PhD Program in Business Administration & Management

Academic Year 2020/2021

40251 - LABOR RELATIONS & HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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Course Description

The purpose of this PhD course is to examine the role of human resource management (HRM) as a constitutive element of organizations. It is grounded on the different theories of the firm and of the labor market and finds its antecedents in the literature on labor economics and labor relations as the foundations of strategic human capital and HRM research. It examines the core topics in human resource management research as located at the crossroads of labor economics, organizational sociology, organizational economics, labor relations theory, political economy and the strategic management of human capital.

The course focuses on the “macro” side of human resource management within organizations and more specifically on its strategic aspect. Research on human resource policies and practices (e.g., selection, training, performance management, job design, compensation etc.) will be touched upon but will not be the primary focus of the course. Overall, the aim of the course is to understand how firms invest in human capital and use human resource management practices to enhance individual and organizational performance.

The course is divided into three main sections.

Section 1, after summarizing relevant labor economics theory, introduces foundational research in industrial relations, employment systems and internal labor market theory as the foundations of modern strategic human resource management and strategic human capital research.

Section 2 builds on human capital theory and illustrates key topics in strategic human capital research focusing on the relationships with the theory of the firm, strategic heterogeneity and firm performance.

Section 3 deals with human resource management research as developed during the last four decades and touches upon strategic human resource management, high involvement/investment/performance human resource systems and practices (including hiring, training, work organization, careers and compensation).

The course topics are analyzed from different theoretical perspectives including organizational economics, institutional theory and the resource based view of the firm. Different approaches to HRM research (both conceptual development and empirical work) are also illustrated.

Grading

Participation (20%): The quality of PhD level courses is directly related to the quality of class discussion. Consequently, class participation will be graded on each student’s degree of quality contribution toward class discussions. To ensure an informed discussion, students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss (not simply summarize) each article. For each session there will be a specific list of required readings (the required readings are marked with a ‘*’ in the readings list). This list blends some “classics” or “must read” in the field with other pieces that better exemplify current or “hot” topics. Students must read all the required readings (3 or 4 papers per session) and be able to provide a summary of them upon request. A list of suggested/additional readings is also provided for those students interested in pursuing a topic in more detail. Students are encouraged, although not required, to read beyond the assigned readings and to bring to the class’s attention research that informs and explores the day’s issues. In preparing for class discussion, students may want to ask themselves some of the following questions:

• What is interesting about this article?
• What are the interesting research questions in this area of research?
• What are the strengths and weaknesses of the conceptual arguments and assumptions of this article?
• What are the strengths and weaknesses of the methodological approach used to test the research questions in this article?
• How does this article fit in with other articles on the topic?
• If you were doing research in the same content area as the article, what would you do next or differently?
• What does this article “have to do” with SHRM (strategic human resource management) and SHC (strategic human capital) research?

In addition, for each class session a discussion leader/class facilitator will be assigned to help clarify key concepts, identify controversial or interesting issues, point out additional articles of particular relevance, and so on. Though all students are strongly encouraged to come to class with questions and issues to discuss, it is the role of the facilitator to prepare 2 or 3 critical questions per article for discussion. However, it is NOT the role of the facilitator to lead the entire discussion — all students are expected to participate equally. We will determine who will be the facilitators for each class during the first class session. Depending on class size, students will be expected to lead one or more class sessions.

Article Critiques (30% - 5 critiques each worth 6% each): To facilitate learning and scholarship, each student will conduct 5 (five) critical evaluations of articles that we read for class. Articles can be chosen among those assigned to any session between 2 and 6. These 2-page critiques will be based on your assessment of the theoretical and methodological quality of an article that is assigned for class reading. Critiques cannot refer to articles of the same session. The articles that you choose will be up to you. These critiques will be collected at the beginning of the session/class. In general, these critiques should not be summaries or a re-hash of each article (we all have read the articles already); instead a good critique identifies the strengths and weaknesses of an article in terms of its contribution to the literature and identifies future research needs and opportunities.

