

Psychology 493
Fairness In The Workplace: A Psychological Perspective
Fall 2019

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Class meets Mon and Wed 12:40-2:00 in **Room 311 Bessey Hall**

Course website available on D2L

Office hours: 2-3PM M and W and by appointment

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.

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

Readings and Assignments:

All readings and assignment instructions are available on D2L. There is no textbook purchase required. It is expected that you will complete readings before class and come to class prepared to discuss. Some readings will be the basis of assignments; others will be the basis of in-class activities that are also graded. Thus, preparation is important.

Check your D2L account and university email regularly for information and updates. Grades are posted on D2L in a timely manner; please be sure to alert me of any concerns within one week of posting.

All assignments will be turned in through drop boxes on D2L. Assignments are due at the start of class on the date due. Assignments turned in late will automatically be deducted 25% if turned in within 24

hours, but not accepted at all thereafter (unless accompanied by documentation, such as that indicated by MSU's grief absence policy).

Assessments of Learning

	Points
Literature review	100
Article/Source list	5
Outline	5
Justice application	100
Assignments (7 opportunities; 6 at 20 points each)	120
Reading reflections (10 opportunities; 8 at 20 points each)	160
In class participation (26 opportunities; 22 at 5 points each needed)	110
Total	600

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 7 assignments and you must do 6 (or do all 7 and drop the lowest grade); there are 10 reading summaries and you must do 8 (or do all 10 and drop the lowest two); there are 26 participation opportunities and you need to be present in class for 22 (or have perfect attendance and drop the lowest 4).

The aim of all assignments is for you to think more deeply about a specific justice issue. The aim of reading reflection assignments is to assist you in reading and critically evaluating research in I/O psychology (they are critiques, not just summaries). The aims of the literature review and application papers are 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.

Grade cutoffs:

540 points and above	4.0
510-539 points	3.5
480-509	3.0
450-479	2.5
420-449	2.0
390-419	1.5

360-389 1.0

Below 360 0.0

Attendance and Participation

This is an upper level class so the expectation is not just that you will attend but that you will **participate**. In-class participation in various activities and thought exercises does count toward grades. Calculation of participation points does consider that you may miss classes due to illness and other emergencies, so there are ample opportunities throughout the term to gain participation points. There are 26 classes where participation credit might be earned and one could potentially get full credit from 22 class periods – this is a very generous policy. Note that credit is based on the quality of participation not just attendance – points are deducted if you are present but are not contributing/are inattentive/put in only cursory effort. There are no opportunities to make up for missed participation, although all in class activities are posted on D2L for your reference after classes. Grief absence information is available at <http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/regulations/selected/grief-absence-policy>.

Class Schedule (subject to change)

Reading assignments by date and full references for readings are at the end of this syllabus. If a link does not work on D2L, you should access the reading through free library database resources by looking up the reference. That is, there is no excuse for not doing a reading.

Miscellaneous policies

Academic Integrity: Please refer to <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.

Electronic devices: We often access online materials during class for activities so plan to have a device with you (laptops and tablets are easier to read from than phones!) However, when we are not using them for class purposes, you should seriously consider putting them away especially your phone. 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/> for suggestions. Do yourself a favor and make this a more focused semester! Finally, I reserve the right to ask you to shut down a device or to confiscate a device (yes, just like you are in high school) if your inattention is disruptive to me or others.

Instructor Availability: 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 respond in a timely manner; however, I will not answer after 9PM so send any questions about assignments that are due before that time.

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. Students may record lectures for their own course-related purposes *with instructor permission*. Students may not share those recordings 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.

Civility. We may engage in discussions 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 in the classroom may result in a 0.0 for participation points for an activity, as well as further sanctions and restrictions.

Accommodations. If you have a disability that will require accommodations, please see me within the first week of class to privately discuss your needs. If you will miss class or an assignment because of a religious observance, please let me know in advance.

