MN5002: CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTUAL ISSUES IN MANAGEMENT

MODULE TYPE/SEMESTER: Core (20 credits), Semester 2

MODULE CO-ORDINATOR: Professor Kevin Orr

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AIM: This module develops students’ prior understanding of management and develops a deep understanding of core conceptual challenges in organisations. Using critical case-based exploration and extensive discussion the module explores such basic yet deep questions as: What are organisations? Can organisations be managed, and what do managers actually do? How do we know what we know? Where does innovation come from? What are skills, knowledge and understanding? What is responsible enterprise? Why are organisations structured the way they are? How do personality, power and politics impact on organisational life? As these and similar questions are addressed, students will be encouraged to reflect and draw upon their own experiences of organisational life as issues are analysed, challenged, researched, evaluated and assessed.

METHOD OF TEACHING & LEARNING: In terms of structure, the module will be delivered in weekly three-hour lecture/seminar activities, complemented by smaller group learning sessions.

This module is core to Human Resource Development; International Business and Marketing students. In addition, some Masters of Research in Management and students taking the MSc in Sustainable Development will be joining the class. The lectures provided are the same for all students with linkages between the lectures and your various degree topics being developed in the seminars and through the assessments.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- critically evaluate a range of contemporary conceptual issues confronting management and how they impact on organisations;
- assess the way knowledge is developed and shared within organisations and communities of practice;
- apply a range of ontological, epistemological and general methodological concerns that arise when investigating managerial and organisational phenomena;
- compare, contrast and evaluate differing theoretical, practical and ethical positions in relation to issues covered in the curriculum;
- understand how a range of critical issues in management and organisations impact on a range of enterprises;
- critically evaluate how issues covered in the curriculum manifest themselves in their chosen area of study.
• critically evaluate their own position with respect to the issues covered in the curriculum.

INDICATIVE TOPIC OUTLINE: The module will cover a variety of critical issues that will encourage students to analyse, challenge, evaluate and research aspects of management and organisational life. While based around a firm curriculum of relevant concepts, the content covered from year to year will comprise a mix of topics that reflect both continuity and change in management and organisations. Key aspects of the curriculum comprise:

• Major contemporary intellectual movements in management;
• Knowledge working: ontology, epistemology and general methodological concerns;
• Team working in theory and practice;
• Perception, power and politics in organisational life
• Personal self-diagnosis and reflection, as well as reflexivity;
• The nature of skill, knowledge, attitude, behaviour and understanding and how these are expressed in the managerial world;
• Theorising leadership and its practice in the organisational world;
• Organisational architecture and the structuring and culturalisation of organisations;
• Change, innovation, conflict and control in organisations;
• Ethics, sustainability and the nature of responsible enterprise.

Week-by-week topic guides will be made available at the opening session.

ASSESSMENT:
50% of the assessment for this module rests on performance in a final exam (in May) while the remainder 50% is split between an individual essay (20%) early in the semester, and a group presentation (30%) late in the semester. The exam will consist of one ‘seen’ question (which is compulsory) and a requirement to answer a second question from a selection of options. Full details on assessments will provided at the start of semester 2.

READING LIST:
Full details on recommended prior reading will be provided prior to commencement of the module, but students might usefully acquaint themselves with the following texts:

Gareth Morgan. *Images of Organization* (Sage; 1998)

Chris Grey. *A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about studying organizations* (Sage; 2009)

Mark Easterby-Smith, Richard Thorpe and Paul R. Jackson. *Management research*. (Sage; 2008)

Reading lists specific to each session will provided during Semester 2.