

Victoria Management School
HRIR 401 LABOUR POLICY
Trimester 2 2007
COURSE OUTLINE

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Course Coordinator

Dr Rose Ryan

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Email: Rose.Ryan@vuw.ac.nz

Website: www.vuw.ac.nz/vms

Office Times: Tuesday – Thursday 11am – 5:30 pm

Administration Assistant

Tania Loughlin

Room RH 1022, Rutherford House

Phone: 463-5358

Class Times and Room Numbers

Thursday 14:40-17:30 p.m.

Location: RW 220 (Railway Building)

Course Objectives

The purpose of the course is to provide students with an understanding of key labour policy issues in New Zealand. When we talk about labour “policy” we are primarily referring to industrial relations and labour market issues in which the state becomes involved in influencing workplace practice, or the behaviour of employers, unions and employees. In particular, the course will examine the role of the state in influencing workplace practices for both economic and social reasons, and the mechanisms available for them to do this. While the course focuses primarily on those labour issues relevant in New Zealand at the current time, these will be set in an international context, with a view to promoting an understanding of how labour policy differs from or is similar to, labour policy in comparable countries.

The course has four principal aims

- To provide students with an overview of the labour policy issues facing New Zealand at the current time;
- To demonstrate the way in which the scope of labour policy issues have changed over time;
- To enhance understanding of the policy objectives of specific policy issues, and the reasons why those objectives may or may not be achieved;

- To consider the roles of unions and employers in the definition of labour policy issues and the development of policy solutions.

Course related student learning objectives

On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- Articulate their understanding of the reasons why the state chooses to become involved in general and specific labour policy issues, and what it seeks to achieve by doing so;
- Use this understanding to define a specific chosen labour policy issue, and to assess possible policy solutions in the light of international experience with alternative solutions;
- Offer a reasoned assessment of the likelihood of achieving the policy outcomes in a New Zealand context, including factors which might impinge on its achievement and any mitigation strategies which may need to be put in place.

Teaching arrangements and reading

Course structure

There are a wide range of labour policy issues that are current in New Zealand, and are subject of active debate within employer, union and policy circles. An in-depth consideration of all of them is not possible in the space of 12 sessions! Accordingly, and in order to respond as much as possible to student research interests, the main bulk of the course content will be determined following a overview and discussion at the first session on 12 July.

The course will be structured as follows (see Section 3 – Course schedule for more detail):

- Sessions 1 – 3: Introduction to labour policy and overview of current labour policy issues in New Zealand, historical development and scope of labour policy issues, the role of labour policy for economic and social development.
- Sessions 4-11: Discussion of selected current labour policy issues (see table below for some possibilities). The specific topics to be covered will be determined at the first session, and will be based on student preferences.
- Session 12: Course review and assessment of New Zealand labour policy directions leading up to 2008 General Election.

Potential selected topics to be covered in sessions 4-11 include:

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Key policy questions</i>
Collective bargaining	The ERA had promoting collective bargaining as one of its key policy objectives. Has it succeeded? Why/Why not?
Employment protection	How does current practice around employment protection (either from dismissal or redundancy) impact on the need for NZ workplaces to be flexible in response to changing circumstances? What factors explain the lack of support for Wayne Mapp’s 2005 Private Members bill on probationary periods of employment? Would macro-economic flexibility be enhanced by the adoption of a European –style “flexicurity” approach?
Health and safety	Have the 2001 amendments to the Health and Safety in Employment Act

	met their objectives? What is the impact of a greater focus on occupational health as opposed to the traditional emphasis on accidents and injuries? How will an aging workforce impact on health and safety concerns? How do public health issues interface with workplace issues?
High performing workplaces	Is the HPWP model relevant to New Zealand? What business is it of government to influence workplace practices? Even if it is, how should it approach interventions to achieve this?
Hours of work	Why do people in New Zealand work longer annual average hours of work than comparable OECD countries? What is the impact of this? Should we adopt policies that give people the right to request flexible working hours as suggested in the current Private Members' Bill before Parliament?
Immigration	In New Zealand, as in other countries, labour market problems (particularly international skill shortages) are an important driver of immigration policy. However, the experience of immigrants within New Zealand workplaces (in terms of recruitment and hiring, and their treatment by fellow workers and management) is often quite negative. Why is this, and what role should labour policy play in addressing these issues?
Improving workplace culture	Some commentators see workplace culture as one of the prime determinants of workplace performance. Do NZ workplaces have a distinctive workplace culture? Does it have positive or negative consequences for workplace (and national) performance? Is workplace culture a legitimate concern for labour policy, or something that should be left to individual workplaces?
Labour standards	New Zealand already has in place free trade agreements with 6 nations, and is actively seeking agreements with a number of others. What principles should be adopted in relation to labour standards in the countries with whom we negotiate? What are the implications of those agreements on domestic labour relations policies? What stance should NZ adopt to international labour standards in an increasingly globalised world?
Learning and skills	What is the responsibility of government in relation to ensuring that the current and future workforce has the skills it needs? How does this interface with the obligations of employers for training and developing their staff?
Managing diversity	How can/do workplaces manage a more diverse workforce in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, disability? Why should the government care?
Minimum Wage	Should there be one? What is its impact? How should the rate be determined? Should the minimum wage vary according to characteristics of the employee?
Partnership arrangements	Why has the current government put such an emphasis on partnership arrangements, both at national and workplace levels? Is it a union avoidance strategy? Is it likely to survive a change of government? How desirable and likely is the prospect of a "social pact"?
Pay equity	How successful have the current public sector initiatives on pay equity been? Should they be extended to the private sector, and if so, how?