Emergency Procedures. Please take time the first day of class to familiarize yourself with the classroom surroundings and multiple exits from the building. Think through your own plans for handling various emergencies that might arise during class. If an emergency occurs that would require class cancellation, I will send a notification via D2L.

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 Center.

Tentative course schedule

(this schedule is subject to change)

The course is divided into 3 sections:

- Theories and terminology regarding fairness at work
- Applying those theories and terms to specific workplace systems and policies
- Ways to address unfairness

Date	Topic	Assignments	Readings
Aug 28	Overview: What is Fair?	----	----
Sept 2	NO CLASS LABOR DAY		
	THEORIES AND CONCEPTS		
Sept 4	What are fair outcomes?	A1 interview	Cropanzano et al 2007
Sept 9	Reading and critiquing research on organizational justice		Greenberg 1988 Valentine 2018
Sept 11	What are fair procedures?	R1	Brockner Greenberg 1994 (R)
Sept 16	What is fair and respectful treatment of others?	R2	Porath & Pearson Fouk et al (R) Davis
Sept 18	Why do people act fairly or unfairly?	Topic Lit review	Scott et al
Sept 23	What are the effects of fair or unfair treatment on employees?	A2 social media	Beaton
Sept 25	Why do people vary in whether they see something as fair or unfair?	R3	Bobocel (R)
Sept 30	What does the justice system consider unfair in the workplace?	A3 legal	Ludden (5:05 mins)
Oct 2	Tools for writing		Geher (under the syllabus tab)
Oct 7	Guest lecture: Caitlyn Briggs, Employee Voice		Potter
	APPLYING CONCEPTS		
Oct 9	What determines views of the fairness of hiring practices?	Article list	Walker et al
Oct 14	What is effected by the fairness of hiring practices?	A4: hiring	Kang Anzilotti
Oct 16	What determines views of the fairness of reward and recognition systems?	R4	Greenberg 1990 (R) Graham (4:03)
Oct 21	What is effected by the fairness of reward and recognition systems?	R5	Noguchi (3:51) Scheiber Hernandez et al (R)

Oct 23	What about the fairness of performance reviews?	Detailed Outline	Capelli & Travis Goler, Gale & Grant Fisher
Oct 28	What about the fairness of layoffs and firing?	A5 Termination	Richter et al. Corkery Noguchi (2:56)
Oct 30	What makes policies on when, where and how much we work seem fair or unfair?	Application topic choice	Kantor Swarns Kodjak (6:12) Scheiber
Nov 4	What makes workplace policies on behavior at work seem fair or unfair?	A6 Policies	Aubrey (2:10) Gelles Ueno & Victor
Nov 6	What are views on the fairness of policies regarding non-work behavior?		Hyman Greenfield Appleby
Nov 11	When are accommodations or exceptions to policies seen as fair or unfair?	Literature review due	Runyan (3:54 mins) Noguchi (3:49) Kurtz Zhuang et al
Nov 13	When are preferences seen as fair or unfair?	R6	Favoritism podcast (15 mins) Zarya Shaw et al (R)
SOLUTIONS			
Nov 18	Addressing unfairness: systems	R7	Silver-Greenberg & Corkery Rubino et al Choshen-Hillel et al (R)
Nov 20	Addressing unfairness: training	R8	Richter et al (R) Sorkin
Nov 25	Addressing unfairness: third parties	R9	Mitchell et al (R) Herschcovis & Bhatnager
Nov 27	Application Writing (no class meeting)		
Dec 2	Addressing unfairness: restorative justice and other responses	A7 Addressing unfairness	Sabat et al
Dec 4	New ways of working: emerging fairness issues/project discussion	R10	Fiesler et al (R)
Dec 10 (Tuesday)	12:45-2:45	Application paper due	

LIST OF READINGS

9/4: Fair outcomes

- Cropanzano, R., Bowen, DE, Gilliland, WS (2007) The management of organizational justice. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 301-48

9/9: Research on justice

- Greenberg, J. (1988). Equity and workplace status: A field experiment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 73(4), 606-613.
- Valentine, M. (2018). When equity seems unfair: the role of justice enforceability in temporary team coordination. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61, 2081-2105

9/11: Fair procedures

- Brockner, J. (2006). Why is it so hard to be fair? *Harvard Business Review*,
- Greenberg, J. (1994). Using socially fair treatment to promote acceptance of a work site smoking ban. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(2), 288.

