Unit Outline*

IREL8711
(8 point unit)

International Employment Relations

Semester 1, 2010
Crawley

Dr Mike Gillan

Business School
www.business.uwa.edu.au

* This Unit Outline should be read in conjunction with the Business School Unit Outline Supplement available on the StudentNet web site http://www.business.uwa.edu.au/studentnet
All material reproduced herein has been copied in accordance with and pursuant to a statutory licence administered by Copyright Agency Limited (CAL), granted to the University of Western Australia pursuant to Part VB of the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth).

Copying of this material by students, except for fair dealing purposes under the Copyright Act, is prohibited. For the purposes of this fair dealing exception, students should be aware that the rule allowing copying, for fair dealing purposes, of 10% of the work, or one chapter/article, applies to the original work from which the excerpt in this course material was taken, and not to the course material itself.

© The University of Western Australia 2010
UNIT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

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

Michael Gillan is a lecturer in employment relations at the UWA Business School, where he teaches units on negotiation and dispute resolution and international employment relations. His current research interests include globalisation and industry restructuring, regulation of collective bargaining processes, and the political economy of economic liberalisation and labour in India. He has published in a wide range of national and international journals including Economic Geography, Economic and Political Weekly, Asian Studies Review, South Asia, and the Journal of Industrial Relations. He is the co-editor of the book Trade, Labour and Transformation of Community in Asia, published in 2009 by Palgrave Macmillan.

Unit content

This course examines international employment relations by considering how changes to employment relations arising from globalization have influenced the role of the state, employers, labour organizations and citizenship (or workers). These themes will be explored by referring to particular country/regional ‘cases’ including Japan, United States, the European Union, newly industrializing Asian economies, India and China.

A theme that is tracked throughout the course is whether or not as a result of globalisation, trends can be detected which show that employment relations systems are in fact converging between countries, even though there may be notable differences in practice within each individual country.

The Goal of the unit

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

Learning outcomes

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain major aspects of how employment relations systems in different countries and regions function.
2. Describe and theorise key differences in employment relations between different countries and regions.
3. Write a comparative analysis of a major aspect of employment relation.
4. Develop team work skills.
5. Justify an informed position on an aspect of international and comparative employment relations.
Learning Outcomes and Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Assessment Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Individual Essay, Seminar Presentation, Seminar Attendance &amp; Participation, Debate Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Individual Essay, Seminar Presentation, Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Individual Essay, Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Debate Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Individual Essay, Seminar Presentation, Debate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational Principles and Graduate Attributes

In this unit, you will be encouraged and facilitated to develop the ability and desire to:

- Critically evaluate scholarly perspectives on international and comparative employment relations and apply these to the analysis of the changing nature of work organisations and social regulation.
- Develop more effective communication skills through a class presentation and through informed discussion and debate in each tutorial.
- Develop competencies to work more effectively in teams through the completion of a team debate.
- Demonstrate self-management and independent learning skills through the completion of a major research essay on an aspect of international ER and through completion of assigned readings.
- Develop ethical and cultural awareness in an international context and an understanding of comparative institutional development through engagement with relevant lecture content, discussions in seminars, and assigned readings.
TEACHING AND LEARNING RESPONSIBILITIES

Teaching and learning strategies

The unit utilises a variety of teaching and learning strategies (individual written work and schedule of readings; lectures; audio-visual materials; presentations etc.) but has a special emphasis upon critical discussion and debate on contemporary international employment relations.

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’. Students should not expect to obtain approval to miss more than two classes per unit unless there are exceptional circumstances.
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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phone:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultation hours:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lecture day and time:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lecture venue:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TEXTBOOK(S) & RESOURCES

Unit Website

The website for this course can be accessed by logging onto the UWA WebCT home page: http://webct.uwa.edu.au/webct/entryPage Ins.dowebct

Recommended/required text(s)

International Employment Relations, Unit Reader 2010

Additional resources & reading material

There are many other readings listed in the seminar outline as well as indicated below. In addition to these however, we would encourage you to source your own references.


