STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & HUMAN CAPITAL

Period: a.y. 2022/23 – 1 sem.  
Office Hours: by appointment

Instructor:  
Prof. Arnaldo Camuffo  
Dept. of Mgmt. & Tech. - Room 4-E2-07  
araldo.camuffo@unibocconi.it

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 firms and labor markets 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 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. The aim of the course is to understand how firms acquire and invest in human capital and use human resource management practices to ensure value creation and value capture by multiple stakeholders.

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 markets 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, performance management, employee development and 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 proposal that integrates past research and theory with new ideas about an issue. Originality, thoroughness, and scholarly thinking are the most important criteria for a research paper. These paper proposals may involve a focused review of the literature on a specific topic, a research design, a plan for 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 proposal 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 Ideas**: A 3-5-page research paper proposal is due by Monday, December 12, 2022. Each student will present her/his research paper proposal in class (session 6). The other attending students and the instructor will provide feedback during the proposal presentation session.

II. **First Drafts of paper proposals**: A first draft of the research paper is due by Sunday, January 15, 2023. 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 Sunday January 22, 2023 and should be sent to the paper author and to me via e-mail.

III. **Final Drafts of paper proposals**: Final due date is Sunday January 29, 2023. Papers will then be presented and discussed in a dedicated session on Monday, January 30, 2023. 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.

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**Faculty Bio.**

## Course Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Session/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon November 7 2021</td>
<td>• Labor markets and relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.00 – 4.30 pm</td>
<td>o Course Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.50 – 6.20 pm</td>
<td>o Labor market theories: a review</td>
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<td>o Labor relations studies: a historical/comparative perspective</td>
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<td><strong>Session 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon November 14 2021</td>
<td>• Employment systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.00 – 4.30 pm</td>
<td>o Internal labor markets</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.50 – 6.20 pm</td>
<td>o Intra and inter-organizational careers and employee mobility</td>
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<td>o Flexible work, the “fissured” workplace, and blended workforces</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Session 3</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon November 21 2021</td>
<td>• Strategic human capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.00 – 4.30 pm</td>
<td>o Human capital resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.50 – 6.20 pm</td>
<td>o General and Firm-specific human capital</td>
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<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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<td><strong>Session 4</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon November 28 2022</td>
<td>• HRM systems and performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.00 – 4.30 pm</td>
<td>o High performance human resource practices</td>
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<td>4.50 – 6.20 pm</td>
<td>o High involvement/investment human resource practices</td>
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<td>o Main effects, moderators and mediators</td>
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<td>o A critical perspective</td>
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<td><strong>Session 5</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed December 5 2022</td>
<td>• Methods and approaches in SHRM &amp; SHC Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.00 – 4.30 pm</td>
<td>o Qualitative and set-theoretic studies</td>
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<td>4.50 – 6.20 pm</td>
<td>o Endogeneity issues and identification strategies in quantitative studies</td>
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<td>o Experiments</td>
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<td><strong>Session 6</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon December 12 2022</td>
<td>• Progressive HRM</td>
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<td>3.00 – 4.30 pm</td>
<td>o HRM, CSR and sustainability</td>
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<td>4.50 – 6.20 pm</td>
<td>o HRM and inequality outcomes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Paper proposal presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Final Session</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon January 30 2023</td>
<td>• Paper presentation and discussion</td>
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<td>2.00 - 4.00 pm</td>
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**Due date/ deadline**

<table>
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<th>Deliverable</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 12, 2022</td>
<td>Research paper proposal idea (3-pager)</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 15, 2023</td>
<td>Research paper proposal draft</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 22, 2023</td>
<td>Classmate’s research paper proposal review</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 30, 2023</td>
<td>Final paper proposal, presentation and discussion</td>
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Reading List

Session 1: Labor markets and relations

**Required Readings:**

**Additional Readings:**


Session 2: Internal labor markets, external labor markets and HR practices

**Required Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**


**Session 3: Strategic human capital**

**Required Readings:**

**Additional Readings:**


**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:**


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**Session 6: Progressive HRM**

**Required Readings:**


**Additional Readings:**


relationship and inequality: How and why changes in employment practices are reshaping rewards in organizations. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1), 61-121.

- De Stefano, F., Bagdadli, S., Camuffo, A., (2017), The HR Role In Corporate Social Responsibility And Sustainability: A Boundary Shifting Literature Review, *Human Resource Management*

### Final Session: Paper presentation and discussion

### Additional Books of interest