

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 2018

**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 – 4:00 PM.  
**January 19, 20; February 9, 10; March 23, 24.**

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 complementary human resource management roles of managers and HR 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 and the interests of employees, as well as 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. There is a blend of informal lecture, case study presentation and discussion, as well as small group and class 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 all 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 (suggested but not required), will help you develop your analytical skills. I will review expectations during our Week 1 class.
- Students are expected to use laptops, tablets, phones and other electronic equipment responsibly – and for learning. If you choose to use these devices during class, please ensure it does not interfere with classroom learning (your own and others' learning), is not inappropriate (playing games, surfing, emailing, texting, engaging in social media, doing homework or on-line shopping, etc.), distracting, inconsiderate or offensive.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION**

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

### **Case: 30 %**

- Each student will select one case from Weeks 2 and 3. You have a choice to do either a group case analysis and presentation, **or** an individual article review which you relate to the case/course topic.
- You will also select a second case for which you will act as a discussant during class discussion (see below).
- There are six case studies from which you may select your preferred cases. (See pages 5-8 below or custom course package M#11366.)
- 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 cases. Otherwise, a sign-up sheet will be posted during our Week 1 class.
- No more than 5 students in each case study group. No more than 3 article reviews per case.
- 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.
- Guidelines for acting as a discussant are posted on OWL (see “Case Study Guidelines”).

### **Essay: 50 %**

- Due date to be discussed and agreed on in class (likely late March or early April). We will try to find a date that does not conflict with other course due dates).
- **Each student must submit a topic statement and question for their essay prior to week 2 (no later than February 3, 2018).** 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 12, 2018** – although earlier is good.

- 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 and will often allow for the negotiation of individual due dates; just be aware that I have constraints on when I submit my course marks.

*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. Chapter and page numbers for earlier editions are posted on OWL.*

Stewart, Eileen, Monica Belcourt, George Bohlander and Scott Snell. Essentials of Managing Human Resources. 6<sup>th</sup> Cdn. Ed. Scarborough, ON: Thomson, 2016.

*Note: This is our core text book.*

Belcourt, Monica, Kenneth J. McBey, Ying Hong and Margaret Yap. Strategic Human Resources Planning. 6<sup>th</sup> Cdn. Ed. Toronto: Nelson Thomson, 2016.

Custom course package, M#11366, "Case Studies in Human Resources Management".

Suggested/optional: Mauffette-Leenders, Louise A., James A. Erskine, and Michiel R. Leenders. Learning With Cases. London, ON: Richard Ivey School of Business, 2014.

*Note: If you have selected to do a group case analysis/presentation, then I encourage you to read and use the analysis described here, especially chapter 3. It makes a difference to the quality of the case analysis and presentation. A few copies of the book (it's small) are available through the Bookstore for those who are interested in the broader topics covered related to using case studies, doing an analysis, etc. Used copies may also be available.*

Additional readings may be handed out in class from time to time, or made available through OWL. 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**

### **Week 1: January 19, 20**

- 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/onboarding
  
- Introduction to the case method.

### **Week 2: February 9, 10**

- Strategic HRM and the role of HR planning
- Succession planning
  
- Developing your people - and yourself / succession management [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
  
- Essay topics, research sources, questions, due dates

### **Week 3: March 23, 24**

- 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]
- Workplace harassment: a matter of equality, health and safety.
- Managing HR strategically: what, why, who and how? [CASE]
  
- Roundtable: course learnings and applications

## Weekly Topic Schedule and Readings: Detailed

### WEEK 1: January 19, 20

#### FRIDAY

- Overview: What is this course about? What is expected?
- Introduction to human resources management (HRM): what, why, roles.
- Strategic HRM: introduction, evolution.
- Guest panel of local government managers/professionals and previous HRM students

**Readings: Stewart, ch. 1. Belcourt, ch. 1, 2**

#### SATURDAY

- Strategic HRM: introduction, evolution – continued.

Small group exercises and class discussion:

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

**Readings: Stewart, ch. 1 (optional: ch.3). Belcourt, ch. 1, 2, 3 (61-76)**

*Exercises related to these topics and readings will be posted on OWL in advance of our class. Students will be assigned to groups. Debriefing these exercises may continue in Week 2.*

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

**Readings: Stewart, ch. 2.**

- Defining and designing work

**Readings: Steward, ch. 4**

- HR planning (introduced, continued in Week 2)
- Recruitment
- Selection

**Readings: Stewart, ch. 5**

- Orientation/onboarding

**Readings: Stewart, ch. 6 (p. 174-177).**

- Introduction to the case method.

## **WEEK 2: February 9, 10**

### **FRIDAY**

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

**Readings: Belcourt, ch. 1, 2; Stewart, ch. 1 (p. 27-28), ch. 5 (134-138).**

- Succession planning and management

**Readings: Belcourt, ch. 7.**

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

[Note: Belcourt, chapters 4, 5, 6 (optional readings) may be useful for the class exercise, or of interest to students who wish to explore HR planning in more depth.]

- Continue introductory exercises from Week 1 (if not completed).

### **SATURDAY**

- Developing your people - and yourself (including succession management)

**Readings: Belcourt, ch. 7. Stewart, ch. 5 (p.135, 140), ch. 6 (p.195-199). Case 4 - GENTRO Limited**

- Training

**Readings: Stewart, ch.6.**

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

**Readings: Stewart, ch. 7. Case 12 - AMAX Automotive**

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

**Readings: Stewart, ch. 7 (p. 232-234), ch. 9 (p. 286-287, 295-310; optional: p. 287-295). Case 21 - Regulatory Review Commission**

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

**Readings: Stewart, ch. 10, ch. 9 (p.282-287). Short exercises will be distributed in advance (see OWL).**

- Roundtable: essay topics, research sources, questions, due dates

### WEEK 3: March 23, 24

#### FRIDAY

- Downsizing and restructuring

**Readings:** *Belcourt, ch. 10 and ch. 12, 13 may also be useful; Stewart ch. 1 (p. 11-12), and ch. 4 may also be of interest. Case: Downsizing Decision at the Department of Public Works*

- 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

**Readings:** *Stewart, ch. 8.*

#### SATURDAY

- Health and safety

**Readings:** *Stewart, ch. 2 (p. 52-53), ch. 3 (p. 78-101). Case 18 - Northern Copper Corporation*

- Workplace harassment: equality + health and safety

**Readings:** *Stewart, ch. 2 (p. 41-50, 53-61), ch. 3 (p. 74-76, 89-95). A short case or exercise will be distributed in class.*

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

**Readings:** *Drawing on all the readings from our course, in particular: Belcourt, ch. 1, 2, 3, 14. Stewart, ch. 1, 5. Case 1 - Hallington Utilities Services*

Reflection and roundtable discussion: *Be prepared to discuss the following -*

- What have you learned that will influence you in your role as (a) manager, (b) public servant, (c) employee, and/or (d) HR practitioner?
- How might your learning influence your decision-making, behaviour and perspective on HR management and the employer-employee relationship?
- How might your learning influence what you expect of and how you relate to your organization's HR department?