

# People, Work and Organizations

37:575:230:T1

## Course Description:

This class will look at the key issues in the management of people, primarily in for-profit corporations in the United States. It will not teach detailed management techniques and methods. Instead, we will discuss theoretical concepts that will help us understand and analyze real world challenges in the changing workplace.

Key questions and themes include:

- What is work, what is a workplace, what is a work system, and what is an organization?
- How the world economy has changed and what is the difference between the old and the new economy?
- How is work changing and how are work systems evolving?
- What are some crucial areas of changes in organizations?
- What is social responsibility and why organizations are becoming more socially responsible?
- How management and worker relations are evolving?

**Learning Objectives. The student is able to:**

### ***Core Curriculum: SCL***

- Understand the bases and development of human and societal endeavors across time and place (h).
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems and other forms of social organization. (Goal m).
- Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations. (Goal n).

### ***School of Management and Labor Relations:***

- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation. (Goal IV)
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance. (Goal V)

### ***Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:***

- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations. (Goal 1).

- Apply those concepts, and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work. (Goal 2).

***The Instructor:***

- Students can express an informed perspective on some of the major dilemmas and conflicts concerning the management of employees.

**Books:**

There are no required books for this course. Readings will be posted on Canvas.

**Grades:**

There are multiple components of the grading scheme.

Participation: There will be 7 forums in all. The first and the last forum are compulsory for all students and then each student can contribute to any 4 out of the remaining 5 forums. Each forum is worth 50 points (total of 300 points). Overall, participation will constitute 30% of the grade.

Short Papers: There will be 4 short papers [3-4 pages double spaced] and students will write any 2 of these. Each short paper is worth 100 points (total of 200 points). These two papers will constitute 20% of the grade.

Midterm Examination: 4 essay questions students will attempt any 2 (5-6 double-spaced pages for both questions). The Midterm will be worth 250 points, i.e., 25% of the overall grade.

Final Examination: 4 essay questions students will attempt any 2 (5-6 double-spaced pages for both questions). The Final will be worth 250 points, i.e., 25% of the overall grade.

**Academic Integrity:**

You are responsible for understanding and following the Rutgers University Policy on Academic Integrity. Information on the policy is available here:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>. Written assignments will be submitted via Sakai and processed through Turnitin.

**Communication:**

Students are expected to check both Canvas messages and their official Rutgers email account regularly for class announcements. Students are responsible for all information communicated to them by the instructor.

The course will involve, as part of student grades, discussions on different topics. It is expected that students will discuss topics and give their views in a civil manner.

Feel free to contact the instructor via email with questions or concerns about the course. I will do my best to get back to you within 24 hours.

**Module 1: The Basic Concepts**

### ***Week 1: Introduction***

- Go over the syllabus and familiarize yourself with the course requirements.
- Take some time to learn basic functions on Canvas. Make sure if you have any Canvas related issues you resolve them for you're and the instructor's convenience. Watch the instructional videos about the use of Canvas.

### ***Week 2: What is work?***

- Work as an essential human activity.
- Work in a changing environment.

#### ***Readings:***

John, B. (2011). *The Thought of Work*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press. Pp 1-19.

Reich, R. B. (1992). *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st-Century*

Barley, S. R., and Kunda, G. (2006). Contracting: A New Form of Professional Practice. *Academy of Management Perspectives* 20, no. 1: 45-66.

Stewart, M. (2006). "The management myth." *Atlantic Monthly* 297(5): 80.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/06/the-management-myth/4883/>

### ***Assignment for Week 2***

There will be two components of this forum:

- **Forum 1 [Compulsory]: Introduction:** Introduce yourself and in a few sentences provide an overview of your educational background, work background including your current job if any.
- **Short Assignment 1: Changes in work experience:** Interview one person who is working but does not belong to your generation (the interviewee can be older or younger) and ask them three basic questions: What is their opinion about work? What do they expect from their work? What is their strategy to be successful in their work? Compare their views with your and write a synopsis of similarities and differences between the views (2-3 paragraphs).

### ***Week 3: What is a work system?***

- Understanding the basics of work systems.
- Tracing the evolution of work systems.
- Understanding the theoretical background of work systems.

#### ***Readings:***

Felix Frei et al., *Work Design for the Competent Organization* (pp. 39-48 only).

J. Richard Hackman et al., A New Strategy for Job Enrichment.

Max Weber, Legitimate Authority and Bureaucracy (pp. 3-15).