Quality of work life	If NZ is a “good place to bring up kids” is that enough? What is it like to work in? Is it better or worse than in other countries? Why might the government want to take steps to influence how people experience work?
Unionisation	Like other countries, NZ has a declining rate of union density, except in the public sector. What is the impact of this? Is it something the government should be concerned with? Do other (non-union) forms of employee involvement and participation fulfil the same needs?
Vulnerable workers and precarious employment	Do we still have an under-class? How have changes in labour policy contributed to this? Should some groups of workers be assisted through regulations that address specific labour market disadvantage (including anti-discrimination law) or should all workers be subject to the same range of protections?
Work, life and family	In the face of organisational strategies which seek increased employee commitment, where does life fit in? Why does government seek to influence the balance?

Session structure

Each session will be loosely based around the following structure. The order of these parts may vary depending on the topic, and in some cases the availability of outside speakers:

- Overview of the issue from Course Coordinator
- Discussion of readings – key questions and debates – based on student input and participation.
- Further detail designed to stimulate thinking – eg; invited speaker, class exercise, case study etc

This course is essentially topic-based and thus structured around a series of presentations and discussions, based on resource material. Students will be expected to engage in class discussion and debate in order to facilitate the formation of their critical judgements. To this end, class participation, independent reading and reflection are essential components of the design of this course. It is expected that students will read widely for this course. Lectures and class presentations are designed to introduce concepts, theories and evidence. Students are expected to engage with the relevant material prior to class so that issues can be explored in greater depth during the class.

Readings

There is no core textbook for this course. Readings for the first 3 lectures will be distributed at the first session. Students wishing to obtain copies after that should contact the HRIR administrator on the 10th floor of Rutherford House. Readings for subsequent lectures will be determined and distributed once the preferences for Sessions 4-11 have been determined.

Students will be expected to have read required readings before each class. It is anticipated that around 6-10 hours work will be needed to read, digest, and develop questions about these readings. Students are also encouraged to read more widely on a topic than the required readings, and to bring perspectives to bear from other courses or disciplines.

Students with no prior knowledge of industrial relations should discuss supplementary reading with the course coordinator.

Communication

Blackboard will not be used for this course

All information will be communicated in class or via email. An email address list will be collated in the first class. Any changes to the course schedule or activities will be emailed to that distribution list, so please make sure that any changes to your details are notified to the course coordinator or course administrator.

Please use my VUW email address for all course related communications. However, as I will not access this from Thursday – Tuesdays, if your email is urgent, please cc me at rose.ryan@xtra.co.nz.

Email Contact at the VUW address should adhere to usual guidelines set out below.

Include the **Course Code**, your **Name**, your **Student ID** and the **Topic** in the subject area of the email, eg HRIR401_Smith_Pauline_3000223344_Ass1 Query. All students must use their VUW SCS email account and ID. Otherwise, email will be classified as Spam and will be dumped without being read. All emails with attachments will be dumped, unless requested by staff.

SECTION 2: COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Mandatory Requirements

To meet mandatory course requirements, students are required to:

- 1) attend all lectures (or notify the course coordinator of the reasons for non-attendance ahead of time, except in the case of an emergency);
- 2) submit the three graded assignments;
- 3) conduct one in-class presentation during the term; and
- 4) participate in discussions of course material.

Students who fail to satisfy the mandatory requirements for this course but who obtain 50% or more overall, will be awarded a "K" grade.

Standard fail grades (D or E) will be awarded when the student's overall course mark falls below the minimum pass mark, whether or not the mandatory course requirements have been satisfied.

