COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the firm-employee relationship from the standpoint of its impacts on economic efficiency and performance, a primary concern of business; and individual and family well-being, a key social welfare concern. In the eyes of many, the predominant orientation of contemporary U.S. for-profit workplaces – profit maximization on behalf of company owners – is fundamentally incompatible with concerns of social justice and the advancement of individual and social welfare. This course is organized to examine this assumption in detail, drawing upon a wide array of theoretical and practical perspectives from the fields of ethics, psychology, and sociology in addition to social work, public policy, and economics. It surveys additional literatures on work-life balance and conflict, as well as human resources management, to establish further theoretical and practical tools for understanding – and addressing – social welfare and efficiency concerns in modern workplaces.

During the term, we will consider 3 central reasons that companies should attempt to develop good relationships with their employees – to provide what we term “workplace opportunity.” The first is moral. Under this banner, firms ought to pursue the goal of good employee relations directly, by treating their employees morally, simply because it is the right thing to do. The second reason is instrumental. In this approach, companies should treat employees morally at least some of the time because such treatment will result in economic benefits for the firm – a manifestation of “enlightened self-interest.” Here we will explore the notion of “stakeholder cultures,” a concept grounded in morality, but with substantial economic implications. The third reason is again moral, but in a different sense. We will examine how the pursuit of “relational wealth” through meaningful and well-rewarded work for employees offers both direct and indirect social benefits, and may therefore represent an approach that is both moral and efficient.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the quarter, students will be able to:
1) explain why business has an important role to play in the welfare of employees from both moral and pragmatic perspectives;
2) encapsulate and present central themes and concerns raised by literatures in employment ethics, work-life balance and conflict, and strategic human resource management;
3) diagnose human resource management dilemmas arising as workplaces seek to balance organizational performance and worker well-being, as well as the private and public roles in these;
4) identify both private and public remedies to human resource management dilemmas that, as needed, enhance performance, well-being, or both; and
5) collaborate effectively with students and professionals across diverse fields and disciplines.

**COURSE FORMAT**

The course uses lecture, large and small group discussion, and regular guest speakers from the domains of business, academia, and social policy. We hope that a diverse group of students will enhance the integrative thrust of the course as well. Toward that end, Masters as well as Ph.D. students, and students across UW schools and departments, are welcome to enroll. To excel, students must come to each class session and to any group planning meetings prepared to contribute thoughtfully.

**DISABILITY SERVICES**

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disability Resources for Students, 448 Schmitz, 206-543-8924 (V/TTY). If you have a letter from the office of Disability Resources for Students (formerly Disabled Student Services) indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to the instructors so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for this class.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**Readings.** There is no text book for the course. Required course readings are contained in a reading packet available on UW e-reserves as well as in hard copy in both the SSW and Business libraries; the latter may be checked out for 2 hours at a time.

**Class participation.** Attendance and prompt arrival are mandatory; please plan accordingly. Your *presence and engagement* throughout the term – both verbally and bodily – will allow us to establish an intellectually and emotionally vital climate for learning. You will be rewarded for coming, coming on time, and coming prepared and willing to participate through making comments and asking questions. More than 1 unexcused absence, or notably poor in-class participation (e.g., consistently disengaged, disrespectful, dominating), will lead to a substantial grade reduction for the course.

**Written assignments.** The written assignments for this class are outlined below. **Pay careful attention to instructions with respect to handing in course assignments (i.e., via email attachment or hard copy in class).** Emailed attachments must be Word or PDF files.
1) **One-Page Papers (DUE at start of class Weeks 2, 3, 4, 6; 1 SS page).** These brief papers require you to think systematically about themes presented in class sessions (either before or after the session in question) or about themes that we are not able to cover in class. You are required to complete 2 of these. *Hand in 2 typed copies at the beginning of the class in question.*

2) **Personal Career Survey (DUE by Fri, April 6, 8pm).** This is a 2-part assignment designed to anchor your advancing skills in workplace practice in reflection upon your own employment experiences.
   a. **Abbreviated resume (maximum 1 SS page):** Provide a listing – job title and organization, city & state, paid/voluntary and full-time/part-time statuses – of the employment you have held since graduating from college.
   b. **Single job analysis (1-2 SS pages).** In this second part, you are to select one paid job you have held or currently hold for closer analysis. You are to examine in what ways, and to what extent, this job did and did not fulfill (a) your needs at the time as an employee, and (b) the needs of your employing organization. *(Be certain to clarify what each of those sets of needs was, as well – including professional, personal, family-related, etc.)*

   *You must submit this assignment via email to both instructors and a designated classmate.*

