Human Relations (BA)

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THE PROGRAM

The first degree of its kind at CUNY, the CUNY SPS Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Human Relations (HRL) is designed to prepare students to meet the demands of the increasingly global, multicultural, and service-oriented workplace.

Human Relations is an applied, innovative, interdisciplinary field of study that examines human behavior, interactions, and relationships within the workplace and society. Drawing on the fields of psychology, sociology, communication, business, and the humanities, students examine the organizational forms, practices, and policies that can foster or hinder the development of productive relationships and organizational success. Students develop the necessary knowledge and skills to make these relationships and their workplaces more effective.

The degree focuses on the application of theoretical concepts to students’ work and civic lives. The degree addresses the learning needs of adult students, promotes diversity and multicultural understanding, as well as improves written and oral communication skills.

Coursework for the HRL degree takes place in-person at the CUNY School of Professional Studies (CUNY SPS) at 119 West 31st Street in Manhattan. Students may also opt to take online courses.

Students who complete the HRL degree will be able to:

- Apply a broad range of human relations concepts, to growing service-sector, people-oriented occupations;
- Utilize key human relations, sociological, and psychological concepts to foster collaboration, motivation, and employee engagement;
- Develop relevant strategies for conflict prevention, negotiation, and resolution in workplace settings;
- Identify and communicate ethical and legal issues at stake in individual and collective decision-making;
- Analyze and evaluate workplace problems, and construct and communicate well-researched and relevant solutions;
- Communicate effectively across all levels of organizations;
- Apply leadership principles to workplace settings; and,
- Career and Academic Advancement Prospects.

Career Prospects

Graduates with a B.A. in Human Relations will possess a solid foundation for graduate work in human resources development and training, education, organization development, counseling, social work, adult learning, business administration, and related fields. Graduates are also prepared for careers in growing service-sector areas, including:

- Human and social services
- Non-profit organizations
- Educational support services
- Human resources management
- Training and development
- Administration, supervision, and management

Program Requirements

Completion of the B.A. in Human Relations requires a total of 120 credits, distributed as follows:

- 39 General Education Pathways Credits
- 45 Major Credits
  - 27 credits (9 courses) from Human Relations courses, including a culminating capstone course
  - 18 credits (6 courses) from additional required courses
- 36 Credits (12 courses) of Free Electives
To fulfill their electives requirement, students will have the option to choose from among any courses offered through CUNY SPS Undergraduate programs.

**Required Courses**

**Required Human Relations Courses**
- HRL 200 - Foundations of Human Relations
- HRL 210 - Interpersonal and Group Communication
- HRL 250 - Adult Learning and Development in the Workplace
- HRL 270 - Human Relations Issues in Management
- HRL 300 - Power and Inequality in the Workplace
- HRL 350 - Ethical and Legal Dimensions of Human Relations
- HRL 380 - Conflict in Human Relations
- HRL 401 - Introduction to Action Research
- HRL 499 - Human Relations Capstone

**Additional Required Courses**
- COM 210 - Writing at Work
- ORGD 341 - Organizational Change and Leadership
- PSY 101 - General Psychology
- PSY 340 - Contemporary Issues in Adulthood and Aging
- QUAN 201 - Quantitative Reasoning and Society
- SOC 216 - Social Problems

**Elective Courses**
- HRL 340 - Special Topics in Human Relations
- HRL 440 - Independent Study in Human Relations
- HRL 450 - Human Relations Internship

**COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**COM 210 Writing at Work**
3 Credits
*Pre-requisite: ENG 101 or equivalent*
An overview of professional workplace writing, including audience assessment, preparation for writing and research, design, editing, and collaborative writing. Models of effective writing and practice in preparing business correspondence, reports, instructions, proposals, presentations, and web content develop competence in creating documents routinely required of professionals in organizations. Relevant for a wide variety of professions.

