

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**  
**HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT UNIT**

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**HR2002 - Human Capital in Organizations**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This multi-disciplinary course invites students to examine, from different perspectives, some major themes pertaining to the management of human capital in a knowledge-intensive world of industry today.

The course targets students who wish to seek some foundational knowledge of the principles of human interactions in the workplace. Departing from the more conventional approaches, students will examine the dynamics of and constraints to individual and organizational behaviours in the context of the challenges posed by an increasingly competitive global landscape.

Besides looking into the structure of industrial organizations; individual behaviours, thoughts and feelings of organizational members are also explored with reference to social processes. The themes covered in the course would provide students with a range of concepts with which to make sense of the human resource challenges arising out of companies' needs to strategically adapt themselves to the forces of technological change and business imperatives.

Some of the issues that this course will explore include areas like how firms are accommodating themselves to business imperatives by re-structuring their operational processes and value chains; industrial relations in the new economy; and the management of emotions and perceptions in an increasingly diverse work place environment. Finally, in the light of all these, students would be invited to critically evaluate how multiple 'intelligences' – emotional, social and professional – can be developed and tapped upon to help them effectively carry out the multi-faceted roles that they are oftentimes called upon to fulfil.

## OBJECTIVES

This module seeks to re-orientate students' perceptions and thinking in an era of new business paradigms. Thus, the module is designed to:

- examine how individuals may respond to global forces that impact technology, organizations and people;
- provide a framework for understanding the structure of industrial organizations and how the interactions of the different components may influence an individual's performance in organizations;
- enhance one's understanding and appreciation of working with diverse individuals,
- develop an understanding of and insights into the importance of managing one's roles and performances in negotiating through the web of organizational life; and
- rethink one's mental models of one's roles, performances and contributions in the organizations of today.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### 1. Globalization and Its Effects on the Workplace

In the globalized workplace, everyone must respond to a rapidly changing society and constantly shifting demands and opportunities. Information and technological change are modifying organizations and bringing added emphasis on knowledge and knowledge workers. Because knowledge constantly makes itself obsolete, the pressure is on individuals to adopt a learning ethic and continually apply new knowledge to problems and opportunities.

- **Globalization, technology and customization**
- **Changing paradigms of management**

### 2. Structure of Organizations

This segment of the course will examine how organizations strategically respond to the demands of the globalized environment by creating a value-enhancing supply chain process to give them a cutting edge either in terms of superior technology, efficiency, fast-response time, innovation, or great customer service. In this connection, we will be looking at various ways by which organizations structure their operational processes to create value for their customers, with an emphasis on how jobs are best designed to support those processes and its impact on the productivity, morale, safety, and effectiveness of workers. This part of the course will also look at the ways by which the

varied relationships involved in the work process impact on the effectiveness of operational processes and the supply chain. References and illustrations to these concepts will be made by looking at how industrial organizations are structured in the context of the contemporary East Asian environment.

- **Business Basics: Strategy, Supply Chain, Structure & Culture**
- **Business Operations: Processes, Productivity and Innovation**
- **Business Management: Systems vs. People**

### **3. People and Processes in Organizations**

An important part of organizational life involves working with and through people. In the context of changing business paradigms, the ability to negotiate through the web of organizational hierarchies and complexities becomes paramount to one's success at work. Hence, this segment emphasizes on people and their behavioural and emotional interactions with one another at the workplace. It would explore the range of social and emotional competencies required by individuals to perform and contribute effectively in one's roles as a peer, team member and leader. Central to the discussion of the segment would be emphases on theories and concepts that would enable students to find new perspectives and approaches in managing relationships in organizations. In addition, the intricacies of managing the politics of interactions would be investigated through exploring the dynamics of peer-to-peer; superior-to-subordinate and customer-to-supplier interactions. Without a doubt, an amalgamation of the know-how to manage one's emotion, an ability to negotiate role-identities and the awareness to recognize the significance of one's roles in an organization, would be a catalyst to creating synergy at work and achieving a satisfactory level of work performance.

