Psychology 493
Fairness in the Workplace: A Psychological Perspective
Fall 2022

Instructor: Jo M Alanís
Pronouns: she/her
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:00pm-12:30pm

Class meets Mon and Wed in-person from 10:20am – 11:40 am in C204 Snyder Hall.

Course website available on D2L

Course Description:

This course will provide an examination of psychological research that can inform how to design fair and effective workplaces from the perspective of organizational psychology.

The course has been designed in a blended fashion with synchronous and asynchronous elements. Synchronous time (when we are in person) is primarily for group activities and guest speakers, as well as for Q&A type of sessions. Asynchronous elements include readings and discussion posts. Many learning activities are designed to work in groups but there are a few you complete individually. In general, the course has been designed to provide variety in what you do and how information is presented, and to provide some flexibility in assessing your learning.

Overall Course Objectives:
1. To define what makes a fair workplace
2. To evaluate that definition in various workplace employment decision contexts (e.g., selection, pay, layoffs, policies)
3. To evaluate individual and contextual factors that influence perceptions of fairness at work
4. To determine how to alter workplace environments to positively influence fairness perceptions
5. To specify the effects of unfairness on individuals and organizations
6. To evaluate systematic and individual means of addressing unfairness
7. To critically review empirical research on fairness and justice in the workplace
8. To hone skills in writing in the discipline of Psychology

Course Materials
All readings and assignment instructions are available on D2L. There is no textbook purchase required. It is expected that you will complete readings and provide reflective discussion posts so you come to class sessions prepared to discuss them. Some readings will be the basis of reading
summary assignments; others may be connected to learning activities that are also graded. Thus, preparation is important to your learning and full engagement.

If a link does not work on D2L, you should access the reading through free library database resources by looking up the reference using the full reference list that is provided at the end of this syllabus. You should also send me an email and letting me know about the broken link. That is, there is no excuse for not doing a reading.

The aim of all in class and outside assignments (learning activities, posts, reflections) is for you to think more deeply about a specific justice issue. The aim of the literature review is to allow you to do a more in-depth examination of topics of interest to you while developing your critical thinking, research and writing skills. This course is designated as a Tier II writing course which means that we focus on writing within the discipline of Psychology. Thus, a portion of class time is devoted to how to effectively write a literature review within the field of Psychology.

Note that in addition to graded items, there are occasional short exercises, surveys, quizzes, and other materials that are meant to facilitate your learning.

**Assessments of Learning**

**Major assignments**
- Literature review: 100
- Annotated bibliography: 25
- Outline: 25
- Exams (2 @ 100 points each): 200

**Class preparation**
- Discussion posts (5 points each; 9 opportunities; must do 8): 40
- Reading summaries (12 points each; 22 opportunities; must do 15): 180

**In class activities**
- Learning activities (12 points each; 17 opportunities; must do 15): 180
- Policy application (in class group work): 30
- Infographic (in class group work): 20

**Total 800 points**

There are no extra credit opportunities. There are multiple means of assessment in the course that provide you with the chance to demonstrate your capabilities. There is also flexibility to accommodate schedules and emergencies (e.g., there are opportunities to drop the lowest grades so if you miss an activity that counts as one of your drops).

Grades are posted on D2L; please be sure to alert me of any concerns within one week of posting. Information on grading (i.e., rubrics or points assignments) are available are D2L under the syllabus and instructions tab. As this course has a variety of graded activities, there may be times in the semester when grading takes longer than a week; please be patient.
All assignments will be turned in through drop boxes on D2L. Assignments typically are due BEFORE CLASS (i.e., by 10:20am). This is so that we can discuss them in class. If an assignment will not be covered in class, you may have until 11:59 to complete it. All due dates are clearly indicated in D2L – please keep track of them so you do not fall behind. I am empathetic to the challenges individuals have; if you feel you will be late on an assignment because of some struggles, please email me and we may be able to work out an alternative due date. My suggestion is you use the checklists provided on D2L with each topic to keep you on track with what you need to do by when. The “roadmap” at the end of this syllabus and on D2L is an ideal way to track as well. It will be clear what you need to do before we have a class meeting and what can be done either during class time or afterward.

