

People, Work and Organizations

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Wednesdays, 9:50am to 12:50pm

Murray Hall, room 210

DRAFT- SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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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 10): 25%

Exam 2: (November 21) 25%

Television assignment (due September 26): 5%

Group presentation: 10%

Case study paper (written individually, based on presentation due December 5): 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. We 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 20):

Introductions

Movie (excerpts): Up in the Air (2009, 109 minutes)

Week 2 (January 27):

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 3):

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 10)

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).

Television assignment due.

Week 5 (February 17):

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 (February 24):

Exam 1

Week 7 (March 2):

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 9):

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>
- “China and the End of Cheap Fashion” (Chapter 7) in Cline, E. L. (2012). Overdressed: the shockingly high cost of cheap fashion. New York, Portfolio/Penguin.

Spring Break

Week 9 (March 23):

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 10 (March 30):

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 11 (April 6):

No class: Use class time to meet with your group

Week 12 (April 13):

Work without organizations:

- Gelles, David “At Zappos, Pushing Shoes and a Vision” *New York Times*, July 17 2015.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/19/business/at-zappos-selling-shoes-and-a-vision.html>
- Horowitz et al: The Rise of the Freelance Class
<http://fu-res.org/pdfs/advocacy/publications/2005/freelancers.pdf>

Week 13 (April 20):

Group presentations

Week 14 (April 27):

Exam 2

Case study papers due

Television Assignment

Your assignment is to watch one episode of a one-hour reality/documentary (**non-fiction**) 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
Undercover Boss
Ramsey's Kitchen Nightmares
Coal
American Chopper
Dirty Jobs
LA/Miami Ink
Duck Dynasty

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

Case study assignment

Presentation:

You will be assigned a group, and as a group you will present a case study of an organization. The presentation should be 30 minutes long (please allow 5 minutes for questions) and should include a brief overview of the organization, and of one major challenge facing it. The remainder of the time should be divided between group members- each person will be assigned to cover one of the following areas:

- Organizational Culture
- Organizational Structure (organization of work)
- Recruitment and selection
- Training
- Compensation
- Supply chain
- Labor Relations
- Sustainability

Your group must **create slides for the presentation (using Powerpoint or equivalent)**. The slides should be clear and should highlight key points or examples from your presentation. The slides should be unified and the presentation should progress logically. Please practice your presentation in advance, **you may be penalized for exceeding the time limit**.

There is a very useful library guide (prepared by our fabulous librarian) which will help you with research for this assignment, available at <http://libguides.rutgers.edu/peoplework>. You should try to use a variety of sources for your presentation and paper, and you may find useful information on blogs, email lists, employee discussion boards. You might look at www.glassdoor.com for this type of information (remember blogs and websites need to be cited, just like any other source).

Paper:

Your (individual) case study paper will be about your individually assigned aspect of the organization. You should write a 5 page paper about your aspect of the organization. This paper should include an overview of this aspect of the organization, and 2-3 critical suggestions for improvement. You must write your paper on your own, and cite all of your sources.

Organizations:

- H&M
- Herff Jones
- Hyatt Hotels
- In-n-out Burger
- L.C. King Manufacturing
- New York City Department of Correction
- Starbucks
- Warby Parker
- Yahoo!
- Zappos