People, Work and Organizations
37:575:230: 02
Mondays, 10:55am-1:55pm
Ruth Adams Building 208

Professor Rebecca Givan
rgivan@work.rutgers.edu
Room 147 Labor Education Center
Phone: 848.932.2030
Office Hours: By appointment

Professor Kaumudi Misra
kmisra@work.rutgers.edu
Labor Education Center
Office Hours: By appointment

This class will look at key issues in work and organizations in the contemporary political economy. We will develop theoretical concepts that help us understand and analyze real world challenges in the changing workplace.

Key questions and themes include:
• What is work, what is a workplace and what is an organization?
• What do we mean by the old and new economy?
• How and why are workplaces changing?
• What are the incentives in the workplace for workers and managers?
• What are the effects of new forms of work organization such as temping, freelancing and outsourcing on workers and organizations?

Learning Objectives:
• An understanding of major issues involved in the changing nature of work, and an informed perspective on some of the major dilemmas and conflicts concerning the management of employees.

  ➤ the economic & strategic challenges facing businesses, and the organizational changes required to meet them.

  ➤ the consequences of different organizations and work systems for employees.

• The ability to create strong arguments and to read others’ arguments critically.

• An understanding of diverse perspectives, theories, and concepts relating to the organization of work.

  ➤ the ability to apply general theories of work and organization to particular cases and current events.

  ➤ the ability to analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

• Proficiency in written and oral communication.
Books:
There are no required books for this course. However, you will need to purchase a few case studies (available for purchase online) for under $5 each, as detailed below. There is a Sakai site for the course, and readings will be posted there.

Assignments: Note- you must complete all assignments to receive credit for the course.

Participation (Includes attendance, thoughtful participation & all in-class work): 20%
Exam 1 (October 9): 25%
Exam 2: (November 27) 25%
Media assignment (due September 25): 5%
Group presentation: 10%
Case study paper (written individually, based on presentation topic due December 11): 15%

For all written assignments, please use 1” margins, double spacing and a 12-point font. All papers should be uploaded to Sakai.

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/policy-on-academic-integrity. Written assignments will be submitted via Sakai and processed through Turnitin.

Class schedule:
The schedule of readings and assignments is below. I may need to move some topics (and readings) to accommodate guest speakers. However, exam dates and assignment deadlines will not change. You should complete all readings before class, and come to class ready to discuss what you have read. In general, lectures will not repeat the material in the readings, but build on this material, although you are encouraged to ask questions about the readings during class.
There will occasionally be an assignment at the beginning of class (such as a quiz or short writing assignment) based on the week’s readings.

Week 1 (January 28):
Introductions
Movie (excerpts): Up in the Air (2009, 109 minutes)

Week 2 (February 04):
What is work?

Week 3 (February 11):
What is an organization?
• Sorensen, J. “Note on Organizational Culture” Stanford Graduate School of Business, Case Study. Purchase online at http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cb/product/OB69-PDF-ENG
• Nohria, Nitin “Note on Organizational Structure.” Purchase online at http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cb/web/product_detail.seam?E=28242&R=491083-PDF-ENG

Week 4 (February 18):
The “Old” Economy

Media assignment due.

Week 5 (February 25):
The “New” Economy
• Anon. The 21st-century organization - McKinsey Quarterly.

Week 6 (March 04):
Exam 1

Week 7 (March 11):
Pay, performance and incentives
Week 8 (March 18):

Spring Break – No class.

Week 9 (March 25):

Managing the global supply chain


Week 10 (April 1):

Corporate Social Responsibility and anti-corporate campaigns


Week 11 (April 08):

The Unionized Workplace


Week 12 (April 15):

Work without organizations:


Week 13 (April 22):
Exam 2
2nd half of class will be used for group meeting time

Week 14 (April 29):
Group presentations

Week 15 (May 06):
Group presentations
Papers due.
**Television Assignment**

Your assignment is to watch one episode of a one-hour reality/documentary TV show that depicts a workplace and working relationships (do not choose a competition show). Watch the show and then write a 2-3 page response paper that does the following:

1. Describe the workplace on the show in one paragraph.
2. Discuss the representation of the workplace and workers in 1-2 paragraphs. What has the TV production chosen to emphasize. Does the representation promote or challenge any stereotypes?
3. Highlight and discuss a particular issue in this workplace that relates to one of the concepts from this class. Issues might include: organizational culture; workplace hierarchy; job security; race and gender dynamics; recruitment and selection; job training; performance incentives. You should focus on only one issue, describe the challenges and mention one or two suggestions for improving the workplace.

You may choose any appropriate show, or select another show (you can get approval from me in class). Many of these shows are currently airing on TV, and most are also available online via various websites including Hulu or for purchase from iTunes. Examples of possible shows include the following:

Ice Road Truckers
The Deadliest Catch
Gallery Girls
Undercover Boss
Ramsey’s Kitchen Nightmares
Coal
American Chopper
Dirty Jobs
Kell On Earth
LA/Miami Ink

There are probably dozens of other shows that meet the criteria - choose one that interests you.