

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE
NUS Business School
Department of Management and Organisation

Module Code and Title: MNO3323/MNO3713 Management of Employee Relations
 (Thursdays 8.30-11.30 AM)

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Session: Semester 2, 2020/2021

Course Objectives:

This course aims to train future managers to effectively handle employee relations in Singapore. It will address various environmental and structural constraints managers face when dealing with employees. It delves into such topics as the history, key institutions, and tripartism philosophy adopted in Singapore as well as several key employment laws and their applications.

Because of its strong orientation towards real-world practices, students will find this course useful when looking for employment or actually managing employees in the future. Students are expected to keep themselves updated about the current trends in employee relations as well as to demonstrate their ability to apply concepts and skills learned from the course. Cases and issues that have happened or are happening in countries outside Singapore (including the US and other Asian countries) will be brought in to broaden our perspectives. This will help future managers perform their managerial roles in a globalized world.

The latest employment relations issues will be explored. Employment-related laws and practices keep changing and thus all students should keep up with the latest development. Many cases involving less-than-ideal labour relations practices are available from the past that shed light on what we can learn to improve the present-day practices. Hence, we will explore such cases in detail. Students are expected to take part in the LUMINUS Forum discussions actively.

Syllabus:

(This is just a guide and it will be used flexibly)

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Text Readings</u>
1 (Jan 14)	Lesson 1: A Framework for Studying ER	Lim, et al., Chapters 1 & 14
2 (Jan 21)	Lesson 2: Historical Milestones of Employee Relations	Lim, et al., Chapter 2
3 (Jan 28)	Lesson 3: Key Features of the Institutional Environment	Lim, et al., Chapters 4 & 5

4 (Feb 4)	Lesson 4: Job & Labour Market	Lim, et al., Chapter 7
5 (Feb 11)	Lesson 5: Major Employment Laws	Lim, et al., Chapter 3
6 (Feb 18)	Lesson 6: The Employment Contract	Lim, et al., Chapter 6
Term Break (Feb 20 – 28)		
7 (Mar 4)	Lesson 7: Employees' Rights and Union Membership	Lim, et al., Chapters 8 & 13
8 (Mar 11)	Lesson 8: Managerial Prerogatives	Lim, et al., Chapter 10
9 (Mar 18)	Lesson 9: Disputes, Impasses, & Industrial Actions	Lim, et al., Chapters 9 & 11
10 (Mar 25)	Lesson 10: Employee Discipline	Lim, et al., Chapter 12
11 (Apr 3, Saturday)	<u>Individual Reflection Paper (Take-Home Test):</u> 9 am – 5 pm; Open-Book; Online Submission at LUMINUS>>Files>>Reflection Paper Submissions by 5 pm on the same day.	All materials
12-13 (Project Weeks)	Individual Study & Sharing Report (Submit Your Report, Presentation Slides, & Video Presentation Record File (Maximum 5 Minutes) at LUMINUS>>Files>>Individual Study & Sharing Submissions by Week 13, Friday, (Apr 16), 2359 Hours)	-

Text and Class Readings:

Main Text:

Lim, G.S., Holley, William H. Jr., Jennings, K. M, and Wolters, R. S. (2018). The labour relations process: A partnership approach to creating strategic competitive advantage (2nd ed.). Singapore: Cengage Learning. ISBN 978-981-4792-37-0.

A hardcopy of this book is available for 2-hour loan at Hon Sui Sen Memorial Library – Reserve Books and Readings (RBR) Section.

This book also available (in hardcopy) for purchase at the NUS Co-op Forum Bookstore located below the NUS Central Library.

This textbook (hardcopy and softcopy) is also available for online purchase. The info provided by the publisher is: “Please share this link. Use **SGNUS20** to enjoy the book at student price during checkout: [The Labour Relations Process: A Partnership Approach to Creating Strategic Competitive Advantage, 2nd Edition](#). Student Price: \$68.00 (before discount: \$124) for a hardcopy with free local delivery; \$37.90 (before discount: \$88) for a 1-year access right.”

