

Talent analytics
3rd semester elective
Open to all BSS students

Instructor: Tunde Cserpes (Assistant Professor of Strategy and Entrepreneurship)

In this course, students will explore how organisations benefit from modern prediction tools such as big data, machine learning and artificial intelligence to inform their hiring, promotion, firing, and team collaboration processes. It is not an applied course; it will not teach you the mechanics behind the technology. This course targets students who want to use these tools to build organisational strategy, be it in a start-up or a large organisation. While this requires some knowledge of how these tools work, that is only a small part of the equation, just like knowing how an engine works is a small part of understanding how to drive.

During the course, we elaborate the central theme that algorithms are shaped by the social world in which they are used. That means that we will treat algorithmic machines as managerial tools and develop a functional vocabulary to understand what these tools do well, and what they do badly. Students will be exposed to some exercises in talent analytics, but we will place most focus on understanding the intuition behind the tools and their societal consequences. Topically, we focus on decisions related to human capital at organisations and discuss the theoretical and practical challenges they present using a vocabulary from macro-oriented social science, such as strategy, sociology, and economics. The course's main learning objective is, therefore, to empower future managers and employees to understand how algorithms affect contemporary talent management.

Throughout the course, we will engage with three overarching themes:

1. What do algorithmic methods do, and what are they incapable of doing in talent analytics?
2. How do algorithmic methods inform human capital decisions in organisations?
3. What are the ethical and societal implications of algorithmic talent management of the workforce?

Competences

After finishing this course, students will be able to:

- explain how algorithmic methods alter age-old organisational processes
- match organisational data with the appropriate descriptive and inferential explanations, learn the limits of causal reasoning
- identify organisational challenges related to human capital issues and address them with algorithmic tools
- understand common roadblocks to implementing talent analytics
- navigate the outcomes of talent analytics in the organisation

Course structure

Classes combine lectures, discussions, and in-class group work to facilitate active learning. We will spend class time making connections between the assigned readings and empirical problems through various exercises. As are constantly changing, we will use an array of readings from popular press, scientific articles, and book chapters. During the course, we will work toward a small take home assignment in which students will choose from a few hypothetical scenarios and outline a managerial proposal for an algorithmic process in response to a specific talent analytics-related organisational challenge.

Topics

This course will cover the following topics:

- making credible causal claims
- artificial intelligence in hiring
- algorithms and performance
- prediction tools to increase engagement and retention
- big data and organisational culture
- algorithmically mediated interdependence: assembling teams for innovation
- team dynamics and interaction
- talent management and diversity
- the ethics of talent analytics
- talent analytics for remote work

Similar offerings at BSS

This class complements Anna B. Holm's classes (Human Resource Management, Human Resource Management and Development, Staffing). Those classes use vocabulary from *micro*-oriented social sciences, such as psychology, and focus on individualistic explanations to provide a qualitative background to manage people in organizations. In comparison, my class builds on concepts and approaches used in labor economics and sociology, which emphasizes explanations on the societal and collective levels. This class is also a good addition to some of the courses offered in the Business Intelligence track as those only focus on the technical aspects as means to make the business case, and place less emphasis on the social consequences of using algorithms in organizations.

Courses around the world that served as inspiration

Stanford GSB– People analytics (Amir Goldberg)

MIT – Talent analytics (Emilio Castilla)

Utah State University – People analytics (Mike Ulrich)

John's Hopkins – Strategic Human Capital (Roman Galperin)