Grade cutoffs:

- 720 points and above: 4.0
- 680-719 points: 3.5
- 640-679: 3.0
- 600-639: 2.5
- 560-599: 2.0
- 520-559: 1.5
- 480-519: 1.0
- 479 and below: 0.0

**Class Roadmap (subject to change)**

An in-depth schedule for class is provided on D2L as a separate file, as well as at the end of this syllabus. I would strongly suggest you print the schedule or integrate its contents into your planner/calendar now. It tells you the critical things you need to do inside and outside of class sessions. Each topic also has a checklist to help you track activity completion as well. Full references for readings are at the end of the syllabus.

**Academic Integrity**

Please refer to the General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. See Spartan Life Online (splife.studentlife.msu.edu) and/or the MSU Web site (msu.edu) and [https://ombud.msu.edu/academic-integrity/index.html#integrity](https://ombud.msu.edu/academic-integrity/index.html#integrity) for details on academic integrity and your rights and responsibilities. Specific to this course, a penalty grade of 0 points is given on any assignment where an individual claims or submits work of another as one’s own (including plagiarism of whole or part of another’s work), completes or attempts to complete in class work for someone not in attendance, or in any way misrepresents one’s completion of assignments or in-class work. Please review the Spartan Code of Honor [https://acadgov.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/SpartanCodeofHonor.pdf](https://acadgov.msu.edu/sites/default/files/content/SpartanCodeofHonor.pdf)

Note that there are assignments where you work in a group and it is acceptable for those in the group to turn in the same material as you worked on it together. These opportunities will be
clearly labelled; other activities are meant to be an individual activity, that should be your own individual work.

**Attendance and Participation**

University Attendance Policy (in part): Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class. Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.

This is an upper-level class so the expectation is not just that you will attend when we do meet but that you will **participate**. In most class sessions we will be working together on activities or having a guest speaker. Speakers are taking time to meet and interact with you, so having attendance on dates where we have speakers reflects on your professionalism.

**If you miss a class that involves an activity, you will have to count those as your dropped grades unless it is a university excused absence.**

Grief absence information is available at [http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/regulations/selected/grief-absence-policy](http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/regulations/selected/grief-absence-policy).

If you will miss a class session or an assignment because of a religious observance, please let me know in advance.

**Instructor Availability and Communication**

While I do have set office hours, I am available to meet with students at other times by appointment. I check my email regularly and try to respond in a timely manner; however, I will not answer after 8PM so send any questions about assignments that are due before that time. Check your D2L account and university email regularly for information and updates.

**Technology**

We often access online materials during class for activities, so you do need to have a laptop or tablet with you – *just a phone is not going to suffice*. You are allowed to maintain a cellular device in silent mode to receive emergency notifications. However, when you are interacting with others or listening to me or a speaker, it is a good idea to get away from your phone if you are going to be constantly interrupted by texts or other notifications. Students often think there is no problem with just checking texts but to everyone else it is clear you are inattentive – it isn’t successful multitasking but rudeness. **Consider it a personal challenge to see if you can actually not look at your phone during class time.** No matter what you think, research has consistently shown how disruptive electronic interruptions are to our concentration and to our social relationships (I’d be happy to share many references with you, or perhaps you can bring some of that research into your class paper!) So get in the habit of turning on site blocking browser add-ins and/or shutting off your phone completely during class. Or force
yourself with a blocker (e.g., you can block Facebook/Instagram/Snapchat during class). See https://freedom.to/blog/8-website-blockers-for-studying-productivity-focus/ or https://zapier.com/blog/stay-focused-avoid-distractions/ for suggestions. Do yourself a favor and make this a more focused semester! Finally, I reserve the right to call you out during a session if your inattention is disruptive to me or others.
If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem you can:
Visit the Distance Learning Services Support Site (lib.msu.edu/dls)
Visit the Desire2Learn Help Site (help.d2l.msu.edu)
Or call Distance Learning Services: (800) 500-1554 or (517) 355-2345

**Recording/photographing others**
As members of a learning community, you are expected to respect the intellectual property of others as well as the ability of others to discuss topics freely within the confines of the classroom. You are not allowed to record any activity yourself without the advance written permission of the instructor and any students whose voice or image is included in the recording. Posting a photo/video or other recording of anyone in the class to social media without their written consent is a violation of this policy, and may result in a penalty up to a 0.0 as a course grade, as well as other academic disciplinary sanctions as described by university policy. If there is a need for me to record an activity (e.g., the first few class sessions on Zoom), I will inform you that we are recording.

