

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE  
School of Business  
Department of Business Policy

**GES1000/SSB1204: Labour Law in Singapore**

**Lecturer** : A/P Ravi Chandran (course coordinator)

**Session** : Semester II: 2017/2018

**Course Objectives:**

The course introduces students to the development of industrial relations and labour laws in Singapore. Students will be able to understand why labour relations are the way they are in Singapore. However, the course is not purely historical. A substantial part of the course is aimed at looking at the current legal problems faced by employees and employers in Singapore. The objective of the course is that at the end of it, students while appreciating the history of industrial relations and labour laws in Singapore would be able to confidently make informed decisions concerning current employment issues without falling into legal pitfalls. This course will be of general relevance to all, as students are either employees or employers.

**Course Outcomes**

Being able to:

1. apply knowledge, to predict the legal outcomes for typical problems that may arise in an employment context,
2. take appropriate measures where possible, to deal with such issues, before they arise,
3. evaluate the effectiveness of policy issues behind various employment related laws and
4. articulate views relating to employment law/policy, at least in a class setting.

**Course Outline:**

The course deals with the rights and obligations of employers and employees and can be divided into 3 main parts.

The first relates to contractual issues, since as between the employer and employee there will be a contract. Issues examined include matters like whether the employee can moonlight or make use of confidential information, who has the right to intellectual property created in the course of work, how termination can be effected, whether there must be a justification for termination and whether redundancy payments must be paid.

The second part relates to statutory obligations of employers. There are various statutes relating to employment in Singapore, such as the Employment Act, CPF Act, Retirement Age Act, Employment of Foreign Manpower Act, Workplace Safety and Health, Employment of Foreign

Manpower Act and Work Injury Compensation Act. Without knowing these statutes, many of which carry criminal sanctions for breaches, a business can easily find itself in trouble. Prosecution for breach of these statutes is a common occurrence.

The third part relates to industrial relations. It looks at the history of industrial relations and discusses what unions can do and cannot do. Though unions in Singapore may have less power in some respects as compared to those in some other countries, they still have a very useful role to play and this role is examined.

Further, the course also looks at methods of dispute resolution such as, mediation. Aside from looking at legal perspectives, some issues will also be discussed from a HR perspective. For instance how would an action on the part of the employer (even though it may be legal) have an implication on employee motivation? In addition, it would be examined how a business can protect itself better in light of the various laws. Some comparative examples would also be examined.

### **Reading Lists**

Basic Reading:

Employment Law in Singapore (Lexis/Nexis) **5<sup>th</sup> 2016/7 Edition** (older editions are outdated). The 5<sup>th</sup> Edition will be available at NUS Forum Co-op.

Supplementary Reading: Various cases, articles and web based resources will be referred to as the course progresses.

### **Assessment Methods**

Class participation:	20%
Group Assignment	20%
Final Examination	60%

Class Participation - refers to participation in class in the form of answering questions, asking questions or sharing experiences. This is extremely important and relates to learning outcome (4) above. Asking questions, for instance, forces you to think and probe further. However, needless to say, ultimately what counts is quality and not quantity. Here is the marking guide:

Below 10 - Does not turn up for classes often or most of the time not prepared

10-12 – Answers only when called; superficial understanding

13-14 – Volunteers to answer/ask questions, quite good understanding

15-16 – Volunteers to answer/ask questions quite consistently and good understanding

16 and above – Excellent; has read up well, actively participates/contributes in class, asks critical/detailed queries

Group Assignment (relates to learning outcomes (1) to (3) above). Each group would typically consist of 5 persons. There will be 1 group assignment will involve answering selected tutorial questions. There will be no presentation.

This is a “group project” and hence there should be a collaborative effort. If it suspected that there is no collaborative effort (eg: the writing styles or approaches are very obviously different), marks may be deducted. In addition, there should be no free-riders. Hence if a group member/s has not contributed much to the project, please inform me and I will deal with it accordingly.

Final Examination - will be "open-book" (2-hour duration). It is likely to be an E exam for which, you will need a laptop and charger. It will relate to one or more of the learning outcomes (1) to (3) mentioned earlier.

The marking rubrics for the group assignment and the final examination are available on IVLE.

### **Plagiarism**

Academic integrity and honesty is essential for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. The University and School expect every student to uphold academic integrity & honesty at all times. Academic dishonesty is any misrepresentation with the intent to deceive, or failure to acknowledge the source, or falsification of information, or inaccuracy of statements, or cheating at examinations/tests, or inappropriate use of resources.

Plagiarism is ‘the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own' (The New Oxford Dictionary of English). The University and School will not condone plagiarism. Students should adopt this rule - You have the obligation to make clear to the assessor which is your own work, and which is the work of others. Otherwise, your assessor is entitled to assume that everything being presented for assessment is being presented as entirely your own work. This is a minimum standard. In case of any doubts, you should consult your instructor.

Additional guidance is available at:

<http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/adminpolicy/acceptance.html#NUSCodeofStudentConduct>

Online Module on Plagiarism:

<http://emodule.nus.edu.sg/ac/>

### **Contacting the Lecturer**

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Consultation Hours: You are most welcome to come and see me. You can also use the e-mail me or the IVLE discussion forum. Do not hesitate at all.