**LER 591: Employment Relations Systems**

**Fall 2017**

Professor Teresa Cardador

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Course Hours: Tuesday or Wednesday, 8:00-10:50 AM

Office Hours: email me anytime to make an appointment

**Course Overview**

The goal of this course is to introduce you to key topics in, perspectives on, and professional roles associated with, the employment relationship. The course has three specific aims: (1) to enhance your understanding of issues of relevance to the major “players” in the employment relationship – employers, employees, unions, and government; (2) to bridge theory and practice by combining a review of current research and best practices with presentations by experts from the field; and (3) to familiarize you with HR/IR roles and career paths. We will examine contemporary topics in human resource management and employment relations.

**Required Texts/Materials**

All assigned readings/resources are on Compass. Readings are contained in folders for each weekly session.

**Student Evaluation**

*Peer Teaching (10%) 20*

*Group Project Paper - including peer evaluation (30%) 60*

*Group Project Presentation (10%) 20*

*Blog Posts (2) (20%) 40*

*Quizzes on Reading (10 total) (20%) 40*

*Class Participation (10%) 20*

***Total Points 200***

***NOTE: Grading rubrics for all assignments are posted on***

***Compass in the “Grading Rubrics” folder.***

**Description of Course Requirements**

1. ***Peer Teaching.*** Students will take responsibility for synthesizing the reading for their assigned week and presenting their synthesis to the class to facilitate learning and discussion. Students will present in assigned groups of 4-5. In brief, presentation groups will be asked to: (1) Review the most important ideas from that week’s reading (15 minutes); and (2) stimulate class discussion by posing 1-2 key questions for discussion (15 minutes). We will discuss specific instructions for topic presentations in class. **Please note that there are NO MAKE-UPS for topic presentations. Please let me know by Sept. 1 if your assigned date does not work for you. After Sept. 1, no changes to the schedule will be made.**
2. ***Group “Consulting” Project - Paper and Presentation*.** For the group project you will work outside of class in teams of 3-4 students. The *Group Consulting Project paper* is due in class on the final day of class – **December 12/13**.

For this project,your group will access and study a local organization (or a department/subunit within a larger organization) and conduct a fieldwork project investigating some aspect of the organization that connects with themes from the course (e.g., diversity and inclusion, recruitment and selection, EEO, working with organized labor, etc.). Your group will gather information from at least 3 HR managers and/or other relevant employees. You will need to visit the organization on-site to interview these individuals. You may also wish to supplement your interview information with archival materials (reports, website, media coverage, etc.) that describe the organization. You will ultimately identify an issue/concern that the organization is facing with respect to your topic and make recommendations – based on course content – for addressing the issue/concern.

Key Paper Components

1. Describe the organization; describe why you decided to focus on the focal issue within this organization - i.e., why the issue is important to the organization (no more than 1 page)
2. Describe how you conducted your assessment (e.g., who you interviewed, how you structured your interviews, etc.) (no more than 1 page)
3. Describe what you found – i.e., describe the main issue/problem that you identified in your interviews (2 pages)
4. Make recommendations for addressing the issue/problem you identified – make sure that your recommendations are meaningfully tied to a topic discussed in the course (2-3 pages)
5. Describe potential barriers to the implementation of your recommendations (1 page)
6. Conclude (no more than a ½ page)
7. ***Group Project Paper***

Each group will turn in one paper. Papers should be no more than *8 pages in length, double spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point times roman font*. Papers will be evaluated based on how well key paper components are addressed. Papers will also be evaluated on writing clarity, grammar, and typos – so please proofread! Papers are due in class at the start of class on **December 12/13**. Each group member will be asked to complete and turn in (also due on December 12/13) a “peer evaluation” of their teammates. The paper and peer evaluation are worth 30% of your grade (paper=25%, peer evaluation=5%).

1. ***Group Project Presentation***

The presentation will be done with your project group during the last two weeks of class. Each group will have approximately 15-20 minutes with time for questions *(please note: the exact presentation time will be announced once groups are formed, as it will depend on the number of groups presenting)*. Students are expected to prepare for the presentation as if they are preparing to present to a client, executive team, or other key stakeholder group. Professionalism is expected (dress, preparation, etc.). The format should follow that of the paper. The presentation is worth 10% of your grade.

1. ***Blog Posts (2).*** Students will complete two blog posts based on the concepts they have read about throughout the semester. Each blog post should be 800-1,200 words long (not including the reference list) and should target aspiring HR professionals and those in the early stages of the HR career. **You should focus on the information that you think would be most useful to these audiences. You have two options: (a) You can go for breadth, by including material from multiple topics (weeks) covered in the class; OR (b) You can go for depth, and include only material from 1 specific topic covered in the class. More detail about this assignment will be provided in class. The blog posts are due on October 3/4 and November 7/8. Blog posts will be graded by me and your peers. Each is worth 10% of your grade for a total of 20%. Students will be responsible for reading and grading 3-4 other students’ blog posts.**
2. ***Quizzes over Reading.*** There will be a total of 11 in-class quizzes which will cover content from the readings assigned for that week. The quizzes will take place on class days noted on the syllabus and will be given at the start of class. **If you arrive late, you will likely miss the quiz, so please be punctual.** The quizzes will be composed of multiple-choice and true-false questions and each quiz will be worth 4 points. Though you will take 11 quizzes, your grade will be based on your best 10 quiz scores. **That is, you are allowed to drop your lowest quiz score. There is NO MAKE-UP for quizzes, so if you miss a quiz that will count as your dropped quiz score.** The quizzes over reading are worth 20% of your grade.
3. ***Class Participation.*** Your participation is critical to our collective learning, thus you will earn points from your participation in class discussion. Read your assignments and come to class prepared to think, discuss, and share. I expect students to come to class, and back from breaks *on time* and prepared to take part. Quality of participation is more important than quantity. Because you cannot participate if you do not attend, class attendance is important for your participation grade. All students are allowed one absence “no questions asked”– beyond that I will excuse an absence only in case of emergency. Please email me ahead of time if you plan to miss class. In total, class participation is worth 10% of your grade.

