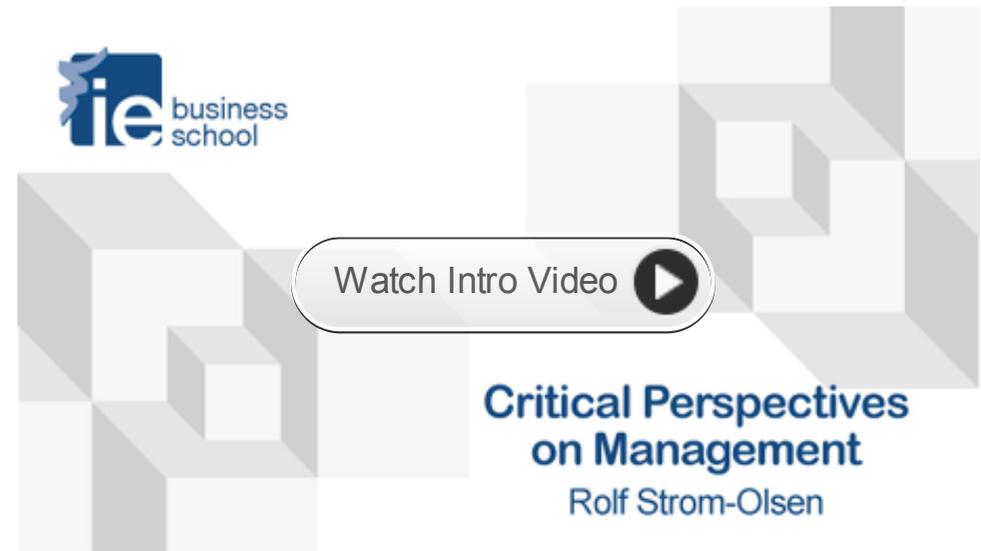




Critical Perspectives on Management

An unconventional approach to management strategy! This class offers students the opportunity to explore today's management practices from unexpected perspectives in order to ask provocative questions about the modern business environment. This approach will allow us to interrogate key management concepts in order to explore the thinking that informs them and, as importantly, the form of capitalism they foster.



About the Course

This course is designed for students of all backgrounds who have an interest in how firms are governed, the forces that have helped define modern management practice, and the outcomes of that practice not only for the firm itself, but also for the societies in which they operate. For students who are thinking of a career in management, it may also prove useful as a basic introduction to some of the conceptual vocabulary and ideas behind modern theories of management.

Using a wide disciplinary approach - from economics and history to social theory and even a smattering of biblical criticism - the course will invite students to consider several core management strategies and priorities from often unexpected

Sessions

Jan 13th 2014 ▾

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Course at a Glance

- 9 weeks
- 1-3 hours of work / week
- English
- English subtitles

perspectives in order to judge their success or failure. The key objective of the course is to bring into critical focus how we think about the function and culture of management, how managers understand their role within a firm, how they take decisions, set priorities and benchmark success and failure.

Topics include: the function of the firm; the role of incentive; the ways in which narrative forces shape decision making, and how market relationships define the managerial culture in ways that can lead to sub-optimal outcomes.

Update: the Facebook group is now open for enrolled students in this class. Click here to join:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/630276887018610/>

Course Syllabus

This syllabus is final.

Week 1 - The Lessons from Rome (I)

In Ancient Rome, merchant organisations very similar to modern firms were critical to capitalising key markets and to solving serious logistical problems to enable a vibrant trading network across the Mediterranean, including, critically, supplying the city of Rome itself with the food its citizens needed to survive. We will examine the Roman grain market and the organisations that operated within that market to ask: what, exactly, is a firm? What led to the firm's evolution? And what is the issue of agency that a firm inevitably entails?

Week 2 - The Lessons from Rome (II)

This lecture expands upon the first discussion, drawing from the insights gained about firm organisation in the Ancient world to ask about the effectiveness of the Forced Distribution Ranking Scheme (also known as "stack and rank", "up and out", etc...) to evaluate and promote or terminate employees, widely used by many of today's leading corporations.

Week 3 - What is Innovation?

We live in the innovation economy. Firms have chief innovation officers. Innovation is,

Instructors



Rolf Strom-Olsen
IE Business School

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so we are told, the key to securing the future. And there are quite literally millions of books on the subject of innovation. So, what does it mean? And is it a useful idea for management? We'll consider both questions.

Week 4 - The Power of Narrative

What do Hollywood movies, the Synoptic gospels, housing bubbles, Alan Greenspan's monetary policy, and the world's worst merger have in common?

This week's lecture will develop a reading of narrative in order to explore a common pitfall that affects many managerial decisions.

Week 5 - Is Shareholder Value a Good Idea?

Perhaps the most important lecture of the course. Almost all publicly traded firms are beholden, either explicitly or implicitly, to the principle of creating shareholder value. This week, we look at the history of this idea, how it has become widespread as a principle of corporate governance and how it has changed fundamentally the nature of the firm over the last 40 years. We will look at who the shareholders are, where their interests lie and what they have gained from this development. We will consider the wider and long-term consequences both for the firm and society. And we will ask - is this the kind of capitalism we really want?

Week 6 - Case Studies

We look at the examples of two companies whose recent experiences encapsulate many of the core ideas of the course.

Recommended Background

No background is required; **all are welcome!**

Suggested Readings

Complementary copies of the required course readings will be made available. Links will be provided to suggested further readings.

Course Format

The class will be made up of video lectures, which will include a variety of multimedia material, slides, and integrated online exercises. There will also be short homework assignments.

FAQ

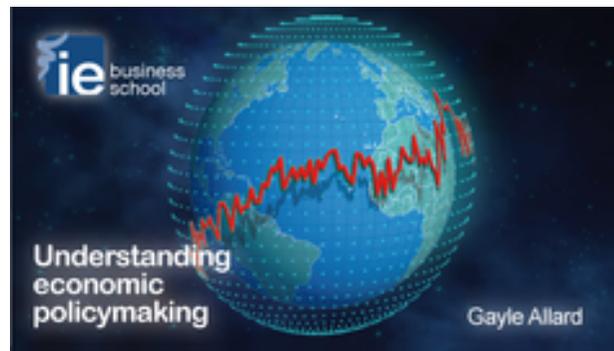
- **Will I get a Statement of Accomplishment after completing this class?**
Yes. Students who successfully complete the class will receive a Statement of Accomplishment signed by the instructor.
- **What resources will I need for this class?**
An internet connection, copies of the readings (which will be provided) and a willingness to think critically are the only things you need!
- **What is the coolest thing I'll learn from this class?**
That the Romans signed contracts in triplicate - *plus ça change...* !

Related Courses

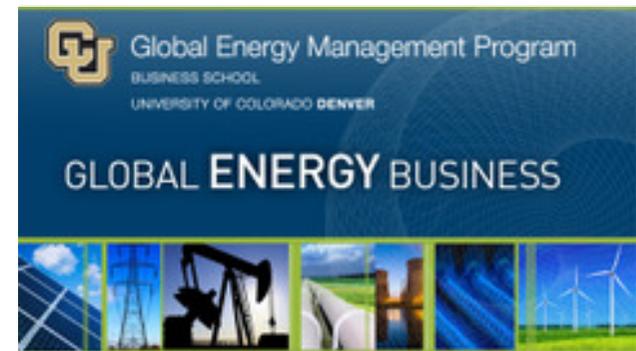


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