

**LER 591
Employment Relations Systems**

Spring 2020

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Course Hours: Wednesday 2PM-4:50 PM
Office Hours: by appointment or just stop by.

Course Overview

The goal of this course is to introduce you to key topics in, and perspectives on, the employment relationship. The course is designed to present the issues, concerns and functions of some of the principal actors in the employment relationship (e.g., employers, employees, unions, government). As part of our review of some of the key issues and concerns of these actors, we will examine historical and contemporary topics in human resources management and industrial relations.

The in-class format will include lecture on key points, as well as exercises, activities, and discussion where appropriate. The format is designed to give students the opportunity to delve into the topics in a hands-on and interactive way. Additionally, the class includes guest lectures from industry leaders who will share valuable practical insights. As soon-to-be professionals, your role is to shift from being consumers of knowledge to becoming evaluators and producers of knowledge. The class format will give you the opportunity to critically explore and analyze the topics covered.

Required Texts/Materials

All assigned readings/resources are available on Compass.

Student Evaluation

<i>Exam #1 (20%)</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Exam #2 (20%)</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Peer Teaching (10%)</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Group Paper - including peer evaluation (25%)</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Group Presentation (10%)</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Quizzes on Reading (7 total) + Memo (10%)</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Class Participation (5%)</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Total Points</i>	<i>400</i>

Description of Course Requirements

1. **Exams.** There will be 2 in-class, non-cumulative exams, each worth 80 points. Exam questions will be derived from class discussion and course readings. In total, the two exams represent 40% of your course grade. The exams will be closed book and comprised of essay, short answer, and multiple choice questions.
2. **Peer Teaching.** Students will take responsibility for presenting “HR/IR in the News” and facilitating discussion for their assigned week. Students will present in assigned groups of 2-3. In brief, student groups will be asked to: (1) Present an HR/IR topic or situation that is in the news and/or a “hot topic”; (2) analyze the topic/situation, placing particular emphasis on explaining what it means for HR/IR, employees and organizations, and why it matters; and (3) stimulate class discussion by posing a question for class discussion. The topic presentation should be 10 minutes long, and the facilitation of discussion should be 5 minutes long. We will discuss specific instructions for peer teaching in class. **Please note that there are NO MAKE-UPS for peer teaching. Please let me know by January 30th if your assigned date does not work for you. After January 30th, no changes to the schedule will be made.**
3. **Group “Consulting” Project - Paper and Presentation.** For this project, you will work outside of class in teams of 2-3 students. The *Group Consulting Project paper* is due in class on the final day of class – **May 6th**.

For this project, your group will access an organization (or a department/subunit within a larger organization) to identify an HR/IR challenge that the organization is facing and make informed recommendations for how they might effectively address the challenge. You are required to interview at least three (3) organizational members to conduct your assessment. You might also supplement your interview information with short surveys and/or archival materials (reports, website, media coverage, etc.) that describe the organization.

Key Paper Components

1. **Introduction:** Describe the organization and introduce your focal topic (i.e., the HR/IR challenge you are helping the organization address (make sure to explain the business problem are you trying to solve and why is it important to solve this problem – (no more than 1 page)
2. **Method:** Describe how you conducted your assessment (e.g., who you interviewed, how you structured your interviews, etc.) (no more than 1 page)
3. **Findings:** Describe what you found through your assessment – i.e., describe the main HR/IR challenges (no more than 2-3) that you identified through your interviews (2 pages)
4. **Recommendations:** Make recommendations for addressing the HR/IR challenge(s) you identified – tie your recommendations to the topics, theories and best practices discussed in the course (2-3 pages)
5. **Implementation Considerations:** Describe two considerations for implementation of your recommendations – i.e., what challenges should the organization anticipate as they implement your recommendations (1 page)
6. **Conclusion** (no more than a ½ page)

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 the key

paper components are addressed. An electronic copy of the paper should be submitted via Compass2g before the start of class on May 6th. To ensure fairness to all team members, each person will be asked to complete and turn in a “peer evaluation” of their teammates. The paper and peer evaluation are worth 25% of your grade (paper=20%, peer evaluation=5%).

Paper Presentation

The presentation will be done with your group. Each group will have approximately 12-15 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 an HR/IR manager, vice-president, or other key stakeholder. Professionalism is expected (dress, preparation, etc.). The format should follow that of the paper. The presentation is worth 10% of your grade.

- 4. Quizzes over Reading.*** There will be 8 in class quizzes which will cover content from the readings for that week. The quizzes will be given at the start of class and take place on class days noted on the syllabus. The quizzes will be comprised of multiple-choice and true-false questions and each quiz will be worth 5 points. Though you will take 8 quizzes, your grade will be based on your best 7 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, this will count as a dropped quiz score.** In addition, there will be a one-page memo (single-spaced), which will be worth 5 points. The memo is due on February 5th; submission through Compass2g. The quizzes over reading and the memo are worth 10% of your grade.
- 5. 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. You are always welcome to ask me how you’re doing on this dimension. Because you cannot participate in class exercises and activities 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 a documented emergency. Please email me ahead of time if you plan to miss class. In total, class participation is worth 5% of your grade.

