

LER 590 CER

Comparative Employment Relations Systems

Fall 2020
Thursday 2 PM – 4:50 PM

LER 35/43

Professor: Eunmi Mun
Office: LER 213
Email: eunmimun@illinois.edu
Office hours: by appointment or just stop by.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course examines employment systems in selected developed, newly industrialized, and developing economies. We will discuss how distinctive labor market institutions emerged in the context of economic development and evolved through interactions with the global economy. Topics include management-labor relations, and the roles of firms, national governments, and international organizations in shaping employment systems. Emphasis will be placed on the analytical tools needed to make multi-country comparisons, to link theory and practice, and to understand the reasons for major changes in the nature of employment relations.

I have two goals for this course. First, I want to familiarize you with the different systems of employment relations and broaden the horizon of your knowledge about labor and employment relations. By doing so, I expect you to be able to confidently communicate the diverse ways of managing employment relations. Second, I want to help you apply the theoretical knowledge you obtained from the class to empirical realities. In other words, I hope that this class provides practical knowledge that you can use when faced with a context different from your own.

HYBRID CLASS:

I plan to organize this class in a hybrid format. Some of you will come to the physical classroom, while others will participate through the online platform. Given the high level of uncertainty due to the pandemic, I would like to keep the way we organize this hybrid class flexible. Once the enrolment is finalized, I will communicate with you about when we will have in-person classes and what the classes will look like.

For the first class meeting, I expect those of you who enrolled for in-person lecture/discussion to come to the LER classroom. In order to attend the class, you should follow the University safety rules (--see the course safety policy in this syllabus for further information). For those of you

who are taking this class online, please go to the Compass2g course website to find a link to the class meeting.

I plan to organize in-class activities that will help you participate in class discussion, but they may look very different from the kind of activities we used to have before the pandemic. We will experiment on new ways of interacting in class. I hope all the attempts work out well, but even if some don't, we will make a great deal of learning out of the experience.

COURSE EVALUATION:

- Attendance and participation: 20%
- In-class activities: 20%
- Individual presentation: 5%
- Mid-term exam: 20%
- Group project: 35% (including group presentation and final report)

REQUIRED TEXT:

Greg J. Bamber, Russell D. Lansbury, Nick Wailes, and Chris F. Wright. 2014.
International & Comparative Employment Relations (6th edition). Sage publications.

All readings listed in this syllabus (except for the chapters from the textbook) are available online for download or purchase. I may also post additional materials during the semester when there are new developments of interest to relevant topics. *It is your responsibility to check course website regularly.* I also encourage students to suggest items that may be of interest to the class.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Attendance and Participation (20%)

Class discussion is a critical ingredient in your learning for this course, for which we all bear collective responsibility. Class participation provides an opportunity to develop oral communication skills, to present your ideas concisely and persuasively, and to respond effectively to the comments of others. While I will lead class discussions, I do not intend to subject you to three hours of intense lecturing each week, but rather encourage you to offer insights and thoughts on the material assigned.

Most issues, cases and problems do not have one “right” answer, though some answers are more correct than others. Consequently, being “right” or “wrong” should not be your concern when participating. **I am interested in your point of view** and, if the consensus differs from your viewpoint, that in no way diminishes the value of your comments. Critically listen to the arguments of your fellow students and if you disagree, speak and explain how and why your

viewpoint differs. In general, I will assess class participation based on the *quality* of your contributions in class, and the professionalism of your conduct (attendance, punctuality, preparedness, and showing respect to all section members and their class contributions). The quality and frequency of contributions depend on a number of issues, such as one's ability to draw on course materials productively, to advance or sharpen in-class discussion and debate, and to use logic, precision, and evidence in making arguments. Therefore, speaking too much without adding value will be as detrimental to your grade as not speaking at all, and behaving in a disruptive manner will be most detrimental to your grade.

Attendance (10 points) Each student is allowed to miss no more than **ONE** class in the semester for any reason (sickness, interview, etc.). No excuse is needed but I appreciate an email notice. For any additional class you miss I will deduct **1.5** points from your final grade. Any tardiness/leaving class early will count as missing half a class.

