

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING/HUMAN & ORGANIZATION STUDIES

HRD 220 - Seminar: The Meaning of Work

Neal Chalofsky
(o) 202-994-7188
(fax) 202-994-4928
(h) 301-588-4667
nealcha@gwu.edu

Description:

Numerous studies indicate that millions of Americans, especially members of the baby boom generation and the current generation “x and y’ers”, are searching for meaning in their lives. This search has been particularly significant in the workplace as we try to cope with the turbulence, stress, and pace of change that continues to exist; if not increase. This course will explore this search for purpose and meaning in work.

Objectives:

- to identify the theories, concepts, and research related to the meaning of work
- to explore the literature on this topic and related themes such as intrinsic motivation, “flow”, work/life balance, spirituality, and social responsibility
- to reflect on the impact of workplace meaning to one’s own “journey”

Book: Matthew Fox, *The Reinvention of Work*, Harper Collins, 1994

Requirements:

Paper - this is a personal reflection piece that should incorporate the literature you review but should emphasize your own thoughts and feelings about this topic. Include how you plan to develop yourself so that you can achieve or increase the meaning of your work and your life. Use APA style for citations and references but write in the first person. No guideline on length. (50%)

Participation - the quality of your oral participation and the contribution of resources is critical to the success of this course. (50%)

Schedule – The Meaning of Work

September 20

- Syllabus
- Introduction: Motivation and work
- The forces leading to the study of meaning of work
- The construct

October 18

- *The sense of self*
- Spirituality and work
- The mental, physical,, and emotional self
- Life purpose/integrity
- Positive belief system

November 15

- *The work itself*
- Flow.
- Learning and growth
- Stress and challenge
- Artful work (creativity)
- Job sculpting

December 6

- *The sense of balance*
- Balance and integration in personal & work life
- Social responsibility
- *Organizational issues*
- The new employee contract and career development
- Organization structure and leadership
- Gender issues
- Closure: *Integrated wholeness*