3) **Peer Response Paper (DUE Wed, April 18, by 8pm, 1 SS page).** You will read and provide a commentary on a classmate’s Personal Career Survey (and that person will in turn be responsible for reviewing yours). You should lend a different perspective on the writer’s self-assessment, offering potentially missed details or novel insights about details given. *You must submit this assignment via email to both instructors and to the student author.*

4) **Employment Field Study.** For this project, you will be assigned to a diverse group of 4 or 6 students from the class, as well as to a particular industry (retail, grocery, restaurant). As a first step, you and each of your other group members will *independently* conduct a brief interview with either an employer or an employee (suggestive interview protocols will be provided to you). Following this, each of you will share your interview write-ups with each other (via emailed attachment). Your group will jointly draft a summary document in which you highlight “findings” from your collection of interviews (this can, again, be completed over email as needed). Finally, your group will create a PowerPoint presentation – with a MAXIMUM of 5 slides allowable – conveying the content of your written summary.

   *Independent interview write-up: DUE to instructors and group members via email by Wednesday, May 9, 8pm*

   *Group summary & PowerPoints: DUE to instructors May 24 (hard copies in class)*

   *The grade for this assignment will be comprised of your independent interview write-up (60%) and your group’s written summary (25%) and your PowerPoint presentation (15%). Each student should hand in each of these three items.*

5) **In-Class Final Exam.** You may take this exam on one of three days – June 1, June 4, or June 5. Exact times will be established later. The exam is designed to test your understanding of the course material as a whole. Prior to the first exam date, you will get a list of all short-answer essay questions from which final exam questions will be selected verbatim.
COURSE-RELATED CONDUCT

Please review the University’s Student Conduct Code, accessible online at: http://www.washington.edu/faculty/facsenate/handbook/03-03-01.html. This document reviews expectations of students in regards to academic integrity and honesty in and beyond the classroom.

Members of our class – and sometimes the authors we read – will predictably share views at times that you disagree with. Please understand this: you will always learn more from people who have views different from you than those with whom you agree. Given that we are operating in a context of learning here, it will be as critical for us not to take offense as to not offend; and when we disagree, to respect the process and our classmates enough to engage productively.

Late paper policy. Penalties will be applied to assignments that are turned in late without advance arrangement with the instructor.

Incompletes. An incomplete may be given only when the student has been in full attendance and has done satisfactory work to within 2 weeks of the end of the quarter and has furnished proof satisfactory to the instructor that the work cannot be completed because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student’s control.

Plagiarism. UW takes plagiarism very seriously. Your written assignments should almost always be wholly in your own language. At any time when you use the words of another person verbatim or even paraphrase them, you must clearly give that person credit through proper APA citation format. This ethical rule applies equally to internet material. A useful tutorial on citations is available at: http://www.lib.umich.edu/ugl/searchpath/index.html (“Citing Sources”). APA citation format guidelines are available online at http://www.lib.umich.edu/ugl/guides/citationguide/acrobat/APA5thed.pdf. Students found to have plagiarized (including copying classmates’ work) will receive a failing grade for the course.

Cell phone and Blackberry policy. Since a great deal of learning from the course will take place during class sessions, we expect you to devote your full attention to classroom activities. Therefore, please keep your cell phones and Blackberries turned off or on their “silent” (not “vibrate”) settings during our meetings.

GRADING

Your final grade in the course will be composed of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-Page Papers</td>
<td>10% each (20% total)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Career Survey</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Response Paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Field Study</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Class Final Exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
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Grading criteria. Bases for instructors’ grading vary by assignment. For the One-Page Papers, emphasis will be on originality and clear, coherent explanation. For the Personal Career Survey and Peer Response Paper, the focus is on diligent and thorough self-reflection; “punting” these assignments will almost certainly yield an unsatisfactory grade. We believe that
students’ ability to become future workplace leaders rests heavily upon their ability to examine their previous roles, and their current identities, as both employers and employees, and to insightfully consider the equivalent experiences of others.

The Employment Field Study assignment grants you credit for effort to some extent – being required to get out into “the real world” and talk with “real people” effectively is work in itself, and must be conducted thoughtfully and respectfully; you are representing yourself and the UW in this. The grade will be further conditioned upon your thoroughness of interviewing, your insightfulness with respect to writing up your interview, and the effectiveness of your group in creating a collective summary and PowerPoint presentation noting key contrasts and similarities across your set of interviews.

