

*Please note: This is a preliminary syllabus and is subject to change. It provides useful introductory detail and additional course insight as you prepare for the application process.*

**MGMT 004:**  
**Work, Power, and Inequality**

**Instructor:** Sara Jane McCaffrey

**Course Description & Objectives**

Workers and employers clearly have interests in common: unless the firm is economically viable, owners will lose their investments and workers will lose their jobs. However, other interests diverge. What share of firm revenues should go to workers versus investors? How much control should managers have over the organization of work and the treatment of disadvantaged workers? What level of commitment should the firm owe to its workers and workers owe to their employer? MGMT 004 examines the balance of power in the workplace and explores responses to perceived abuses of employer power.

Via discussion of cases from immigrant shirtwaist sewers' strike of 1909 to the 2021 union declaration by engineers Google, MGT-004 examines how political institutions (including labor laws), social movements (like #MeToo), and firm-level strategies (such as race and gender inclusion initiatives) shape workforce structures and inequalities. To assess how national institutions influence productivity, profitability, fairness, and stability, we compare the United States with other countries.

**Course Overview**

This class emphasizes discussion, and students are required to participate synchronously during scheduled class meetings.

*Sequence of Class Meetings and Topics*

Class 1	Introduction and Course Overview
Class 2	Firms and Workers: Organization and Control
Class 3	Labor Markets and Labor Market Institutions
Class 4	Job Design
Class 5	Social Movements and Social Movements at Work
Class 6	What Unions Do and What Firms Do About Unions
Class 7	Other Employment Systems: Germany
Class 8	Work in the Gig Economy
Class 9	Worker Movements Today
Class 10	Globalization at Work: Cross-border Supply Chains
Class 11	Race and Work
Class 12	Gender and Work
Class 13	The Scope of Work Demands
Class 14	Group Project Presentations

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## Course Content & Schedule

*A note on readings:* Students must complete the assigned readings (and view videos/ listen to podcasts) **before** class on the day shown in the schedule. Readings can be accessed via the “Assignments” section on Canvas, where you will find links to Harvard Business School cases for purchase and links to articles, library URLs (for journal articles), and PDFs. On Canvas, you will also find a list of study questions for each session to help guide your preparation for class. In several cases, I ask you to read only a few of the pages in an assigned article or chapter; these cases are clearly noted on Canvas and below.

Class 2	Hirschman, A. O. (1970). <i>Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States</i> . Harvard University Press. See Penn Library Course Reserves tab on Canvas.	8 pages
	Anderson, Elizabeth (2017) “How Bosses are (Literally) Like Dictators”. Vox.com, July 17, 2017. <a href="https://www.vox.com/the-big-idea/2017/7/17/15973478/bosses-dictators-workplace-rights-free-markets-unions">https://www.vox.com/the-big-idea/2017/7/17/15973478/bosses-dictators-workplace-rights-free-markets-unions</a>	8 pages
	Case: Kantor et al (2021) “The Amazon that Customers Didn’t See” NYT.	Long!
	<b>OPTIONAL:</b> Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (2019) “Warehouses”. <b>Please note:</b> contains crude language and puerile humor. <a href="https://deadline.com/2019/07/amazon-john-oliver-warehouse-working-conditions-insulting-hbo-last-week-tonight-1202640925/">https://deadline.com/2019/07/amazon-john-oliver-warehouse-working-conditions-insulting-hbo-last-week-tonight-1202640925/</a>	21 minutes
Class 3	Hyclak, T, G. Jones, and R. Thornton (2013) “Internal Labor Markets” <i>Fundamentals of Labor Economics 2E</i> (pp. 243-62; 268-273). Upper Cenage. See Penn Library Course Reserves tab on Canvas.	25 pages
	Streeck, W. (2005) “The Sociology of Labor Markets and Trade Unions.” In <i>The Handbook of Economic Sociology</i> (pp. 254-283). Princeton University Press. Read the sections “The Sociology of Labor Markets”, beginning toward the end of page 254 and ending at the bottom of 256; and the part from the bottom of the first column on 261 (“The supply of free labor in a society –”) to the bottom of page 262. <a href="http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/19500/ssoar-2005-streeck-the_sociology_of_labor_markets.pdf?sequence=1">http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/19500/ssoar-2005-streeck-the_sociology_of_labor_markets.pdf?sequence=1</a>	6 pages
	Hurst, Eric (2016) “Video Killed the Radio Star: How Games, Phones, and Other Tech Innovations Are Changing the Labor Force” <i>Chicago Booth Review</i> . <a href="http://review.chicagobooth.edu/economics/2016/article/video-killed-radio-star">http://review.chicagobooth.edu/economics/2016/article/video-killed-radio-star</a>	3 pages
Class 4	Case: Shih et al, (2012) “Jialiang Phone Home! A and B” Harvard Business School Publishing, 609080-PDF-ENG and 609081-PDF-ENG . See study.net	25 pages
	Kanigel, R. (1997) “Prologue,” from <i>The One Best Way: Frederick Winslow Taylor and the Enigma of Efficiency</i> . New York: Viking Press, pp. 1-10. See Penn Library Course Reserves tab on Canvas.	10 pages
	Arielly, D. (2012) “Motivation” TedTalk, <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_what_makes_us_feel_good_about_our_work?language%20=en">https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_what_makes_us_feel_good_about_our_work?language%20=en</a>	20 minutes
	“Digital Taylorism,” (2015) The Economist. <a href="https://www.economist.com/news/business/21664190-modern-version-scientific-management-threatens-dehumanise-workplace-digital">https://www.economist.com/news/business/21664190-modern-version-scientific-management-threatens-dehumanise-workplace-digital</a>	2 pages