**Commercialization of materials**
Commercialization of any notes and materials from this course is not permitted.

**Civility**
We may engage in discussions (both online and in class) of topics where individuals have different opinions. It is important for you to recognize distinctions between opinions and facts, but also to in all cases show courtesy and respect for others. Please refrain from using language that others might find offensive, and express disagreements and counterarguments in diplomatic and civil ways. Uncivil behavior may result in a 0.0 points for an activity, as well as further sanctions and restrictions based on MSU Code of Conduct.

Article 2.III.B.4 of Student Rights and Responsibilities for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.III.B.10 states that "The student and the faculty share the responsibility for maintaining professional relationships based on mutual trust and civility." General Student Regulation 5.02 states: "No student shall . . . obstruct, disrupt, or interfere with the functions, services, or directives of the University, its offices, or its employees (e.g., classes, social, cultural, and athletic events, computing services, registration, housing and food services, governance meetings, and hearings).” Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Judicial Affairs office.
Accommodations
If you have a disability that will require accommodations, please contact me within the first week of class to privately discuss your needs. Materials I have created have been reviewed for accessibility and modified as much as possible as well as close captioned. If there are accessibility issues with external material that is linked through the MSU library, please contact the library. If there are other accessibility concerns you have please let me know.

Emergency Procedures
If an emergency occurs that would require cancellation of a class session, I will send a notification via D2L. Similarly, if a weather emergency or illness outbreak requires us to switch from in-person to online, I will notify you. In case of an emergency while in person in class, it is your responsibility to know the emergency procedures posted by the exit door and to understand evacuation, shelter-in-place, and other MSU directives.

Limits to confidentiality
Students should be aware that I am unable to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with my responsibilities as a mandatory reporter within the university. That is, I must report to other University offices any information you share with me regarding (1) suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this happened when you were a child, (2) allegations of sexual assault or harassment involving MSU students, faculty or staff, and (3) credible threats of harm to oneself or others. These reports may trigger contact from a campus official; in almost all cases, it will be your decision if you wish to speak to that individual. If you would like to talk about any of the above in a setting that is confidential and not bound by mandatory reporting, please make an appointment with the MSU counseling services at www.caps.msu.

Technical support
For questions about D2L contact https://help.d2l.msu.edu/ or Local: (517) 432-6200 Toll-free: (844) 678-6200 (North America and Hawaii). For other technical difficulties (e.g., WiFi or power outages while we are meeting online), email me and let me know if this happens during a synchronous session and has disrupted your learning. Also, if you are in Michigan, here is a link to a map of free wifi hotspots http://cngis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=0d69accbb5ff422a82eccce9101b69d

Mental Health
Mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. Services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Counseling & Psychiatric Services (CAPS) website at www.caps.msu.edu.

Staying Home or Self-Isolating when Appropriate
If you have been sick with COVID-19 symptoms, tested positive for COVID-19, or have been potentially exposed to someone with COVID-19, follow CDC guidance regarding isolating,
quarantining, etc… I will make accommodations for those who must miss class due to COVID illness.
LIST OF READINGS

Module 1: Overview

8/31: Overview & Fairness
   • No readings for this class

9/5: NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

9/7: Organizational Justice

Module 2: Fundamental Concepts

9/12: Fair Outcomes

9/14: Fair Procedures

9/19: Fair Treatment
Module 3: Advanced Concepts

9/21: Motives
• Brockner, J. (2006). Why is it so hard to be fair? Harvard Business Review,
• Gajendran, R. Sherf, EN & Venkataramani, V. (2020). Why managers treat employees unfairly when they are overworked. HBR Ascend