The standards for the Final Exam are somewhat different than these. Here, you should offer evidence of your comprehension of the core theories and practical tools of the course, as well as an ability to extrapolate these to real-world situations. Analytical writing will be expected, as well as an indication that you have carefully absorbed the readings and in-class content.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wk 1 (3/29)</td>
<td>Course Introductions: Central concepts &amp; values in Business and Social Welfare, and introductions to the course and its members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 2 (4/5)</td>
<td>Corporate Governance, the Morality of the Market, and the Principal-Agent Model</td>
<td>Alternative Ethical Frameworks and Distributive Justice</td>
<td>Career Survey DUE BY Friday, April 6, 8pm (emailed)</td>
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<td>Wk 3 (4/12)</td>
<td>Class attends speaking engagement at Town Hall with U.S. Senator (D-NJ) Bill Bradley</td>
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<td>*Fri, 4/13</td>
<td>Private breakfast with Sen. Bradley at the UW Club, 8:30-10:00am</td>
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<td>Wk 4 (4/19)</td>
<td>Ethics and Success in Business</td>
<td>Speaker: David Rolf, President, Service Employees International Union, Local 775</td>
<td>Peer Review DUE BY Wednesday, April 18, 8pm (emailed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 5 (4/26)</td>
<td>The U.S. Employment Contract</td>
<td>Speaker: Terry Halverson, CEO, Metropolitan Markets</td>
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<td>Wk 6 (5/3)</td>
<td>Work-Life Interdependence</td>
<td>Speaker: Sally Jewell, CEO, REI</td>
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<td>Wk 7 (5/10)</td>
<td><strong>Speakers:</strong> State Representative Mary Lou Dickerson &amp; Marilyn Watkins, Policy Director, Economic Opportunity Institute (with Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, Founder, MomsRising.org)</td>
<td>Social Justice and Wealth Creation in Harmony?</td>
<td>Independent Interview Write-Up DUE BY Wednesday, May 9, 8pm (emailed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 10 (5/31)</td>
<td>Course Wrap-Up</td>
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<td>Final Exam: in-class June 1, 4, or 5</td>
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<td>TOPIC OUTLINE</td>
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<td><strong>Week 1 (March 29): Course Introductions</strong></td>
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In this first meeting of the class, we will introduce ourselves, our perspectives and our fields to each other – and discuss the vision fueling this unique curricular endeavor. Given the many “moving pieces” that are part of this undertaking, we will also spend some time reviewing sheer logistics: how the two professors co-teach, the role of course speakers, our pedagogical approach to required reading, the nature of the course assignments, and so forth.

**There are no required readings for this week.**
Week 2 (April 5): The Morality of the Market and Market Morality

In this session, we will examine the moral foundations that underpin the behavior of economic entities, corporations in particular, and evaluate the adequacy of those foundations. We will pay particular attention to situations in which “market morality” has potential detrimental effects on social welfare.

One-Page Paper: What are some of the possible negatives consequences for others when managers attempt to maximize profits for their firms (or maximize the wealth of their shareholders)? Identify 3 or 4 items and elaborate (in a paragraph) on each one. [Sample item: A firm might reduce employee benefits in order to increase its profits.]

REQUIRED READING:

Session 1 Corporate Governance, the Morality of the Market, and the Principal-Agent Model

Session 2 Alternative Ethical Frameworks and Distributive Justice
In this session, we will examine formulations of ethics are not always compatible with market morality and discuss their implications. One prominent theory of ethics – Rawlsian justice – stands in stark contrast to the utilitarian foundation of market capitalism.
Week 3 (April 12 and 13):  Two Special Engagements

This week brings two very unique events. Our Thursday evening class session will be spent attending a talk by former U.S. Senator (D-NJ) Bill Bradley at Town Hall. We will arrange carpooling as needed to be sure that all students have reliable transportation too and from the event. It will be free of charge, with reserved seating. **Attendance is required this evening.**

The next morning, from 8:30 to 10:00am at the UW University Club on campus, we will enjoy a private breakfast with Senator Bradley, providing us a more “up close,” in-depth opportunity to discuss issues facing contemporary U.S. employers and employees. We will be joined by a number of invited campus guests, including President Emmert. **Attendance is not required for students who are strictly unable to make arrangements to come, but it is strongly encouraged; we will expect all affirmative RSVPs to be honored.**

**Book description:** “Bill Bradley, former Senator, basketball star, and Presidential candidate, believes that we are at a moment when we are compelled to reevaluate our political system and leadership. **The New American Story** argues that a strong nation requires a stronger 2-party system that tells the truth to the American people. He talks about how the Republican party has built a solid pyramid with money, ideas, and the media at its base; whereas the Democratic party’s structure is an inverted pyramid with too much pressure for a charismatic leader to hold it up.”

**One-Page Paper:** From your reading of either Ehrenreich chapter (below), what is your most vivid impression of the situation faced by the individual(s) in the chapter? What larger social problem(s) is/are suggested by the chapter you read?

