

# Social Relations in the Workplace

Spring 2009

203 Peabody Hall

MWF, 10:00-10:50am

<b>Course Number:</b>	SOCI 131, MGMT 131
<b>Instructor:</b>	Lindsey King
<b>Office:</b>	273 Hamilton Hall
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<b>E-office Hours:</b>	5:00-7:00 on Sunday and Tuesday; in-person or alternate E-office hours by appointment
<b>Course website:</b>	<a href="http://blackboard.unc.edu">blackboard.unc.edu</a>

## Course Description

Work is one of the central features of modern life—it is a source of identity, a cause of frustration or happiness, and the location of most interpersonal interactions. Work itself is an inherently social phenomenon. When at work, we interact with bosses, coworkers, and customers or clients. The organization of these relationships significantly affects our well-being. However, workers are not passive bystanders in the employment relationship—jobs and work relationships are also impacted by the actions of workers themselves. In this class, we will explore the reciprocal influence of jobs and workers, as well as the role people play in structuring workplace interactions. Broadly we will look at three interconnected themes: the structure of jobs, the structure of interpersonal interactions, and the meaning of work.

## Course topics

The topics we will be covering this semester are grouped into seven major themes:

### Unit I: Manufacturing work

- Employment relations and the structure of manufacturing work
- Routine work--alienating or fulfilling?

### Unit II: Service work

- Emotional labor and peer support
- Routinization of emotional labor

### Unit III: Professions and semi-professions

- Authority and autonomy
- Emotional neutrality

### Unit IV: Group processes

- Employee involvement
- Boundary spanning and boundary heightening

Unit V: Maintaining difference and establishing equity

- Power differences
- Effort and justice

Unit VI: Identity

- Shaping identity through interaction
- Preserving identity under changing circumstances

Unit VII: Gender at work

## **GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS**

### **Course goals**

The major goals of this course are:

#### Knowledge goals

- 1) To understand how jobs are structured in relation to each other
- 2) To recognize how and why work tasks are structured in particular ways
- 3) To explore interactions between the main actors in the workplace: employees, managers, and customers/clients
- 4) To appreciate the reciprocal nature of work relationships: how work impinges on individual values and identities, and how individuals shape workplace interactions

#### Practical skills goals

- 1) To explain your own experiences at work in terms of larger social forces
- 2) To collaborate with others in generating solutions to workplace issues
- 3) To learn how to critically evaluate workplace interactions
- 4) To develop a repertoire of concepts that will help you understand the workplace experiences of a variety of workers

### **Common courtesies**

#### What you can expect from me:

- Class will begin and end on time
- You will be treated with respect and understanding
- I will be available outside of class for questions or discussions
- Blackboard will be updated in a timely manner
- Assignments will be graded fairly and returned quickly

#### What I expect from you:

- Cell phones will either be turned off or turned to silent mode before the start of class
- Contributions to class discussions are presented respectfully and with the understanding that it's okay to disagree, as long as you are considerate of others' opinions
- E-mail and blackboard will be checked regularly; visiting blackboard regularly will ensure that you have the most current information
- Regular attendance of class

## CLASS STRUCTURE

The summary below is intended as a quick guide to the course website; each element is then explained in greater detail.

### **Summary of Blackboard:**

- Readings can be found in “Course Documents.”
- Team pages can be found under “Communication” → “Group pages.”
- The E-office chat room is at “Communication” → “Collaboration” → “Office hours.”
- E-office hours and contact information are at “Staff Information.”
- Assignment due dates for graded material can be found in “Assignments.”
- This syllabus and supporting documents are posted under “Course Information.”

### **Readings**

Each class meeting, with the exception of movie days (described below), has assigned readings. The readings for each day are posted on the course Blackboard site under “Course Documents,” and are grouped according to the seven major themes listed above. Readings marked with a “CP” are in a Coursepack that is available at Student Stores. All other readings are already posted on Blackboard. You will be responsible for downloading readings that are not in the Coursepack.

Most importantly, *bring the day’s readings with you to class. You will need them.*

### **Teams**

At the start of the semester, I will assign you to a collaborative team, composed of three to four people. It is a pedagogical truth that active discussion fosters deeper understanding of class material than passive listening. The teams are intended to give everyone in the class an opportunity to discuss their own reactions and connections to the material, and thereby provide a richer learning experience than you would receive by just listening to me talk.