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Class 5	"Triangle Fire" (2011) Documentary. <i>The American Experience</i> . See link on Penn Library Course Reserves tab on Canvas.	50 minutes
Class 6	Noe et al "Collective Bargaining and Labor Relations" pages 589-6XX See Penn Library Course Reserves tab on Canvas.  Streeck, W. (2005) "The Sociology of Labor Markets and Trade Unions" in <i>The Handbook of Economic Sociology</i> (from the bottom of 262 "The formation of trade unions was a historical response" through to p.263-266). Princeton University Press. <a href="http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/19500/ssoar-2005-streeck-the-sociology-of-labor-markets.pdf?sequence=1">http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/19500/ssoar-2005-streeck-the-sociology-of-labor-markets.pdf?sequence=1</a>  Rosenfeld, J. (2014) "Strikes" in <i>What Unions No Longer Do</i> . Harvard University Press. Pages 84-99. See Penn Library Course Reserves tab on Canvas.	4 pages  15 pages
Class 7	Dubner, Stephen (2107) "What are the Secrets of the German Economy – and Should We Steal Them?" <i>Freakonomics Radio</i> , October 11, 2107. Focus especially on the section from 18 minutes, 44 seconds to the end of the podcast. <a href="http://freakonomics.com/podcast/secrets-german-economy-steal/">http://freakonomics.com/podcast/secrets-german-economy-steal/</a>	56 minutes
Class 8	Irwin, Neil (2017) "To Understand Rising Inequality, Consider Janitors at Two Top Companies, Then and Now" <i>The New York Times</i> , Sept. 3, 2017. <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/03/upshot/to-understand-rising-inequality-consider-the-janitors-at-two-top-companies-then-and-now.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/03/upshot/to-understand-rising-inequality-consider-the-janitors-at-two-top-companies-then-and-now.html</a>  Audio Case: Planet Money Podcast (2015) "Hard Work Is Irrelevant" (Netflix) <a href="http://www.npr.org/sections/money/2015/08/28/435583328/episode-647-hard-work-is-irrelevant">http://www.npr.org/sections/money/2015/08/28/435583328/episode-647-hard-work-is-irrelevant</a>	5 pages  20 minutes
Class 9	Case: Finnegan, W. (2014) "Dignity: Fast Food Workers and a New Kind of Labor Activism" <i>The New Yorker</i> . September 15, 2014. <a href="http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/15/dignity-4">http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/09/15/dignity-4</a>  Kalleberg, A. L. (2009) "Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition". <i>American Sociological Review</i> , 74(1), 1-22. READ ONLY PAGES 1-10 (stop at the section "Challenges for the Sociology of Work" and pages 14-16 "Precarity and Insecurity as Global Challenges". See Penn Libraries Course Reserves on Canvas.	12 pages  11 pages
Class 10	Case: Quelch, J. and M. Rodriguez (2015) "Rana Plaza: Workplace Safety in Bangladesh" Harvard Business School 514034-PDF-ENG. See Study.net.  Locke, R. (2013) "Can Global Brands Create Just Supply Chains?" <i>Boston Review</i> . <a href="http://bostonreview.net/forum/can-global-brands-create-just-supply-chains-richard-locke">http://bostonreview.net/forum/can-global-brands-create-just-supply-chains-richard-locke</a>	15 pages  9 pages
Class 11	"Statistics that Hurt: Racial Discrimination Still Affects Minority Wages" (2014) <i>Kellogg Insight</i> . Based on the research of Fryer, Pager, and Spenkuch (2011) <a href="http://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/statistics-that-hurt">http://insight.kellogg.northwestern.edu/article/statistics-that-hurt</a>  Dobbin, F. and A. Kalle, (2016) "Why Diversity Programs Fail." <i>Harvard Business Review</i> . <a href="https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-diversity-programs-fail">https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-diversity-programs-fail</a>	4 pages  10 pages

