Unit Outline*

IREL2241

International Employment Relations

Semester 2 2010
Campus (Crawley)

Unit Coordinator: Dr Michael Gillan

* This Unit Outline should be read in conjunction with the Business School Unit Outline Supplement available on the Current Students web site
http://www.business.uwa.edu.au/students
UNIT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

Welcome to International Employment Relations.

This unit considers debate on the global 'convergence' of employment relations practices across national boundaries. Globalisation has had a significant impact on national employment relations, causing changes to the role of the state, employers, unions, and to the subsequent status of workers. The unit discusses common global forces that have shaped employment relations (trade and relocation of work, corporate and workplace restructuring, ideological and policy transformation) and key features of employment relations systems in four regions—North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. The evolution of employment relations in these regions is analysed taking into account conflict at the workplace and dispute resolution procedures, regulatory institutions, employee participation, and the role of unions and employers.

We hope you enjoy this unit and we look forward to a stimulating interaction with you on the many issues and topics.

The Goal of the unit

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to the area of international employment relations.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

• Develop a familiarity and a critical understanding of core concepts in the scholarly literature on international and comparative employment relations.
• Develop an informed understanding of broad patterns of employment relations parties, practices, and institutions, in a number of key countries.
• Develop and improve the ability to engage in comparative analysis
• Learn to reflect on your own learning experiences throughout the semester and to apply this knowledge to various topical issues relevant to international employment relations.
• Further develop research, essay and report writing, and verbal presentation skills.

Outcomes and Assessment

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<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Assessment Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Individual Essay, Tutorial Participation, Journal, Examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Individual Essay, Tutorial Participation, Journal, Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Individual Essay, Tutorial Participation, Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Journal, Tutorial Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Individual Essay, Tutorial Presentation and participation</td>
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TEACHING AND LEARNING RESPONSIBILITIES

Teaching and learning evaluation

You may be asked to complete two evaluations during this unit. The Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT) and the Students’ Unit Reflective Feedback (SURF). The SPOT is optional and is an evaluation of the lecturer and the unit. The SURF is completed online and is a university wide survey and deals only with the unit. You will receive an email from the SURF office inviting you to complete the SURF when it is activated. We encourage you to complete the forms as your feedback is extremely important and can be used to make changes to the unit or lecturing style when appropriate.

Attendance

Participation in class, whether it be listening to a lecture or getting involved in other activities, is an important part of the learning process. It is therefore important that you attend classes. More formally, the University regulations state that ‘to complete a course or unit students shall attend prescribed classes, lectures, seminars and tutorials’.

CONTACT DETAILS

We strongly advise students to regularly access their student email accounts. Important information regarding the unit is often communicated by email and will not be automatically forwarded to private email addresses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit coordinator/lecturer</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name:</strong></td>
<td>Dr Mike Gillan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email:</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Michael.Gillan@uwa.edu.au">Michael.Gillan@uwa.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phone:</strong></td>
<td>6488 7101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultation hours:</strong></td>
<td>By appointment as required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lecture times:</strong></td>
<td>Monday 1pm; Wednesday 1pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lecture venue:</strong></td>
<td>BUSN101</td>
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TEXTBOOK(S) & RESOURCES

Unit Website

http://webct.uwa.edu.au/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct

Recommended/required text(s)

There is no textbook for this course.
A unit reader will be available for sale at the Coop Bookshop.

Additional resources & reading material


**Journals Which May Be Useful**

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (available on line)
- European Journal of Industrial Relations (available on line)
- International Labour Review (a journal of the ILO) (available on line)
- Economic and Industrial Democracy (available on line)
- Bulletin of Comparative Labour Relations
- Industrial and Labor Relations Review (available on line via library catalogue)
- British journal of industrial relations (available on line via library catalogue)
- Industrial Relations (available on line via library catalogue)
- Labour and Industry
- The Journal of industrial relations
- Industrial Relations Journal (available on line via library catalogue)
- Relations Industrielles (available on line via library catalogue)
## UNIT STRUCTURE

