The World of Work, 
Human Resources and Labor Relations 
and the 2012 Elections 

UGS 103, Section 704 
Freshman Seminar, 2 credits, Pass/No Grade 
Summer/Fall 2012 

with 
John L. Revitte, Professor 
Human Resources and Labor Relations (HRLR) 

FRESHMAN SEMINAR OVERVIEW: 

The 2012 elections could prove pivotal in many ways defining the future of America. The world of work, human resources and labor relations (HRLR) are certainly likely to be affected by these elections. We will look at recent trends in human resources and labor relations, and briefly at US labor history, and then seek to determine the most likely impacts of the federal elections for President, and the Senate and House, and at some state level elections particularly in Michigan, on the future world of work and HRLR. 

This freshman seminar will review readings from popular HRLR and political journals, and one small paperback course reader, and at HRLR and political websites. We will make numerous site visits in Washington D.C. to both “tourist” destinations including the U.S. Capitol, and to less popularly visited government buildings like the US departments of labor and state, and to the national AFL-CIO headquarters. We will have guest lectures from university professors and the MSU DC office, US government officials and staff including from the National Labor Relations Board, US departments of Labor and State and Michigan US Senator Stabenow’s DC office, and site and hotel classroom visits with both current and retired business lobbyists and labor leaders and staff. 

The seminar's required activities include doing the assigned readings, participating in class discussions and all site visitations, listening to guest lecturers and viewing of videos, as well as presentations of short oral reports, and keeping a daily journal of reflective writing and completing a written report assignment due after return to MSU in the fall of 2012. The required readings are listed below, and in addition students are encouraged to look at some journals, magazines and newspapers in our hotel “library” and to both HRLR and political sites that they find on-line. Each student is expected to attend class, read the assigned book chapters and online articles, and prepare a couple short oral reports and a modest written report, which will be due in September 2012.
**COURSE INSTRUCTOR:**

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**OFFICE HOURS:** can be arranged if desired by the student or Professor Revitte during the D.C. experience and/or after returning to MSU in the fall semester.

**COURSE READINGS:**

**Text:** *The Changing World of Work*, Marjorie Ford, 2006, PB.

This short, but thoughtful, collection of relatively recent readings on work and HRLR topics has both a traditional table of contents and a “rhetorical contents” list of readings. We will however follow an order of readings that the instruction hopes better reflects the order of site visits and guest lectures during our 10 days in D.C. There are interesting and useful “questions for discussion” and “ideas for writing” at the end of each reading selection. These will be referenced by the instructor in class discussions, and students may find these to be useful starting points for writing their daily 50 to 100 word reflective essays regarding the day’s readings, class discussions, site visits and/or guest lectures. They also may prove helpful in writing the assigned 750 to 1,000-word report due in September 2012.

and

**On-line “course pack” readings:**

There are also required readings on-line in MSU’s Angel course system that are also available by request on a flash drive or in hard copy. They discuss recent trends in work, human resources and labor relations. In addition in the course pack, and in a hotel “library,” there are recent news articles, websites and popular “political” and HRLR magazines that discuss the Democratic and Republican Party candidates’ core positions on work and HRLR topics. The “required” on-line “course pack” readings are listed below by article title and the page numbers where they appear within the online packet of “Revitte” readings.
ORAL AND WRITTEN REPORT REQUIREMENTS:

Each freshman seminar student is expected to write a brief daily 150-word reflective journal entry regarding the day’s readings, class discussions, site visits and/or guest lectures. Students will be expected to use these reflections during in-class discussions, and each student will be expected to make a brief oral report on the final Tuesday of the seminar’s D.C. experience regarding these reflections.

Each student is also expected to write a 750 to 1,000-word “research paper” or “reflective essay” report that is due in September 2012. There will be an opportunity and expectation that each student will present a brief oral report summarizing their paper at a fall 2012 class session.

As noted above, Ford’s “Changing World of Work” collection of readings on work and HRLR topics has both an interesting set of “questions for discussion” and “ideas for writing” at the end of each reading selection. Students are not required to use these in their writings but they may find them to be useful starting points for writing both their daily reflections and their final paper.

ASSIGNMENTS

1.) Journal Entries (10) 10pts each 100
2.) Future Me Letter 20
3.) Final Oral Report 20
4.) Final Written Paper/Essay 50
5.) Final Student Feedback Sheet 10

Total 200 points

Journal Entries – Due each morning by 7:00am EST
Each freshman seminar student is expected to write a brief daily 150-word minimum reflective journal entry regarding the day’s readings, class discussions, site visits and/or guest lectures. Students will be expected to use these reflections during in-class discussions, and each student will be expected to make a brief oral report on the final Tuesday of the seminar’s D.C. experience regarding these reflections.

Future Me Letter - Due Monday, July 30 by 8:00am EST
Who do you hope to be next year? What do you want to accomplish in your freshman year as a Spartan? Who will you serve? Who will follow you? What change will you make by August 2013? Write a minimum of a one page single spaced letter to yourself and reflect on what you learning during this seminar and how you’ll use it in the coming year. It will be mailed back to you next year so you can check your progress.
Final Oral Report – Due Tuesday, July 17 during class
You’ll be asked to give a short presentation on a specific topic related to the book to the entire group on the last day of class. Topics and details will be discussed during the classes.

