

# **Proposal for Work and Society class**

## **Short description and overview**

This module provides an introduction to theoretical approaches and empirical literature on the sociology of work and employment across Europe and in China. Work occupies an important part of our life and impacts significantly on our well-being. In this way, it can therefore be said that understanding both the variety of work we engage in through our life course and work's economic and social practices are of vital importance. After the module, students will be able to reflect on the multi-layered nature of work and apply the knowledge gained to contemporary issues. Thereby, they will be able to give well-informed responses to questions such as "What is work and what is not work?" "Why are social relations important at work?" "What will work look like in the future?" "What are the differences and similarities in European and Chinese business environments and workplace contexts, and why do they matter?"

This is an essential introduction for students who want to develop a greater understanding about the relationship between work and society across European and Chinese contexts.

## **Key topics include**

- What does it mean to think sociologically about work?
- Labour process theory and theories of 'work'
- Public, private and non-profit work
- The future of work
- Work in Europe, China and beyond: factories, fields and debates
- Work / company case studies across a range of industries

## **Course language**

- English

## **Teaching methods**

The class delivery will be split 50/50 between interactive lectures and workshops and seminars which are focused on skills development. Lectures will usually outline the parameters of a topic, key themes and debates, whereas seminars will take these debates further through practical applications, tasks and learning. The range of delivery methods include: traditional lecture format, seminars, role play, presentations and both supported and unsupported guided learning.

## **Learning Strategies include**

- Induction which clarifies expectations around learning and becoming an autonomous learner
- Spoken English delivery at a pace suitable for Chinese students

- Actively spacing out vital aspects as to encourage deeper learning
- Embedding study skills discussion and practice into seminars
- Facilitating a writing workshop linked to assignment
- Facilitating discussions about different types of academic writing
- Embedding short ‘thinking’ and writing tasks into seminars
- Providing written/oral guidance on assignment writing and use of annotated exemplars
- A lecture on critical thinking linked into seminar work
- Activities to help students find high quality resources

## **Learning outcomes**

- Students should be able to describe and contrast different forms of work organisation under capitalism in different global contexts
- Students should be able to collate and interpret theoretical approaches
- Students should be able to select a specific theoretical approach this class has discussed and apply it to contemporary phenomena of the world of work
- By drawing on personal experience, relevant theoretical approaches and empirical case studies from the class students should be able to argue and evaluate when work contributes to human well-being and when it does not

## **Assessment**

### 1500-word essay

- Do we need friends at work? The CIPD (2018) suggest that in today’s interconnected world, people are increasingly blending their work and personal lives and the implications of our work relationships go beyond organisational life. The essay should discuss whether work relationships not only help people to cope with problems, but also support development and enable employees to flourish

### Assessment Criteria

- The assignment will be marked by the following assessment criteria: use of resources as evidence to support the argument; quality of the written presentation; quality of argument put forward; demonstrable capacity at answering the question, analytically; structure, integration of theory

## **Class arrangements**

## **Recommended reading / introductory reading**

- Allen S. (1997) What is work for? The right to work and the right to be idle“, in R. K. Brown (ed.) (1997) The changing shape of work, Basingstoke: Palgrave. Anthony, P.D. (1977) The ideology of work, Tavistock [D2.22 ANT]
- Introduction chapter. Green, F. (2006) Demanding work: The paradox of job quality in the affluent economy, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Noon, M., and Blyton, P. (2007) The realities of work, 3rd edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave, chapters 1,2 and 3. Rose, M. (1988) ‘Attachment to work and social values’ in D. Gallie (ed.) (1988) Employment in Britain, Basingstoke: Palgrave [G 14 GAL]
- Strangleman, Tim, Warren, Tracey (2008): Theory and Work (Chapter 2). In: Work and society: sociological approaches, themes and methods

## **Tutor**

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