

Rutgers University
School of Management and Labor Relations
Fall 2025 – Virtual Synchronous Class – All Sessions on Video in Real Time on Zoom
37:533:353:90

Equity Compensation & Employee Ownership

This seminar-style course examines the many ways businesses share equity and profits with employees, and the organizational, motivational, and employment relations issues these practices raise. Students will explore major forms of equity compensation and employee ownership—including stock options, stock grants, ESOPs, ESPPs, and profit-sharing—through a mix of expert guest speakers, case studies, research readings, and discussion. In addition to learning the financial, legal and human resource dimensions of equity-sharing plans, students will engage with broader social science questions about fairness, incentives, and the role of ownership in society. The course combines guest presentations with interactive discussions, short lectures, and critical analysis of contemporary research and practice.

Course Time: Tuesdays, 2:00-5:00 pm (on Zoom)

Professor: Adria Scharf, PhD

Professor Email: adria.scharf@rutgers.edu

Office Hours: After class and by appointment. The professor encourages scheduled office hours.

Note: This class is open to both undergraduates and graduate students. This will be a small seminar with a lot of discussion, guest speakers and class participation, and brief lectures by the professor.

Books

Ownership: Reinventing Companies, Capitalism, and Who Owns What. John Case and Corey Rosen, 2022. (Paper copies available from professor to borrow. Or purchase at nceo.org or on Kindle)

Shared Entrepreneurship: A Path to Engaged Employee Ownership. Edited by Frank Shipper. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. (Rent from Kindle or access online through Rutgers University Library)

The Citizen's Share: Reducing Inequality in the 21st Century. Joseph Blasi, Richard Freeman, and Douglas Kruse. (BFK) New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014. (Complimentary PDF copies will be distributed to the class at no charge. Please do not purchase this book.)

The professor will supplement the readings with research articles, statistical reports, and working papers by scholars and experts along with case studies and materials from the Curriculum Library on Employee Ownership (CLEO) at <http://www.cleo.rutgers.edu> based at the School of Management and Labor Relations, as well as contemporary magazine articles and videos for context.

Required Video:

[“We The Owners” full-length documentary film](#)

SMLR Learning Objectives

This course is designed to help students attain the following SMLR learning objectives:

I) Written & Oral Communication – Communicate effectively at a level and in modes appropriate to an entry level professional

- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights
- Produce high quality executive summaries
- Make an argument using contemporary and/or historical evidence
- Present ideas and arguments in a logical and effective way

V) Understanding Context - Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions

- Analyze a contemporary global issue in their field from a multi-disciplinary perspective
- Analyze issues related to business strategies, organizational structures, and work systems
- Analyze issues of social justice related to work across local and global contexts (LSER)
- Analyze issues related to the selection, motivation, and development of talent in a global context (HRM)

Skills

By the end of the course, students will:

- Be conversant with the major types of equity sharing, profit sharing, and gain sharing plans in existence, and their history, development, incidence, mechanisms, advantages and disadvantages for the performance and welfare of such firms and their employees.
- Develop an understanding of the differences between the specific approaches to equity compensation and employee ownership.
- Understand legal and financial and practical issues involved in using such plans in corporations.
- Have explored major social science questions including the role of equity and profit sharing in society.
- Understand several corporations, their stories and issues, along with the principal institutions dealing with shares in the United States: regulatory bodies, stock exchanges, associations of corporations, non-profit research organizations, corporate social responsibility institutions, and the principal research centers on shares in the U.S.

Required Course Work

Reflection Journal

Reflect on and analyze major points in the material.

Short Quizzes

Occasionally there will be short quizzes to assess learning.

Mid-Term Exam

For the mid-term, you will complete an exam that will include multiple choice questions, fill in the blank questions, and short-essay questions.

Participation In-Class

Students are expected to arrive prepared to actively participate in class discussions. Students will share their questions and observations from the readings and videos. Students will have the opportunity to engage in Q&A with guest speakers, having completed and thoughtfully reflected on the assigned readings.

Occasionally students will also contribute to an online discussion forum; participation in these forums will count toward the overall participation grade.

Regular attendance and active in-class participation are essential and will significantly impact your grade. This is a discussion-based seminar, and your consistent presence and contributions are critical to the success of the class. Absences reduce the participation score.

Short Presentations

At the beginning of each class, a student will present a summary and analysis of that week's assigned readings to start the discussion. Each student will present once over the course of the semester.

