SOC 3411
UNDERSTANDING FORMAL ORGANIZATIONS

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**ORGANIZATIONS: STRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT**

**Organization**: a goal-directed, boundary-maintaining, activity system (Aldrich 1979)

**Internal structure**: stable pattern of routine activities; division of labor [Fig. 1.2]

**Environment**: everything outside the organizational boundary [Fig. 1.1]
Over 20th century, especially last 3 decades, many social forces changed organizational life. Some occurred at macro-level, others at micro-level:

**MICRO-ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES**

- The Globalizing Economy
- Accelerating Technological Innovation
- Slowing Productivity Growth
- Demography May Be Destiny
- Market Capitalism Trumps Democratization
MICRO-ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

• Perpetual Corporate Restructuring
• Reorganized Workplaces
• The New Employment Contract
• Rising U.S. Income Inequality
CHAPLIN’s MODERN TIMES

Made during the Great Depression (1936), Charlie Chaplin’s last silent feature film, Modern Times, also saw the final appearance of his alter ego, the “Little Tramp.”

The conveyor belt scene is a wicked satire on Frederic Taylor’s “Scientific Management,” but it contains many insights into organizational activity in capitalist societies. After watching this excerpt, we’ll do a short reflective writing exercise followed by a discussion.
What is the moral of *Modern Times*? What does Chaplin show about authority, power, technology, privacy, freedom, and alienation inside large organizations – which may apply in the 21st century as during the Great Depression?