

People, Work and Organizations

37:575:230: 02

Mondays, 10:55am-1:55pm

Ruth Adams Building 208

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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?

- Reich, R. B. (1992). The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st-Century Capitalism. New York, Vintage. pp 171-184.

- Schlosser, E. (2004). Reefer madness: Sex, drugs, and cheap labor in the American black market, Mariner Books. Pp77-108.
- Stewart, M. (2006). "The management myth." *Atlantic Monthly* 297(5): 80.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/06/the-management-myth/4883/>

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
- Greenhouse, S. *The Big Squeeze: Tough Times for the American Worker*. New York: Knopf, 2008. Chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 98-134).

Week 4 (February 18):

The "Old" Economy

- Drucker, P. F. (1992). "The New Society of Organizations." *Harvard Business Review* 70(5): 95-105.
- Hochschild, Arlie Rusell. *The Time Bind: When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work*. New York, NY: Holt. 2000. Ch 5 (pp55-72).

Media assignment due.

Week 5 (February 25):

The "New" Economy

- Anon. The 21st-century organization - *McKinsey Quarterly*.
- Ross, Andrew. *No Collar: The Humane Workplace and its Hidden Costs*. New York: Basic Books, 2003. Chapters 2 (pp21-54) and 3 (55-86)

Week 6 (March 04):

Exam 1

Week 7 (March 11):

Pay, performance and incentives

- Pfeffer, Jeffrey "Six Dangerous Myths about Pay" *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 1998. Available online for purchase at: http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cb/web/product_detail.seam?E=61003&R=98309-PDF-ENG&conversationId=91652
- Chambers et al. "The War for Talent" *McKinsey Quarterly*, 1998, Number 3.
- Eichenwald, Kurt (2012) "Microsoft's Lost Decade" *Vanity Fair*, August 2012
<http://www.vanityfair.com/business/2012/08/microsoft-lost-mojo-steve-ballmer.print>

Week 8 (March 18):

Spring Break – No class.

Week 9 (March 25):

Managing the global supply chain

- Struna, Jason et al. “Unsafe and Unfair: Labor Conditions in the Warehouse Industry” *Policy Matters*, Volume 5, Issue 2. Summer 2012.
<http://www.policymatters.ucr.edu/pmatters-vol5-2-warehouse.pdf>
- Applebaum, Richard and Nelson Lichtenstein. “New World of Retail Supremacy: Supply Chains and Workers' Chains in the Age of Wal-Mart” [International Labor and Working- Class History](#) / Volume 70 / Issue 01 / October 2006 , pp 106-125.
<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=991364>

Week 10 (April 1):

Corporate Social Responsibility and anti-corporate campaigns

- Lenzer, Anna. “Fiji Water: Spin the Bottle” *Mother Jones*, September/October 2009.
- McMaster, James and Jan Nowak. “FIJI Water and Corporate Social Responsibility - Green Makeover or "Greenwashing"?” Harvard Business School Case, 2011.
Available for purchase online at:
http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cb/web/product_detail.seam?E=1022151&R=909A08-PDF-ENG&conversationId=75769
- Friedman, Milton. “The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits.” *The New York Times Magazine*, September 13, 1970.

Week 11 (April 08):

The Unionized Workplace

- Zweig, Michael. *The Working Class Majority: America's Best Kept Secret*, Second Edition. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012. Chapter 6, “The Working Class and Power” pp117-142.
- Milkman, Ruth. “Two Worlds of Unionism: Women and the New Labor Movement” in Cobble, D.S., Ed. *The Sex of Class: Women Transforming American Labor*. Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 2007. pp 63-80.

Week 12 (April 15):

Work without organizations:

- Kunda, G., S. R. Barley, et al. (2002). "Why do contractors contract? The experience of highly skilled technical professionals in a contingent labor market." *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*: 234-261.
- Horowitz et al: *The Rise of the Freelance Class*
<http://fu-res.org/pdfs/advocacy/publications/2005/freelancers.pdf>

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.