***Assignment for Week 3:***

- **Forum 2: Work Systems:** This week's readings focused on changing work systems and how workers can be motivated. Based on what you have learned from these readings what are the main changes in work systems from the earliest to the latest systems and what impact these changes would have on employee-employer relations?

**Week 4: What is an organization?**

- Understanding organizational structures.
- Understanding organizational culture.
- How to create

***Readings:***

D. Warrick, John F. Milliman, Jeffery M. Ferguson (2016). Building high performance cultures. *Organizational Dynamics*, 45(1): 64-70.

Ethan, B., and Nohria, N. (2016). Note on Organizational Structure. Purchase online.

Sorensen, J. (2009). Note on Organizational Culture. Purchase online.

***Assignment for Week 4:***

- **Forum 3: Link between Organizational Structure and Culture:** We have discussed the hardware and software of organizations, i.e., organizational structure and organizational culture, respectively. An important question here is that how these two critical organizational components interact with each other. Imagine that you are changing organizational structures from bureaucratic to flat organizations in which all work is done in autonomous teams. What cultural changes will you need in your organization to make the structural changes successful?
- **Short Assignment 2: Watch the movie:** Up in the Air (2009, 109 minutes) and give your opinion on the following questions:
  - What changes do you observe in management style in the movie?
  - Are these changes good or bad? Explain why?
  - What lessons do you get, as an employee, from this movie?

The assignment should be between 2-3 pages.

**Week 5: The Changing Economy?**

- The changing economy.
- “Old” Economy vs. the “New” Economy

***Readings:***

Drucker, P. F. (1992). The New Society of Organizations. *Harvard Business Review* 70(5): 95-105.

Anon. The 21st-century organization - McKinsey Quarterly.

Ready D, A., Hill, L. A., and Thomas, R. (2014). Building a Game-Changing Talent Strategy. *Harvard Business Review*, January 2014, 63-68.

## **Module 2: Changing Work and Work systems**

### **Week 6: Professional Work, Offshore Outsourcing, Downsizing, and Restructuring.**

- Changes in professional work.
- Offshoring, outsourcing, downsizing, and their impact.

#### ***Readings:***

Doig, S. J., Ritter, R. C., Speckhals, K., and Woolson, D. (2001). Has outsourcing gone too far? The McKinsey Quarterly, No.4.

Horowitz et al. (2005). The Rise of the Freelance Class.  
<http://fu-res.org/pdfs/advocacy/publications/2005/freelancers.pdf>

Girod, S., and Karim, S. (2017). Restructuring or Reconfiguration? Harvard Business Review.

Brimm, L. (2015). How to Embrace Complex Change. Harvard Business Review.

### **Week 7: Changes in Work Systems.**

- How teams work?
- How teams are managed?

#### ***Readings:***

Harvard Business School Chapter (2006). Organizational Trap: The Madness-and the Wisdom-of Crowds. Purchase online.

Kanter, R. (1989). The New Managerial Work.

Harvard Business School article (2001). A Note on Team Process. Purchase online.

Guttman, H. (2007). Are Your Global Team Members Miles Apart? Harvard Business Review.

#### ***Assignment for Week 7:***

- **Forum 4: Grouping and Teamwork:** For this forum first watch the short video from YouTube. In the video evaluate the emergence of groupthink and what possible impact it could have on group decisions. What would you do differently to avoid groupthink.
- **Short Assignment 3:** This short paper is based on a Harvard Business School case. The link of the case will be sent to students separately in an email. Read the case and answer the following questions:

- Why did the Varsity team lost to the Junior Varsity team?
- What should the coach have done differently earlier in the season to resolve issues? At exactly what point should he have intervened differently?
- How would you compare the Army Crew team to other types of organizational teams? What are the key similarities and differences? What lessons can be learn from the Army Crew team?

The assignment should be between 3-4 pages.

### **Module 3: Crucial Areas of Change in Organizations**

#### **Week 8: Diversity, Discrimination, and Technology**

- Diversity and managing diversity.
- Discrimination and its impact.
- Technology and the issues of employee privacy.

#### ***Readings:***

Dobin, f., and Kaley, A. (2016). Why Diversity Programs Fail. Harvard Business Review.

Harvard Business Review (2016). Designing a Bias Free Organization.

