required Readings:


Recommended:


Leslie Sklair, *The Transnational Capitalist Class*.

Kees van der Pijl, *The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class*.