Class Readings:

Lesson 1:

1. [Perspectives of Industrial Relations \(pay special attention to 1/13 - 1/17\)](#)
2. [Government Type \(World Factbook\)](#)
3. [List of Current Sovereign Monarchs](#)
4. [Can You Name the Five Remaining Communist Countries in the World?](#)
5. [Developing a Measure of Industrial Relations Climate](#)

Lesson 2:

6. [Industrial Revolution](#)
7. [History of Communism](#)
8. [Communist Party of the Soviet Union](#)
9. [Video on the Labour Movement in Singapore - National Trades Union Congress](#)
10. [Khmer Rouge](#)

Lesson 3:

11. [List of Trade Unions in Singapore – Employee Unions, Employer Unions, & Federation of Trade Unions](#)
12. [Vital to Maintain Symbiotic Ties Between Party, NTUC](#)
13. [NTUC-Affiliated Unions and Associations, Social Enterprises, & Related Organizations](#)
14. [Singapore Labour Foundation Annual Report 2018 \(pay special attention to pages 22-23\)](#)
15. [8 Myths About Trade Unions and Union Activities in Singapore](#)
16. [Singapore Business Federation](#)
17. [Singapore National Employers Federation](#)
18. [25 Trade Associations and Chambers Come Under One Roof to Help Companies Grow](#)
19. Singapore Constitution:
 - a. [Part V Chapter 1 \(President\)](#)
 - b. [Part VA \(Council of Presidential Advisers\)](#)
 - c. [Part VI \(the Legislature\)](#)
 - d. [Part V Chapter 2 \(the Executive\)](#)
 - e. [Part VIII \(the Judiciary\)](#)
20. [Elections in Singapore](#)

Lesson 4:

21. [List of Minimum Wage by Country](#)
22. [Central Provident Fund](#)
23. [Skills Development Levy Act](#)
24. [Workforce Singapore \(via Skill Development Levy Act\) & SkillsFuture Singapore \(via Government Annual Budget\)](#)
25. [Why Workfare Instead of a Minimum Wage in Singapore?](#)
26. [Workfare Income Supplement](#)
27. [Workfare Skills Support](#)
28. [Parliament: Progressive Wage Models Can Be Extended to More Sectors, Says Sam Tan](#)
29. [What is the Progressive Wage Model](#)
30. [Singapore Government Budget 2020/2021](#)
31. [Key Household Income Trends 2019](#)
32. [Fair Consideration Framework](#)
33. [Employment Act \(pay special attention to Section 48: maximum one month of Annual Wage Supplement \(fixed bonus\)\)](#)
34. [Real Wages Grew Faster Than Productivity in Recent Years](#)

Lesson 5:

35. General Provisions in Employment Related Laws in Singapore:
 - a. Singapore Constitution:
 - i. [Articles 10 \(no forced labour\)](#)
 - ii. [Article 14 \(employees have freedom of association such as joining a union\)](#)
 - b. Employment Act:
 - i. [Sections 9 - 11 \(employees are free to resign by giving the required notice\)](#)
 - ii. [Part IV \(minimum working conditions\)](#)
 - c. [Child Development Co-Savings Act \(maternity and paternity benefits for employees and self-employed/freelancers/independent contractors\)](#)
 - d. [Industrial Relations Act \(workplace collective bargaining procedures\)](#)
 - e. [Trade Unions Act \(setting up and management of employee/employer trade unions\)](#)
 - f. [Trade Disputes Act \(individual/group conduct during an industrial action\)](#)
 - g. [Criminal Law \(Temporary Provisions\) Act \(prohibitions and advance notice of industrial/strike action required for employees in essential services\)](#)
 - h. [Central Provident Fund Act \(save-and-you-earn retirement savings\)](#)
 - i. [Skills Development Levy Act \(training tax to fund subsidized training programs conducted by Workforce Singapore\)](#)
 - j. [Retirement & Re-Employment Act \(current retirement age is 62, should reemploy employees till they turn 67\)](#)
 - k. [Work Injury Compensation Act \(compensation for workplace injuries/illnesses\)](#)
 - l. [Workplace Safety & Health Act \(regulate the conduct of all stakeholders at the workplace\)](#)
 - m. [Employment of Foreign Manpower Act \(regulate the employment of individuals who are not citizens or permanent residents\)](#)
 - n. [Immigration Act \(regulate the flow of people entering, staying in, and exiting Singapore\)](#)