Research Paper draft (50%): Each student will investigate a topic of his/her choice in HRM/SHC and draft a paper that integrates past research and theory with new ideas about an issue. Originality, thoroughness, and scholarly thinking are the most important criteria for the research paper. These papers may involve a focused review of the literature on a specific topic, data analysis or a conceptual contribution to the field of SHC/HRM. Whatever the nature of the research paper and its stage of development/completion at the deadline, it must be clearly crafted; this is an opportunity to develop a paper that might become of publishable quality. All papers should be written in a format and structure suitable for submission to the top management journals (Academy of Management Review, Academy of Management Journal, Administrative Science Quarterly, Journal of Management, Journal of Applied Psychology, Strategic Management Journal etc.) or to the top field journals (Personnel Psychology, Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Industrial Relations, Human Resource Management, British Journal of Industrial Relations, International Journal of Human Resource Management) and should not exceed 30 pages. Presentations will be made by each student during the final session and will follow the format of the academy of management meetings conference. The deadlines for the research paper are listed below.

I. Research Paper Proposals: A 3-5-page research paper proposal is due by Wednesday, December 9, 2020. Each student will present her/his research paper proposal in class (session 6) when I will provide you feedback. The other attending students will provide feedback as well during the proposal presentation session.

II. First Drafts: A first draft of the research paper is due by Tuesday, January 12, 2021. I will ask one student in the class to review your paper (this will simulate an actual review that a manuscript would go through when submitted for publication). Reviews (1-pager) are due by Tuesday January 19, 2021 and should be sent to the paper author and to me via e-mail.

III. Final Drafts: Final due date is Tuesday January 26, 2021 when papers will be presented and discussed. Each student must also submit a short written response to the reviewer’s comments with their final draft. I will also provide my feedback to each student during the presentation/discussion session.
**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>• Labor markets and relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon November 2 2020</td>
<td>o Course Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.30 – 4.00 pm</td>
<td>o Labor market theories: a review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15 – 5.45 pm</td>
<td>o Labor relations studies: a historical/comparative perspective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>• Employment systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon November 9 2020</td>
<td>o Internal labor markets</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.30 – 4.00 pm</td>
<td>o Intra and inter-organizational careers and employee mobility</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.15 – 5.45 pm</td>
<td>o Flexible work, the “fissured” workplace, and blended workforces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>• Strategic human capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon November 16 2020</td>
<td>o Human capital resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.30 – 4.00 pm</td>
<td>o General and Firm-specific human capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.15 – 5.45 pm</td>
<td>o Individuals, teams and performance</td>
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<td>o Human capital inflows and outflows: Turnover models</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td>• HRM systems and performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon November 23 2020</td>
<td>o High performance human resource practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.30 – 4.00 pm</td>
<td>o High involvement/investment human resource practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.15 – 5.45 pm</td>
<td>o Main effects, moderators and mediators</td>
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<td>o A critical perspective</td>
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<td>Session 5</td>
<td>• Methods and approaches in SHRM &amp; SHC Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon November 30 2020</td>
<td>o Qualitative and set-theoretic studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.30 – 4.00 pm</td>
<td>o Endogeneity issues and identification strategies in quantitative studies</td>
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<td>4.15 – 5.45 pm</td>
<td>o Experiments</td>
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<td>Session 6</td>
<td>• Progressive HRM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed December 9 2020</td>
<td>o HRM, CSR and sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.30 – 4.00 pm</td>
<td>o HRM and inequality outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.15 – 5.45 pm</td>
<td>• Paper proposal presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Session</td>
<td>• Paper presentation and discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues January 26 2021</td>
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<td>2.00 – 5.45 pm</td>
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<tr>
<th>Due date/ deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Every session (2 to 6)</td>
<td>Article Critique (2-pager)</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 9 2020</td>
<td>Research paper proposal (3-pager)</td>
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<td>January 12 2021</td>
<td>Research paper draft</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 19 2021</td>
<td>Classmate’s research paper review</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 26 2021</td>
<td>Final paper, presentation and discussion (Individual feedback from instructor)</td>
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Reading List

Session 1: Labor markets and relations

**Required Readings:**

**Additional Readings:**


Session 2: Internal labor markets

**Required Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**


**Session 3: Strategic human capital**

**Required Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**

Management, 27(6), 661-678.


**Session 4: Performance Implications of HRM systems**

**Required Readings:**

Additional Readings:


**Session 5: Methodological approaches and issues in SHRM & SHC Research**

**Required Readings:**

**Additional Readings:**


**Session 6: Progressive HRM**

**Required Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**


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**Final Session: Paper presentation and discussion**

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**Additional Books of interest**