Final Written Paper/Essay – Due in September 2012, exacted date to be announced
Each student is also expected to write a 750 to 1,000-word “research paper” or “reflective essay” report that is due in September 2012. There will be an opportunity and expectation that each student will present a brief oral report summarizing their paper at a fall 2012 class session.

Final Student Feedback Sheet – Due Monday, July 30 by 8:00am EST
Respond to questions posed in your ANGEL group regarding your experience.

This is a Pass / No Pass graded course that will not affect your grade point average. However, there are a possible 200 points during the semester. In order to receive a “Pass” in the class students must complete all assignments and receive a minimum of 130 points. A deduction of 5 points per calendar day will be made for each late student assignment.

D.C. WEEK ONE and WEEK TWO DAILY
IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES and READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Sunday, July 8, 2012 IN-CLASS Activity:

The instructors and freshman seminar students will each make a short personal introduction. The instructors will also review the syllabus, oral and written assignments and our two weeks of site visits and guest lecturers; answer questions concerning the seminar and/or MSU; perhaps show and briefly discuss a video related to the world of work and HRLR and social and economic inequality and civic engagement; and participate in some “ice-breaker” activities.

Sunday, July 8, 2012 READING ASSIGNMENTS (for Tuesday)

Read the essays by the following authors which begin on the page noted:
Judis, (6); Florida (30); Shipler (142); Tannock (172); Mantsios (182)

On-line: SHRM: Future Insights, top trends 2012 (pp. 7-17); Future of Work, 1983 (114-124); MSU SHRLR (65-68)
Monday, July 9, 2012 IN-CLASS Activity:

The instructors and freshman seminar students will travel most of the day together across Washington D.C. on a special bus. There will be an expectation that each student will have an assigned “buddy” whom they will work together with on an educational “scavenger hunt” of both common “tourist” sites and several locations more directly connected to our seminar themes on the 2012 elections, the world of work and HRLR, social and economic inequality and civic engagement. The students are expected to answer a series of questions regarding their thoughts and reflections concerning the sites they visit. Students also will be expected to turn in their written comments before the conclusion of the day’s site visits across DC.

Monday, July 9, 2012 READING ASSIGNMENTS (for Tuesday):


On-line: See Sunday above.

Tuesday, July 10, 2012 IN-CLASS Activity:

Visit to the George Washington University campus and a brief tour and a guest lecture on the world of work and recent HRLR trends by Patrick McHugh, a GW professor of human resources, labor relations and management. McHugh’s lecture will be supplemented by comments by the MSU instructors regarding ethical issues in HRLR, an introduction to US labor history, and a brief overview of related current issues in social and economic inequality and civic engagement.

Tuesday, July 10, 2012 READING ASSIGNMENTS (for Wednesday):

Read the essays by the following authors which begin on the page noted:
Mencimer, (69); Cullen (76); Schlosser (178)

On-line: Likability for Romney & Obama (1-6); Five regions key to economy & UAW’s Last Stand (97-99); Mother Jones: Occupied Washington: Shadowy Forces Warping Democracy (69-80)
Wednesday, July 11, 2012 IN-CLASS Activity:

Visit to the U.S. Capitol as a group for an in-depth special tour and a guest lecture on the world of work and HRLR and economic and social equality and poverty issues by a member of U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow’s staff.

Wednesday, July 11, READING ASSIGNMENTS (for Thursday):

Read the essays by the following authors which begin on the page noted:
Scharf (105); Traub (105); Ehrenreich (178)

On-line: Welcome to the Union (125-132); Perkins, Debs, Mitchell, Taylor and Randolph (81-96)

Thursday, July 12, 2012 IN-CLASS Activity:

Guest lecture by Rachel Revitte, and perhaps an NLRB colleague, in-class at the hotel, on American workers’ protected concerted rights to discuss workplace issues with coworkers, recent NLRB concern about workplace Internet and privacy matters, NLRB and court decisions on related matters, and expectations regarding the potential impact of the 2012 elections on the National Labor Relations Board. Rachel is an NLRB field examiner and an MSU James Madison College bachelor’s degree and School of HR & LR masters’ degree graduate.

Tour the Washington D.C. Newseum and focus as the HRLR group on the elections and politics exhibits and those that speak to the world of work and HRLR. We will eat first, then visit as a group the exhibits at the Newseum that relate to elections and politics and the world of work and HRLR, including parts of the civil rights exhibits, and then tour on your own and/or with a buddy those exhibits which interest you individually.

Thursday, July 12, 2012 READING ASSIGNMENTS (for Friday):

Read the essays by the following authors which begin on the page noted:
Levine (4); Walton (97); Leyton (197); Carroll (208); Shire (219)

On-line: The Nation: Occupy and the Safety Net (100-113)
Friday, July 13, 2012 IN-CLASS Activity:

Visit as one freshman seminar group Washington D.C.’s unique organization and site known as SOME. We will receive a special guest lecture by a key SOME staff person, and then the instructors and all students will be expected to provide service at a designated time as a volunteer worker, and all are to interact as requested and appropriate with the paid staff, other volunteers, and the “clients” of the center.

