

Industrial Relations

Course authors: Hebdon R., Brown, T.C. & Walsworth, S.

Course Instructor: TBA

Required Text: Hebdon R., Brown, T.C. & Walsworth, S. (2020). Industrial Relations in Canada, 4th edition. Toronto: Nelson

Brief description: In Canada, approximately one in three employees are represented by unions. This course provides an introduction to the economic, legal, political and social aspects of industrial relations in Canada. While the emphasis of the course will be on the union-management relationship, non-union representation issues will also be examined. Topics to be covered include: labour and employment law, collective bargaining, grievances and arbitration, strikes, as well as the rights of the employer and union.

Online Multimedia Units

Unit 1: The Introduction to Industrial Relations and the Industrial Relations Systems.

As the introductory unit, the chapter focuses on defining the field of study relative to other, similar, disciplines as well as reviewing the differing views of industrial relations. As the industrial systems framework grounds the course and text, there is extensive focus on that system in the chapter.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the similarities and differences between such terms as labour relations, human resources, employment relations, and industrial relations;
- Explain a systems framework that can be used to assess and understand industrial relations issues;
- Define the differing views in the field of industrial relations; and
- Understand how this course, and the text used, are structured to follow the industrial relations system framework.

Unit 2: Labour History

This chapter serves to overview key historical events related to the field of industrial relations. The chapter starts with the pre-unionization work context of the master-servant relationship and, moving in a largely decade by decade approach, ends with a discussion of more recent events.

Throughout the chapter, there is considerable emphasis on the relationship between the American and Canadian labour movements as well as the tension between skilled and unskilled labour organizations.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the preunionization work environment and the movement toward unionized relationships;
- Explain the relationship between the Canadian and American labour movements;
- Describe the elements of exclusive jurisdiction, business unionism, and political nonpartisanship and how these three elements have divided the labour movement over time;
- Examine how significant events from the 1850s to present day have shaped the history of workplace relations.

Unit 3: The Economic, Social, and Political Environments

In Industrial relations, environmental issues related to economics, politics and the general society values play an important role. Given the important role of the economic environment, considerable emphasis is placed in the labour supply-demand analysis to enable students to understand such phenomena as labour market shortages, labour power and the impact of free trade on unions.

Learning Objectives

Economic environment

- Describe the supply of and demand for labour;
- Explain the elasticity of supply and demand and its impact on labour power;
- Discuss the impact of free trade, deregulation, and privatization on unions;
- Examine the importance of work–leisure decisions;
- Overview the institutional and non-competitive factors that affect labour supply;
- Understand recent demographic changes in the labour force;

Social environment

- Explain the social conditions of the labour market;

- Examine public attitude toward unions in North America;
- Discuss current trends in income distribution and poverty;
- Overview the impact of compositional shifts in the labour market on labour
- Understand the importance of achieving a work–life balance

Political environment

- Examine the structural elements of the political system that help labour
- Explain globalization and politics

Unit 4: The Legal Environment

The legal environment plays an important role in the industrial relations system. While there will be discussion of all three legal frameworks in Canada (e.g., common law, statutory law and collective bargaining law), the focus will be on legislation related to unionized workplaces (e.g., union recognition and collective bargaining. Emphasis is placed on the variation across Canada in terms of ten provincial and the federal jurisdiction. Also introduced is the basic outline of collective agreement administration

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the basic elements of the Canadian model of union recognition and collective bargaining;
- Understand collective agreement administration;
- Examine the role of the Charter in industrial relations;
- Discover the impact of international law on labour relations policy; and
- Explain how employment law affects employee rights and conditions.

Unit 5: The Union Perspective

Labour is a key actor in the industrial relations system. This chapter provides extensive coverage of the union actor in terms of labor unions, labour federations and the workers these labor actors represent. In particular, the chapter examines the many challenges labour now faces as a result of globalization and the liberalization of markets, changes in the nature of work, and shifts in the composition of the labour force.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the function and role of unions in contemporary Canadian society;
- Explain union purposes and philosophies;
- Overview the organization and structure of unions;
- Discuss the differences between craft/occupational, industrial, and public-sector unionism;
- Understand the democratic processes of unions;
- Explain why employees join unions; and
- Examine the changing union membership patterns.

Unit 6: The Management Perspective

In the industrial relations system, management represents a key actor. This chapter examines the actor of ‘management’ with particular emphasis on strategic planning and decisions, high performance HRM practices, as well as the more proactive role that management now plays in the IR system.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the evolving managerial view;
- Explain the growing role of management in the industrial relations system;
- Discuss the relationship between business and industrial relations strategies;
- Outline the various management strategies as they relate to unionization; and
- Overview current managerial perspectives and trends.