Course assessment

Assessment for this course consists of three assignments—three essays (worth 20%, 30% and 25%), each worth 25%; an in-class presentation, worth 10% of the total assessment; and class participation, worth 15% of the student's overall mark in the course.

Assignment	Title	% of Marks Available	Due Date
1	Completed Essay Assignment #1	20	August 9 2007
2	Completed Essay Assignment #2	30	September 27 2007
3	Completed Essay Assignment #3	25	October 30 2007
4	Student Presentation	10	TBD
5	Participation	15	Each Week
	TOTAL	100	

Written Assignments (75% of final grade)

Students are required to select one well-defined area of labour policy and complete the following three assignments related to that policy area:

Assignment 1: Scoping and definition (20%) Due August 9 2007

Students are required to write a paper (2,500-3,000 words) analysing the policy issue that they have chosen to address. The paper should clearly outline what the policy problem is (problem definition) and what the desired policy outcome is. Other issues to address include contextual factors that may impact on the issue – these may include demographics, other policy settings, and stakeholder views and interests.

Assignment 2: Literature Review (30%) Due September 27 2007

Students are required to complete a paper (approximately 5,000 words) summarising the international and New Zealand academic and policy literature on their chosen labour policy area. This review should contain an outline of any relevant NZ attempts to address the issue (or related issues), together with analysis on policy solutions utilised in other jurisdictions

Word of caution: The preparation for the second assignment should start concurrently with the first assignment, as some of the literature might need to be inter-loaned, which might take considerable time.

Assignment 3: Options Paper (25%) Due October 30 2007

Based on their understanding of the state of affairs of their chosen labour policy field in New Zealand (Assignment 1) and the international literature on the topic and the practices followed in other jurisdictions (Assignment 2) students are required to write a 2,000 - 2,500 word policy options paper suggesting several courses of action for government to take and a recommendation for action with justification.

In the options paper they should consider:

- Who the major stakeholders are and how their interests will be affected by the various options;
- What are the costs and the benefits of the various options;
- What will be the impact of the various options on economic and social development within New Zealand;
- Risk management/mitigation;
- Recommendations.

Students will prepare two copies of each hand-in and keep the second copy for their own reference. Students must also keep an electronic copy of their work.

Appendix 1 contains details of matters related to written assignments, including logistics of handing in assignments, penalties for late work, and referencing requirements.

Presentations: (10% of final grade)

Deadlines and content for presentations will be determined at the first session.

Class Participation (15% of final grade)

Regular attendance in lectures is required of all students. Attendance is obviously a prerequisite for class participation. In addition, students are expected to have read and studied the material prior to class. This means that the student should be prepared to discuss the week's material and ask questions. Participation includes informal class discussion of the readings and in-class presentations. When determining class

participation, emphasis will be placed the quality of the student’s statements and questions rather than the frequency with which the student speaks. Class participation will be assessed by the course coordinator on the basis of an individual's contribution to class discussion on a weekly basis, but overall assessment will take place at the end of the course. Students who wish to seek feedback on an informal basis during the course are welcome to do so.

Assessment Guidelines - Overall course

The following broad indicative characterisations of grade will apply in grading all work – whether written or oral

- A+ excellent performance in all respects at this level
- A excellent performance in almost all respects at this level
- A- excellent performance in many respects at this level
- B+ very good, some aspects excellent
- B, B- good but not excellent performance at this level
- C+, C work satisfactory overall but inadequate in some respects
- D poor performance overall, some aspects adequate
- E well below the required standard
- K failure to achieve mandatory course requirements and have achieved at least an average "C" over all the assessment. Note this is a failing grade.

SECTION 3: COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Lecture Topics & Additional Materials	Readings
12 July	Introduction, admin, course outline Labour policy – what is it? Overview of current labour policy issues	Dalziel, P. and Lattimore, R. (2004) “Labour Policy” from <i>The New Zealand Macroeconomy: striving for Sustainable Growth with Equity (5ed)</i> Oxford University Press: melbourne
19 July	The past and future of labour policy in New Zealand . Are we any different from anywhere else?	Ludlam, S. Wood, S., Heery, E., and Taylor, A. (2003) “Politics and Employment Relations” BJIR 41(4):609-616 Wales, N., Ramia, G., and Lansbury, R. (2003) “Interests, Institutions and Industrial Relations” BJIR 41(4):617-637 Chaykowski, R. P. and Gunderson, M. (2002) North American Labour Policy Under Transformed economic and Workplace Environment in Belanger et al <i>Work and Employment Relations in the High-Performance Workplace</i> Continuum: London and New York