The beginning of class time will be spent in collaboration, during which time you work together to make sure everyone comprehends the major points of the day’s readings. The goal of collaboration is to teach each other well enough that each team member is prepared to answer questions on class material.

Classes rely heavily on group work and discussion. In order for these to run smoothly, you must 1) complete each reading prior to the class for which it is assigned, 2) attend class regularly, and 3) be prepared to discuss concepts, questions, or ideas you have about the readings.

## Contacts

This semester, I am experimenting with a new format of holding office hours: E-office. I find that students rarely attend my set office hours and generally require the most help during weekends and late afternoon/evenings, when office hours are not feasible. For my E-office hours, I will be using Blackboard's chat feature. It can be found by the following path from the course homepage: "Communication" → "Collaboration" → "Office hours" (click "Join").

E-office hours will be from 5pm to 7pm on Sunday and Tuesday.

Alternately, if you would like to make an appointment to see me in person, I am generally available on weekdays and can accommodate most requests. My office is located in Hamilton 273.

## GRADED MATERIAL

This section provides an overview of the graded assignments for the class. More detailed instructions and grading rubrics are posted under "Course Information" on Blackboard.

### **1) Movie reviews (4): 15% each, 60% total**

There are many excellent films about social relations in the workplace—it would be a shame to not include some of them in our class. We will be watching four work-related movies: "Office Space," "Patch Adams," "Waiting...," and an unnamed fourth movie that will serve as the final exam. For each movie, you will write a 4- to 5-page paper applying class readings to the movie. Detailed instructions will be provided in class as we near the viewing date of the first movie.

Papers are due in class, at the start of class, two class days after we wrap up a movie. Thus, if we finish watching a movie on Friday, the movie review will be due the following Wednesday. Movie days and due dates are listed on Blackboard under "Assignments."

The final exam—movie viewing and review #4—will occur from 8am to 11am on Wednesday, May 6.

### **2) Reading comparisons (7): 3% each, 21% total**

This assignment asks you to compare the main arguments of two readings within a unit. Authors within a unit may approach the same topic in a different way, draw different conclusions about the same issue, or draw the same conclusions despite differing approaches. Reading comparisons should consist of two parts: (1) *Connections* between the readings and (2) *Implications* of your findings for workers. Drawing connections necessitates that you integrate each reading into your comparison, while discussing implications may involve talking about your own experiences or the experiences of others. Discussion of the readings' implications involves going beyond the authors' findings, emphasizing the practical applicability of the readings and the conclusions you draw through connecting the readings. Each reading comparison should be 2 to 3 pages in length, double-spaced.

There are 10 reading comparison due dates listed on Blackboard; you are required to complete 7 of the 10. You can choose which of the 7 reading comparisons you will do. I have not provided the option of turning in reading comparisons when it would also fall on a movie review due date, assuming that almost everyone will choose to skip the reading comparison for that day. You are however, welcome to turn in a reading comparison that day if you are particularly interested in those readings.

### **3) Group glossaries (7): 2% each, 14% total**

Teams will be responsible for compiling a glossary of the main concepts contained in each unit's readings. Glossaries are intended to serve as a resource when writing your movie reviews and reading comparisons, and are intended to ensure that everyone has a firm grasp of the core concepts contained in the readings before we begin class discussions.

At the end of each of the seven units, teams should submit a Unit Glossary on Blackboard. I will set up a blackboard page for each team to facilitate collaboration, as the best strategy is to generate concepts as you complete each reading and compile them at the end of a unit. It is up to you, as a team, to (1) determine the main concepts of the readings, (2) divide up the work, and (3) make sure all team members fully comprehend the main concepts of each reading.

For *each* concept included in a Unit Glossary, teams should include *at least* one quote from the reading that best captures the concept, as well as a paraphrase of the concept's definition. Glossaries will be graded based on (1) thoroughness, (2) accuracy, and (3) aptness of chosen quotes. All group members will receive the same grade for unit glossaries.

Glossaries are to be submitted (one glossary per team) at the next class meeting after a unit ends. Due dates are posted under "Assignments" on Blackboard.

### **4) Peer evaluations: 5% total**

Peer evaluations will compose a significant part of your grade. At the end of the semester, each team member will provide an assessment of the other members' contributions to team work such as group glossaries and in-class discussions. Peer evaluations assess preparedness for class, quality of contributions, and quantity of contributions. I have no control over this grade; it is purely a result of how your team members feel you have performed over the course of the semester.