Friday, July 13, 2012 READING ASSIGNMENTS (for Saturday):

Read the essays by the following authors which begin on the page noted: Bracken (42); McMurray (64); Shore (209)

On-line: Michigan Voices and Visuals Interview Protocol (166-168); YES: 15 Extraordinary People (157-165); Oliver, Edmondson, Robinson & Meier--MSU MHRLR graduates (59-64)

Saturday, July 14, 2012 IN-CLASS Activity:

Guest presentations and informal discussions on careers working for the American labor movement and reflections on the role of labor in politics and the potential impact of the 2012 elections on labor and HRLR issues and related economic and social problems. Invited guests include Elmer Chatak, retired economist and lobbyist for the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) which later merged to form the AFL-CIO, and the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) currently the largest US international industrial union; Haley Kossek and/or a colleague from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), one of America’s largest and fastest growing international unions; and David Arouca, from the Communications Workers of America (CWA), which is well known as one of the most innovative and vigorous international unions in America today.

Saturday, July 14, 2012 READING ASSIGNMENTS (for Sunday):

Read the essays by the following authors which begin on the page noted: Hooks (21); Lama (14)

On-line: Teaching About Labor (145-156); Labor & Civil Rights Songs (169-181)
Sunday, July 15, 2012 IN-CLASS Activity:

Guest visit and presentation at the hotel by Elise Bryant, recently retired faculty member of the Silver Springs, MA based National Labor College. Elise was also formerly an instructor for many years with the University of Michigan’ Labor Studies Center and she was a founding member and a performing artist with U of M’s Workers Lives, Workers Stories project. Elise will discuss her life involved in labor and social and economic movement concerns and her unique career that featured being both a teacher on varied subjects and a performer and singer on social justice issues that took her across the USA and the globe.

Sunday, July 15, 2012 READINGS ASSIGNMENTS (for Monday):

Read the essays by the following authors which begin on the page noted:
Ullman (87); Rifkin (113); Thottam (122); Strasburg (202)

On-line: AFL-CIO to Counteract Negative Ads (143-4); Union Survival Strategies in Open Shop America (133-142)

Monday, July 16, 2012 IN-CLASS Activity:

Visit to the Michigan State University Washington D.C.’s office, where we will receive a brief tour and a couple short presentations on why the office exists and what the key staff persons who run this MSU off-campus office do. There will also be a special guest lecture via Skype by Kevin Simpson on social and economic concerns that he has addressed in recent years.

Visit to the AFL-CIO national headquarters building for lunch and a brief tour and presentations by elected and staff representatives. The presentations will discuss the AFL-CIO’s recent “cutting edge” activity with “worker centers” across the USA and their anticipated activity with the 2012 elections. A review of several key national and local races and the labor movements’ anticipated involvement with campaigns and GOTV activity will be discussed as well as thoughts on the potential impact of the 2012 elections on the world of work, HRLR concerns, and economic and social justice issues.

Visit to the U.S. State Department as a group for a brief building tour and a guest lecture on economic and social equality and poverty issues by a staff member of the U.S. department of state will be featured.
Monday, July 16 2012 READING ASSIGNMENTS (for Tuesday):

**Text:** *The Changing World of Work*, Marjorie Ford, 2006, PB.
Read the essays by the following authors which begin on the page noted:
Trye (50); Bellabonte (59); Polyestra (164)

**On-line:** Deloitte Human Capital Trends 2011 (18-49); O-Net On Line
Summary Report: HR Managers (50-55); IKEA Job details
and NBA Career Opportunities (56-58)

Tuesday, July 17, 2012 IN-CLASS Activity:

Guest lecture presentation by David Trebing, in-class at the hotel, on the Daimler company’s views of recent trends in HRLR and the economy, a review of Daimler’s lobbying activity at the federal level in Washington D.C. and monitoring and involvement with state level economics, employment and labor relations matters, and some informal comments on the potential impact of the 2012 elections on Daimler and the employer community. David is a graduate of MSU and has a masters’ degree from the Political Science department.

The instructors and freshman seminar students will spend most of the rest of the day together as one group at the hotel. Each student will be expected to present a short 5-minute “report” on their reflections on our seminar’s readings, lectures and site visits and share their thoughts on what they learned about the 2012 elections, the world of work and HRLR, and on social and economic justice and civic engagement matters.

Visit as a group the Washington D.C. Nationals baseball park for the evening with the instructors and a night of baseball. A special tour of the park and a guest presentation about the Nationals as an employer and their HRLR concerns and the Nationals’ organizations varied efforts at outreach to the community will also be a featured portion of the evening.

Tuesday, July 17 2012 READING ASSIGNMENTS (for Wednesday):

**Text:** *The Changing World of Work*, Marjorie Ford, 2006, PB.
Read any of the essays that perhaps you previously missed.

**On-line:**
See above comment.

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