Ferdman, B. (2017). Paradoxes of Inclusion: Understanding and Managing the Tensions of Diversity and Multiculturalism. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences*, 53(2), pp. 235-263.

Harvard Business Review (1976). IBM's Guidelines to Employee Policy.

#### ***Assignment for Week 8:***

#### **Forum 5: Employee Privacy Rights:**

- You are a juror in a lawsuit where a female employee has sued her company for violation of privacy.

The facts of the case are as follows: this employee works for a company that has a known policy of having cameras in the workplace. This employee works in a large room with several cubicles. However, she has a separate cubicle for her office. The large room with the cubicles has several cameras. The employee is in the habit of working till 5:30 pm (when the office closes) and then after making sure that there is no one in the office she, in her cubicle, changes into her gym clothes and goes to her gym that is close to her office. She is not doing anything wrong as per firm polices. Things get complicated when one of the managers who has access to the videos from the installed cameras in the office not only starts recording the act of the changing clothes but he also starts sharing the recorded video with other managers. Eventually, the employee comes to know of this and she sues the company for violation of privacy.

As a juror would you decide in favor of the company or the employee and why?

#### **Week 9: Pay and Performance, Global Talent, and Regulating Global Business.**

- Issues related to pay and performance as a motivational tool.
- Global labor standards and Corporations.

### ***Readings:***

Jeffrey, P. (1998). Six Dangerous Myths about Pay. *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 1998. Purchase online.

Chambers et al. (1998). The War for Talent. *McKinsey Quarterly*.

Jeffrey, (P. 2001). Fighting the war for talent is hazardous to your organization's health. *Organizational Dynamics* 29, no. 4: 248-259.

Witte, J. M. (2008). Realizing Core Labor Standards, pp 8-23.

### ***Assignment for Week 9:***

- **Forum 6: Minimum Labor Standards:** For this forum first watch the short video from You Tube. You have read the reading on global labor standards. The video above goes into some of the issues raised by the reading. Based on the reading and the video discuss the following questions:
  - Is it fine for companies to do business with autocratic regimes? Give arguments.
  - Should there be minimum global labor standards applied to all global industries?
  - What possible mechanism can be developed to implement the global labor standards?

### **Week 10: Corporate Social Responsibility**

- What is corporate social responsibility?
- What are arguments for and against it?

### ***Readings:***

Friedman, M. (1970). The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits. In *Honest Work: A Business Ethics Reader*. Edited by Joanne Ciulla, Clancy Martin, and Robert Solomon, Oxford University Press, pp. 241-246.

Freeman, R. E. (2007). A Stakeholder Theory of the Modern Corporation. In *Honest Work: A Business Ethics Reader*. Edited by Joanne Ciulla, Clancy Martin, and Robert Solomon, Oxford University Press, 2007. pp. 255-261.

Keith, D. (1973). The case for and against business assumption of social responsibilities. *Academy of Management journal* 16.2 (1973): 312-322.

### ***Assignment for Week 10:***

- **Forum 7 [Compulsory]: Arguments For and Against CSR:** Read Davis (1973) and give your arguments on the above forum. The idea is not just to give views but also to challenge each other's arguments.

- What in your opinion is the best argument for CSR? Why?
- What in your opinion is the best argument against CSR? Why?

### **Week 11: Sustainability, and Corporate Governance Issues**

- Need for sustainable practices.
- Corporate Governance issues.
  - Executive pay.
  - Who should control corporations?

#### ***Readings:***

Heath, E. (2002). *Morality and the Market*. Boston, McGraw Hill Publishers. Pp 648-653.

Werbach, A. (2009). *Why your business needs a strategy for sustainability---NOW*. Harvard Business Review.

Lazonick, W. (2014). Profits without Prosperity. Harvard Business Review.

Nader, R. (2007). Who Rules the Corporation? In *Honest Work: A Business Ethics Reader.*" Edited by Joanne Ciulla, Clancy Martin, and Robert Solomon, Oxford University Press, 2007. pp. 583-589.

#### ***Assignment for Week 10:***

- **Short assignment 4:** The assignment is based on a Harvard Business School case (the link for the case will be provided through an email). Read the case and answer the following questions:
  - Evaluate the new strategy based on Unilever Sustainable Living Plan? Discuss benefits and risks of the policy.
  - What actions should the company take now? Which of the three options identified at the end of the case would you recommend? How would you implement your recommendation?

The assignment should be between 4-5 pages.



