

Sociology Department Seminar &
'OAS' Colloquium on Organization and Work

HRM Taken Seriously - a Labour process critique



Paul Thompson

Wednesday Sept. 14, 13.00 - 14.30

Seminar room B900, B-huset, Frescati

This Colloquium and Sociology Dept. Wednesday seminar is also an introduction to the ilpc2012, the 30th *International Labour Process Conference* to be held in Stockholm, March 27-29 2012, and with a doctoral workshop March 26. More at www.ilpc.org.uk

Paul Thompson is Professor of Organisational Analysis in the HRM Department at Strathclyde University in Glasgow. He is convenor of the steering group for the ilpc conference. He has published well known books on organization, political economy, work and HRM. More on this overleaf.

Colloquium home page <http://tinyurl.com/3cnxkhw>

Welcome!

Stina Bergman Blix & Thomas Florén / Wednesday seminar
Åke Sandberg / OAS Colloquium

HRM appears to be in trouble

Its legitimacy has been threatened by challenges to the impact of its core research programme (high performance work systems and investment in human capital) and the centrality of its practices and function. Sociologists of work and employment have been rightly sceptical of HRM, but what should the basis of a critical approach be? In this presentation I will argue that it is mistaken to focus on HRM primarily as a cultural construct that relies on the creation of employee commitment. Drawing on labour process perspectives I will make a case for a political economy approach that situates HR troubles within the constraints of the accumulation regimes of financialized capitalism. Among the outcomes is a strengthening of market discipline rather than commitment as a driver of high performance. While challenging the assumption that HRM is a distinctive mode of managing the employment relationship, it seeks to identify some common grounds for dialogue between mainstream and critical approaches.

Paul Thompson

is Professor of Organisational Analysis in the Department of Human Resource Management at the University of Strathclyde. He is the author of a number of well known books: *The Nature of Work*, *Work Organizations* (with David McHugh) *Organization Misbehaviour* (with Stephen Ackroyd) and *New Technology@Work* (with Paul Boreham, Rachel Parker and Richard Hall); plus six edited collections including *A Handbook of Work and Organization* (with Stephen Ackroyd, Pam Tolbert and Rose Batt, 2004). Informed by labour process theory, his research interests focus on skill and work organisation, control and resistance, organisational restructuring and changing political economy. He is Convenor of the Steering Group for the International Labour Process Conference.