Work-Life Practices and Policies (3 credits): Explore the causes and consequences of conflicts between work, family, and other life commitments, and how these may be resolved.

Nature, Purpose and Objectives of the Course:

Welcome to the world of work-life! The topic has recently attracted much attention from researchers, the media, and policy-makers. The critical issues we cover concern how employment and life at home or away from work interact. The field exists largely because different disciplines have tried to explain the causes and consequences of the transformation that has occurred as mothers, whose role was mainly as homemaker 50 years ago, are now mainly employed. For these women and their partners, juggling work and family tends to be challenging because of the inherent time and role conflicts that are generated between family, personal and paid work commitments. Moreover, men and women have been gradually increasing somewhat their time commitments to household work, particularly care of young children. Thus, the two key institutions in society of the workplace and the family have become increasingly interlocking, in ways that appear irreversible. Yet, employer practices and public policies in the US have not quite kept up with the pace of such fundamental changes. Thus, the course will examine the problems as well as proposed solutions at both the public and private sector levels. It will focus not only the imbalances but the possibilities for facilitation, enhancement, fit or integration of work and non-work life and to promote generally less stressed and healthier individuals, families, organizations and society.

The LER field focuses on the innovative ways that families, organizations, managers, labor unions and various governmental bodies can better help to unburden those who are in a stage of the life cycle where they are attempting to juggle work, family and personal responsibilities and commitments. It also addresses improvement of organizational productivity, retention and work culture. The work-family or work-life field has over time expanded to cover a variety of family types, fathers as well as mothers, caregivers who provide elder care, those nearing retirement and those who are students and the role of ethnicity and race. It increasingly differentiates between the diversifying needs of individuals depending upon whether they are single or partnered, men or women, caring for very young children, teenagers or the elderly, and whether they are in traditional, neo-traditional or egalitarian type of households.

The course then has three main objectives. First, the course should provide an opportunity for intellectual discovery, to explore how academics examine employment and home life and what happens when they do not fit. The LER and work-life fields are by nature, multi-disciplinary. Thus, the course attempts to compare and contrast the approaches adopted by the fields of economics, sociology, industrial/organizational psychology, organizational behavior, human and family development, human resource management and labor and employment law to analyze the employment relationship, workplaces, families and uses of time. Thus, it will explore recent changes such as the demographics of the work force and trends in the economy and labor market, such as the quality of jobs, income inequality, overwork and how people tend to spend time. Second, the course should provide you with ways of thinking about your own life, as a prospective employee, supervisor, manager, owner, family member and responsible citizen. Critical reading, thinking and writing is central to accomplishing these objectives. This means effectively summarizing a specific reading briefly and critically analyzing whether or not the researcher(s) arguments were sound and their findings sensible. Third and finally, the course will consider the potential support systems of employers, families, labor unions and government legislation. This will include workplace flexibility—organizations’ formal work-life programs such as flextime, teleworking, compressed workweeks, paid or unpaid parental leave, part-time career options, paid time-off banks, child care, phased retirement, and the role of informal supports. It will consider the role of federal and state policies such as subsidies and taxes, maximum hours, anti-discrimination laws and paid family leaves. The course attempts to help students expand their understanding of broader trends in society, workplaces and households, the analytical tools to analyze such trends and the possible practical ways to promote a better facilitation of work and nonwork commitments.

Required Textbooks (abbreviations in parentheses):


Web Resources:

Sloan Work-Family Network Topic Pages (WFNet Topics), [http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/template.php?name=topicpages](http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/template.php?name=topicpages)

Sloan Work-Family Network Encyclopedia (WFNet Encycl), [http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/encyclopedia_entry.php?id=4256&area=All](http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/encyclopedia_entry.php?id=4256&area=All)


New American Foundation, Workforce and Family Program, [http://www.newamerica.net/programs/workforce_and_family](http://www.newamerica.net/programs/workforce_and_family)


Videos:

9 to 5 No Longer.
Juggling Work and Family.

