

MGT 3715 - Managing Employee Relations

Summer 2026 Syllabus, Section A01, CRN 30913,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Ms. Kimberly Pleva, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

Professional Qualifications:

- Master's in Business Administration, Youngstown State University
- Bachelor's in Business Administration, Youngstown State University
- Certification, Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR), Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI)
- Certification, Senior Certified Professional in Human Resources (SHRM-SCP), Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- 16 years of senior level human resource experience at a Fortune 200 corporation with leadership in employee relations, workforce development and planning, recruiting/selection, compensation, skills assessments, succession planning, safety and learning and development.

Senior Lecturer

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Office Phone: 330-941-1891

Preferred Contact Method: Email (Please put "MGT 3715" in the subject line.)

Communication Expectations:

Students are expected to communicate professionally and respectfully. Course communication will occur through university email and Blackboard (email preferred), which students should check regularly. During the work week (Monday-Friday), I try to promptly return your emails. Reasonable response time should be allowed.

How to Refer to me:

Ms. Pleva

Course Description

3715. Managing Employee Relations. Business success often hinges on an organization's most valuable resource: its employees. In today's dynamic business environment, effective leaders must prioritize positive employee relations practices to foster a workplace that minimizes conflict, enhances employee retention, and promotes satisfaction, all while upholding ethical standards. This course will explore how to develop and implement strategies that support healthy employee relationships, address challenging employment situations, and navigate issues such as labor organizations and current workplace trends. Prereq.: 2.5 GPA. Prereq. or Coreq.: MGT 3725. 3 s.h.

Employees are an organization's greatest source of competitive advantage, and effective leaders must understand how to manage both employee and labor relations in today's complex workplace. This course explores the legal, ethical, and strategic dimensions of employee relations in both unionized and non-unionized environments. Students will examine employment law, collective bargaining agreements, employee engagement, workplace ethics, and current events shaping the field.

Through applied case studies, interactive discussions, and analysis of real-world scenarios, students will develop the ability to evaluate employee and labor relations strategies, apply ethical reasoning to managerial decisions, and respond to contemporary challenges with confidence.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Managing Human Resources	Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, Cardy, Carson	978-0134900001
Required	It Depends: Employee Relations Case Studies for Human Resource Professionals & Students	Angela Champ	978-1773700700

- Each week a learning module will be released on Blackboard covering one large topic. The module will contain items to support the week's learning such as readings, videos, and assignments. All recommended course readings and links are listed in the schedule at the end of this document.



- Each module should be reviewed thoroughly before starting any work. Start by reviewing the “Welcome” page. This covers all the details for that module including assignments.
- After reading the objectives, read all the readings for the week. This will contain key content to aid in completing any work (including discussion boards). THEN, start your work for the week.

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
5/11	• Textbook Chapter 3 (except 90-94) • Textbook Chapter 15 (15.2 only, p. 461-464) • Summary of Major Equal Opportunity Laws Summary of Employment Laws - KMPLeva • "Everything you need to know about Labor and Employee Relations" https://www.hracity.com/blog/what-is-labor-relations-everything-hr-should-know/ HR Acuity, 2025. • HR Basics: Equal Employment Opportunity https://youtu.be/3lRjzlnR1i0?si=6bsBsikZu6bT4p1U GreggU, 2019. • HR Basics: Employee Relations https://youtu.be/j2WsfhSIEHI?si=3iNVpjVCVAowrbtY GreggU, 2017.	Employee & Labor Relations: Shaped by Employment Law	Discussion Board 1 (DUE 5/14) Course Objectives Quiz (DUE 5/17) Quiz: Module 1 (DUE 5/17)



5/18	• Textbook Chapter 15 (except 15.2 from Module 1 and 484-486 from Module 3) • Do's and Don'ts in Union Organizing Campaigns. https://www.laborconsultants.org/dos-donts-union-campaign/ Reliant Labor Consultants, 2021. • The Five Steps Unions Use to Organize Your Employees https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/five-basic-steps-unions-use-organize-your-employees-walter-orechwa/ Orechwa, Walter, 2017. • How Does Collective Bargaining Work? https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/How%20Does%20Collective%20Bargaining%20Work%3F%20A%20Step-by-Step%20Guide.pdf. National Education Association, 2022. • Glossary of Terms - Labor Relations . UW HR, 2025 • Video: How to Manage Union Relationships https://www.linkedin.com/learning/certification-prep-professional-in-human-resources-phr/managing-union-relationships?collection=urn%3Ali%3AlearningCollection%3A6621249730318004224&u=57694233 Smith-Walters, 2018. • Video: American Labor – A Journey of Struggle https://youtu.be/v19vl6jK2eU?si=_PI17i1nq1qTimuU UFCWLocal234, 2011.	Labor Relations – How, Why & Then What?	Discussion Board 2 (DUE 5/21) Quiz: Module 2 (DUE 5/24)
5/25	• Textbook Chapter 15 only p. 484-486 (contract administration) • What is a "union contract?" What is a Union Contract? UFCW, September 2020. • Subjects of Bargaining What are subjects of Bargaining? Austin Legal, February 2022. • What is a Grievance: Everything You Need to Know https://www.upcounsel.com/what-is-a-grievance UpCounsel, December, 2024. • Whether or Not to Arbitrate https://www.ueunion.org/stwd_arb.html UE, March 2025. • The Seven Test of Just Cause https://www.ueunion.org/stwd_jstcause.html UE, March 2025. • Check out some CBAs at YSU: https://ysu.edu/human-resources/bargaining-unit-agreements Youngstown State University, March 2025.	Labor Relations – Key Contract Provisions	Discussion Board 3 (DUE 5/28) Quiz: Module 3 (DUE 5/31)



