

**2004-2005 Spring
Technology and Work Organization
Erkan Erdil**

Course Description

This course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the transformation of production process and the changing pattern of work organization. The premise of the course is that the scientific and technological improvements bring about a radical change in the technical and social organization of production by altering the division of labor in the work process.

It seems that capitalism is at a crossroads in its development presenting the emergence of technological, market, social, and institutional forces that are very different from those which dominated the economy after the Second World War. Beginning with the mid-1970s, there is a clear-cut transition in the capitalist development. Now, we are in the age of flexible specialization characterized by new principles in production, including special units of production, decentralized management and versatile technologies and workforces to satisfy increasingly volatile markets.

The Post-Fordist debate concerns the nature and direction of these transformations and seeks to identify the driving forces in each historical phase. However, critics of this debate tend to reject the debate for its systematic theorization of the historical process, they, instead, employ an approach that emphasizes the non path-dependent, contested, and open-nature of change in societies.

In order to understand the basic premises of this debate and its counter arguments, it is necessary to learn the terminology, functioning, theories of labor markets. Thus, in the first part of the course, we will briefly analyze the demand for and supply of labor, alternative approaches to labor markets, and the trade union behavior. Then, we will continue with the short history of the scientific-technical revolution.

Second, we will be interested with the Post-Fordist debate on technology, markets, and institutions.

The third part of the course will be devoted to the organization of work and labor. This part also includes discussions on "unions and technological change", "employers' response to technological change", and labor relations in the new workplace.

The last part is related with the empirical studies of technology and work organization with reference to U.S., U.K., Germany, Japan, and Turkey.

Course Outline and Readings:

Neoclassical, Post-Keynesian, Institutionalist, and Radical-Marxian Theories on Labor Markets. Demand for Labor. Supply of Labor.

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Economics and Sociology of Trade Unions.

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A Chronology of Scientific-Technical Revolution. Nature of Technology.

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- Foster, J.B., 1999, ♦A classic of our time: Labor and Monopoly Capital after a Quarter-Century♦, Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine, 50,12-19.
- Freeman, C. and Soete, L., 1997, The Economics of Industrial Innovation, Pinter:London. (Part I-chps. 2-7).
- Freeman, R.B., 2002, "The Labor Market in the New Information Economy", Oxford Review of Economic Policy, 18, 288-305.
- Greenwood, J., 1997, "Third Industrial Revolution: Technology, Productivity, and Income Inequality", American Enterprise Institute Monograph.
- Grint K. and Woolgar, S., 1997, The Machine at Work: Technology, Work, and Organization, Polity Press:Cambridge. (chp. 1)
- H♦lzl, W., 2000, "The Adoption and Enforcement of Technological Regime: The Case of the First IT Regime", Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration Working Paper Series, No:12.

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Capitalist Development of Society, Taylorism and the Crisis of Fordism.

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Unions, Employers, and Technological Change.

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There will be one mid-term (a paper) and final exam. Students will also be required to write paper reviews and present them at each week.