Managing the Future of Work Course Overview – Spring 2020

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The nature and scope of work is rapidly changing, creating massive business and political challenges. HBS launched a major initiative in 2017 on *Managing the Future of Work* to define these workplace issues and highlight their implications for business leaders.

This EC course brings the initiative's major ideas to life for contemplation and debate. The course covers the perspectives of business, policy, and workforce development institutions in advanced economies. The material is comprehensive in nature and significant in scope, with a modest edge given to implications for business leadership in larger corporations (i.e., what opportunities might be available for firms like Apple or Siemens, and what should they do?). The course also features emerging business concepts and applications embedded in start-up companies.

The course focuses on actions business leaders can take. Embedded in the approach is the assumption is that tackling these complex workplace issues will require new competencies for business leaders, including working in close collaboration with policy leaders, educators, and labor leaders.

This course is a great fit for students who want to position themselves for careers in the future of work landscape. These roles could be as a startup founder for a company related to the future of work, as a business executive guiding a larger firm through its required transformation, as a leader within policy and labor groups interacting with firms, or as an educator playing an important role in workforce training and reskilling.

The class will have three core modules with two in-class exercises:

- *Module 1: Future of Work Drivers and Scenarios.* The first module considers the major technological and demographic trends that are reshaping the workplace. We explore the impact on the workplace of automation/digitization, artificial intelligence, robotics, and augmented reality/virtual reality. We also consider the aging and shrinking workforces in many advanced economies. Comprehensive frameworks connect the macro picture of change under way for businesses and society with the micro actions being undertaken by leaders in companies.
- *Exercise 1:* Our first exercise explores what the future scenarios for work could look like and helps develop understanding/empathy for how the condition of workers and the workplace could look under different scenarios. Students select a track that most closely resembles their jobs forecast and will work on how to share this with the class at large.
- *Module 2a: New Labor Models for the Future of Work.* The second module evaluates how the labor models used by firms and workers is changing because of these technology and demographic drivers. We consider the development and future of the gig/contractor economy, new workplace arrangements towards the increasing care responsibilities born

by employees (young children, aging/elderly parents, etc.), fair chance employment practices, and the ways that companies are boosting their talent supply chain.

- *Module 2b: New Policy and Education Models for Future of Work.* The second module continues with a perspective that extends beyond the individual firm to consider potential policy and education sector models for the future of work. We consider national policies like Universal Basic Income and regional interventions that enhance local capacities. We also consider apprenticeship models, competency based education, and related education/reskilling innovations seeking to build "durable" skills and career pathways for workers.
- *Exercise 2:* Our second exercise explores public and private sector responses to this new workplace environment. Students select a track that most closely resembles their career interest and will work on a potential response from either a business opportunity perspective or a policy perspective.
- *Taking Action:* Our class wraps up with exploring how you can take action now for managing the future of work. A final exam applies the course lessons and frameworks.

The class is co-taught by Chris Stanton and Bill Kerr. Class sessions include case studies, primers that lay out the core issues on topics, and playbook reports designed for business and policy leaders. We also mix in multi-media content (podcasts, videos, etc) where best suited. Class guests are frequent.

Course grades are based equally on class participation/exercises and a final exam.

Course Sessions:

Introduction to Future of Work
Class 1: Autonomous Vehicles: The Rubber Hits the Road…but When?
Class 2: AT&T, Retraining, and the Workforce of Tomorrow

Future of Work Drivers and Scenarios
Class 3: Prediction Machines
Class 4: Vodafone: Managing Advanced Technologies & Artificial Intelligence
Class 5: Demographic Changes for the Future of Work in Japan
Class 6: Why Are There Still So Many Jobs? Is This Time Different?
Class 7: How Robots Will Reshape the Workplace
Class 8: The Future of Commerce & its Implications
Class 9: FoW Scenarios Exercise
Class 10: FoW Scenarios Exercise
Class 11: FoW Scenarios Exercise

New Labor and Policy Models for Future of Work
Class 12: The Gig Economy in the Future of Work
Class 13: Catalant: Organizational Transformation
Class 14: Google: To TVC or Not to TVC?
Class 15: The Care Economy & Workforce Implications
Class 16: Managing Talent Pipelines in Future of Work
Class 17: Universal Basic Income, Job Guarantees, or None of the Above?
Class 18: Panel on Future of Work Policy Environments
Class 19: Geographic Differences & Inequality in the Future of Work
Class 20: Jumpstart America
Class 21: Public/Private Future of Work Response Exercise
Class 22: Public/Private Future of Work Response Exercise
Class 23: Public/Private Future of Work Response Exercise

Taking Action
Class 24: CareerWise Colorado & Apprenticeship Models
Class 25: Western Governor's University: 10x Vision
Class 26: Unilever's Response to the Future of Work
Class 27: Golden Triangle Region: Back in Business
Class 28: Course Wrap