

General Studies VAK 08-29-GS-42

Dr. Sylke Meyerhuber

Acting Socially Sustainably in Organisations Sociology Meets Psychology (part 1): Postmodern Issues

(Sozial nachhaltiges Handeln in Organisationen – Soziologie trifft Psychologie Teil 1: Postmoderne Problemlagen)

“The workplace is the most important environment for most people’s health, whether it is a home, office, factory or forest.” (Kjellström 2007)

Social sustainability is one of three global goals noted in the Rio Convention 1992 by the UN World Commission of Environment and Development. While economic sustainability is a booster of change for modern organisations, ecological sustainability remains a constant task, while social sustainability is less looked at in the everyday workplace. But “the labour force of a human being is part of the person and their dignity, therefore the labour market can not be looked at as every other market”, as Sociologist Senghaas-Knobloch 2011 states.

Statistics since 2005 show alarming figures concerning the well-being and health of working people world wide. Therefore, it is important to understand *how organisational structures and subjective processing and coping are interlinked*. The seminar is based on sociological and psychological knowledge, focussing on theories and praxis concepts that allow gathering an understanding on how organisations and their role actors can shape a workplace “socially sustainable”. Within the course we will explore the psychological effects of the quality of the social climate, communication and interaction, in order to understand social vulnerability. We discuss effects of socially anti-sustainable workplaces marked by problems as work addiction, burnout and mobbing, and more sustainable approaches like occupational health management and or work-life-balance. Ethics and responsibilities are addressed as well.

The seminar uses English as a lingua franca. Coping with the effects of this setting is part of the reflection within the course, referring to differences between communication, comprehension and understanding within a working environment. Students are supported to express themselves, didactically and by the lecturer. The interactive learning setting (by TCI methods) combines theoretical and practical elements, supporting reflection on own experiences of participants. Students should be willing to participate in this manner.

The next summer term will offer a 2nd part of the seminar with topics of further consideration and a field exploration (though part 1 and 2 can be attended separately).

Open for 1st semester students and above, *recommended* for 3rd semester Bachelor students before their internship and thesis, as well *open* for Master and Erasmus students, and to students of other faculties. This course is limited to 20 participants.

2 SWS: Fortnightly, starting in the 2nd week of the term, probably Tuesdays 4-7 pm; 3 hours (s.t.!). Please register *reliable* via Stud.IP for your participation (lack of access: e-mail me).

Recommended Literature

Hämäläinen, Riitta (2006). Workplace Health Promotion in Europe. Finnish Institute of Occupational Health.

Meyerhuber, Sylke (2014) Trust and Time in Reorganisations and the Role of Middle Managers. In Guido Becke, Mindful Change in Times of Permanent Reorganisation – Organizational, Institutional and Sustainability Perspectives. Heidelberg New York London: Springer, 147-166.

Pongratz, Hans & Voß, Günter (2001). From Employee to ‘Entreployee’ – Towards a ‘Self-Entrepreneurial’ work force? In: SOWI – Sozialwissenschaftliche Informationen, 2001, pp. 42-52.

Performance requirements / ECTS (credit points)

Preparation of an interactive lecture and exposition in small groups (6 CP / 3 CP).

General Studies VAK 08-29-GS-41

Dr. Sylke Meyerhuber

Acting Socially Sustainably in Organisations Sociology meets Psychology (part 2): Topics of In-Depth Consideration with Field Exploration

(Sozial nachhaltiges Handeln in Organisationen – Soziologie trifft Psychologie Teil 2: Themen für eine vertiefende Befassung mit Felderkundung)

Sustainability research can be related to macro-, meso- or micro phenomena. While a political or sociological viewpoint focuses on macro- or meso-level, social sustainability in this course issues the meso- and micro-level of organisations and the people within. Winter terms of this General Studies targeted a) rising problems or b) solutions in the postmodern organisations, always considering the strategic, interactive and individual dimensions.