Final Project

The final paper will be an in depth paper on a question of your choosing related to the course topic, which includes a clear articulation of the question, a literature review, your analysis, and your "answer" to the question. It must reference concepts or readings from the class and include citations. On the last day of class, you will make a presentation about the paper topic.

Grading

Grades will consist of the following components of 100% of the grade:

Grading Components	% of Final Course Grade
Class Participation (20%) + Summary Presentation (5%)	25%
Midterm Exam	25%
Quizzes	15%
Reflection Journals	10%
Final Paper (20%) + Presentation (5%)	25%

Total	100%
--------------	-------------

The grade range is as follows: A = 90% and above.; B+ = 88%-89.9%; B = 80%-87.9%; C+ = 78%-79.9%; C = 70%-77.9%; D= 60%-69%; F = less than 59%.

Classroom Conduct

This course relies on active discussion and mutual respect. Students are expected to:

- Seek understanding and insight
- Ask questions and make connections between ideas
- Build thoughtfully on others' contributions, acknowledging classmates
- Refer to readings, case studies, and videos when relevant

A respectful tone is expected at all times toward classmates, guest speakers, and the professor.

Academic Integrity

The rights of students will be protected to ensure that test scores are related to competence in the subject matter. Therefore, all examinations will be carefully proctored. If cheating is detected, it will be prosecuted to the limit allowed by University policies. An academic integrity contract is attached to this syllabus. Students must submit a signed copy of the contract before the second class they attend.

Video Camera Policy

This is a live, discussion-based virtual seminar. To create an environment that mirrors an in-person class experience—with discussion, interaction, and small-group breakouts—students are expected to keep their video cameras on during class.

- You may blur your background or use a virtual background for privacy.
- If you need to turn your camera off briefly, that is acceptable.
- If you are unable or unwilling to keep your camera on during most of the class, please contact the professor to request an exemption.

We recognize there are valid reasons for camera exemptions, but the default expectation is that students will be visible on camera to help foster connection and engagement.

2025 Class Schedule

Date	Topic & Assignments
Sept. 2	<i>Introduction: Varieties of Equity Shares</i>
	<i>Models of Business Ownership</i>
Sept. 9	Read: <i>Ownership</i> , Intro & Part I Guest Speaker from Atlantic Plywood, NJ ESOP
Sept. 16	<i>Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs)</i> Read: <i>Citizen's Share</i> , Intro & Ch. 1; <i>Ownership</i> , Ch. 5
Sept. 23	<i>Shared Entrepreneurship</i> Read: Introduction and Part I, <i>Shared Entrepreneurship: A Path to Engaged Employee Ownership</i> . Edited by Frank Shipper Guest Speaker from employee-owned Hypertherm
Sept. 29	<i>Stock Options & RSUs</i> Read: <i>Ownership</i> , Chs. 6 & 7 Watch: Equity 101 (first 5 videos)
Oct 7	<i>Employee Stock Purchase Plans (ESPP)</i> Read: "Money Left on the Table" (Bebenko & Sen); <i>Morgan Stanley Brief</i> Guest Speaker TBA

Date	Topic & Assignments
	<i>Equity by Gender, Race & Ethnicity</i>
Oct 14	Read: 2024 Carta Report; “ Building the Assets ” (Boguslaw, Schur, et al.)
	<i>Mid-Term Review & Exam</i>
Oct 21	Review practice questions
	<i>Equity in Multinationals</i>
Oct 28	Read: Unilever Shares; <i>Ownership</i> , Chs. 11, 12, Conclusion Guest Speaker: TBA
	<i>Financing Employee Ownership</i>
Nov 4	Read: <i>Ownership</i> , Chs. 8, 9; Ownership Capital Lab Report Submit: Final Project Proposal
	<i>Cooperative Ownership in the U.S.</i>
Nov 11	Read: <i>Ownership</i> , Ch. 10; CHCA & PT360 Case Studies ; <i>Rooting Economic Change</i> Watch: Coursera “Our Share,” Module 4, Lesson 1
	<i>International Equity Compensation</i>
Nov 18	Read: Cases from China, South Africa, UK; <i>Mondragon</i> (NYT overview)

Date	Topic & Assignments
	<i>Asynchronous Class</i>
Nov 25	Submit: First Section of Final Paper Participate: Online Discussion Forum
Dec 2	<i>Course Review</i>
Dec 9	<i>Student Presentations</i> – Final Paper Topics
Dec 17	Final Papers Due