Participation (10 points) -- Please do not confuse attendance with participation. While on-time attendance is important, active participation in the class discussion is evaluated separately. When you are in the physical classroom, you may ask questions to me, respond to other students' questions, and comment on student presentations. A full credit will be awarded to students who make a contribution that moves the discussion forward in an insightful way. When you attend the class through zoom, I encourage you to actively use the chat window to share thoughts. After each class, I will count the number of relevant participation in the chat window and use it to calculate your attendance scores.

Students who miss class without a valid excuse or behave in a disruptive way will receive “zero” participation point. If you have concerns about your ability to participate during class discussions, or are unaccustomed to participating in class, **please contact me immediately**. I can help you to improve your ability to participate, but only if you contact me **early** in the course for assistance.

In-Class Activities (20%)

In each class, I plan to organize at least one in-class activity. A brief report based on the activity is due by the end of the class. Late submission will not be accepted.

Individual Presentation on “Employment Issues in the Headlines” (5%)

For this assignment, students freely choose one of the three countries we will have covered by Week 7, find an article that discusses a current employment issue in the country, and make a presentation on it during the class time in Week 7. The presentation should NOT be longer than 5 minutes.

Mid-Term Exam (20%)

I will give you instructions in class.

Group Project (35%)

For this project, you will work outside of class in teams of 3-4 students. I ask each group to pick one of the countries that we will discuss between week 9 and week 13 and think about HR-related challenges a US (or any other national) company may face if it wants to do business in the country. Your presentation and final report should focus on the “challenges” as well as “HR strategies” to overcome those challenges. These two components must be included in the presentation and the final report.

The breakdown for the group project grade is as follows:

Group presentation (15 points): Each group will make a presentation in the week when their chosen country is discussed. After my lecture, I will give 20 minutes to the presenting group to present their materials and lead discussion. Since this is a group project, it is important that all team members participate. **I encourage the presenting group to contact me in advance to discuss their plan.**

Group final report (20 points): Each group will turn in one report. Reports should be **no more than 10 pages** in length, double-spaced, in 12-point font, and with margins of 1 inch. Papers will be evaluated based on how well the key paper components are addressed (please see below for the key components). An electronic copy of the paper should be submitted via Compass2g by the end of December 3rd. 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 20% of your grade (paper=15%, peer evaluation=5%).

I would like to emphasize that group projects are wonderful opportunities for you to develop your people skills. You will be working with others all the time in the workplace, and as an HR professional, you will need more people skills than others. In the final class, I will ask you to **evaluate your own and other members' contribution** to the group work. So, try to be a responsible and friendly team member.

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. **Overview of the Employment Relations System:** Describe the most important characteristics of the country’s employment relations system (no more than 2 pages)
3. **Challenges:** Describe the main HR/IR challenges a foreign company is likely to face (2 pages)
4. **Recommendations:** Make recommendations for addressing the HR/IR challenge(s) you identified (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)

Grading Scale

A+	97-100%
A	93-96.9%
A-	90-92.9%
B+	87-89.9%
B	83-86.9%
B-	80-82.9%
C+	77-79.9%
C	73-76.9%
C-	70-72.9%
D+	67-69.9%
D	63-66.9%
D-	60-62.9%
F	Below 60%

OTHER THINGS OF WHICH YOU SHOULD BE AWARE

The following lists some procedural items that are in your best individual interest and in the interest of the class as a whole. Please take this information into account. Your consideration will help make the course more worthwhile—and fun—to all participants!

Absence Policy

If you miss class, it is **your responsibility** to find out from your classmates what was covered, and to obtain copies of any handouts and/or assignments. Make-up exams will be given **only** if arranged well in advance, and if I believe that your situation warrants it. You are more likely to gain my sympathy if you contact me as soon as possible to let me know about catastrophic or unexpected events, instead of just not showing up.

Lateness and Courtesy

Arriving late or leaving early can be disruptive, particularly given the importance of student participation and in-class discussion in this course. Such behavior is also discourteous to the class when it makes it necessary to repeat material. Therefore, please come to class on time, and, if you must arrive late or leave early for a particular session, please let me know in advance.

Ethical Behavior

Cheating or other breaches of ethical behavior will not be tolerated. I do not wish to have to act on any unethical case. Nevertheless it is in the best interest of the class that such offenses not to be allowed to interfere with the learning process. University provisions for the punishment of unethical behavior are such that a guilty student may fail the course, be brought before the Disciplinary Committee, or be expelled.