26 July	Worker rights and economic development – are they mutually exclusive?	Coats, David (2005) An Agenda for Work: The Work Foundation's Challenge to Policy Makers. Provocation Series Vol 1 no 2, Work Foundation, London
2 August	TBD	TBD
Completed Assignment due Thursday 9 August 2007 at the start of lecture		
9 August	TBD	TBD
16 August	TBD	TBD
20 August – 2 September — Mid Trimester Break		
6 September	TBD	TBD
13 September	TBD	TBD
20 September	TBD	TBD
27 September	TBD	TBD
Completed Assignment 2 due Thursday 27 September at start of lecture		
4 October	TBD	TBD
11 October	Course Review What is the future prospect for labour policy in New Zealand	TBD
Completed Assignment 3 due Tuesday 30 October 2007 no later than 4:30pm		

Referencing

There are many different styles of referencing and the Faculty of Commerce & Administration at VUW has decided to make APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style the common standard across the Faculty. The Commerce and Central Libraries hold the APA Style Guide. You can also access the information from the online VUW library site (<http://www.vuw.ac.nz/library/research/reference/referencingguides.aspx>).

Handing in assignments:

Assignments should be dropped in to the HRIR administrator on the 10th floor of Rutherford House (Pipitea Campus). All completed assignments must have a cover sheet. In addition, an electronic form of each assignment should be emailed to the course coordinator by the due date. Students are also requested to keep a copy of all source materials used in their assignments.

Penalties- for Lateness & Excessive Length of Assignments

- (i) In fairness to other students, work submitted after any deadline will incur a penalty for lateness. *The penalty is 5% for each day it is overdue, unless there is a valid reason as to why it is late and this is accepted by the course coordinator.* Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays will be included when counting the number of days late. Assignments received more than 7 days after the due date will not be accepted and the student will automatically fail the Mandatory Course Requirements.
- (ii) Course Outlines provide a signal to student of forthcoming workload, dates of submission etc, and thus student study plans should take account of course requirements across all courses. Consequently, workload issues related to other courses and employment will not be accepted as reason for dispensation from mandatory requirements or waiver of penalties. Extensions to submission deadlines for any assigned work will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- (iii) Students who are unable to comply with any of the mandatory requirements should make a written application for an extension to the due date for submission of assigned work or for waiver of a penalty, *in advance*, to the course coordinator, providing documentary evidence of the reasons of their circumstances.

All such applications must be made *before* the deadline and be accompanied by documentary evidence, eg a medical certificate, or counsellor's report that indicates the degree of impairment, and for how long the student has been impaired. Please be sure to ask at the time of consultation for the degree of impairment to be stated in any certificate you provide to support your case.

- (v) In the event of unusual or unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. serious illness, family bereavement or other exceptional events), that precludes an application in advance, students should make contact with the course coordinator, as soon as possible, and make application for waiver of a penalty as soon as practicable.
- (vi) Word limits should be adhered to, especially so when they provide a guide to limiting the student's coverage of a topic. Assignments exceeding the word limit by over 10% will have 5 marks deducted.

Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices

Railway West Wing (RWW) - FCA Student and Academic Services Office

The Faculty's Student and Academic Services Office is located on the ground and first floors of the Railway West Wing. The ground floor counter is the first point of contact for general enquiries and FCA forms. Student Administration Advisers are available to discuss course status and give further advice about FCA qualifications. To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

Easterfield (EA) - FCA/Education/Law Kelburn Office

The Kelburn Campus Office for the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, Education and Law is situated in the Easterfield Building - it includes the ground floor reception desk (EA005) and offices 125a to 131 (Level 1). The office is available for the following:

- Information concerning administrative and academic matters.
- Forms for FCA Student and Academic Services (e.g. application for academic transcripts, requests for degree audit, COP requests).
- Examinations-related information during the examination period.

To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

General University Policies and Statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to www.vuw.ac.nz/policy.

For information on the following topics, go to the Faculty's website www.vuw.ac.nz/fca under Important Information for Students:

- Academic Grievances
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

Manaaki Pihipihinga is an academic mentoring programme for undergraduate Māori and Pacific students in the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, and Humanities and Social Sciences. Sessions are held at the Kelburn and Pipitea Campuses in the Mentoring Rooms, 14 Kelburn Parade (back courtyard), Room 109D, and Room 210, Level 2, Railway West Wing. There is also a Pacific Support Coordinator who assists Pacific students by linking them to the services and support they need while studying at Victoria. Another feature of the programme is a support network for Postgraduate students with links to Postgraduate workshops and activities around Campus.

For further information, or to register with the programme, email manaaki-pihipihinga-programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5233 ext. 8977. To contact the Pacific Support Coordinator, email pacific-support-coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5842.