9/26: Effects

9/28: People Vary

10/3: Applying Concepts to Policies
• No readings for this class

10/5: Legal
Module 4: Fairness and Organizational Systems

10/10: Hiring Practices

10/12: Exam 1

10/17: Hiring Practices

10/19: Library (how to do a literature search)

10/24: NO CLASS, SEMESTER BREAK

10/26: Rewards and Recognition

10/31: Performance Reviews
   • Golen, L., Gale, J. & Grant, A. Let’s not kill performance evaluations yet *Harvard Business Review.*

11/2: Firing and Layoffs, Customers
Module 5: Fairness and Workplace Policies

11/7: When, Where, and How Much

11/9: Behavior at Work

11/14: Non-Work Behavior
- Appleby, J. (June 24, 2015). When does workplace wellness become coercive? Shots, NPR.

11/16: Accommodations

11/21: Preferences

Module 6: Addressing Unfairness

11/23: Restorative and Retributive Justice (NO CLASS MEETING, SEE D2L)
Retaliation on Subordinate Well-Being Following Abusive Supervision. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*. Advance online publication. 
http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000291


11/28: Address: Systems

11/30: Address: Training, Third Parties

**Module 7: Current and Emerging Issues in Fairness**

12/5: Emerging Issues
- Dworskin, E. (2020, October 20) Americans might never come back to the office, and Twitter is leading the charge. *The Washington Post*