You must join at least one of the following listservs:

"workfam," a newsgroup with a weekly summary of research and events in the field. Bob Drago moderates it: email to drago@psu.edu saying "put me on." [http://lser.la.psu.edu/workfam/history.htm](http://lser.la.psu.edu/workfam/history.htm)

"Workplace Flexibility 2010" [wf2010@law.georgetown.edu](mailto:wf2010@law.georgetown.edu), type in your email on left hand column, which sends a “News Roundup” about twice a week, such as: [http://www.law.georgetown.edu/workplaceflexibility2010/nr/2008/Jul/2/index.cfm](http://www.law.georgetown.edu/workplaceflexibility2010/nr/2008/Jul/2/index.cfm)

"HR Daily Advisor," BLR, [HRDailyAdvisor@mail55.subscribermail.com](mailto:HRDailyAdvisor@mail55.subscribermail.com), see for example: [http://hrdailyadvisor.blr.com/archive/2008/08/05/HR_Management_Retention_Employee_work_life_Balance_Flexible_Schedule.aspx](http://hrdailyadvisor.blr.com/archive/2008/08/05/HR_Management_Retention_Employee_work_life_Balance_Flexible_Schedule.aspx)


Assignments, Tests and Grading Weights:

2 exams (during class or online in Angel) (25% each) 50%
Paper: Business Case/Policy Case (with Theory and Evidence) 25%
Paper presentation (during Finals week) 5%
1 Synopsis of article(s) from the reading list 10%
Participation: Weekly reflection on readings assignment, quantity/quality of class discussion and feedback 10%
Total 100%

Grading Scale

Grading will be on the usual 90, 80, 70, 60 point scale, denoting the boundaries of A, B, C, D respectively. However, there will be some adjustment in the students’ favor: 100-90% = A; 90-87% = A- to B+; 87-80 = B; 80-77% = B- to C+; 77-61% = C; 61-50% = D.

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. If any student has a special need for accommodation, please let me know on the first day of class.

Weekly Reflection on Readings Assignment:

Each lesson has at least a few supplemental, recommended articles to read, which are posted up at our Angel course website. Pick one of the articles on the list of “supplemental” readings, a PKS Chapter OR a SloanWF Research Network entry. You can also use up to 2 relevant articles from the listservs of popular press above (cite it): Briefly summarize, in 2-4 sentences, what you learned from the findings of the article.

1) To improve the work-life balance of employees and/or organizational performance, as if you were their supervisor/manager;
2) To improve your own personal (or a household or family you know of personally), work-life balance.
Sometime after the break in each class, one student will be called upon to share their reflections with the rest of the class. You must turn in a hard copy of this assignment each class period (except for video), at the start of class. Also turn in a copy to the Drop Box, to make sure you get credit. The more you turn in the better your participation grade. Turn in 10 total to receive the maximum grade.

**Paper Assignment:**
At least 1700 words but no more than 1800 words total (6-7 pages), not including references and diagrams.
Pick one workplace practice or public policy that would address a specific work-life issue of your own choosing. The practice or policy must appear on the list of “Topics Pages” or in the “Encyclopedia” at the Sloan Work-Family Research Network (see below). Your assignment is to accomplish the following: (a) Advocate why you believe it would address a pressing need in the US work force, promote better worker, family, and social well-being and potential organizational performance (b) construct the “business case” to your employer’s skeptical executives (played by the rest of the class) to adopt or spread a certain practice. Recommend whether this practice should be available to all or just a subset of employees. The goal will be to demonstrate with theory (from at least two different disciplines) and evidence (from articles you select) that it may be worth the expense. (c) find a real, live case study of a similar policy that has somewhere been implemented. Try to provide an estimate of the costs, i.e., who ‘pays’ for any new practices or policies (including time and money or taxes), who should absorb those costs, potential pitfalls of implementing the practice or policy and a rough estimate of the “return on investment” (ROI); (d) finally, propose what can also (or instead) be done at the state or federal policy level, using the “public goods” case, for adopting or subsidizing the practice society-wide. You should focus in on just one or two of the possible outcomes for workers and employers (see list below). On the Monday of Final Exam week, you will present the findings of project in class, using powerpoint, whereupon you also will turn in the paper (but no written version of the presentation is required). Each student will have 5 minutes to present and one minute after that to take a challenging question or two from the professor. A half-page outline of the paper is due to the Drop Box an hour before classtime on November 3 (you will receive a bonus point or two added on to your paper score if you make this deadline and are sufficiently thorough). The Outline should include a minimum of three published references you plan to use and cite (you may also use LIAS’s library data bases, such as ProQuest or the Sloan Work Family Research Network’s “Literature Database.” At least one theoretical or statistical – based article will be expected. “Degree of difficulty” will be applied to the articles you select. The purpose of the outline describing the intended paper is mainly to ensure that you start off on the right track and have chosen a topic that is relevant and manageable. From the Sloan WF Network “Topics Pages,” here are some examples of:

### Practices:
- Breastfeeding and the Workplace
- Domestic Violence and the Workplace
- Elder Care at the Workplace
- Employer-Supported Child Care
- Family Leave
- Flexible Work Schedules
- Military Families
- Part-Time Work (reduced hours)
- Phased Retirement
- Shift Work (by choice)
- Telework
- Alternative Work Arrangements
- Nonstandard Work Schedules and Work-Family Issues
- Reduced Hours Work/Part-Time Work
- Unions and Work and Family Integration
- Others: Compressed workweeks, etc.