6/1	• Textbook Chapter 13 • “Employee Relations Best Practices to Stay Union-Free” https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/employee-relations-best-practices-stay-union-free-walter-orechwa/ Orechwa, June 2021. • Your Best Employees are Burning Out: A Framework for Retaining Talent https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/your-best-employees-are-burning-out-a-framework-for-retaining-talent Harvard Business School, August 2022. • What is Employee Turnover & Why It Matters for Your Business https://www.netsuite.com/portal/resource/articles/human-resources/employee-turnover.shtml Holliday, January, 2021.	Employee Relations and Engagement	Discussion Board 4 (DUE 6/4) Quiz: Module 4 (DUE 6/7)
6/8	• Textbook Chapter 14 - Employee Rights only p 424-436 • How Leaders Determine Workplace Ethics https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/5608-workplace-ethics.html Anziano, November 2023. • Ways to Prevent Unethical Behavior in the Workplace https://smallbusiness.chron.com/ways-prevent-unethical-behavior-workplace-21344.html Brookins, March 2025. • Employee Privacy Laws: What Employers Should Know https://technologyadvice.com/blog/human-resources/data-monitoring-and-employee-privacy/ Sherrer, January 2024. • Why Ethical People Make Unethical Choices https://hbr.org/2016/12/why-ethical-people-make-unethical-choices Carucci, Harvard Business Review, December 2016. • What is a Code of Conduct? https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/code-of-conduct-examples Indeed Editorial Team, March 2025	Ethics, Workplace Privacy & Fraud	Discussion Board 5 (DUE 6/11) Quiz: Module 5 (DUE 6/14)



6/15

- Textbook Chapter 14 – 437-450
- How to Create Bulletproof Documentation <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/employee-relations/how-to-create-bulletproof-documentation> Meinert, July 2016.
- 10 Sins of Employee Documentation <https://hrdailyadvisor.blr.com/video/10-sins-of-employee-documentation/> Bruce, January 2017.
- 5 Steps for Tackling Difficult Conversations <https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/5-steps-for-tackling-tough-conversations/#:~:text=Start%20from%20the%20%E2%80%9Cthird%20story.%E2%80%9D&text=Describe%20the%20problem%20as%20the,sort%20out%20the%20situation%20together.> Center for Creative Leadership. February 2023.
- How to Handle Difficult Conversations at Work <https://hbr.org/2015/01/how-to-handle-difficult-conversations-at-work> Knight, January 2015.
- How to Have Difficult Conversations with Employees <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/how-to-have-difficult-conversations-with-employees> Landry, 2022.

Handling Employee Situations

Discussion Board 6 (DUE 6/18)
Quiz: Module 6 (DUE 6/21)



6/22	• Textbook Chapter 16 (pages 507-516 "Managing Contemporary Safety, Health & Behavioral Issues"); Chapter 3 (pages 90-94 "Sexual Harassment") • The Effects of Substance Abuse in the Workplace https://americanaddictioncenters.org/workforce-addiction Geneses, March 2025. • Surprising Stats on Drugs in the Workplace https://www.psychemedics.com/blog/2018/01/surprising-stats-drugs-workplace/ Wylie, January 2018. • The Prevalence of Substance Abuse in the Workplace https://drugabuse.com/addiction/substance-abuse-workplace/ American Addiction Centers Editorial Staff, August, 2024. • Why Sexual Harassment Programs Backfire https://store.hbr.org/product/why-sexual-harassment-programs-backfire/s20031?sku=S20031-PDF-ENG Dobbin & Kalev, May 2020. • Workplace Bullying & Harassment https://www.nsc.org/getmedia/e18a9637-8b0c-4c6a-9daf-98a907bfee63/bullying-english.pdf.aspx National Safety Council, 2020. • Workplace Drug Testing: Weighing the Pros and Cons https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/employment-law-compliance/workplace-drug-testing-weighing-pros-cons Nagele-Piazza, January 2020.	Current Events	Discussion Board 7 (DUE 6/25) Quiz: Module 7 (DUE 6/28)
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