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	Phillips, Dumas, and Rothbard (2018) "Diversity and Authenticity" <i>Harvard Business Review</i> , March-April 2018. <a href="https://hbr.org/2018/03/diversity-and-authenticity">https://hbr.org/2018/03/diversity-and-authenticity</a>	4 pages
	US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, (undated) "EEO Is the Law". <a href="https://www.eeoc.gov/employers/upload/poster_screen_reader_optimized.pdf">https://www.eeoc.gov/employers/upload/poster_screen_reader_optimized.pdf</a>	1 page
Class 12	Case: Fowler, Susan J, (2017) "Reflecting on One Very, Very Strange Year at Uber". Blog post, <a href="https://www.susanjfowler.com/blog/2017/2/19/reflecting-on-one-very-strange-year-at-uber">https://www.susanjfowler.com/blog/2017/2/19/reflecting-on-one-very-strange-year-at-uber</a>	8 pages
	Kliff, Sarah (2017) "The Truth About the Gender Wage Gap" Vox.com posted August 8, 2017. <a href="https://www.vox.com/2016/8/1/12108126/gender-wage-gap-explained-real">https://www.vox.com/2016/8/1/12108126/gender-wage-gap-explained-real</a>	7 pages
	Johnson and Smith (2018) "Mentoring Women Is Not About Trying to 'Rescue' Them" <i>Harvard Business Review Web</i> .	2 pages
	OPTIONAL Podcast: "The True Story of the Gender Pay Gap", <i>Freakonomics Radio</i> . <a href="http://freakonomics.com/podcast/the-true-story-of-the-gender-pay-gap-a-new-freakonomics-radio-podcast/">http://freakonomics.com/podcast/the-true-story-of-the-gender-pay-gap-a-new-freakonomics-radio-podcast/</a> (NB: This podcast covers much of the same material as the Kliff article from Vox.)	
Class 13	Perlow, L. and J. Porter (2009) "Making Time Off Predictable -- and Required" <i>Harvard Business Review</i> . <a href="https://hbr.org/2009/10/making-time-off-predictable-and-required">https://hbr.org/2009/10/making-time-off-predictable-and-required</a>	7 pages
	Michel, A. (2012). "Transcending Socialization: A nine-year ethnography of the body's role in organizational control and knowledge workers' transformation". <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> . ONLY section "Organizational Controls", pages 336-340, is required! See Penn Libraries Course Reserve Tab.	4 pages

### Assessments & Grading

Student assessments are grouped in the following categories:

	% of total
1. Individual paper	25
2. Class preparation and participation, including daily Canvas 'quizzes' (top 9 of 12 grades)	40
3. Group Project Presentation (April 28)	10
4. Group Project Paper (May 1)	25

In the interest of fairness, all students will be given the same assessment opportunities. There will be no opportunities to earn credit beyond what is outlined in this syllabus.

