

XMBA 257: Managing People in the Global Context

Summer 2025

Professor Aruna Ranganathan, UC Berkeley--Haas

Dates: June 16 - 20, 2025

Time: M-F 9:00AM-4:00PM

Location: Chou Hall N300

Course Description

An organization's most valued resource is its people. Hence, managing people effectively is critical to organizational success. But organizations in today's business world are integrally linked to the global economy and many of you will manage teams of people located in different countries. When managing people in the global context, how should you think about people decisions? In particular, should you follow a "one-size-fits-all" universalistic approach or should you customize your management practices to local contexts and institutions? If customization is necessary, what are the different local institutions that could affect people-management decisions?

We will answer these questions while learning about recruitment, compensation, performance management, diversity management, global teams, job design and global supply chains. In each lecture, we will discuss a case about a firm dealing with a specific people management problem in a specific part of the world, and we will use this example to understand how local institutions and norms dramatically influence HR solutions. In doing so, we will cover a range of carefully picked global industries including microfinance, IT services and manufacturing and understand local institutions in countries as diverse as Japan, South Africa, France, Kenya and China. Further, for most topics, we will be hosting a distinguished guest speaker who will provide additional insights on the topic being discussed in class.

This course is practical but based on social science research. Where relevant, students are encouraged to bring their own experiences and illustrations into class discussion.

Logistics, Classroom Dynamics, and Responsibilities

Preparation before class: I request students to be prepared for each class session by reading the assigned cases carefully. There is no other reading required before class. From the second lecture onwards, please also post questions for the guest speaker on Slido (link on bCourses) in advance of class, and upvote your classmate's questions (make sure to include your name so that you get credit for your question!). I am looking forward to a stimulating class discussion and to ensure broad participation from all students, I will use both warm and cold calls. If you

have specific expertise on a particular issue, firm, or industry that we will be discussing, I appreciate knowing about this in advance, so we can best take advantage of your knowledge in class discussion.

Absenteeism and tardiness: Attendance is mandatory; hence, absenteeism and tardiness will adversely affect your grade, and the negative impact will increase with each instance. In any case, please email your Teaching Assistant if you plan to be absent.

Honor Code: In line with the Honor Code, I expect that any analyses you present in class or submit for individual or team assignments be reflective of original work. This is not meant to discourage discussion with your fellow students, but allows me to grade your performance in a fair manner.

Feedback from me: If you desire feedback on your participation or progress at any point in the course, don't hesitate to contact me.

Reaching Me

Email: arunar@berkeley.edu

Office Hours: Scheduled upon request between 4-5pm, Monday -- Thursday.

Teaching Assistant: Maggie Ye. xingqi_ye@berkeley.edu

Grades

1. **Team Project: 50% of grade.** Working with your team, your task is to manage a group of online workers via the Upwork platform to develop an animated video of an assigned research paper. More details will be provided on bCourses.
2. **Class Participation: 50% of grade.** Class participation grades will reflect my assessment of your total contribution to the learning environment in the classroom. Your contributions in class will affect your grade not simply based on the frequency of your class comments, but also: (1) comment quality (ability to draw on course materials and your own experience productively, ability to advance or sharpen in-class discussion and debate, willingness to take risky or unpopular points of view, use of logic, precision, and evidence in making arguments); (2) the professionalism of your conduct (attendance, punctuality, preparedness, respecting section members and their contributions, and refraining from conduct that is distracting); and (3) the thoughtfulness of your questions for the guest speakers (on Slido) and your interactions with them. The teaching assistant will keep track of your attendance, tardiness and comments to help me evaluate your overall class participation.

Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00-11:00	Global vs. Local	Compensation	Company Visits (Atlassian + Upwork) Meet at 7:30 AM <i>During the commute, we encourage you to use the time productively—please make an effort to work on your group project while on the bus.</i>	Job Design	Global Teams
11:00-2:00	<i>Upwork project: Job Postings</i>	<i>Upwork project: Finalizing Upwork Team</i>		<i>Upwork project: Executing Project and Working on Presentations</i>	<i>Upwork project: Executing Project and Working on Presentations</i>
2:00-4:00 (1:00-4:00 for Friday only)	Recruitment	Performance Management		Diversity Management	Team Presentations (1:00-4:00)

Lecture 1. Global vs. Local: Language

Case: Language and Globalization: “Englishnization” at Rakuten

Lecture 2. Recruitment: Educational Institutions

Case: Infosys: Building a Talent Engine to Sustain Growth
(read pages 1-9 only and see all exhibits)

Guest: Mitesh Bohra, Co-Founder, InfoBeans

Lecture 3. Compensation: Values

Case: Juhudi Kilimo: Designing Microfinance Staff Incentive Plans

Guest: Claudia Salvischiani, People & Organization Advisor and Coach at Stanford Seed Program in Africa

Lecture 4. Performance Management: Cultural Norms

Case: Managing Performance at Haier
(make sure to read both cases A and B)

Guest: Ryan Hammond, Head of Total Rewards, Datavant

Lecture 5. Job Design: Meaningful Work

Case: Trouble at Tessei

Guest: Jim Hartnett, ex-CEO, Caltrain

Lecture 6. Diversity Management: Ascriptive Characteristics

Case: Shifting the Diversity Climate: The Sodexo Solution

Guest: Natalie Johnson, Co-Founder and MD, Paradigm

Lecture 7. Global Teams: Status and Communication

Case: Yola: Managing Multiple Challenges

Guest: Trevor Harries-Jones, Vice Chairperson, Yola

Lecture 8. Team Presentations

Cell phone & laptop use in class

Cell phones and texting devices should be silenced during class. Use of texting devices and cell phones during class is disruptive to student learning (your own and your peers') and is socially inappropriate. Students may bring laptops to class to take notes and contribute to in-class activities. It is expected that you will not surf the web, check email, or access social media sites during class. Failure to abide by this policy results in a reduced class participation grade.