### Lecture Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LECTURE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
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| 1-3     | **Introduction: Convergence or Varieties of capitalism?**  
How has globalisation affected international employment relations?  
To what extent is there ‘convergence’ in ER/IR across various nations and regions? To what extent is the concept of “varieties” of capitalism useful for framing analysis of employment relations?  
Held, D. and McGrew, A. ‘Globalization’  
| 4       | **MNCs and global ER**  
What is the role of MNCs as actors in the global economy? How can we conceptualise their global strategies for the management of employment relations?  
| 5-6     | **Global unionism or varieties of unionism?**  
Are unions ‘converging’ on common strategies for renewal and in responding to globalisation?  
| 7-8     | **Employment relations in the United States**  
What are the key features of employment relations in the United States? What are the implications of the “US model” in terms of bargaining patterns, employment growth, job security and quality of employment?  
| 9-10 | **A European Model?**  
Is there a distinctive European approach to employment relations?  
| 11-12 | **Employment relations in Germany**  
What are the main features of the “German model”? What is co-determination? How is German ER being re-shaped by globalisation?  
| 13-14 | **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the ‘regulation’ of global production networks**  
To what extent does ‘corporate social responsibility’ impact the management of employment relations in global supply chains?  
| 15-16 | **ER in East Asia (Japan and Korea)**  
How has ER in Japan developed historically and how has it been reshaped over the last two decades? How have Korean workers challenged a historically authoritarian ER system? What new challenges are posed by globalisation?  
| 17-19 | **ER in China : The crisis of worker representation**  
What are the implications of economic restructuring and global integration for employment relations in China? What are the social and political consequences of a growing employment crisis? How are workers interests represented in the workplace?  
| 20-21 | **ER In India**  
How does the ‘organised’ sector differ to the ‘unorganised’ in India? To what extent are labour movements in transition in India? Why is the state and politics central to ER in India? |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>22-23</th>
<th>Comparing Australia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How have ER and IR been re-shaped over two decades of economic restructuring in Australia? Are we converging towards a particular employment relations 'model'?</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>24</th>
<th>The World of Work in an era of financial globalisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the relationship between employment relations and inequality?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How is work being transformed globally?</td>
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</tbody>
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| 25-26 | Course Review and Exam Preparation |
TUTORIAL PROGRAM

Week 1: NO TUTORIAL

Tutorial 1: Converging on “flexibility” or continued divergence in international employment relations?

What is signified by the terms neo-liberalism and flexible labour markets?

According to the “varieties of capitalism” perspective what are the implications for employment relations of a Liberal Market Economy (LME) model versus a Coordinated Market Economy (CME) model?

Is there evidence that various national frameworks are ‘converging’ or is there evidence of resistance and continued diversity in employment relations?

No seminar presentations. Extra Task: allocating tutorial presentation topics to students for presentation.

Readings:


Tutorial 2: The role of MNCs in global employment relations

What is the definition of an MNC? How significant are they in the global economy? Do they play a role as leading agents of change in employment relations systems in various countries?

In terms of their own global operations, do MNCs develop and apply consistent and uniform (convergent) patterns of employments relations (IR and HRM policies and practices)?

Readings:


Tutorial 3: Labour movements in the age of globalisation

What are the major challenges and threats confronting trade unions globally? Are national trade union organisations continuing to decline or are they now beginning to stabilise? What strategies are unions developing in order to respond to globalisation?

Readings:


Fairbrother Peter (2008) Social Movement Unionism or Trade Union as Social Movements, Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal 20, pp.213–220. (course materials online)

Tutorial 4: Neo-liberal employment relations? The case of North America

What are the distinctive features of employment relations in the United States? Is WalMart the ‘archetypal’ employer in US employment relations?

Evaluate the strategic response of North American labour organisations to globalisation and workplace restructuring over the last decade.

What are the implications of Ehrenreich’s observations and experiences in the world of ‘low wage’ employment for general debates about labour market flexibility and social security? Would Ehrenreich have similar experiences if she found low wage work in Australia?