9/16: Fair treatment

- Porath, C.L., Pearson, C.M.. "The Price of Incivility." *Harvard Business Review* Jan/F (2013).
- Foulk, T., Woolum, A. & Erez, A (2016). Catching rudeness is like catching a cold: the contagion effects of low-intensity negative behaviors. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 101, 50-67.
- Davis, L. (2018, March 12). The Tipping equation. *The New York Times*

9/18: Motives

- Scott, BA, Garza, AS, Conlon, DE & You Jin, K (2014). Why do managers act fairly in the first place? A daily investigation of “hot” and “cold” motives and discretion. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57, 1571-1591

9/23: Effects

- Beaton, C. (2018). Why you can't really trust negative online reviews. *The New York Times*.

9/25: People vary

- Bobocel, D. R. (2013). Coping With Unfair Events Constructively or Destructively: The Effects of Overall Justice and Self-Other Orientation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

9/30: Legal

- Ludden, J. (June 11, 2013). Pushed off the job while pregnant. All things considered. Podcast.

10/2: Research and writing

- Geher, G. (2017). How to really write a psychology paper. *Psychology Today*

10/7: Employee voice

- Potter, P.W. (2006). Procedural justice and voice effects. *Journal of Organizational culture, communications and conflict*, 10, 33-62.

10/9: Hiring practices

- Walker, H. J., Helmuth, C. A., Feild, H. S., & Bauer, T. N. (2015). Watch what you say: Job applicants' justice perceptions from initial organizational correspondence. *Human Resource Management*, 54(6), 999-1011.

10/14: Hiring practices

- Kang, C. (2016, May 22). Unemployed Detroit residents are trapped by a digital divide. *New York Times*
- Anzilotti, E. (2018). This company hired anyone who applied. Now it's starting a movement. *Fast Company*

10/16: Reward and recognition

- Greenberg, J. (1990). Employee theft as a reaction to underpayment inequity: The hidden cost of pay cuts. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75(5), 561.
- Graham, L. (2015, Dec 1). Detroit bankruptcy lesson: underfunded pension funds could trip up other municipalities. Michigan Radio, (4:03)
- Marasi, S. & Bennett, R.J. (2016). Pay communication: Where do we go from here? *Human Resource Management Review*, 26, 50-58

10/21: Reward and recognition

- Noguchi, Y. 2017 Proposals aim to combat discrimination based on salary history. NPR, May 30. (3:51)
- Scheiber, N. (2018). If a law bars asking your past salary, does it help or hurt? *The New York Times*
- Hernandez, M., Avery, DR, Volpone, SD & Kaiser, CR (2019). Bargaining while Black: the role of race in salary negotiations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 104, 581-592.

10/23: Performance reviews

- Cappelli, P., & Tavis, A. (2016, 10). The performance management revolution. *Harvard Business Review*, 1.
- Golen, L., Gale, J. & Grant, A. Let's not kill performance evaluations yet *Harvard Business Review*.
- Fisher, A (2019). An algorithm may decide your next pay raise. *Fortune*, July 14.

10/28: Firing and layoffs

- Corkey, M. (2018). At Toys R Us, There is nothing left: the day it closed for good. *The New York Times*.
- <https://www.npr.org/2018/03/24/595534122/fired-via-tweet-text-and-voicemail-loss-of-job-and-respect>
- Richter, M, Konig, CJ, Geiger, M, Schieren, S, Lothschutz, J & Zobel, Y (2018). "just a little respect": Effects of a layoff agent's actions on employees' reactions to a dismissal notification meeting. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 153, 741-761.

