

The University of Western Ontario
Department of Political Science
Master of Public Administration, Local Government Program

PA 9922b
Human Resource Management

Course Outline
Winter Term 2015

FACULTY

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Office hours: In person after class, during class breaks or by appointment anytime during the term; also, consultation by e-mail and telephone.

TIMETABLE & LOCATION

Three weekends: Friday 3:00 – 7:00 PM and Saturday 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
January 9, 10; January 30, 31; March 6, 7.

All classes will be held in **room 4255 SSC** (Social Science Centre).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Our course draws on theories and research findings in the fields of human resources management, labour relations, public administration, management and organizational behaviour. Using this interdisciplinary perspective, the course aims to blend theory and “best/promising practices” to help you gain an understanding of *progressive and strategic* human resources management (HRM) – including policies, practices, procedures and principles – and how to apply them in a public sector environment. Particular attention will be given to the Canadian local government environment.

The respective and complimentary human resource management roles of managers and practitioners will be a theme throughout the course. Similarly, you will be encouraged to view and critically examine the HR management roles and functions from a variety of stakeholder perspectives. We will define HRM to include the management of human resources by executives, managers and supervisors, as well as the management of an organization’s human resources by the human resources (HR) department and HR practitioners. The roles and responsibilities of unions and employees will also be discussed.

It is expected that you will develop an understanding of:

- The relationship of HRM to organizational goals and functions,
- The relationship of HRM to the needs and interests of employees,
- Your HRM role, especially if you are in a leadership position,
- The context, including the legal framework, in which we manage people and the “human resources” of an organization,
- How to strategically and effectively use progressive HRM to further your organization’s goals, the interests of employees, and your own career, management and professional objectives.

Through the research on your essay, the analysis of case studies and our class discussion, it is also expected that you will identify, analyse and seek remedies for HRM issues and problems relevant to you or your environment and organization.

INSTRUCTIONAL STYLE AND EXPECTATIONS

- The instructional style is interactive and highly participative. It will involve a blend of informal lecture and case study presentation and discussion, including small group and plenary discussion. *Your contribution to the learning of others is a significant element of the course.*
- Our learning of HRM will be enhanced by student presentations on HRM case studies. As well, each student will take a lead role and act as a discussant for an additional case study. **All students are encouraged and expected to participate in class analysis and discussion of all case studies.**
- **It is expected that students will complete the assigned readings, including case studies, prior to each class so that we may then discuss concepts and applications.**
- The case method (business case analysis) will be used in this course. I hope it will strengthen your analytical skills and help you apply key learning points from the readings. The case study guidelines, plus the Learning With Cases text, will help you develop your analytical skills.
- Students are expected to use cell/smart phones, laptops, tablets and other electronic equipment responsibly. If you choose to use these devices during class, please ensure that it does not interfere with classroom learning, and is not inappropriate (playing games, surfing, emailing, texting, engaging in social media, doing homework, etc.), distracting, inconsiderate or offensive.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Case – either group analysis and presentation or an individual article review	30 %
Contribution to learning – including acting as a discussant for one case	20 %
Essay – 50% or 15:30% (outline, essay)	50 %

Case: 30 %

- One case per student, plus one case for which you will act as a discussant (see contribution to learning, below).
- You select either to work in a group to do a case analysis and present it in class, or to individually write an article review and bring insights to our class discussion of the case/topic.
- Your choice of the cases listed for Weeks 2 or 3.
- Cases are assigned on a first come, first served basis. Email me before the course starts if you have decided which option you have selected and your preferred case. Otherwise, a sign-up sheet will be posted during our Week 1 class.
- No more than 5 students in each case study group.
- Case study questions and guidelines are posted on OWL. They will assist you to select your case, focus your analysis and plan your presentation, or alternatively to select and write an article review.

Contribution to learning: 20 %

- Continuous. Includes your role as discussant for one case (5%) and meaningful contribution to learning in class exercises and discussion, including cases (5% for each weekend class). HR concepts and tools drawn from the readings are of high value; relevant applications and examples are also welcome.

Essay: 50 %

- Due date to be discussed and agreed on in class (likely end of March or early April – I'm flexible, and we will try to find a date that does not conflict with other due dates).
- **Each student must submit a question and topic statement for their essay prior to week 2 (no later than January 26, 2015).** While there is no mark for the essay question and topic statement, feedback will be given and I will advise and assist as you focus and clarify your topic/question and identify appropriate resources.
- For the essay you have a choice to:
 - prepare a detailed outline valued at 15%, with the essay valued at 35%, OR
 - discuss or submit a less detailed outline where your objective is to seek feedback (no grade), with the essay valued at 50%, OR
 - submit the essay (valued at 50%) with no outline.
 - **Outlines (to be marked) are due March 13, 2015** – although earlier is fine.
- Essay guidelines are posted on OWL.
- Note: You may NOT submit an essay without prior approval of your topic statement/question.

To clarify expectations, the following documents are posted on OWL:

- Essay Guidelines
- Case Study Guidelines
- Case Study Questions

Please get in touch if you wish any further clarifications.

Feel free to suggest alternative due dates if these dates conflict with other course requirements or workload. I especially welcome a collective decision for change of due dates. I value flexibility; just be aware that I would like to submit the course marks by late-April.

It is the student's responsibility to submit his or her own original written material in courses.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Note: Cheaper digital formats and used books/earlier editions may be available.