- o. [Holidays Act \(gazetting public holidays, usually 11 per year in Singapore\)](#)
- p. [Enlistment Act \(employee rights are protected if they are called to do national service\)](#)
- 36. [WICA \(Work Injury Compensation Act\) vs Common Law](#)
- 37. [Sample Collective Agreement: Beach Road Hotel](#)
- 38. [Collective Agreements Certified by Type of Organizations](#)
- 39. [Common Law](#)
- 40. [Tripartism in Singapore](#)
- 41. [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\) Conventions and Recommendations](#)
- 42. [ILO Conventions Ratified in Singapore](#)

Lesson 6:

- 43. [Contract of Service vs Contract for Service](#)
- 44. Applicability of these employment laws is affected by whether a work agreement is “contract of service” or “contract for service”:
 - a. [Employment Act](#)
 - b. [Child Development Co-Savings Act](#)
 - c. [Work Injury Compensation Act](#)
 - d. [Central Provident Fund Act](#)
 - e. [Enlistment Act](#)
 - f. [Industrial Relations Act](#)
 - g. [Skills Development Levy Act](#)
 - h. [Retirement & Re-Employment Act](#)
 - i. [Employment of Foreign Manpower Act](#)

Lesson 7:

- 45. [National Trades Union Congress – for all “workers” \(employees & freelancers/independent contractors/self-employed individuals\)](#)
- 46. Industrial Relations Act
 - a. [Section 17 \(bargainable vs non-bargainable employees\)](#)
 - b. [Scope of Collective Agreement May Exclude Certain Employees](#)
 - c. [Industrial Relations – MOM \(employees’ and executive employees’ rights to collective/individual bargaining\)](#)
 - d. [Part IV \(union protection for individual executive employees\)](#)
 - e. [Part IVA \(rights to assistance via a labour union for union social members\)](#)
- 47. [Trade Unions Act \(pay special attention to Parts III – IX \(setting up and management of a trade union\)\)](#)
- 48. [Employment Act Section 33 \(up to five months of the salary of manual workers earning not more than \\$4,500 per month and non-manual workers earning not more than \\$2,600 per month enjoy priority in case of employer bankruptcy\)](#)
- 49. Employees’ Workplace Rights Protected:
 - a. [Employment Act Section 17 \(employee’s right to join a labour union protected\)](#)
 - b. [Industrial Relations Act Sections 78 – 82 \(protection for employee union activities\)](#)
 - c. [Employment Act Section 15 \(employee can leave if danger not agreed to has arisen\)](#)

- d. [Employment Act Section 13 \(employee can leave without notice if employer fails to pay salary on time\)](#)
 - e. [Employment Act Section 18 – 18A \(employee rights protected in merger/acquisition/transfer of employment\)](#)
50. [Public Sector Employees Allowed/Disallowed to Join a Labour Union as Declared by the President of Singapore](#)

Lesson 8:

51. Industrial Relations Act:
- a. [Section 18 \(six major managerial prerogatives\)](#)
 - b. [Section 83 \(protection for employers when employers carry out employer union activities\)](#)
52. Employment Act:
- a. [Section 45 \(employees cannot bargain for retrenchment benefits if they have less than 2 years of service\)](#)
 - b. [Section 46 \(employees cannot bargain for retirement benefits if they have less than 5 years of service\)](#)
 - c. [Section 14 \(employers can dismiss an employee based on misconduct\)](#)
 - d. [Section 10 \(employers can terminate an employment contract by notice\)](#)
53. [Trade Disputes Act \(pay special attention to Section 3: unions cannot take industrial action for industrial matters not directly related to their terms and conditions of employment\)](#)
54. [Trade Unions Act \(pay special attention to Section 2 – definition of “Trade Union”\)](#)

Lesson 9:

55. [Managing Employment Disputes – Ministry of Manpower](#)
56. [Industrial Relations Act Part IVA \(tripartite mediation of disputes “Tripartite Mediation Framework”\)](#)
57. Labour-Management Bargaining Process:
- a. [Industrial Relations Act Part III \(collective bargaining process\)](#)
 - b. [Trade Unions Act \(pay special attention to Section 27 on having to conduct a secret ballot to obtain a majority support for taking an industrial action\)](#)
 - c. [Industrial Relations Part V \(arbitration process\)](#)
 - d. [Industrial relations Act Part VI \(IAC award is a court document\)](#)
58. [Trade Dispute Act \(all provisions\)](#)
59. [Criminal Law \(Temporary Provisions\) Act \(pay special attention to Parts III – IV, First Schedule on Essential Services\)](#)

Lesson 10:

60. Employment Act - Pay special attention to:
- a. [Section 14 \(employer can discipline employee based on misconduct via dismissal, demotion, or suspension of 1 week\)](#)
 - b. [Section 13 \(employer can dismiss employee if the latter absents from work for more than 2 consecutive days without excuse\)](#)
 - c. [Section 88A \(employees’ earned annual leave can be forfeited if they absent from work without excuse for more than 20% of the month/year or are dismissed based on misconduct\)](#)

- d. [Section 88 \(paid public holiday entitlement can be forfeited if the employees absents from work without excuse on the day before/after the public holiday\)](#)
 - e. [Sections 26 – 32 \(up to ¼ of a month’s pay can be deducted for damage or loss of goods and money entrusted; no pay for period of unexcused absence\)](#)
61. [Termination Due to Employee Misconduct – due inquiry required by MOM](#)

Modes of Learning:

Classes will be conducted in a seminar format.

The course will be learner-centred. We shall adopt norms of openness, participation, and preparedness because much of the learning in this course will be through peer- and self-learning.

You will also learn from a variety of readings and resources that we will examine throughout the course. Learning activities include analyses of cases (local and foreign), debates, critiques of papers, and others.

Learners’ Responsibilities:

Everyone in this class is responsible for creating a positive and supportive learning environment. You are encouraged to ask questions, comment, and be intellectually critical, while displaying courtesy, consideration, and openness to others.

We will be using group exercises as part of the learning process. You have a responsibility to your group to be prepared for the exercises and play your part.

At some point in the semester you will (working in groups) be put in charge of part of a class session. Please make sure you are well prepared to lead the discussion for that session.

Outside of classes, our main mode of communication with the class will be via LUMINUS and e-mail. It will be your responsibility to check your NUS mailbox regularly, and to read the announcements, updates, and other materials uploaded to the LUMINUS.

You are encouraged to take note during all the lessons to record key concepts and their applications as discussed for your own reference.

Academic Honesty: No Plagiarism

Please acknowledge all references and sources that you use in your work. This is not just good manners but also academic honesty. Please note the NUS Business School policy below:

“Academic integrity and honesty are essential for the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. The University and School expect every student to always uphold academic integrity & honesty. 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 it 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://nus.edu.sg/osa/resources/code-of-student-conduct>

Academic Privilege Under the Copyright Act of Singapore:

Please do not keep in your possession any materials that add up to or represent an unauthorized reproduction of more than ten percent (10%) of any specific published work (e.g., book, journal, magazine, etc.) unless you have obtained the required permission from the publishers and the copyright owners.

Assessment Methods:

Group Study & Sharing (Lessons 3-10):	20%
Individual LUMINUS Forum Contributions (Lessons 3-10):	20%
Individual Reflection Paper (Week 11, Saturday, 9 am – 5 pm):	30%
Individual Study & Sharing (By Week 13, Friday, 2359 Hours):	30%

Group Study & Sharing (Maximum 20%) (Lessons 3-10):

The students will form 8 Teams of several members each.

Each Team please study and share with the class one of the case studies assigned for Lessons 3-10.

Each sharing session will not be longer than 15 minutes in total.

The Presentation Team please have a representative to post a video record (or the Internet link to the record) of your team's presentation (showing yourselves talking about the case study) as well as the PowerPoints slides used in your team's presentation at LUMINUS>>Forum before the start of the relevant lesson.