During this summer, participant will search for a deeper understanding of specific issues identified as important for acting socially sustainably organisation. Topics will be chosen by students according to their own interests. Preparation in small groups will lead to an input and interaction within the course shaped as a workshop, which allows for living learning about the chosen topic for all participants. A field exploration allows for reflection of practice besides theoretical knowledge in the classroom enlightenment. Therefore, methods of qualitative interview techniques are introduced. Probable themes Group dynamic approaches, sense making and meaningfulness at the workplace, acknowledgement and work, interconnectedness of trust and time in organisations, psychology of individual & institutional defence mechanisms, psychology of manipulation, psychology of time, organisational structures and leadership, intercultural cooperation, age-adequate personnel recruitment & -development, organisational culture & ethics, work law (some of these topics, as selected by participants). Willingness of self-reflection and cooperation is prerogative.

The seminar uses English as a lingua franca – coping with the effects of this setting is part of the reflection within the course, referring to differences between communication, comprehension and understanding within a working environment. Students are supported to express themselves, didactically and by the lecturer. The interactive learning setting combines theoretical and practical elements and allows for reflection on own experiences of the participants.

The following winter term 2018/19 will again offer students part 1 of the seminar (postmodern issues in organisations). Note: all parts of this General Studies can be attended separately.

Created for students in their 3rd semester or above, *but open* for all students interested in issues of work-life! Additionally, students of other faculties and Erasmus students are welcome. Please note: This trainings-course is limited to 20 participants.

2 SWS: Fortnightly, starting in the 2nd week of the term, 3 hours (s.t!), probably Tuesdays, 6-9 pm. Please *register reliable via Stud.IP* for your participation (lack of access: e-mail me).

Recommended Literature

Kuebel, Mary A. (2002). Living Learning. A reader in theme-centered interaction. Dehli: Media House
Meyerhuber, S. (2013). Trust and time in reorganisations and the role of middle management. In G. Becke, Mindful change in times of permanent reorganisation. Berlin: Springer
Dybbrae (2012). Work identity and contradictory experiences of welfare workers. Online: FQS.

Performance requirements / ECTS (credit points)

Preparation of an interactive workshop and it's documentary, as well as a qualitative field interview about the topic chosen, including a report (6 ECTS / 3 ECTS).

General Studies
VAK 08-29-GS-41

Dr. Sylke Meyerhuber

Acting socially sustainably in organisations
Sociology meets Psychology (part 3): Principles, approaches and methods for organisational solutions

(Sozial nachhaltigen Handelns in Organisationen - Soziologie trifft Psychologie (Teil3): Prinzipien, Ansätze und Methoden für organisationale Lösungen)

Sustainability research targets issues on the macro-, meso- or micro level (societies, organisations, groups and individuals). While a political or sociological viewpoint focuses on the macro- or meso-level, social sustainability in this course issues the meso- and micro-level of organisations and the people within. Part 1 (in winter terms, alternately with part 3) of this General Studies reflects rising *problems in the postmodern organisation*, considering the strategic, interactive and individual dimensions (topics: basics on sustainability studies, psychology of work, occupational health management, workaholism, burnout, mobbing, work-life-balance and downshifting). Part 2 (in summer terms) aims for a deeper understanding on *topics of further in-depth consideration* identified as important for a socially sustainable organisation, chosen by students according to own interests. Part 4 targets the issue of intercultural communication in alternating summer terms. All summer term classes are accompanied by a field exploration besides theoretical knowledge in the classroom enlightenment. All parts described can be studied separately; since students like continuity, a series is offered.

Part 3 spotlights on *principles, approaches and methods* which enable the postmodern organisation and their actors to support socially sustainable practices at the workplace. The first two sessions are dedicated to the organisation of the seminar and some basic knowledge. The further topics will be prepared in small groups of students. They take care to prepare inputs and interactional parts, shaped as a workshop, which allows for “living learning” (TCI didactic) about the chosen topic for all participants. Suggested topics are: Sustainable leadership, participation and quality of work, communication skills, acknowledgement and work, new practices of time-management, e.g.

The seminar uses English as Lingua Franca. Coping with effects of this setting is part of the reflection within the course, referring to differences between communication, comprehension and understanding within a working environment. Students are supported to express themselves, didactically and by the lecturer. The interactive learning setting combines theoretical and practical elements, allowing for reflection on own experiences of participants. The upcoming summer term and winter term will offer students part 2 and 1 of the seminar with topics as mentioned above. Please note: all parts can be attended singularly.