Stewart, Eileen, Monica Belcourt, George Bohlander and Scott Snell. Essentials of Managing Human Resources. 5th Cdn. Ed. Scarborough, ON: Thomson, 2014.

Note: This is our core text book.

Belcourt, Monica, Kenneth J. McBey, Ying Hong and Margaret Yap. Strategic Human Resources Planning. 5th Cdn. Ed. Toronto: Nelson Thomson, 2013.

Custom course package, #M11085, "Case Studies in Human Resources Management".

Mauffette-Leenders, Louise A., James A. Erskine, and Michiel R. Leenders. Learning With Cases. London, ON: Richard Ivey School of Business, 1997.

Note: If you have selected to do a group case analysis/presentation, then I encourage you to read and use the analysis described here – it makes a difference to the quality of the case analysis and presentation. You may wish to purchase one copy to be used by several students.

Additional readings may be handed out in class from time to time, or made available through OWL or the Local Government Library. Additional HR text books (either more detailed than our texts or of a specialized nature) have been placed in the LG Library, and may be useful for your case study analysis and essays.

Weekly Topic Schedule: An Overview
(corrected dates)

Week 1: January 9, 10

- Overview of the course.
- Introduction to Human Resources Management (HRM): what, why, roles.
- Strategic HRM: introduction, evolution.
- Current HR challenges; the strengths and weaknesses of HRM in the public sector environment, and particularly in local government; mapping the stakeholders.

- The legal framework of HRM (introduction; this will be continuously discussed throughout the course).
- Defining and designing work
- Recruitment
- Selection
- Orientation
- Introduction to the case method.

Week 2: January 30, 31

- HR planning – an introduction
- Strategic HRM and the role of HR planning.
- Succession planning

- Developing your people - and yourself. [CASE]
- Training.
- Managing performance.
- Performance appraisal: systems and their implementation. [CASE]

- Dealing with poor performance. [CASE]
- Disciplinary policies and procedures.
- Employee rights and management rights.

- Labour relations, collective bargaining and contract administration: the basics.
- Labour relations in the public sector.

Week 3: March 6, 7

- Downsizing and restructuring [CASE]

- Total compensation: pay, incentives, and benefits/employee services.
- Compensation in a local government environment: private sector approaches and public sector conditions.
- Recognizing and rewarding employees.

- Health and safety. [CASE]

- Equality in the workplace/workplace harassment.

- Managing HR strategically: what, why, who and how? [CASE]

- Roundtable: course learnings and applications

Weekly Topic Schedule and Readings: Detailed

WEEK 1: January 9, 10

FRIDAY

- Overview of the course: What is this course about? What is expected?
- Guest panel of local government managers/professionals and previous HRM students (TBA)

- Introduction to Human Resources Management (HRM): what, why, roles.
- Strategic HRM: introduction, evolution.
- Current HR challenges in the public sector, particularly in local government.
- The strengths and weaknesses of HRM in the public sector environment, with an emphasis on local government.
- Mapping the stakeholders re: HRM.

Readings: Stewart, ch. 1. Belcourt, ch. 1, 2, 3 (65-81).

Exercises related to these topics and readings will be emailed to students in advance of our class. Students will be assigned to groups. Debriefing these exercises will continue on Saturday.

- Assessing your learning needs: What do you want to learn?

SATURDAY

- The legal framework of HRM (introduction; this will be continuously discussed throughout the course).

Readings: Stewart, ch. 2.

- Continuing introductory exercises (from Friday)

- Defining and designing work

Readings: Stewart, ch. 3. Belcourt, ch.4.

- Recruitment
- Selection

- Orientation

Readings: Stewart, ch. 5 (p. 154-156, 170-173). Case 10 - A Matter of Fit

This case will be used to demonstrate how a case might be analyzed and presented. Read the case carefully in advance and be prepared to participate in a case analysis.

Readings: "Learning with Cases", in particular, Part 2: Analyzing the Case, p. 40-54.

WEEK 2: January 30, 31

FRIDAY

- HR planning – an introduction.

Readings: Stewart, ch. 4.

[Note: Belcourt, chapters 5, 6, 7 or 8 (optional readings) may be useful for the class exercise, or of interest to students who wish to explore HR planning in more depth.]

- Class exercises (on OWL) – using mini-cases in course package.

- Linking Week 1 to Week 2: Strategic HRM and the role of HR planning

Readings: Belcourt, ch. 1, 2, 8. Stewart, ch. 1 (p. 30-32), 4 (108-112).

- Succession planning

A class exercise will use the mini-case “Nike Inc. – A Doomed Succession Plan?” (see OWL).

SATURDAY

- Developing your people - and yourself

Readings: Belcourt, ch. 8. Stewart, ch. 5 (p. 154-156, 176-182). Case 4 - GENTRO Limited

- Training

Readings: Stewart, ch. 5.

- Managing performance
- Performance appraisal: systems and their implementation
- Conducting performance appraisal; participating in your own performance review

Readings: Stewart, ch. 6. Case 12 - AMAX Automotive

- Dealing with poor performance
- Disciplinary policies and procedures
- Employee rights and management rights

Readings: Stewart, ch. 6 (p. 217-218), ch. 9 (p. 319-336). Case 21 - Regulatory Review Commission

- Labour relations, collective bargaining and contract administration: the basics
- Labour relations in the public sector

Readings: Stewart, ch. 10. Short exercises will be distributed in advance (see OWL).

- Roundtable: essay topics, research sources and questions [or in Week 3]