Unit 7: Negotiations

Perhaps the most examined conversion mechanism in the industrial relations system is collective bargaining. Clearly collective bargaining represents a key difference between union and non-union workplaces. In this chapter, students are exposed to the entire collective bargaining process from pre-bargaining to contract settlement. Students are also exposed to the bargaining steps in a typical set of negotiations, including a look at the dos and don'ts

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the differences between negotiations between individuals and collective bargaining;
- Explain the four subprocesses of collective bargaining;
- Provide examples of distributive and integrative bargaining issues;
- Examine a collective bargaining model;
- Describe the pressures on all of the parties to collective bargaining;
- Overview collective bargaining in a step by step manner;
- Explain the dos and don'ts of bargaining;
- Discuss the principles of adversarial, integrative, and win–win negotiations;
- Examine the elements of interest-based negotiations;
- Discover obstacles to achieving the best bargaining outcome for management and labour; and
- Determine when to use adversarial and win–win negotiations.

Unit 8: Collective Agreement Administration

In unionized workplaces, the collective agreement defines the work relationship as well as many of the roles and responsibilities of the union and management actors. This chapter overviews the typical elements and/or clauses of a collective agreement. The chapter also includes 'real world' examples of collective agreement language from various Canadian jurisdictions and industries to illustrate key concepts.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the role of the collective agreement in unionized workplaces;
- Overview the typical layout of a collective agreement;
- Discuss the clauses typically found in collective agreements;
- Explain why the actors of management and labour may prefer certain wording in collective agreements;

- Examine the importance and meaning of collective agreement language.

Unit 9: Conflict Resolution: Grievances and Strikes

In the field of industrial relations, perhaps no area gains more media focus than strikes. This chapter first focuses on strikes (their causes, consequences, and statistics) and then moves to a full discussion of dispute resolution procedures such as grievance.

Learning Objectives

- The steps that must be taken prior to a strike;
- The various statistics used to measure strikes;
- The theories, causes, and impacts of strikes;
- Typical grievance procedure in unionized workplaces; and
- Common types of non-union grievance procedures and why they are used.

Unit 10: Third Party Dispute Resolution Procedures

In this unit, we are going to focus more heavily on third party dispute resolution, interventions, that are commonly used in the field of industrial relations. So by the end of this unit, you should be able to discuss both typical grievance and arbitration procedures, mediation and conciliation, other common conversion alternative dispute resolution procedures as well as why non-union employees also use grievance and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, even when not required to do so by law.

Learning Objectives

- The process of grievance arbitrations;
- Types of grievance arbitration;
- Interest arbitration;
- Mediation and conciliation procedures; and
- Alternative dispute resolution procedures (ADR).

Unit 11: The Impact of Unionization

Academics, practitioners, and policy makers often seek to determine the impact of unionization. The chapter allows students to see the relationship between the conversion mechanisms, the actors, and the internal inputs of these actors in terms of potential outputs of the IR system. This chapter examines the impact of unionization on management and human resources practices, the operation (e.g., productivity, efficiency, etc) , and the employees (e.g., employee satisfaction, commitment, etc.)

Learning Objectives

- Explain the impacts of unions on management practices, in particular those related to human resources practices (e.g., staffing, termination, training, compensation, etc.);
- Describe the relationship between unions and firm efficiency and financial measures; and
- Discuss the impact of unionization on employee measures

Unit 12: The Public Sector

In Canada, a large percentage of the broader public sector is unionized. The chapter overviews key elements of the industrial relations system in the public sector with particular emphasis on the changing nature of the public sector context, how the public and private sector industrial systems differ in terms of: legislation, dispute resolution and strike restrictions.

Learning Objectives

- Examine why the public sector is a special industry in industrial relations;
- Describe the factors accounting for public-sector union growth;
- Overview the theoretical differences between private and public sectors;
- Explain bargaining power in the public sector;
- Discuss essential services and special dispute resolution procedures; and
- Present management issues such as restructuring, privatization, and HR practice differences.

Learning Aids

Interactive questions within the multimedia lecture streams. Self-help quiz attached to each unit of the course.

Participation

Discussion board moderated and graded by the instructor. Students are required to post 3 substantial submissions (400 words or more) during the course on assigned questions (topical and case study based) that demonstrate knowledge and skills congruent with the Learning Objectives. There will be instructor feedback on all submissions.

There will also be a General Discussion Board moderated by the instructor in which questions can be asked on any course topic.

Midterm Paper

A midterm paper of approximately 1500 words to be submitted online approximately 6 weeks after the start of the course. The instructor shall grade and comment on each paper, which shall be returned to the student.

Final Examination

Proctored, open book, online examination consisting of essay question(s). Any part of the entire course content may be examined. Government issued photo identification will be required to verify the student's identity.

Grade Weightings of Course Components

Participation in Discussion Board: Weighting 10%

Midterm Paper: Weighting 35%

Final Examination: Weighting 55%: (It is required to pass the final examination with a grade of at least 65% in order to pass the course, regardless of grades earned in other components.)

Passing Grade for the Course: 65%