Recommended for students in their 3rd semester. *Open* to first semester students, students from other faculties (BA, MA), and Erasmus students. As a training seminar, this course is limited to 20 participants.

2 SWS: Fortnightly, starting in the 2nd week of the term, 3 hours (s.t.!), Tuesdays, 6-9 pm. Please register *reliable* via Stud.IP for your participation (lack of access: e-mail me).

Recommended Literature

French W.L. & Bell C. H. (2005). Organizational Development and Transformation – Managing Effective Change. McGraw-Hill.
Kuebel, M. A. (2002). Living Learning: A Reader in Theme Centered Interaction. Delhi: Media House.
Meyerhuber, S. (2013). Trust and Time in Reorganisations and the Role of Middle Management. In G. Becke, Mindful Change in Times of Permanent Reorganisation. Berlin: Springer.

Performance requirements / ECTS (credit points)

Preparation of an interactive lecture and its documentary on the topic chosen, in a small group of students. (6 ECTS / 3 ECTS)

General Studies - VAK 08-29-GS-42

Dr. Sylke Meyerhuber

Sociology Meets Psychology (part 4): Intercultural Communication for Acting Socially Sustainably in Organisations

(Soziologie trifft Psychologie Teil 4: Interkulturelle Kommunikation für sozial nachhaltiges Handeln in Organisationen)

“Understanding is the journey into the land of the other.” (Fazil Hüsnü Dağlarca, poet)

To be understood stems from understanding, an ability to change perspective, and of reflection. In order to act socially sustainably in organisations, people are obliged to deal with a growingly complex role set in competent ways. Key competences and social skills play a vital role in dealing with the complexity of human diversity. Is it enough to travel, to attend a training, to read a book for “intercultural competence”? Probably it is not. In this trainings-seminar, approaches of intercultural understanding are examined in 7 workshops of 3 full hours: Theoretical frameworks are laid out, exercises and levels of reflection are experienced. Enlightenment and practical value from different approaches are examined. Participants explore the issue interactively with theory and by exercises, always in the light of entering a probably intercultural work life in the near future.

Framework: Social sustainability is one of three global goals noted in the Rio Convention 1992 by the UN World Commission of Environment and Development. While economic sustainability is a booster of change for modern organisations, ecological sustainability remains a constant task, while social sustainability is less looked at in the everyday workplace. Therefore, it is important to understand how organisational structures and subjective processing and coping are interlinked. This General Studies is comprised of four parts: 1 Postmodern issues, 2 Selected solutions, 3 Issues of further in-depth investigation, 4 Intercultural communication. It is based on sociological and psychological knowledge, focussing on theories and praxis concepts that allow gathering an understanding on how organisations and their role actors can shape a workplace “socially sustainably”. All seminar parts can be studied separately, or as a row.

The seminar uses English as a lingua franca. Coping with the effects of this setting is part of the reflection within the course, referring to differences between communication, comprehension and understanding within the working environment. Students are supported to express themselves. The interactive setting combines theoretical and practical parts, supporting reflection of own experiences. Students should be willing to participate in this manner. A field exploration for research-based learning will be part of this terms requirements.

Open for 1st semester students and above, recommended for Bachelor students before their internship and thesis, as well as for Master students, and *open* to Erasmus students and to students of other faculties. Please note: this course is limited to 20 participants.

2 SWS: Fortnightly, starting in the 2nd week of the term, (probably) Tuesdays 6 – 9 pm; 3 hours (s.t.!). Register *reliable* via Stud.IP for your participation (lack of access: e-mail me).

Recommended Literature

Hall, E. (1959). *The Silent Language*. Garden City.

Hofstede, G. (1980). *Cultures Consequences*. International differences in work-related values. Sage.

Crisp, R. (ed.) (2010). *The Psychology of Social and Cultural Diversity*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Meyerhuber, S. et al. (2018). *Theme-centered Interaction in Higher Education*. A didactic approach for sustainable and living learning. Springer.

Performance requirements ECTS points (credit points)

Preparation of an interactive workshop and its documentary, as well as a qualitative field interview about the topic chosen, including a report (6 ECTS / 3 ECTS).