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)

Useful Websites

- Global Policy Network http://www.globalpolicynetwork.org/
- Open Democracy http://www.opendemocracy.net/home/index.jsp
- Globalisation Guide http://www.globalisationguide.org/
- Global Unions http://www.global-unions.org/
- International Reform Monitor, http://www.reformmonitor.org (US IR)
UNIT SCHEDULE

SEMINAR PROGRAM

Seminar One (24 February 2010)


Tasks:

Clarify course expectations and requirements.
Confirm assessment components.

Learning Outcomes

• Understand the significance of studying international employment relations.
• Consider how globalisation has affected international employment relations.
• Consider to what extent is there ‘convergence’ in ER/IR across various nations and regions.

Readings:

Held, D. and McGrew, A. ‘Globalization’

**Seminar Two (3 March 2010)**

**Seminar Topic:** Varieties of capitalism, varieties of employment relations?

**Learning Outcomes**

- Understand debates on various ‘models’ of capitalism and employment relations.

**Readings:**


**Discussion Questions:** 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?

---

**Seminar Three (10 March 2010)**

**Seminar Topic:** Global unionism or varieties of unionism?

**Readings:**


**Discussion Questions:** 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? Are unions ‘converging’ on common strategies for renewal and in responding to globalisation?
Seminar Four (17 March 2010)

Seminar Topic: Employment Relations in the USA

Readings:


Student presentation I

Discussion Questions:
How has ER in the USA developed and changed over time?
What are the major characteristics of employment relations in the United States today?
Evaluate the strategic response of North American labour organisations to globalisation and workplace restructuring over the last decade.
Seminar Five (24 March 2010)

Seminar Topic: Is there a ‘European Model’ of employment relations?

Learning Outcomes

- Introduction to key aspects of ‘European’ employment relations.
- Understanding of why similarities and differences arise between employment relations in Europe.

Readings:


Student presentation 2

Discussion Questions: What are the major features of the ‘European model’? What are the implications for employment relations? What are its goals? What are its strengths and its disadvantages?
Seminar Six (31 March 2010)

Seminar Topic: The German Model - the demise of social partnership and codetermination at work?

Learning Outcomes

- Assessment of how Germany’s employment relations systems compare to the European model of employment relations.

Readings:


Student presentation 3

Discussion Questions: 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?

2 week break from class contact (1 week study break + week free for essay preparation)
Seminar Seven (21 April 2010)

Seminar Topic: Labour standards and the ‘regulation’ of global production networks

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the emergence of global production networks and the consequent implications for employment relations.
- Understand debates over global labour standards, ethical ‘monitoring’ and notions of corporate ‘social responsibility’.

Readings:


Student presentation 4

Discussion Questions: 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?
Seminar Eight (28 April 2010)

Seminar Topic: Employment relations in East Asia (Japan and Korea)

Learning Outcomes

• Understand the similarities and differences between the development of ER in Japan and Korea.

Readings:


Frenkel, Stephen J. and Kim, Seongsu (2004) Corporate codes of labour practice and employment relations in sports shoe contractor factories in South Korea, Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, 42(1)


Student presentation 5

Discussion Questions: 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?
Seminar Nine (5 May 2010)

Seminar Topic: Employment Relations in China: Labour, development, worker representation

Learning Outcomes

- Introduction to distinguishing features of employment relations in China.
- Assessment of the similarities and differences between the old and new models of employment relations in China.
- Analysis of the role of the 'state' in employment relations.
- Consideration of the issue of labour representation and conflict management in China.

Readings:


Student presentation 6

Discussion Questions: 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 trade unions and effective labour market regulation?
Seminar Ten (12 May 2010)

Seminar Topic: Employment Relations in India: “new” economy meets “old” economy?

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the historical development of ER in India.
- Understand debates on the effect of outsourcing and offshoring in developed and developing nations.

Readings:


Student presentation 7

Discussion Question: How has ER in India changed over the last two decades? How have labour organisations responded to these changes? What types of employment relations practices are associated with the emergence of the call centre/business process outsourcing sector in India?
Seminar Eleven (19 May 2010)

Seminar Topic: Comparing Australia: reconstructed or deconstructed?