**HRL 200 Foundations of Human Relations**
3 Credits
*Prerequisite: None*
This course introduces students to the foundational concepts and theories upon which the interdisciplinary field of human relations is based. Students examine the importance of human relations concepts to their personal and professional development. The topics and concepts include communication, problem solving, conflict management, diversity, cultural awareness, and stress management with a particular focus on workplace application. Case studies and class discussions draw attention throughout to the role of leadership in human relations, as well as skills of a successful leader.

**HRL 210 Interpersonal and Group Communication**
3 Credits
*Prerequisite: None*
Communication theory and human relations concepts frame students’ exploration of interpersonal and group dynamics that characterize effective communication in families, the workplace, community organizations, and social settings. Within these theoretical and contextual frames, key communication topics and competencies are addressed: listening, verbal and non-verbal expression, questioning, self-disclosure, assertiveness, persuading, emotion, concreteness, confrontation, and perception of self and others. These topics are considered with an emphasis on observation, analysis and practice of effective communication and relationship development strategies in a variety of individual and group situations. Students will also conduct a study of their communication styles and habits with the aim of improving and understanding the impact of different styles and habits on workplace relationships.
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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tr>
<td>HRL 250</td>
<td>Adult Learning and Development in the Workplace</td>
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<td><em>Prerequisite: None</em></td>
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<td>This course examines adult learning and development as ongoing processes in the workplace and in daily life, as well as in formal settings. Through exploration of key theories of adult learning and development, students will gain awareness of how they learn best, as well as an appreciation of the diverse ways in which others in the class learn. They will apply these insights to critically examine ways in which the cognitive, affective, and social dimensions of learning can produce more effective workplace environments.</td>
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<td>HRL 270</td>
<td>Human Relations Issues in Management</td>
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<td><em>Prerequisite: None</em></td>
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<td>This course addresses management from the perspective of strategic relationships between managers and employees. From this human relations lens, students explore issues considered to have a broad-based effect on individuals, groups, and organizations. The issues include recruitment, selection, the effect of technology on workplace dynamics, motivation, worker alienation, coaching, recognition, discipline, intergenerational collaboration, and evaluation. Oral, written, and interpersonal communication approaches frame each content area. Case studies and student work experience provide the platform for addressing current and emerging human relations issues in management.</td>
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<td>HRL 300</td>
<td>Power and Inequality in the Workplace</td>
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<td><em>Prerequisite: None</em></td>
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<td>Students examine the literature describing the ways in which inequality is created, maintained, and challenged in American society, and analyze how systems of inequality are connected to power and opportunity. Students apply the course material to real-life experiences with a focus on workplace issues and interactions. Emphasis is on the question, who is left out? Students reflect upon and analyze their personal experiences with power and inequality, and connect with theoretical constructs that promote social change.</td>
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<td>HRL 340</td>
<td>Special Topics in Human Relations</td>
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<td><em>Prerequisite: Varies</em></td>
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<td>This course provides students with the opportunity to study new and/or other topics in Human Relations not covered in existing courses. Topics may vary from term to term and reflect the interests of faculty and students. Course description may be obtained by going to the college website and/or e-mailing the instructor before registration. Students may take this course more than once for credit but may not repeat topics.</td>
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<td>HRL 350</td>
<td>Ethical and Legal Dimensions of Human Relations</td>
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<td><em>Prerequisite: None</em></td>
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<td>This course focuses on legal rules and ethical principles, and considerations and constraints that impact the American workplace on organizational, group, and individual levels. Students consider the practical applications of these rules and constraints to real-world situations. Readings and activities emphasize analytical problem solving and ethical decision making in the workplace, as well as the ability to communicate ideas and decisions to others. General ethical principles will be applied each week to a different area of individual and organizational behavior.</td>
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<td>HRL 380</td>
<td>Conflict in Human Relations</td>
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<td><em>Prerequisite: None</em></td>
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<td>Students study conflict prevention, management, and resolution within the framework of individual needs and goals, organizational demands and objectives, social structures, and changing social dynamics. Students examine sources of conflict and processes of conflict escalation and de-escalation, negotiation, and mediation; and practice effective communication skills to support collaborative problem solving in face-to-face and online contexts. The class will examine a range of approaches by which to apply these concepts to relevant workplace settings.</td>
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<td>HRL 401</td>
<td>Introduction to Action Research</td>
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<td><em>Prerequisite: HRL 200</em></td>
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<td>This course will introduce students to action research, a form of self-reflective systematic inquiry by practitioners on their own practice. The course reviews a few of the many approaches to action research, including ethnography, participatory action research, living theory, action science, and cooperative inquiry, as well as qualitative data analysis methodologies, including discourse analysis and participatory evaluation. The central argument is that action researchers operate with diverse epistemologies, but all promise improvements in the quality of social research, and emphasize a commitment to improving workplace relationships, organizational issues, and/or community or societal problems.</td>
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HRL 440  Independent Study in Human Relations  3 Credits
Prerequisite: Permission of the Director
This course allows students to focus on an independent project or research conducted under faculty guidance about a topic of interest. Students are expected to take an active role in specifying readings and outcomes and are required to sign a contract acknowledging course learning objectives and expectations.