10/30: When, where and how much

- Kantor, J. (2014). As shifts vary, family's only constant. *New York Times*, August 14.
- Swarns, RL (May 24, 2015). Long hours at work leave her little time for brother in need. *New York Times*.
- Kodjak, A. (2016) Hassle of being a patient can turn into a crisis without sick leave. Podcast, Morning Edition, July 11.
- Scheiber, N. (2018). A find at Gap: Steady hours can help workers and profits. *The New York Times*

11/4: Behavior at work

- Aubrey, A. (July 23, 2016). Starbuck's new dress code: purple hair and fedoras OK, but hoodies forbidden. NPR podcast.
- Gelles, D. (2018). Memo from the boss: You're a vegetarian now. *The New York Times*
- Ueno, H. & Victor, D. (2019). Japanese women want a law against mandatory heels at work, *New York Times*, June 4.

11/6: Non-work behavior

- Appleby, J. (June 24, 2015). When does workplace wellness become coercive? Shots, NPR.
- Greenfield, R. (July 23, 2019). It's getting harder to fire people for using pot. *Bloomberg Businessweek*.
- Hyman, D. (July 27, 2019). Where legal, pot still closes door to hiring. *New York Times*.

11/11: Accommodations

- Runyon, L. (Jan 14, 2016) Dispute over prayer breaks divides Muslim meatpacking workers. All Things Considered podcast
- Noguchi, Y. (Sept 22 2015). What's that smell?! When workplaces try fragrance bans. Morning Edition podcast
- Kurtz, A (2016). When the pilot is a new mom: accommodating new motherhood at 30,000 feet *New York Times*.
- Zhuang, J., Bresnahan, M., Zhu, Y, Yan, X., Bogdain-Louis, E., Goldbart, J & Halder, S. (2018). The impact of coworker support and stigma on breastfeeding after returning to work. *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 46, 491-508

11/13: Preferences

- (May 6, 2013). Op-ed: How favoritism is driving minority employment. Talk of the Nation, podcast.
- Zarya, V. (2015). Why is the “Rooney Rule” suddenly tech’s answer to hiring more women? *Fortune*, August 10.
- Shaw, A., Choshen-Hillel, S. & Caruso, EM (2018). Being biased against friends to appear unbiased. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 78, 104-115.

11/18: Address: systems

- Rubino, C., Avery, DR, McKay, PF, et al. (2017). And justice for all: how organizational justice climate deters sexual harassment. *Personnel Psychology*, 1-26.
- Silver Greenberg, J. and Corkery, M. (2016) Start-ups embrace arbitration to settle disputes. *New York Times*
- Choshen-Hillel, S., Shaw, A & Caruso, EM (2018). Disadvantaged but not dissatisfied: how agency ameliorates negative reactions to unequal pay. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 24, 578-599.

11/20: Address: training

- Richter, M., Konig, C.J., Koppermann, C. & Schilling, M. (2016). Displaying fairness while delivering bad news: testing the effectiveness of organizational bad news training in the layoff context. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 101, 779-792.
- Sorkin, AR (2018). Why Starbucks’s bias training, despite skepticism, is an important start. *The New York Times*.

11/25: Address: third parties

- Mitchell, M.S., Vogel, R.M & Folger, R (2015). Third parties’ reactions to the abusive supervision of coworkers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100, 1040-1055.

- Hershcovis, M.S. & Bhatnagar, N. (2017). When fellow customers behave badly: witness reactions to employee mistreatment by customers. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 102*, 1528-1544

12/2: Addressing unfairness: restorative/individual

- Sabat, IF, Martinez, LR & Wessel, JL 2013 Neo-activism: engaging allies in modern workplace discrimination reduction. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 6*, 480-485.

12/4: New ways of working

- Fieseler, C., Bucher, C., & Hoffmann, C.P. (2019). Unfairness by design? The perceived fairness of digital labor on crowdworking platforms. *Journal of Business Ethics, 156*, 987-1005.