

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

SPRING 2005

FIRST YEAR SEMINAR UNDERSTANDING ENTREPRENEURSHIP Dr. Ian M Taplin

Office: Carswell 211
Office Hours: MW 10-11.30; M 3-4 or by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Work is inevitably a central part of our lives. For most of us it becomes a defining experience, shaping not just our daily schedules but also many of our ideas and values. Many people build their lives around distinct concepts of work and leisure, follow rigid routines five or six days a week, live in one place and work in another, wear uniforms, defer to authority, and spend so much time in a single spot performing a single set of activities. Why do they (we) do this? Is this pattern changing at all? If so, what are the factors that are responsible for change? Will work continue to place the same sets of constraints upon our lives that it has in the past?

As people become frustrated working for others they decide to open their own businesses or contract themselves out. Some decide to do this before working for others; others as a last resort because they can find no other job. Generically referred to as entrepreneurship, the process of having an idea and then trying to market it successfully is a longstanding human trait. How can we describe this process in the broader context of society and culture? Instead of assuming that all explanations for entrepreneurial activity are explained by individual traits, can we find 'demand' conditions in society that stimulate opportunities?

In this course we examine many of these issues and seek answers to these basic questions. We will look at the evolution of attitudes towards work and then examine the various dimensions of work in a capitalist society. We shall explore some of the factors that are causing changes in the way in which work is organized, and our perceptions of it have changed. The complex relationship between work, gender and family will also be discussed.

REQUIREMENTS

The course will be structured as a seminar, with discussion and debate focused around the readings. When called upon in class, you will be required to critically assess the various

approaches that are presented and summarize them succinctly in an oral fashion. Participation [**10% of the grade**] will be assessed by the quality of one's response rather than their quantity. In addition, you will write 5 'position papers' (2-3 pages in length, each constituting **10% of the grade**) that represent responses to set questions that are derived from the readings. There will also be an exam [**20% of the grade**], situated at the mid point of the semester. Finally you will be divided into three groups of 5 persons for the purpose of pursuing an on-campus entrepreneurial project. More discussion of this will follow but generally it will involve identifying an unmet need and putting together a plan to satisfy that need and if possible implementing that plan. Presentations of these project plans will be in the last week of the semester [**20% of the grade**].

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 12	Introduction: why do we work? From vice to virtue; the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism -- work as a sign of salvation. Beder: <i>Selling the Work Ethic</i> , chapters 1-3
Week 2: January 19	Evolution of Work: Why do some become rich and others remain poor? Persistent inequality and frustrated opportunity. Rethinking education. Beder, chapters 4-5
Week 3: January 26	Work as alienation and opportunity; motivation and control in the workplace Beder, chapters 6-7; Marx, "Measuring everything that moves: The new surveillance at work"
Week 4: February 2	Crisis: Insecurity and unemployment; the decline of the implicit work contract; rethinking welfare Beder, chapters 8-10
Week 5: February 9	Developing appropriate work ethics; schooling and consumption; work versus leisure Beder, chapters 11-14
Week 6: February 16	Job Satisfaction versus stress at work Reading tba
Week 7: February 23	New types of work: temporary, contingent and part-time Meiksins and Whalley: <i>Putting Work in its Place</i>
Week 8: March 2	Examination

Spring Break

Week 9: March 16	What is entrepreneurship? Context and demand Coulter: <i>Entrepreneurship in Action</i> , chapters 1-2; Thornton, "Sociology of entrepreneurship"
Week 10: March 23	Viability and feasibility Coulter, chapter 3
Week 11: March 30	Planning and organizing Coulter, chapters 4-5
Week 12: April 6	Launching and managing the new venture Coulter, chapters 6-7
Week 13: April 13	Sustaining the venture Coulter, chapter 9
Week 14: April 20	Case study: NC wine industry Breckenridge and Taplin, "Entrepreneurship, industrial policy and clusters: the case of NC wines"
Week 15: April 27	Group presentations