Safety Policy

Following University policy, all students are required to engage in appropriate behavior to protect the health and safety of the community, including wearing a facial covering properly, maintaining social distance (at least 6 feet from others at all times), disinfecting the immediate seating area, and using hand sanitizer. Students are also required to follow the campus COVID-19 testing protocol.

Students who feel ill must not come to class. In addition, students who test positive for COVID-19 or have had an exposure that requires testing and/or quarantine must not attend class. The University will provide information to the instructor, in a manner that complies with privacy laws, about students in these latter categories. These students are judged to have excused absences for the class period and should contact the instructor via email about making up the work.

Students who fail to abide by these rules will first be asked to comply; if they refuse, they will be required to leave the classroom immediately. If a student is asked to leave the classroom, the non-compliant student will be judged to have an unexcused absence and reported to the Office for Student Conflict Resolution for disciplinary action. Cumulation of non-compliance complaints against a student may result in dismissal from the University.

Enrollment in this course indicates you have read and accepted the terms of this course outline.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Aug 27) Introduction

Introduction to the course

Week 2 (Sept 3) How to study employment relations from a comparative perspective

Chapter 1: Introduction in *ICER*.

Class activity – Let's share some stories of surprising norms regarding employment relations

Week 3 (Sept 10) Labor standards in the global market

Frederick Mayer and Gary Gereffi. 2010. "Regulation and Economic Globalization: Prospects and Limits of Private Governance," *Business and Politics* 12(3) Article 11.

Stephen J. Frenkel and Duncan Scott. 2001. "Compliance, Collaboration, and Codes of Labor Practice: The *adidas* Connection." *California Management Review*.

Class activity – Private vs. public regulations

Week 4 (Sept 17) Anglo-American LME: “Employment at will” in the US

Chapter 3 in *ICER*.

Peter Cappelli. 1999. *The New Deal at Work: Managing the Market-Driven Workplace*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press. pp.18-37.

PBS Frontline “The Pension Gamble” (<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/the-pension-gamble/>)

Class activity – Choosing between a defined benefit and defined contribution plan

Week 5 (Sept 24) Asian CME: Lifetime employment in Japan

Chapter 10 in *ICER*.

Chiaki Moriguchi and Hiroshi Ono. 2003. "Japanese Lifetime Employment: A Century's Perspective." In *Institutional Change in Japan: Why It Happens, Why It Doesn't*.

Boris Groysberg et al. 2018. "Womenomics in Japan." Harvard Business School Case 9-417-002.

Class activity – What can women do to break the glass ceiling in the Japanese workplace?

Week 6 (Oct 1) European CME: Co-determination in Germany

Chapter 8 in *ICER*.

Joel Rogers and Wolfgang Streeck. 1994. “Workplace Representation Overseas: The Works Councils Story,” in *Working Under Different Rules*, ed. by Richard Freeman, New York: Russell Sage Foundation. (READ pp. 97-117)

Alexandra Spitz-Oener. 2017. “The Real Reason the German Labor Market Is Booming.” *Harvard Business Review*.

Class activity – Can Americans use German VET model?

Week 7 (Oct 8) Individual Presentations

Week 8 (Oct 15) MID-TERM EXAM

Week 9 (Oct 22) UK

Chapter 2 in *ICER*.

Barbara Petrongolo. 2016. “Brexit and the UK labour market.” CentrePiece.

Week 10 (Oct 29) Denmark

Chapter 9 in *ICER*.

Ton Wilthagen. 2011. “Flexicurity: Riding Into the Future.” IESE-INSIGHT MAGAGINE.

Class Activity – What would flexicurity look like in the U.S.?

Week 11 (Nov 5) France

Chapter 7 in *ICER*.

Morten Bennedsen. 2017. “To Reduce Unemployment, French President Macron Reforms the Labour Market.” INSEAD case IN1452.

Week 12 (Nov 12) China

Chapter 12 in *ICER*.

Lynne Sharp Paine. 2008. "Haier Hefei Electronics Co. (A)." Harvard Business School Case 9-308-075.

Week 13 (Nov 19) India

Chapter 13 in *ICER*.

Debi S. Saini. 2016. "A Popular HR Chief Burned to Death: People Management Dynamics at the Indian Subsidiary of Suzuki LTD." Asian Case Research Centre. University of Hong Kong.

Week 15 (Nov 26) HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Week 16 (Dec 3) Final Paper Due