There should be a Q&A (Questions and Answers) segment (part of the 15 minutes) at the end of your presentation to address actual/potential questions from the audience.

The Presentation Team may use the inputs from the members of the audience in their presentation. Please individually acknowledge audience's contributions in your presentation video.

If you have made reference to any published or unpublished sources of info in your presentation, please list them at the end of your presentation.

The assessment strategy (including teamwork, depth of analysis, and audience involvement) for Group Study and Sharing is detailed on the last page of this course outline.

You need not fulfil all the recommended elements of the assessment strategy given the current constraints of the learning environment.

After the sharing session, all members of the Presentation Team please individually provide the instructor with your feedback on each other's relative contributions to the group study and sharing preparatory process. Equal marks will be given to all the members of the Presentation Team in the absence of feedback to the contrary.

Individual LUMINUS Forum Contributions (Maximum 20%) (Lessons 3-10):

For each of Lessons 3-10, when you are not in the Group Study and Sharing Presentation Team doing the presentation, as a member of the audience you may independently post up to 5 ideas (each idea written in one paragraph) at LUMINUS>>>Forum to help the Presentation Team prepare for their presentation.

For each timely and relevant idea (complete with appropriate explanation & justification) you suggest to the Team, you earn one mark (= 1 percentage point).

Please see the last page of this course outline for an example.

You must post your ideas at least 72 hours before the relevant lesson starts to be eligible for earning the marks.

You may earn up to 5 marks (one idea = one mark = one percentage point) for helping the Presentation Team each week.

Only members of the audience may do this to earn marks. If you are a member of the Presentation Team doing the Group Study & Sharing presentation for the week, you need not do this (if you do so, no marks will be awarded to you).

Each of the ideas you offer to help the Presentation Team must be constructive and useful and related to employee relations which the Presentation Team can adopt for their presentation.

This may take the form of substantiated opinions, comments, examples, suggestions, critiques, questions, discussions, personal experiences, readings (of journals, newspapers, magazines, etc.), or the likes.

Please include the web-links or sources of the readings which you make reference to for each of the ideas you submit. If your idea is based on personal experiences, please describe the context of the experience succinctly.

You must not revise your ideas when the “-72 hours” deadline is over. The LUMINUS database will record the time of your original submission and the time of your most recent revision, if any. Your ideas will be considered late and not considered for marking purposes if the LUMINUS records show that you have revised

your ideas after the “-72 hours” deadline for the relevant lesson is over. Similarly, late submissions will not be awarded marks.

Individual Reflection Paper (Maximum 30%) (Week 11, Saturday, 9 am – 5 pm):

On the Saturday of Week 11, there will be a take-home test in the form of an online Individual Reflection Paper for you to complete. A case study with questions will be posted at LUMINUS>>Files>>Individual Reflection Paper at 9 am that day and you will submit your Individual Reflection Paper in a Word document by 5 pm on the same day (at LUMINUS>>Files>>Individual Reflection Paper Submissions).

The case study will ask you to review all the lessons of this module and show how you apply what you have learned from this module in the case. Please answer the specific questions posed in the case accurately (“to the point”).

Individual Study & Sharing (Maximum 30%) (By Week 13, Friday, 2359 Hours):

Each student will post an Individual Study & Sharing Report (maximum 2,400 words in main text), presentation slides (used in your individual presentation), and a video presentation record file (or the Internet link to the file) (maximum 5 minutes featuring yourself talking about your Report) at LUMINUS>>Files>>Individual Study & Sharing Submissions, by Week 13, Friday, 2359 hours.

Your Report can be on any topic (give it a project title of your choice) relevant to this module. It must shed insight (new, useful, and not available elsewhere) on any issue or issues of relevance to this module.

The more a typical manager in the real world can learn from your Report, the more marks will be awarded to you.

You may generate insights via opinion surveys, interviews with practitioners/employees, provocative reviews of publications and issues, and others.

The time limit of 5 minutes on your video presentation record is a big challenge because you must be very clear about how your Report adds value to managers.