Other Important Issues

Course is Unplugged

Though it is difficult to separate ourselves from our technology at times, students will be expected to stay off their computers and phones during class time.

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, cheating on quizzes/exams, 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 are always welcome to email me (eunmimun@illinois.edu), or come by my office, with questions or concerns about how the course is going. Also, if you require accommodation for a disability, please email me ASAP to set up an appointment to discuss your needs.

LER 591: Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

January 22: Course Overview & Introduction

Reading: Syllabus

January 29: Understanding Perspectives on the Employment Relationship (QUIZ 1)

Reading:

- Budd, J.W. (4th Edition) *Labor Relations: Striking a Balance*.
 - Ch. 1: Contemporary Labor Relations: Objectives, Practices and Challenges
 - Ch. 2: Labor Unions: Good or Bad?

February 5: The Human Face of Employment Relationship (NO CLASS; INDIVIDUAL SCREENING & ONE-PAGE MEMO)

Documentary:

- Cell Tower Deaths (<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/cell-tower-deaths/>)

February 12: Understanding the Role of Unions in Organizational Life (QUIZ 2 and Peer Teaching Group #1)

Reading:

- Kochan, T.A., Katz, H.C, & McKersie, R.B. (1994). *Transformation of American Industrial Relations*.
 - Ch. 2: Historical Evolution of the US Collective Bargaining System, 21-46.
 - Ch. 3: The Emergence of the Non-Union Industrial Relations System, 47-80.

February 19: Working with Organized Labor (QUIZ 3 and Peer Teaching Group #2)

Reading:

- Gomez-Mejia, L.R., Balkin, D.B., & Cardy, R.L. (2010). Ch. 15: Working with Organized Labor. In *Managing Human Resources* (6th edition)

February 26: Managing the Changing Forms of Employment (QUIZ 4 and Peer Teaching Group #3)

Reading:

- Cappelli, P. (1999). *The New Deal at Work: Managing the Market-Driven Workplace*.

- Ch. 1: The New Deal at Work, 18-37.
- Weil, D. (2014). *The Fissured Workplace*.
 - Ch. 5: The Subcontracted Workplace, 99-121.

March 4:

***** EXAM #1 *****

March 11: Supporting the Business: The Role of the HR Business Partner – Guest Speaker: Al Barardi, McCarthy Holdings, Inc.

Reading/Resources:

- “Trouble in Texas” Case Materials
- Cappelli, P. (2015). Why We Love to Hate HR...and What HR Can Do About It. *Harvard Business Review*.
- Vosburgh, R.M. (2007). The Evolution of HR: Developing HR as an Internal Organizational Consultant. *People and Strategy*.

March 18: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

**March 25: Complying with Government Regulation - EEOL
(QUIZ 5 and Peer Teaching Group #4)**

Reading:

- Gomez-Mejia, L.R., Balkin, D.B., & Cardy, R.L. (2010) -- Ch. 3: Understanding Equal Opportunity and the Legal Environment. In *Managing Human Resources*.

**April 1: Complying with Government Regulation – FMLA
(QUIZ 6 and Peer Teaching Group #5)**

Reading/Resources:

- Waldfogel, J. (2001). Family and Medical Leave: Evidence from the 2000 Surveys. *Monthly Labor Review*.
- FMLA: A Primer for HR. *SHRM*.
<https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/0318/pages/fmla-a-primer-for-hr.aspx>

**April 8: Managing Work-Life Balance Tensions
(QUIZ 7 and Peer Teaching Group #6)**

Reading/Resources:

- Thebaud, S. & Halcomb, L. (2019). One Step Forward? Advances and Setbacks on the Path Toward Gender Equality in Families and Work. *Sociology Compass*.

- Working fathers need balance too. *Harvard Business Review* podcast. <https://hbr.org/ideacast/2013/08/working-fathers-need-balance-t>
- Why we pretend to be workaholics. *Harvard Business Review* podcast. <https://hbr.org/ideacast/2015/05/why-we-pretend-to-be-workaholics.html>

April 15: Technology and HR
(QUIZ 8 and Peer Teaching Group #7)

Reading:

- Spotlight: HR Goes Agile article series (2018). *Harvard Business Review*.
- Guenole, N. and Feinzig, S. (2018). The Business Case for AI in HR. *IBM Smarter Workforce Institute*.

April 22: ***** EXAM #2 *****

*please note: students are responsible for guest speaker content and readings

April 27: Class Recap & Project Consultation

May 6: Presentations and *** GROUP PAPERS DUE ***