## GRADING

### Grading scale

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>
+		87-89	77-79	67-69	
	93-100	83-86	73-76	60-66	Below 60
-	90-92	80-82	70-72		

### A note on due dates

Hard copies of assignments are due at the beginning of class. I will not accept e-mailed submissions. Papers that are not turned in by the start of class on the due date will be subjected to a 10% penalty for each day late. I generally gather papers up and put them in my bag before starting class. If you miss this event, your paper is considered late.

### Unavoidable absences

If you absolutely must miss a class day on which an assignment is due, I will accept the assignment without penalty **provided the following conditions are met:**

- You have a legitimate reason for missing class (the definition of “legitimate” is up to me, but includes the usual reasons of serious illness, death in the family, weddings, sports games, and the like).
- You notify me *before* the start of the class period you will miss.
- The assignment is turned in at the next class meeting. After that, the late penalty is activated.
- You have used this policy no more than three times. After the third unavoidable absence, the policy becomes void and late penalties are automatically put into effect.

### A note on grading

I will not alter grades on the basis of need. If you need a specific grade in the class (for Management and Society majors, that is at least a C-), you must do the necessary work to earn the grade. If you find that, after the first few assignments, you are not on track to earn the grade you want or need, come talk to me and I will work with you to improve your performance on future assignments.

“Incomplete” grades will not be given except in the most extreme circumstances.

## INTEGRITY

### **Honor code**

The University Honor Code will be in effect through all assignments. Please read carefully the provisions of the Honor Code (<http://instrument.unc.edu>), making certain you understand and adhere to them. The basic message: don't cheat or be dishonest. While preparation for assignments is a collaborative process, the writing process is a sole endeavor. I consider integrity and fairness to be vital guiding principles, both in academia and life in general. I hold myself to a high standard of integrity and fairness, and I expect the same of you.

To demonstrate our joint commitment to the Honor Code, I would like you to please include the Honor Code Pledge in all assignments you turn in. For submitted written work, the following statement, quoted from the Honor Code website, neatly captures my expectations: "No unauthorized assistance has been received or given in the completion of the work." For individually-authored work, this means that you alone have authored the paper; for group work, this means that written work is exclusively the product of the group members.

### **Plagiarism**

Neither I nor UNC have any tolerance for plagiarism; I thus encourage you to learn how to properly quote material. If you didn't write it, cite it! The Writing Center is an excellent resource for learning how to properly cite material, as well as how to paraphrase without plagiarizing. The website "<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/plagiarism.html>" discusses the common pitfalls of plagiarism and how to avoid them. I wholeheartedly support the use of citations in your written assignments as long as it is done properly. I strongly recommend that you peruse not only the Writing Center's handout on plagiarism, but also the rest of their website, which provides a wide variety of resources that are applicable to any class you are taking.

Any assignments that exhibit blatant instances of plagiarism will not be graded. More to the point, the grade will be zero.

### **Anonymous grading**

I try to be as impartial and objective as possible when grading papers. To help ensure impartiality, please attach a cover sheet to assignments with the following information:

- Name or Team name
- Assignment (for example: Movie review, "Office Space" or Reading comparison, Hodson & Brase)
- Date
- Honor code: "No unauthorized assistance has been received or given in the completion of the work." (signed by all team members in the case of group glossaries)

When submitting assignments, please fold this sheet over so that no identifying information is immediately visible.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Monday, January 12: Introduction to the class

### Unit I: Manufacturing work

#### **Section 1: Employment relations and the structure of manufacturing work**

Wednesday, January 14: Factory labor and the drive system

Jacoby, Sanford M. (2004). "The way it was: Factory labor before 1915." Chapter 1, Pp. 10-28 in *Employing Bureaucracy: Managers, Unions, and the Transformation of Work in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Friday, January 16: Taylorism and Fordism

Braverman, Harry (1974). "Scientific management". Chapter 4, Pp. 85-123 in *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Monday, January 19: NO CLASS!

#### **Section 2: Routine work--alienating or fulfilling?**

Wednesday, January 21: Alienation and routine

Ritzer, George (1986). "Conflict in semiskilled and unskilled occupations in organizations." Chapter 12, Pp. 328-335 in *Working: Conflict and Change*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. and

Juravich, Tom (1985). "Women on the line." Chapter 4, Pp. 45-57 in *Chaos on the Shop Floor: A Worker's View of Quality, Productivity, and Management*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Friday, January 23: Finding meaning in the routine

Roy, Donald (1959). "'Banana Time': Job Satisfaction and Informal Interaction." *Human Organization* 18: 158-168.