### Public Policies:
- Afterschool Care
- Dependent Care Tax Assistance
- Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA)—extensions to employees in smaller sized businesses, paid leave, etc.
- Fair Labor Standards Act

### Outcomes of focus:
- Health and Workplace Flexibility
- Gender and Use of Workplace Policies
- Generation X/Generation Y
- Low Wage Workers
- Older Workers Overview
- Overwork

- Spillover
- Asian Women and Work-Family Issues
- Boundary/Border Theory and Work-Family Integration
- Career Development of Women
- Cross-Generational Issues in Organizations
- Crossover of Stress and Strain between Spouses
- Discrimination Against Employees Who Are Also Family Caregivers
- Educational Careers, Returning to School and Work-Family Concerns
- Extending Work-Family Concepts to the Lives of Latinos
- Family Well-Being
- Fathers
- Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment
- Life Satisfaction
- Low-Level Jobs and Work-Family Studies
- Marital Satisfaction and the Work-Family Interface: An Overview
- Maternal Employment and Child Outcomes
- Measurement of Organizational Outcomes
- Perceived Usability of Work/Family Policies
- Recruitment
- Role Stress/Strain and Work-Family
- Sandwiched Generation
- Social Capital
- Work-Family Experiences and Physical Health: A Summary and Critical Review
- Work-Family Guilt
- Work-Family Policies and Gender Inequality at Work
- Work-Family Role Conflict
- Workaholism
One Synopsis/Summary of a Supplemental reading article:

For weeks #4-14, all students will take a turn leading a brief class discussion (usually during the last segment of class) on a particular article that you will select from our course Reading List of supplemental articles. Synopsis must be turned in by 5pm, an hour before class starts, to the Angel Drop Box. Sometime the last hour of class, two students will be scheduled to orally present their summary. You may use ONE powerpoint slide to augment your presentation, but this is not required.

1. What is (are) the authors’ main, key point(s) that is (are) connected to assigned textbook readings this week (or previous weeks)?
2. What appears to be the central question or hypothesis that guides or concerns this study?
3. What seems to be innovative or unique about it—the approach, the findings, etc.?
4. One new thing you learned from this article that is of practical use to you as a manager or employee.
5. One way in which you were positively impressed with the way the author(s) addressed the issue?
6. In what way were you disappointed (e.g., something omitted, misleading, covered inadequately)?
7. How might these findings be of practical use to you? To a workplace/organization?
8. Raise one specific question for the class to discuss that were provoked in your mind after reading this research.

Reading Assignments

Week 1 Aug. 25

Overview of the Course, Contrasting Disciplines’ Perspectives on Work and Work-Life, Causes vs. Consequences

Labor Economics; Human Resource Management (HRM), Sociology (Soc); Labor-Employment Relations (LER); Labor and Employment Law; Organizational Behavior (OB); Industrial Organization (I/O), Occupational Health Psychology (OHP).

BFW (Economics of Men, Women and Work): Chp 1;

D (Drago, Striking a Balance): Chp. 1, 2 (23-29).


(Sept 1. NO CLASS Labor Day)

Week 2 Sept. 8

Historical Perspectives: The Changing Work Force, Workplace and Family Diversities

BFW (Economics of Men, Women and Work): Chp. 2, Chp. 3 (70-75), Chp. 9 (289-310).

D (Striking a Balance): Chp. 2 (30-40).

PKS (The Work and Family Handbook):


“Family Diversity”


**Week 3 Sept. 15**

**Economics of Individual Labor Supply: Choice, Constraints, Hours of Work, Earnings and Non-Work Time**

*BFW: Chp. 3 (35-70), Chp. 4 (85-117).*


**Week 4 Sept. 22**

**Households’ Allocation of Time, Norms and Ideal Workers: Paid Work, Housework, Caregiving and Labor Force Participation Trends**

*BFW: Chp. 4 (118-134).*

*D: Chp. 3*


Mederer, Helen J. “Division of labor in two-earner homes: Task accomplishment versus household management.” *Journal of Marriage and the Family*; Feb 1993; 55, 1; pg. 133-


**Week 5 Sept. 29**

Labor Markets, Occupations, Industries, Job Trends, Gender, Opt-Out vs. Opt-In

BFW: Chp. 5 (136-147), Chp. 7 (211-218), Chp. 8 (267-280).

D: Chp. 4, 5, 6.