I. **TOWN HALL EVENT  (Thursday, 4/12):  7:30pm, Great Hall room**

**DRIVING FROM THE NORTH:**
Town Hall is located at Eighth Avenue & Seneca Street. Take I-5 to the James St. exit. Take the first left after exiting (Cherry St.). Stay in the right hand lane and continue to the next traffic light (Seventh Ave.); turn left and continue north past Madison St. one block to Spring St. Town Hall is at Eighth Ave. between Spring and Seneca Sts.

II. **UNIVERSITY CLUB EVENT  (Friday, 4/13):  8:30-10:00am, UW Club**
The Club is located across the street (Stevens Way) from the HUB on the UW Seattle campus. A free buffet breakfast will be served.

**Required reading (due for Thursday night):**
Week 4 (April 19): Ethics and Success in Business

Many managers feel that they cannot simultaneously “be good” and “do well.” They reason that they must take advantage of opportunities to exploit others in order to survive in business. They apply the sentiments of former New York Giants manager Leo Durocher (“Nice guys finish last.”) to the business world. In this session, we will examine this assumption in detail.

[NOTE: Other Leo Durocher quotes, many on the same theme, can be found at: www.brainyquotes.com/quotes/authors/l/leo_durocher.html]

One-Page Paper: 1) In what ways can/does the existence of mutual trust (I trust you; you trust me; we both behave in a trustworthy manner) result in improved economic outcomes? Put differently, in what ways does trust make the economic system work better? And 2) how might “being trustworthy” benefit an individual economically?

Required reading:

Speaker: David Rolf, President, Service Employees International Union, Local 775 (2nd half)

Week 5 (April 26): The U.S. Employment Contract

In this session, we consider different models of the relationship between employers and their employees, as well as the evolving meaning of work for individuals over their developmental course personally and professionally.

Required reading:

Speaker: Terry Halverson, CEO, Metropolitan Markets (2nd half)
Week 6 (May 3):  Work-Life Interdependence

This week, we survey some of the literature on work-life conflict: that is, ways that employment can negatively affect family and community life, and obligations and resources represented by families and communities can, conversely, place strains on work participation. We are interested not in how standard this dynamic is. Far from it, we will be considering the notable variation in the interplay of work and life across different jobs, tiers, organizations, and family and community realities, and the influential role of structures/institutions in this interplay.

One-Page Paper: How do the domains of employment and life – including family, community, and civic engagement – conflict and complement (discuss 2 examples). How might these interplays differ by (a) lower-level versus professional-level job status or (b) worker’s life course phase (young/new versus older/near-retirement) (pick (a) or (b) to develop).

REQUIRED READING:

Speaker: Sally Jewell, CEO, REI (2nd half)

Week 7 (May 10): Social Justice and Wealth Creation in Harmony?

In this session, we will take a closer look at the circumstances under which a genuine regard for the interests of others, particularly employees, leads to competitive advantage and, in turn, to financial success for corporations.

REQUIRED READING:

Speakers: State Representative Mary Lou Dickerson
Marilyn Watkins, Policy Director, Economic Opportunity Institute
*Joined by Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, Founder, MomsRising.org* (2nd half)
Week 8 (May 17): The “Whys” and “Hows” of Creating Relational Wealth

Session 1  Creating and Preserving Relational Wealth
In this session, we will elaborate on the idea that firms can be ethical with respect to their stakeholders (particularly their employees) and be financially successful by focusing on the creation and preservation of relational wealth.

REQUIRED READING:

Session 2  Tools for Performance and Well-Being: Strategic HR Management
In this session, we consider the tools available for designing and rewarding employment – through what has alternately been termed “strategic human resource management” and “high commitment” or “high performance” practices.

REQUIRED READING:
### Week 9 (May 24): Tools for Performance and Well-Being, continued

**Session 1**  
**The Roles of Governments and Unions**

In this session, we introduce – for continued consideration throughout the rest of the term – the roles of government and unions in employment relations. By examining both historical change within the U.S. context and cross-national differences in expectations of the public/collective role in supporting employment, we equip ourselves to engage the ongoing debate about how these institutions do, and might, shape the workplace.

**REQUIRED READING:**
- “Mother Load”: A special report of *The American Prospect* (March 2007): Draut, T. The mother of all issues: What it will take to put work and family on the national agenda.

**Session 2**  
**Student Presentations of Field Projects**

### Week 10 (May 31): Course Wrap-Up – Creating “Performance & People Balancing” Employment

In this session, we will aim to pull the major themes of the class together in the interest of demonstrating a coherent theme. We will review the contributions of our guest speakers as well as those of the instructors. If there is enough time, we may try to discuss issues raised by readings that, while related to the focus of the course, were not covered in our class sessions.

**REQUIRED READING:**
- Review readings assigned earlier in the quarter:
  - Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*
  - Ehrenreich, *Bait and Switch*
  - Pfeffer, “Working Alone”