\*\*\*Due: Reading comparison 1 (Unit I, Section 2)

### Unit II: Service work

#### **Section 1: Emotional labor and peer support**

Monday, January 26: Emotional labor

Ashforth, Blake E. and Ronald H. Humphrey (1993). "Emotional labor in service roles: The influence of identity." *Academy of Management Review* 18(1): 88-115.

\*\*\*Due: Unit I Glossary

Wednesday, January 28: The culture of service work

Van Maanen, John. (1991). "The Smile Factory: Work at Disneyland." Chapter 4, Pp. 58-76 in Peter J. Frost, Larry F. Moore, Meryl Reis Louis, Craig C. Lundberg, and Joanne Martin (Eds.), *Reframing Organizational Culture*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Friday, January 30: Peer culture and fun

Besen, Yasemin (2006). "Exploitation or fun?: The lived experience of teenage employment in suburban America." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35: 319-340.

\*\*\*Due: Reading comparison 2 (Unit II, Section 1)

**Section 2: Routinization of emotional labor**

Monday, February 2: The standardization of emotion

Leidner, Robin (1993). "How can work on people be routinized?" Chapter 2, Pp. 24-43 in *Fast Food, Fast Talk: Service Work and the Routinization of Everyday Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wednesday, February 4: Monitoring emotion

Head, Simon (2003). "On the digital assembly line." Chapter 6, Pp. 100-116 in *The New Ruthless Economy: Work and Power in the Digital Age*. Oxford University Press.

Friday, February 6: Maintaining autonomy

Sallaz, Jeffrey J. (2002). "The house rules: Autonomy and interests among service workers in the contemporary casino industry". *Work and Occupations* 29(4): 394-427.

\*\*\*Due: Reading comparison 3 (Unit II, Section 2)

Monday, February 9: Applying readings

Movie: "Waiting..."

\*\*\*Due: Unit II Glossary

Wednesday, February 11: Applying readings

Movie: "Waiting..."

**Unit III: Professions and semi-professions**

**Section 1: Authority and autonomy**

Friday, February 13: Professional autonomy

Hodson, Randy (2001). "Defending autonomy." Chapter 6, Pp. 140-170 in *Dignity at Work*. Cambridge University Press.

Monday, February 16: Presenting a professional appearance

Brase, Gary L. and Jillian Richmond (2004). "The white-coat effect: Physician attire and perceived authority, friendliness, and attractiveness." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 34(12): 2469-2481.

\*\*\*Due: "Waiting..." movie review  
No reading comparison

**Section 2: Emotional neutrality**

Wednesday, February 18: Learning affective neutrality

Smith, Allen C. and Sherryl Kleinman (1989). "Managing emotions in medical school: Students' contacts with the living and the dead." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 52(1): 56-69.

Friday, February 20: The incompatibility of emotional labor and professionalism

George, Molly (2008). "Interactions in expert service work: Demonstrating professionalism in personal training." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 37(1): 108-131.

Monday, February 23: Why don't doctors laugh at your jokes?

Romero, Eric J. and Kevin W. Cruthirds (2006). "The use of humor in the workplace." *Academy of Management Perspectives* May: 58-69.

\*\*\*Due: Reading comparison 4 (Unit III, Section 2)

Wednesday, February 25: Applying readings

Movie: "Patch Adams"

\*\*\* Due: Unit III Glossary

Friday, February 27: Applying readings

Movie: "Patch Adams"

**Unit IV: Group processes**

**Section 1: Employee involvement**

Monday, March 2: Employee involvement programs

Smith, Vicki (1996). "Employee involvement, involved employees: Participative work arrangements in a white-collar service occupation." *Social Problems* 43(2): 166-179.

Wednesday, March 4: Normative control

Barker, James R. (1993). "Tightening the iron cage: Concertive control in self-managing teams" *Administrative Science Quarterly* 38: 408-437.

\*\*\*Due: "Patch Adams" movie review

Friday, March 6 through Friday, March 13: SPRING BREAK

Monday, March 16: Emotional contagion

Bartel, Caroline A. and Richard Saavedra (2000). "The collective construction of work group moods." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 45: 197-231.