***Academic Integrity***

I expect all members of this class to abide by the University's standards for academic integrity. Violations of this code, in the form of plagiarism, turning in work that is not your own, and the like, will be penalized according to the steps outlined in the UIUC Code of Policies and Regulations. If you are caught cheating (this includes signing in others who are not in attendance, or being signed in by others), all parties involved will receive a zero on the assignment, and may be subject to further penalty according to University policy. Violations are relatively easy to spot. Don’t risk it…it’s not worth it.

***Course Feedback***

You may always feel free to email me ([cardador@illinois.edu](mailto:cardador@illinois.edu)), or come by my office, with questions or concerns about how the course is going. I’m happy to hear your feedback and suggestions. If you require accommodation for a disability, please email me ASAP to set up an appointment to discuss your needs.

**Course Schedule, Topics, and Reading Assignments**

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| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic** | **Speaker(s)** | **Reading** |
| ***Section Topic: Overview of the Employment Relationship*** | | | | |
| 1 | Aug.29/30 | Introduction to Course | Cardador | None |
| 2 | Sept.5/6 | Perspectives on the Employment Relationship (QUIZ) | Cardador | Hills, Ch. 2 |
| ***Section Topic: The HR Career*** | | | | |
| 3 | Sept.12/13 | Day in the Life of an HR Professional (QUIZ) | Sam Dwinell, TI/  Will Murphy, Amgen | * Why We Love to Hate HR…and What HR Can Do About It (HBR) * Bright Shiny Objects and the Future of HR (HBR) * *Additional readings TBA* |
| 4 | Sept.19/20 | How to be an Effective Business Partner  (QUIZ)  ***Due: Project Team Name*** | Carolyn Whiteman, Shell  Al Berardi, McCarthy | * What Does Being a Strategic HR Business Partner Look Like in Practice? (ILR Student Works) * The HR Business Partner Model: Past Learnings and Future Challenges (HBR) * <https://workology.com/the-difference-between-an-hr-business-partner-just-hr/> * http://www.hrminsider.com/role-of-hr-business-partner/ |
| ***Section Topic: Working with Organized Labor*** | | | | |
| 5 | Sept.26/27 | Collective Bargaining and Contract Implementation (QUIZ) | Brian Zellner BP/ Cardador | Fossum, Ch. 14 |
| 6 | Oct.3/4 | Unions and Organizational Life (QUIZ)  ***Blog Post #1 Due*** | Cardador/  Dan Gilbert, LER | Gomez-Mejia, et al., Ch.15 |
| ***Section Topic: Complying with Government Regulations*** | | | | |
| 7 | Oct.10/11 | EEO & Affirmative Action (QUIZ)  ***Due: Project Topic and Organization*** | Cardador/  **Students (2)** | Gomez-Mejia, et al., Ch. 3 |
| 8 | Oct.17/18 | Diversity and Inclusion (QUIZ) | Cardador/  **Students (2)** | Gomez-Mejia, et al., Ch. 4 |

**Course Schedule, Topics, and Reading Assignments (cont’d)**

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| ***Section Topic: Solving Business Problems Involving People*** | | | | |
| 9 | Oct.24/25 | **Project Meetings** |  |  |
| 10 | Oct.31/  Nov.1 | Employee Motivation (QUIZ) | Cardador/  **Students (2)** | Robbins & Coulter, Ch. 16 |
| 11 | Nov.7/8 | Recruitment & Selection (QUIZ)  ***Blog Post #2 Due*** | Steve Conaton, P&G/  Cardador | Gomez-Mejia, et al., Ch. 5  https://www.fastcompany.com/3044094/how-changing-one-word-in-job-descriptions-can-lead-to-more-diverse-candid |
| 12 | Nov.14/15 | Appraising/Managing Performance (QUIZ) | Cardador/  **Students (2)** | Gomez-Mejia, et al., Ch. 7 |
|  | Nov.21/22 | ***No Class – Thanksgiving*** |  |  |
| 13 | Nov.28/29 | Work-Life Conflict and Balance (QUIZ) ***–*** | Cardador/  **Students (1)** | * Your work-life balance should be your company’s problem (HBR) * What one company learned by forcing their employees to use their vacation time (HBR) * Manage your work, manage your life (HBR) * PODCAST: Is work-life conflict reaching a tipping point? https://soundcloud.com/hbrideacast/394-is-work-family-conflict |
| ***Project Presentations*** | | | | |
| 14 | Dec.5/6 | **Presentations** | Cardador | None |
| 15 | Dec.12/13 | **Presentations (Papers Due)** | Cardador | None |