MN4241 – Knowledge Work: Context & Practice

Module Type/Semester: Honours/Option (20 Credits)/Semester 2

Pre-Requisite(S): MN2001 and MN2002

Module Co-Ordinator: Dr Cinla Akinci

Contact Details: cinla.akinci@st-andrews.ac.uk
01334 46(4838)

AIM:
Knowledge work is widely regarded as desirable, the hallmark of successful economies. It is clearly evident in a variety of work settings, including the professions, financial and management services, and so-called ‘creative industries’. Great efforts are made to develop and extend this form of work internationally, regardless of context. But what does “knowledge” imply, as a focus for work? What might this involve in work settings? How might it be conceptualised and understood? Where does learning fit in? How might such forms of work be organised and managed, and what challenges might this entail? This module explores these issues by focusing on learning and knowing in contemporary work situations. The aim of the module is to offer participants ways of addressing these questions in the world of work and beyond.

Method of Teaching & Learning:
- Lectures – mixture of formal and interactive
- Tutorials – interactive, some student-led
- Group and independent study

Learning Outcomes:
By the end of the module, students should be able to:
- Critically evaluate popular notions of knowledge and learning as manageable commodities for economic growth
- Enhance abilities to appreciate differing perspectives on issues of direct relevance to them in their future working lives
- Develop awareness of work as historically, socially and culturally situated, and the complexities of knowledge and learning as inherent aspects of work
- Gain insights to enable them to become responsible practitioners
- Develop critical thinking to identify ‘givens’ or taken-for-granted notions in everyday life
- Enhance their ability to accommodate complexity and contradiction in relation to work and academic literature
• Develop understanding of the relations between theory and practice
• Develop experience of working with others and sharing knowledge, through participation in course work

INDICATIVE TOPIC OUTLINE:
Lecture Topics per week*:

Week 1: Introduction to learning, knowledge and knowledge work(ers)

Week 2: Collective learning: Promises and pitfalls

Week 3: Intuition at work: Implications for organisational learning and knowledge

Week 4: Learning and knowledge at work: Introducing a practice theoretical perspective

Week 5: The “Problem of Context” – or the problem of standardisation?

Week 6: Class test

Week 7: Practitioner session: Managing, learning and knowing: the benefits of failure

Week 8: Practitioner session: Knowledge work and ways of organising complexity

Week 9: Practitioner session: Learning and knowing through making: aesthetics in knowledge work

Week 10: Group presentations of group reports

Week 11: Revisiting knowledge work, practice and context - Implications for working in contemporary organisations: revision and feedback from coursework

ASSESSMENT:
• Two-hour written class test (30% of module mark)
• Group report of max 1500 words (20% of module mark)
• Individual reflective essay of max 2000 words (50% of module mark)

CORE READING LIST*:
There is no single textbook for this module. The reading will draw on a variety of sources including textbooks, monographs and academic journals. You will be expected to read for each lecture/tutorial session.
Preparatory reading on the broader subject of knowledge in organisation studies/organisations:


Additional readings:


Other readings:
These resources will be supplemented with other references to scholarly books and/or journals throughout the module. Details will be provided in lectures and on Moodle site.

*NB Subject to change: details will be on Moodle.*