WFNet Encyclopedia

  - Job Insecurity

WFNet Topics:

  - Generation X/Generation Y
  - Older Workers
  - Phased Retirement


**Week 6 Oct. 6**

VIDEOS in class:

  - 9 to 5 No More,
  - Juggling Work and Family.

Business@Work: Work-Life Balance August 14, 2008, [http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/08_34/b4097036727134.htm?chan=magazine+channel_special+report](http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/08_34/b4097036727134.htm?chan=magazine+channel_special+report)

EXAM #1: opens on Angel at 8:30pm.
Week 7  Oct. 13

Work Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction, Happiness and Family Well Being: From Spillovers, Imbalance, Interference and Conflict to Facilitation, Enhancement, Fit and Integration

BFW: Chp. 9 (310-324).

PKS:


Sloan Work and Family Encyclopedia, Topics Pages:

  Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

  Life Satisfaction

  Boundary/Border Theory and Work-Family Integration

Spillover: Negative Impacts

  Family Well-Being

  Dual-Earner Couples

  Work-Family Experiences and Physical Health: A Summary and Critical Review*


Week 8  Oct. 20

Overwork, Workaholism, Work Engagement and Consequences on Families and Individuals

WFNet Topic:
* Overwork

Workaholism

Work Time and Gender Inequities


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**Week 9  Oct. 27**

**Low Wage Workers, Shift Workers, Teens, Working Students**

*WF Network Topics:*

**Nonstandard Work Schedules and Work-Family Issues**

*Sloan Work and Family Encyclopedia*

* Low Wage Workers

* Low-Level Jobs and Work-Family Studies

* Nonstandard Work Schedules and Work-Family Issues.

* Shift Work


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**Week 10  Nov. 3**

**Work-Life Practices I: Consequences for Organizations and Human Resource Management: Workplace Flexibility, Flexible Work Scheduling, Teleworking**

BFW: Chp. 10 (362-67).
D: Chp. 7 (119-134).

PKS:

Chp. 29. Ellen Ernst Kossek and Alyssa Friede “The Business Case: Managerial Perspectives on Work and the Family”

Chp. 34. K. Christensen, Leadership in Action: A Work and Family Agenda for the Future.

WFNet Topics:

* Flexible Work Schedules
* Telework
* Part-Time Work

Family-Friendly Workplace

Flexible Work Arrangements

Flextime

Measurement of Organizational Outcomes

Alternative Work Arrangements

Phased Retirement and Reduced Hours in Late Careers

Telecommuting


Thompson, Cynthia A, Managing the work-life balancing act: An introductory exercise, Journal of Management Education; Apr 2002; 26, 2; pg. 205-. 

**Week 11 Nov. 10**

**Work-Life Practices II: Consequences for Individuals—Health, Earnings and Flexibility in Work Time and Location**

**WFNet Topics:**

* Workplace Flexibility Health and Well Being

* Use of Workplace Policies, Gender
  
  **Family-Friendly Policies and Organizational Justice**
  
  **Cross-Generational Issues in Organizations**
  
  **Role Stress/Strain and Work-Family**
  
  **Perceived Usability of Work/Family Policies**


**Week 12 Nov. 17**

**Labor Unions, Collective Bargaining, Labor Organizing and Work-Life**

**BFW: Chp. 8 (281-87).**

**Sloan Work and Family Encyclopedia:**

**Unions and Work and Family Integration**


**EXAM #2: Opens on Angel, 8:30pm**

(Week 13 Thanking Break No Class)

**Week 14 Dec. 1**

**Public Policies I: Child Care, Day Care, Paid Sick Time, Paid Leave Time**

BFW: Chp. 10 (326-362).

D: Chp. 7 (135-152).

* Employer-Supported Child Care, Elder Care

http://www.takecarenet.org/WorkFamilyBOR.aspx


Legal Professions and Job Demands: Implications for Work/Life Balance

Reduced Hours Work/Part-Time Work


**Week 15 Dec 8**

**Policies II: National and State Legislation and Legal Perspectives on Work-Family**

* Family Leave Law, Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Fair Labor Standards Act

Family and Medical Leave Act

Family Leave: A Policy Concept Made in America

Jessica DeGroot, ThirdPath Institute http://www.thirdpath.org/
PKS:

Chp. 5. E.L. Kelly, Work-Family Policies: The United States in International Perspective.

Chp. 15. Mary C. Still and Joan C. Williams, “A Legal Perspective on Family Issues at Work”


Discrimination Against Employees Who Are Also Family Caregivers


**Week 16 Dec. 15**

6pm-7:50pm, IN CLASS

Student Term Paper Presentations