Readings:


Tutorial 5: The European model

What are the major features of ‘European’ ER? What are the goals and the advantages and disadvantages of the European approach to ER? Are ‘Anglo-American’ employment relations practices becoming dominant in Europe?

Readings:


Tutorial 6: The German model- in transition or decline?

What have been the historical strengths and achievements of the German model of employment relations? Will Works Councils and codetermination be stable and enduring features of the German model? Consider recent transformations in employment relations at VW- are these changes indicative of broader transformations in the German Model?

Readings:


Tutorial 7: Labour standards and the regulation of global production networks

What is meant by the term international labour standards? Are ethical ‘audits’ and ‘monitoring’ of corporate social responsibility in global production networks effective means of securing basic labour rights and standards? What are the prospects for union negotiated international ‘framework’ agreements?


Tutorial 8 Employment relations in East Asia (Japan and Korea)

Culture, economics or politics: Which factors are driving changes in employment relations in Japan and Korea? What are the similarities and differences between ER in Japan and Korea? In which ways are workers responding to changing employment relations?

Readings:


Tutorial 9 Employment relations in China: Restructuring and employment security

Typically, China is depicted as a society and economy in ‘transition’. Are employment relations (organisation of work; HRM; and industrial relations) in China similarly transforming? What are the prospects for the emergence of independent worker representation and labour market regulation?

Readings:

Available at: http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/globallabour/vol1/iss1/8


Tutorial 10 Employment relations in India: “new” economy meets “old” economy?

How has ER in India changed over the last two decades? How have labour organisations responded to these changes? How significant is the so-called informal (unorganised) sector in India? What types of employment relations practices are associated with the emergence of the call centre/business process outsourcing sector in India?

Readings:


Tutorial 11 Bringing it all back home: Australia- reconstructed or deconstructed?
Broadly, how has Australian ER been reshaped over the last two decades? How will Australian employers and workers respond to the challenges of globalisation and the global financial crisis? Which other national/regional ‘model’ is Australia most likely to resemble?

Readings:


Tutorial 12: Discussing the Journal

Each class member should select one article from their journal and discuss its relevance to international employment relations:

Why did you select this article?

What does the article discuss and where was it published?

What are the arguments and perspectives presented in the article?

From a critical perspective, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the article?

Why is it relevant to the themes explored in this course?

Task: Hand in your journal at the end of the class.
ASSESSMENT MECHANISM

The purpose of assessment

There are a number of reasons for having assessable tasks as part of an academic program. The assessable tasks are designed to encourage you to explore and understand the subject more fully. The fact that we grade your work provides you an indication of how much you have achieved. Providing feedback on your work also serves as part of the learning process.

Assessment mechanism summary

Assessment will be based on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Friday 17 September 4pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>As allocated in Tutorial 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>In Tutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Week 13 Tutorial 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Final Exam Period</td>
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</tbody>
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**Note 1:** Results may be subject to scaling and standardisation under faculty policy and are not necessarily the sum of the component parts.

**Note 2:** Your assessed work may also be used for quality assurance purposes, such as to assess the level of achievement of learning outcomes as required for accreditation and audit purposes. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of Business School programs. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the unit.

Assessment components

1. Essay

Aim: To assist students understand the implications of a key concept for the study of international and comparative employment relations.

Task: To write a research essay on one of the topics outlined below.

Topics:

1. Globalisation and economic restructuring has led to discussion and demands for the introduction of ‘core’ international labour standards. To what extent have such labour standards been introduced and enforced globally?
2. Compare the history, organisational development, and current strategies and goals of trade unions in any two of the following nations: Japan, Korea, China, India, the United States of America, Germany, and Australia. Is there compelling evidence of union ‘revitalization’ in both cases?

3. “In Europe, employment relations are moving towards so-called ‘Anglo-Saxon’ practices rather than a distinctively European regional model.” Assess this statement.