If you have collected raw data for your Report, including questionnaire surveys, interviews with respondents, email exchanges with practitioners, etc., please include them in the Appendices to your Report. There are no word limits on Appendices.

Please see the last page of this handout (ignore the Teamwork portion) for tips on how to do a good individual presentation. You need not fulfil all the recommended elements given the current constraints of the learning environment.

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Group Study & Sharing Registration Form

The Presentation Team please have one representative to post the video record of your team's presentation (maximum 15 minutes) as well as the PowerPoint slides used in your team's presentation at LUMINUS>>>Forum before the relevant lesson starts.

Members of the audience are encouraged to independently post up to 5 ideas each week (at least 72 hours before the relevant lesson starts to qualify for credits) at LUMINUS>>>Forum to help the Presentation Team prepare for their presentation.

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Case Title</u>	<u>Team Members</u>
1	-	---
2	Case Practice: Chong Yuen Engineering Pte Ltd (Not Graded)	All teams please post your practice presentation slides at LUMINUS>>>Forum before Lesson 2 starts. For this practice, you need not post any video record or any ideas to help other teams. (Not graded).
3	Horrible Bosses (Case at end of Chapter 4)	_____ _____ _____
4	No Jobs, Labor Reforms in Limbo (Case at end of Chapter 7)	_____ _____ _____
5	Telling It Like It Is (Case at end of Chapter 3)	_____ _____ _____
6	Hyundai Motor vs. Labor Union (Case at end of Chapter 6)	_____ _____ _____
7	A Fog of 'Facts' (Case at end of Chapter 8)	_____ _____ _____
8	Labor Rights Reforms and Impatient Unions a Challenge for NLD (Case at end of Chapter 10)	_____ _____ _____
9	Goenka Confident of Ssangyong Motor's Future (Case at end of Chapter 9)	_____ _____ _____
10	Death of Sick Teacher Highlights Medical Rights (Case at end of Chapter 12)	_____ _____ _____

For In-Class Sharing/Presentation, Some Examples of Good Teamwork, Depth of Analysis, and Audience Involvement Are:

Good Teamwork: All team members are present and speak; not ideal for some to escape speaking as we train leaders of tomorrow; clear roles for all team members; members do not contradict one another; good flow from one member to another; others.

Depth of Analysis: Relevant real-life examples, references of published articles, and ideas beyond textbooks are to be rewarded; use of relevant concepts taken from textbooks is a basic requirement; issues that should be tackled given the case questions must be clearly specified to the audience; at the minimum, presenters must know what questions to ask of the audience; others.

Audience Involvement/Engagement: An elated audience should be taken as a good reason for giving more marks for audience involvement/engagement; asking specific students to answer questions can be taken as an active strategy to stimulate discussion---rather than ask a question and wait and no one answers; amount of interactions between the presenters and the audience is another indicator; innovative techniques like role play and skits should be rewarded; good graphic presentations should be regarded as helping the audience stay attentive and given recognition; others.

An Example of Acceptable Idea Contributed by a Member of the Audience to Help the Presentation Team (Worth One Mark)

“The management of Liu’s case was both legally and morally wrong. Chinese law prohibits employers from firing workers while they are receiving medical treatment. Article 42 was adopted at the 28th Session of the Standing Committee of the 10th National People’s Congress on June 29, 2007. It was effective as of January 1, 2008. This meant that Bowen College terminated the labour contract with Liu disregarding the law. Looking at the moral aspect, shortly after Liu was let go, she filed a lawsuit against the university, arguing that she had been wrongfully dismissed. The court sided with Liu, ordering Lanzhou Jiaotong to restore her employment, but the school did not comply, choosing instead to appeal the decision. That showed the lacked humanity. The solution offered by Bowen College raised doubts too. Faced with a public outcry, the college suspended Jiang Xueyun, head of human resources, for “errors” when dealing with Liu’s case. However, Jiang was unlikely to have acted without the direct college president Chen Ling. The suspension was a way to appease the public without getting to the root of the problem. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-05/13/content_17503812.htm”