- **Dynamics of Relationships in Organizations: Hierarchies & Roles**
- **Diversity in Interactions: Diversity Challenges & Reframing Diversity**
- **Workplace Interactions: Interpersonal Dynamics**

### **4. The Self in Organizations**

This segment examines the multifaceted tasks and challenges encountered by individuals in an organizational setting. As organizations strive to become more competitive in the global business environment, individuals are expected to manage new forms of pressures and relationships. Hence, the ability to make sense of and develop one's capabilities is of utmost importance to perform effectively in the highly competitive work place of today. Change is inevitable, and the premium is on the adaptability of the individual to make the transitions through changes more effectively and easily. In the light of these unprecedented demands on students whose entry to the workplace is imminent, this segment of the module will focus on the individual's role in managing change, the imperative to learn and manage knowledge; and his/her strategic plan and choices in managing his/her career development. The need to

develop multiple competencies as well as reframe one's mental models to remain relevant is also expounded on to encourage students to think and consider beyond his/her current role identities.

- **Managing Change and Learning**
- **Exploring Career: Development and Professionalism**
- **Understanding Competencies and Reframing Mental Models**

#### **TEACHING METHODOLOGY**

The teaching format of this module is via sectional teaching. The lecturer takes the small group for both 'lectures' and 'tutorials'. This teaching format is designed to be flexible, interactive and to create an environment that supports active and creative learning. Students are urged to make the best use of this small group teaching, to cultivate an active learning mindset, to be involved and participative. The flexible philosophy of this module means that individual lecturers may order the 4 major components of the curriculum according to their rationale, so that there may be chronological differences among classes. The intellectual dimension, however, is consistent.

#### **ASSESSMENTS**

Students will be assessed on the basis of both individual and group work. Continual assessments account for 50% of the final grade, while the final open-book examination makes up the other 50%.

##### **I. Continuous Assessments (50%)**

There will be 3 continuous assessments as follows:

|     |                     |     |
|-----|---------------------|-----|
| CA1 | Class Participation | 10% |
| CA2 | Reflection Paper    | 10% |
| CA3 | Group Project       | 30% |

Details of the continuous assessments are as follows:

##### **CA1 Class Participation (10%)**

For class participation, marks will be awarded based on active and quality contributions to class discussion as well as for demonstrating good learning attitudes.

##### **CA2 Reflection Paper (10%)**

CA2 will be a reflection paper on each student's learning experiences during the course.

The aim of this reflection paper is to allow students to critically evaluate, and reflect upon the theories and concepts learnt in the first half of the module, and discuss how the newly acquired knowledge has influenced their understanding of human relations in the context of one's personal experiences.

Students should seek to provide insights, critical opinions, and applications of concepts learned. **Each student's ability to discuss the challenges and issues of applying the theories and concepts introduced in the module to his personal experiences would be highly valued in the grading of this reflection paper.**

Each write-up should not exceed **800 words**.

The deadline for submission is latest by the **8th session**.

### **CA3 Group Project (30%)**

This is a group assessment. The group should choose an industry or organization and research on it.

Students should seek to:

- Gather information on developments within an industry or a certain organization;
- Analyze the information collected based on concepts learnt from the sessions under Structure of Organizations;
- Draw implications for other relevant topics covered in the module, for examples, career, leadership, learning, or dynamics of relationships.

The group may refer to journals, books and periodicals.

The size of each group should be about 5 to 7 members, depending on the class size. Please check with your lecturer for more details on groupings for the project.

**Mere regurgitation of lecture materials or reproduction from reference sources is not encouraged.** Students should seek to add value via new insights, critical opinions, and applications of concepts learned.

The criteria for assessment would include your ability to:

- a. introduce new content and insights pertaining to the topic you have chosen to study;
- b. apply and evaluate your experiences, personal and/or organizational, in the context of the topic you have chosen to study; and

- c. synthesize information collected, either through primary or secondary research, to add new insights to the discussion of the topic you have chosen to study.

As a guide, the methodologies that could be used for the group project may include field studies, interviews, surveys, focus group discussions, content analysis, etc...

The group will make a 15-minute presentation and submit a written report not exceeding 3000 words, excluding references. The group presentation carries a weightage of 15% and the group report, 15%.

The group report is to be submitted **latest by 5.30 p.m on Session 11**. Submissions that are later than the deadline may not be granted credits.

Presentations will take place during **Session 12 and 13**, please refer to your lecturer for more details.

All group members must be present on the day of presentation.

### **References for Library Research**

The following journals and periodicals provide a wealth of information which students could use in their further reading and research:

Academy of Management Journal, Academy of Management Review,  
Administrative Science Quarterly, Human Relations, Harvard Business Review  
Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Organizational Behavior etc...

## **II. Final Exam (50%)**

This is an open-book examination. Students are individually required to answer 2 out of 3 questions (25% each). The total time allotted for the exam is 2 hours.