HRL 450  Human Relations Internship  3 Credits
Prerequisite: Permission of the Director
This option consists of an off-campus Human Relations internship supervised by a faculty member. The venue must be approved by the faculty member and/or program and must be the focus of no less than 150 hours of student work. Weekly discussions of each student’s internship will be conducted. This course requires students to write a paper based on their internship.

HRL 499  Human Relations Capstone  3 Credits
Prerequisite: Permission of the Director
All students will complete a capstone project under the direction of a faculty mentor. This senior project will build upon work done in previous courses, allowing students to apply methods of scholarly and/or action research to issues related to Human Relations and work settings. Projects may be completed in small research groups or individually.

ORGD 341  Organizational Change and Leadership  3 Credits
Prerequisite: None
This course is designed to provide students with a conceptual framework and fundamental practical skills needed to plan, design, implement, and manage effective change within organizations. Specific attention is given to processes for assessing organizational functioning from a systems perspective, evaluating drivers of change and change strategies, and taking or leading action. Discover how to initiate and implement change, create solutions, and empower and motivate others to take action.

PSY 101  General Psychology  3 Credits
Prerequisite: None
This course examines behavior and mental processes. Topics include research methods, biological bases of brain and mind, sensation-perception, sleep and states of consciousness, learning and memory, development, cognition-intelligence, motivation-emotion, personality, abnormal psychology, and social psychology. The focus is on findings and principles related to everyday life.

PSY 340  Contemporary Issues in Adulthood and Aging  3 Credits
Prerequisite: PSY 101
Study of current theories and research on physical, intellectual and social-emotional growth and change across the adult years will be the central focus of this course. Key roles of family and friendship, work and retirement, as well as broader social, economic and legal factors are examined, along with race, culture, class, and gender differences. Implications of research findings for optimizing adaptation to normal development change and crises are considered.

QUAN 101  Quantitative Reasoning and Society  3 Credits
Prerequisite: None
An interdisciplinary introduction to the ways in which data can be used to enhance thinking and decision-making capacities, including using simple statistical techniques, creating visual representations of quantitative data, deriving accurate conclusions from quantitative data, and using data effectively in analyses and arguments. Assignments build capacity to evaluate and write clearly about quantitative evidence using methods for analyzing and communicating about data that do not require complex mathematics.

SOC 216  Social Problems  3 Credits
Prerequisite: None
The course focuses on problems whose origins lie outside the individual and how these problems impact individual behavior and social adjustment. Students will analyze problems related to major social institutions with special focus on the impact of inequality: health care, education, criminal justice, culture, political, and economic.