12/7: Exam 2

12/16: Final Exam, 7:45AM-9:45AM (class activity TBD)
## ROADMAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments (exact due time on D2L)</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Class Meeting Focus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Overview</strong></td>
<td>8/31</td>
<td>Overview: What is fairness?</td>
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<td>Overview of course</td>
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<td>In-class activity: what is fairness?</td>
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<td>9/5</td>
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<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/7</td>
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<td>What is organizational justice?</td>
<td>• Discussion Board (DB): introduce yourself • DB: general questions (you can post to this anytime)</td>
<td>• Cropanzano et al.</td>
<td>Discussion on how to read research articles, fundamental concepts, ethics In-class activity: breakout discussions</td>
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<td>9/14</td>
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<td>What are fair procedures?</td>
<td>• DB: fair process effect • Reading summary: Greenberg (1994)</td>
<td>• Greenberg (1994)</td>
<td>Discussion on fair process effects In-class activity: procedural justice</td>
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<td>9/19</td>
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<td>What is fair and respectful treatment of others?</td>
<td>• DB: incivility, free speech • Making connections quiz • Topic preferences for policy analysis • Reading summary: Rothberger et al. • Reading summary: Reknes et al.</td>
<td>• Reknes et al. • Porath &amp; Pearson • Davics • Rothgerber et al.</td>
<td>Guest lecture: Dr. Daisy Chang</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>9/21</td>
<td>Why do people act fairly or unfairly?</td>
<td>Why do people act fairly or unfairly?</td>
<td>Discussion on how to write lit review, Discussion on the why of fairness. In-class activity: models of fairness</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/26</td>
<td>What are the effects of fairness or unfairness on employees?</td>
<td>Topic preferences for legal infographic, Making connections quiz, Reading summary: Ambrose et al., Reading summary: Brockner et al.</td>
<td>Discussion on psychological contracts, Begin policy analysis group work</td>
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<td>9/28</td>
<td>Why do people differ in what they see as fair?</td>
<td>Topic for literature review, Reading summary: Varty et al., Reading summary: Rice et al.</td>
<td>Discussion of readings and questions on moderators, Policy analysis groupwork</td>
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<td>10/3</td>
<td>Applying concepts to policies</td>
<td>Policy analysis</td>
<td>Policy analysis presentations and discussion</td>
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<td>10/5</td>
<td>How do legal definitions of fairness connect to psychological ones?</td>
<td>Reading summary: Hackney et al.</td>
<td>Guest lecture: Dr. Ann Marie Ryan</td>
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<td>10/10</td>
<td>What determines views of the</td>
<td>Learning activity: criminal records</td>
<td>Discussion on hiring practices and criminal records in hiring</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Fairness and Organizational Systems</td>
<td>Walker et al.</td>
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<td>10/12</td>
<td>EXAM 1</td>
<td>• Reading summary: Walker et al.</td>
<td>Begin group work on infographic</td>
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<td>10/17</td>
<td>What is affected by the fairness of hiring practices?</td>
<td>• Reading summary: Noble et al.</td>
<td>Discussion on technology and hiring</td>
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<td>• Noble et al.</td>
<td>Guest speaker: Dr. Juliya Golubovich</td>
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<td>In-class activity: hiring FSOs</td>
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<td>Group work on infographic</td>
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<td>10/19</td>
<td>How to do a literature search</td>
<td>• DB: pay transparency</td>
<td>Guest lecture, Kathleen Weessies</td>
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<td>10/24</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>• Making connections link</td>
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<td>• Making connections quiz</td>
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<td>• Reading summary: Hernandez et al.</td>
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<td>10/26</td>
<td>What is affected by the fairness of reward and recognition systems?</td>
<td>• DB: transparency</td>
<td>Discussion on pay transparency</td>
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<td>• Making connections</td>
<td>In-class activity: negotiations</td>
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<td>• Making connections quiz</td>
<td>Guest speaker: Dr. Carrie Ott-Holland</td>
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<td>10/31</td>
<td>What about the fairness of performance reviews?</td>
<td>• DB: getting rid of performance reviews</td>
<td>Discussion on performance reviews</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Capelli &amp; Tavis</td>
<td>How to outline; activity on outlining</td>
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<td>• Golen et al.</td>
<td>In-class activity: performance reviews</td>
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<td>11/2</td>
<td>What about the fairness of layoffs and firing?</td>
<td>• DB: customer mistreatment</td>
<td>Discussion on terminations and mistreatment by customers</td>
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<td>• Reading summary: Hershcovis &amp; Bhatnagar</td>
<td>In-class activity: terminations</td>
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<td>• Lichter</td>
<td>In-class activity: layoffs</td>
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<td>• Herschovis &amp; Bhatnagar</td>
<td>Writing hook activity</td>
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<td>11/7</td>
<td>Fairness and Workplace Policies</td>
<td>What makes policies on when, where, and how much we work seem fair or unfair? Discussion on fairness of policies regarding when, where, and how to work Writing activity on integrating literature</td>
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<td>11/9</td>
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<td>What makes policies on behaviors at work seem fair or unfair? Discussion of policies on behavior at work In-class activity: monitoring</td>
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<td>11/14</td>
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<td>What are views on the fairness of policies regarding non-work behavior? Discussion on non-work policies In-class activity: wellness programs 1:1 consultations on paper this week</td>
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<td>11/16</td>
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<td>When are accommodations or exceptions to policies seen as fair or unfair? Discussion on accommodations In-class activity: accommodations</td>
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<td>11/21</td>
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<td>When are preferences seen as fair or unfair? Discussion on preferences In-class activity: accommodations</td>
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<td>11/23</td>
<td>Addressing Unfairness</td>
<td>What is restorative and retributive justice? Discussion on preferences Watch video on forgiveness and restorative justice</td>
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<td>11/28</td>
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<td>How can we use organizational systems to                                             Discussion on apologies and organizational systems In-class activity: apologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Reading Summaries</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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| 11/30    | How can we use training to address unfairness?                          | • Reading summary: Ashburn-Nardo et al.  
• Reading summary: Richter et al.  
• Reading summary: Mitchell et al.  
• Reading summary: Greenberg | Discussion on training and 3rd party interventions  
In-class activity: corporate statements  
In-class activity: training |
| 12/5     | What are emerging issues in workplaces?                                  | • DB: fairness and the pandemic  
• Reading summary: Yuan et al. | Guest speaker: Rachael Pyram  
Discussion on fairness & pandemic, remote work |
| 12/7     | EXAM 2                                                                  |                                                                                  |                                                                      |
| 12/16    | FINAL EXAM (7:45AM-9:45AM)                                               |                                                                                  |                                                                      |