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand key features of Australian employment relations.
- Understand similarities and differences between employment relations in Australia and elsewhere.

Readings:


Student presentation 8

Discussion Question: 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?

Additional Task: Determine debate team membership. Prepare for final week’s debate.
Seminar Twelve (26 May 2010)

Review, Debate and Exam Information

Learning Outcomes

• Develop an awareness of different presentation styles and content.
• Be able to evaluate others’ presentations style and content.
• Understanding of different debates surrounding aspects of international and comparative employment relations.
• Understanding of exam requirements.

Course Review and exam information.

Conduct debate

Organised into two teams you are required to debate (speak for or against) the following proposition:

“Convergence towards a ‘liberal market economy’ approach to employment relations may be gradual but is inevitable in a global economy”

Debate Rules:

1. Each team has 25 minutes to present their case. One speaker MUST introduce and the final speaker MUST summarize the team position.
2. Handouts may be used
3. No power points etc may be used
4. Hand in notes after presentation of debate.
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Seminar Participation &amp; Attendance</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Seminar Presentation and summary notes</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Ongoing and presentation date to be determined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Essay</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Friday 16 April 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Debate Exercise &amp; Debate Notes (Team Mark)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Wednesday 26 May 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Exam (Take-Home)</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Monday 7 June 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Available: Friday 4 June 2010

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: The grade FC indicates failure to complete an identified essential assessment component and means failure of the unit.

Note 3: 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

**Assessment item # 1 – Seminar Participation and Attendance: 5%**

Whilst attendance is critical for knowledge and skill development in this course, participation is equally critical.

**Assessment item # 2 – Discussion Question Presentation and summary notes: 15%**

Students will be required to lead a discussion around seminar questions listed for each week. Students can use whatever presentation mode they wish in leading this discussion. The presentation order will be decided in either week one or week two of semester.

However, a requirement is that they have available: 1) a one page handout to give to fellow students that summarises the key points of their presentation 2) a three page (12 point font, 1.5 spacing) summary (key points of information; arguments/analytical observations; references) to be submitted to your lecturer at the conclusion of the class.
Assessment item # 3 – Individual Essay: 35%

The core of the task is to write a comparative essay on an aspect of international employment relations. Topics available are:

1. Discuss the following statement: “Despite the Rudd government’s introduction of the Fair Work Bill 2008, employment relations in Australia remains closer to the U.S. than the so-called European ‘model’.

2. Compare the history, typical organisational structure, and current strategies and goals of trade unions in any two of the following nations: Japan, China, the United States of America, Germany, and Australia. Is there compelling evidence of union ‘revitalization’ in both cases?

3. Discuss how the Corporate Social Responsibility discourse relates to international labour standards. Your answer should address a specific campaign around CSR and the challenges faced by different actors (i.e. employers, governments, workers, NGOs).

4. Is there a distinct ‘Asian’ model of employment relations? Elaborate your answer by making specific reference to the countries discussed in this unit (India, China, Japan, Korea).

5. Develop your own essay topic in consultation with the unit lecturers (question confirmed by email).

Word length: 3000 words

Due Date (3000 words): 16 April 2010

Assessment item # 4 – Team Debate Exercise: 10%

In teams prepare a debate presentation on the following topic.

Debate Topic:

“Convergence towards a ‘liberal market economy’ approach to employment relations may be gradual but is inevitable in a global economy”

Your team will have to hand in a 3 page summary of your debate notes after the debate. This should:

a. summarize your individual arguments.

b. list the pieces of evidence which you used in your part of the debate.

This should contain select reference details, especially for point b.

Debate Date and Submission of Notes: 26 May 2010 in class time.

Assessment item # 5 – Exam: 35%

Available: Friday 4 June 2010
Due: Monday 7 June 2010

This is a take home exam. Details of the exam will be given out during the seminar programme.
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 StudentNet web page http://www.business.uwa.edu.au/studentnet/assessments

Note: The bar-coded cover sheets should only be used for postgraduate assignments that are to be handed in at the Postgraduate Student Centre. These are the only ones that will be scanned. Postgraduate assignments handed in during class should use the normal individual or team cover sheet.

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