4. Discuss the following statement: “Despite the introduction of the Fair Work Act, employment relations in Australia remains closer to the U.S. than the so-called European model”

5. “Industrial democracy” has been defined as “the participation of employees in the decision-making of a work organization. The participation may be total or shared with ownership and managerial interests” (Collins Dictionary of Sociology, 1995, pp. 315). Consider the contemporary international relevance of industrial democracy and compare the core characteristics of employee participation in two or more selected nations.

Length: 2500 words

Submission Date: 4.00 p.m. Friday 17 September

Note: the essay must be submitted to the UWA Business School student centre with a cover sheet attached that indicates your name, Student ID, the date etc. It is your responsibility to ensure that your work is submitted by the due date and time- electronic submission of assignments is not acceptable. You are also advised to keep a copy of any work that you submit.

2. Seminar Presentation

Aim: The aims of this exercise are to:

a. Provide students with the opportunity to develop verbal and written presentation skills.
b. Provide students with the opportunity to stimulate interest in their presentation topic.
c. Demonstrate research skills.

Task: You will have to select a topic from the list of available tutorial topics and prepare a 10-15 minute presentation on the topic for your class colleagues.

Remember that the aim of the presentation is to act as a “discussion leader” for the suggested tutorial topic. In this respect, you may choose to focus on only one suggested discussion question or, alternatively, to provide a broad overview of the topic area. You should use a range of sources and attempt to provoke interaction with your class members. Your assessment, in part, will be based on your ability to engage your class members in discussion.
3. Seminar Participation

You are required to actively participate in the tutorials and will be assessed on evidence of your preparation (completing readings) and ability to contribute to class discussion and activities.

You must be present in order to participate. It follows, therefore, that failure to attend classes without good reason will have a negative impact on your participation mark. Specifically, if you are absent from tutorial classes on more than three occasions without a valid reason, you will be awarded 0 for your participation mark.

4. Journal

This will be a record of ongoing work throughout the semester. It should include relevant press clippings and magazine articles that have furthered your understanding of globalisation and international employment relations over the course of the semester. Try to use a range of source material, including material available on the websites of relevant organisations (trade unions, NGOs, various international agencies etc.). You should include a minimum of 12 articles. For at least 6 of these selected articles, you should also include personal reflections (a maximum of 300 words per entry) on why these sources have been useful for extending your understanding of the subject.

The journal will be assessed on the range, quality and relevance of sources and the depth and insight of your reflections on the material. Please ensure that it is well-presented and that you have been consistent in collecting material throughout the semester (ie. do not simply scribble some summary notes and print out the results of a 'google' search the night before the journal is due to be submitted!!)

The journal will be submitted in class at the end of tutorial 12. It is important that you attend this class to discuss your journal (see tutorial program). In the event that you are unable to attend this tutorial you must submit the journal via the business school student centre with a cover sheet attached.

5. Examination

Aim: To examine students understanding of course concepts and ability to apply them.

Task: The examination will consist of a short answer and a compulsory essay section.

Submission of assignments

Please remember to attach an Assignment Cover Sheet to the front of your assignment. You can download and print your Assignment Cover Sheet from the Current Students web page http://www.business.uwa.edu.au/students/assessments
Please submit your work through the pigeon holes next to the Undergraduate Student Centre (with the exception of the journal, which as noted above, can be handed in at the end of tutorial 12).

**Late Assignments**

Assignments that are not handed in by the due date will automatically lose 5% per day for each day (including Saturday and Sunday) overdue. Assignments that are more than two weeks late will not be accepted. Students who do not submit an assignment within two weeks after the due date will be allocated a mark of zero on the assignment. No extension of the due date will be granted other than in circumstances requiring special consideration (eg medical grounds). Equipment malfunction and work commitments are not acceptable as valid reasons for late work.

**Student Guild**

Phone: (+61 8) 6488 2295  
Facsimile: (+61 8) 6488 1041  
E-mail: enquiries@guild.uwa.edu.au  
Website: http://www.guild.uwa.edu.au