\*\*\*Due: Reading comparison 5 (Unit IV, Section 1)

## **Section 2: Boundary spanning and boundary heightening**

Wednesday, March 18: Territoriality

Brown, Graham, Thomas B. Lawrence, and Sandra L. Robinson (2005). "Territoriality in organizations." *Academy of Management Review* 30(3): 577-594.

Friday, March 20: Going above and beyond

Grant, Adam (2007). "Relational job design and the motivation to make a prosocial difference." *Academy of Management Review* 32(2): 393-417.

\*\*\*Due: Reading comparison 6 (Unit IV, Section 2)

## **Unit V: Maintaining difference and establishing equity**

### **Section 1: Power differences**

Monday, March: 23: Who has a right to anger?

Sloan, Melissa M. (2004). "The effects of occupational characteristics on the experience and expression of anger in the workplace." *Work and Occupations* 31(1): 38-72.

\*\*\*Due: Unit IV Glossary

Wednesday, March 25: Maintaining distance between employers and employees

Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierette (2001). "Maid in L.A." Chapter 2, Pp. 29-60 in *Domestica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

\*\*\*Due: Reading comparison 7 (Unit V, Section 1)

### **Section 2: Effort and justice**

Friday, March 27: Doing less than your best

Kidwell, Roland E, Jr. and Nathan Bennett (1993). "Employee propensity to withhold effort: A conceptual model to intersect three avenues of research." *Academy of Management Review* 18(3): 429-456.

Monday, March 30: Justice

Greenberg, Jerald (1990). "Employee theft as a reaction to underpayment inequity: The hidden cost of pay cuts." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 75(5): 561-568.

\*\*\*Due: Reading comparison 8 (Unit V, Section 2)

Wednesday, April 1: Applying readings

Movie: "Office Space"

\*\*\*Due: Unit V Glossary

Friday, April 3: Applying readings

Movie: "Office Space"

**Unit VI: Identity**

**Section 1: Shaping identity through interaction**

Monday, April 6: How other people shape our attitudes toward work

Wrzesniewski, Amy, Jane E. Dutton, and Gelaye Debebe (2003). "Interpersonal sensemaking and the meaning of work." *Research in Organizational Behavior* 25: 93-135.

Wednesday, April 8: Stigmatized jobs and identity

Ashforth, Blake and Glen E. Kreiner (1999). "'How can you do it?' Dirty work and the challenge of constructing a positive identity" *Academy of Management Review* 24 (3): 413-434.

Due: "Office Space" movie review

Friday, April 10: HOLIDAY

**Section 2: Preserving identity under changing circumstances**

Monday, April 13: Transplanting old identities into new workplaces

Beyer, Janice M. and David R. Hannah (2002). "Building on the past: Enacting established personal identities in a new work setting." *Organization Science* 13(6): 636-652.

Wednesday, April 15: Unemployment and the work identity

Smith, Vicki (2001). "Structural unemployment and the reconstruction of self in the turbulent economy." Chapter 5, Pp. 120-156 in *Crossing the Great Divide: Worker Risk and Opportunity in the New Economy*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press.

Friday, April 17: Creating a work identity without a workplace

Ammons, Samantha K. and William T. Markham (2004). "Working at home: Experiences of skilled white collar workers." *Sociological Spectrum* 24: 191-238.

\*\*\*Due: Reading comparison 9 (Unit VI, Section 2)

**Unit VII: Gender at work**

Monday, April 20: The perceived incompatibility of women and leader roles

Eagly, Alice H. and Steven J. Karau (2002). "Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders." *Psychological Review* 109(3): 573-598.

\*\*\*Due: Unit VI Glossary

Wednesday, April 22: When someone is in the "wrong" job for their gender

Henson, Kevin D. and Jackie Krasas-Rogers (2001). "'Why Marcia you've changed!' Male clerical temporary workers doing masculinity in a feminized occupation." *Gender and Society* 15(2): 218-238.

Friday, April 24: Gendered expectations of role performance

Pierce, Jennifer (1995). "Women and men as litigators: Gender differences on the job." Chapter 5, Pp. 103-142 in *Gender Trials: Emotional Lives in Contemporary Law Firms*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Monday, April 27: Gendered explanations for success

Davies-Netzley, Sally Ann (1998). "Women above the glass ceiling: Perceptions on corporate mobility and strategies for success." *Gender and Society* 12(3): 339-355.

\*\*\*Due: Reading comparison 10 (Unit VII)

\*\*\*Due: Unit VII Glossary

Wednesday, May 6 from 8am to 11am: Final exam