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#### *Group Project: Presentation or Video (10%) and Paper (25%)*

For detailed information on the expected content and format of the group projects, as well as a timetable for deliverables and a grading rubric, please see the prompt posted on Canvas.

- Teams must consist of **exactly four students**.
- Groups will receive one grade for the project. If groups are experiencing problems working together, members should inform me well in advance of any due dates. In cases of egregious free rider problems, I will consider splitting a group and requiring one or more individuals to do a project to a solo project. For this to be considered, I must be notified at least **nine calendar days** before the final deadline.

Project timetable and deliverables:

Project team composition must be input on Canvas (click on “People” then the tab for “Project Groups”). You may input your own groups, but note that groups **MUST** contain **exactly members**. Members of incomplete groups may be split up and reassigned. Please email me your topic. No two groups will be allowed to cover the same topic. Students who do not self-sort into groups will be assigned.

Project teams submit a 300-500 word proposal that names the organization you plan to study, outlines the main focus of your analysis (your research question), and details how you plan to gather data.

Project presentations: Upload your files to Canvas **at least two hours** before class, and have a backup ready to share via Zoom.

Students must submit the final group project reports (pdf form) by 11 PM EST.

Penalties for late group papers:

- For each additional day (or fraction thereof submitted past the deadline, three points (of 100) will be deducted from the group paper grade.

#### *Individual Writing Assignment (25%)*

For detailed information on expected content and format for the individual writing assignment, please see the prompts posted on Canvas under “Assignments”.

*Late paper policy:* students who submit their papers late will be docked one point for the first day (or fraction thereof), one more point for the second day, and two additional points each additional day. This late policy will be STRICTLY ENFORCED. Outside of the most exigent circumstances, last minute requests for extensions will not be granted.

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***Class Preparation, Attendance, Homework, and in Class Participation (40%)***

**A. Showing Up**

- This class emphasizes synchronous discussion. To ensure you get credit for attending class, please log into the meeting on time and turn on your video.
- Students will receive a preparation and participation grades for all class meetings (other than the first and the final class). Should students be unable to attend synchronously for any reason, including last-minute technology failures, they will earn no credit for preparation and participation for that class. The lowest THREE participation grades will be dropped (of twelve). Therefore, students can miss a maximum of **three** classes without penalty.
- ***Attendance at fewer than half the sessions may result in course failure regardless of performance on other class assessments.***

**B. “Quizzes” and Homework**

- At the beginning of each session, students will be asked to answer a couple of short questions based on the readings assigned for the day AND on the readings and discussion from the previous class. Via the “Quiz” feature on Canvas, students will be given 10-15 minutes to answers the questions. Please log in on time so that you have the full opportunity to do so.
- Homework
  - ***About Me*** slide: Please complete and upload by **the first day of class**, or (if you add the class late) when you register. A template is available on Canvas.
  - ***Other homework may be assigned in advance of certain class days.*** Failure to complete assigned homework could result in lost points in this assessment category.

**C. Speaking in Class**

- Because discussion is a substantial part of this course, student participation is essential, both for your own learning and for that of the other students. Students are expected to come to class having read and thought about the assigned material. Cold calls are fair game.
- Students must contribute ***memorably and effectively*** to earn credit in this category. Absences will not factor into the tabulation of scores for this category (i.e., the speaking score will be a sum of points accumulated, not an average based on the number of times a student attends class).
- The best comments in class advance our discussion, often by responding (politely) to other students' arguments, drawing support from course readings, outside sources, and real-world experience, or making connections between MGMT 104 and other courses.
- ***High-quality participation also involves knowing when to speak and when to listen or allow others to speak.*** Vague, tangential, or repetitive comments, along with remarks that are disrespectful of other students, will result in lost credit.

**D. Calculation of Preparation and Participation Grades**

- Written responses should demonstrate that students have mastered the content from the previous session, and read the day's assignments carefully. In addition, students earn credit for speaking memorably and effectively in class-wide discussions.
- After each class session, I will record preparation and participation grades, based on the ‘quizzes’ at the beginning of class ‘and student contributions during the synchronous discussion.
- If we work on a small group activity that takes a substantial part of the class and requires students to upload their work, points may be awarded for that participation.