

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

University of Montana Course Syllabi

Open Educational Resources (OER)

---

Fall 9-1-1995

### PSC 460.01: Public Personnel Administration

Jonathan R. Tompkins

*The University Of Montana*, [jonathan.tompkins@umontana.edu](mailto:jonathan.tompkins@umontana.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

Tompkins, Jonathan R., "PSC 460.01: Public Personnel Administration" (1995). *University of Montana Course Syllabi*. 6747.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/6747>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Educational Resources (OER) at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana Course Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

Political Science 460  
PUBLIC PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

Professor Tompkins  
Phone: 243-2721

Office: LA 352  
Hours: Anytime I'm not in class

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the field of public personnel administration. It focuses on the substantive knowledge and work-related skills required by both personnel officers and those who manage personnel on a daily basis.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To acquire substantive knowledge of each major area of personnel management.
2. To develop problem-solving skills relevant to situations faced by managers and personnel officers.
3. To develop technical skills relevant to the effective administration of personnel systems and the effective management of human resources.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Jonathan Tompkins, Human Resource Management in Government (HarperCollins, 1995).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to read all assigned readings, be prepared to discuss them in class, and take four exams. Each exam is worth 100 points.

A = 360 points  
B = 320 points  
C = 280 points  
D = 240 points

READING ASSIGNMENT

Sept. 5 and 7      An Introduction to the Human Resource Function  
Read Chapter 1 and prepare answers to the following:

1. What is the conceptual distinction between personnel administration and human resource management?

2. What is meant by the term human resource function and what are its five primary tasks?
3. What is the distinction between line and staff personnel?
4. Why is the relationship between line managers and personnel officers not always a harmonious one?
5. What are some of the theoretical premises (or themes) of the HRM perspective?

Sept. 12 and 14

HRM's Environment and the Organization of Civil Service Systems

Read Chapter 2 and prepare answers to the following:

1. How are HRM policies and practices affected by politics?
2. How are HRM policies and practices affected by changing demographic characteristics?
3. How are HRM policies and practices affected by technological changes?
4. How are HRM policies and practices affected by new laws and a greater willingness to litigate?
5. How are HRM policies and practices affected by negative public attitudes toward government?
6. What does strategic human resource management mean in the context of Chapter 2, and what does it entail?

Read Chapter 3 and prepare answers to the following:

1. What is a civil service system?
2. Within a civil service system, what distinguishes the career service from the noncareer service?
3. What distinguishes a rank-in-position career system from a rank-in-person career system?
4. What is a merit system and what are the four traditional merit principles?
5. How is the classic, highly centralized merit system organized?
6. What distinguishes the commission model from the executive personnel office model of organization?
7. Generally speaking, what is the role of the central personnel office in relation to the departmental personnel office?

Sept. 19 and 21

Social Values and Civil Service Reforms

Read Chapter 4 and prepare answers to the following:

1. When George Washington selected civil servants to fill positions in the new government, what values was he most concerned with?
2. What is a patronage system and what values did Andrew Jackson seek to achieve in adopting it in 1829?
3. The merit system adopted in 1883 sought to achieve what values?
4. How did the scientific management and administrative management movements impact personnel administration?
5. What major changes did the Civil Service Reform Act make, and how did it represent an effort to balance several competing values at once?

\*\*Exam 1 is Thursday September 21\*\*

Sept. 26 and 28

Job Analysis

Read Chapter 5 and prepare answers to the following:

1. What does job analysis entail?
2. What five kinds of information are typically sought?
3. How does the information derived from job analysis contribute to other personnel activities?
4. What are the problems or limitations associated with analyzing and describing positions?
5. What techniques are used to obtain job information?
6. What is the "inference problem"?
7. When are formal methods of job analysis used?

Oct. 3 and 5

Job Evaluation and Pay Systems

Read Chapter 6 and prepare answers to the following:

1. What does job evaluation entail and what is its primary purpose?
2. What are the limitations of job evaluation?

3. How would you describe the position classification method of job evaluation?
4. How would you describe the point factor method of job evaluation?
5. What is external pay equity and how is it typically achieved?
6. Why is it difficult to maintain internal and external pay equity simultaneously?
7. What does the term "comparable worth" refer to?
8. What is a pay equity study and how is one conducted?
9. Why is comparable worth so controversial?

\*\*Note: Oct 9 is the last day to drop a class\*\*

Oct. 10 and 12      Job Evaluation and Pay Systems (continued)

\*\*Exam 2 is Thursday October 12\*\*

Oct. 24 and 26      Nondiscrimination Approach to Equal Employment Opportunity  
Read Chapter 7 and prepare answers to the following:

1. How would you define the concept of EEO?
2. What does the nondiscrimination approach to EEO involve?
3. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act protects individuals on the basis of what five categories?
4. How are Title VII complaints typically processed?
5. How would you define the disparate treatment theory of discrimination? What are some examples of disparate treatment?
6. What is the one legitimate defense for job qualifications that require the successful applicant to be of a particular gender, religion, or ethnic background?
7. How would you define the disparate (or adverse) impact theory of discrimination? What are some examples of disparate impact?
8. What are the facts of the Griggs case and what legal standard(s) did it produce?
9. What is the purpose of the Four-fifths Rule and how is it applied?

10. What should an employer do if analysis reveals that the Four-fifths Rule has been violated?
11. What distinguishes "quid pro quo" sexual harassment from "hostile work environment" sexual harassment?
12. Why is sexual harassment so pervasive, and why is it so important to address it in the workplace?
13. What is management's responsibility and what is the victim's responsibility in the context of sexual harassment?

Oct. 31 and Nov. 2     Affirmative Action Approach to Equal Employment Opportunity  
Read Chapter 8 and prepare answers to the following:

1. How would you define the affirmative action approach to EEO, and is its goal?
2. Why did advocates of the affirmative action approach find the nondiscrimination approach to be inadequate?
3. What five affirmative action methods are used, and why are some more controversial than others?
4. What does a court-ordered affirmative action program entail?
5. What employers are subject to Executive Order 11246 and what is required of them?
6. What distinguishes voluntary affirmative action programs from other programs, and why do employers establish them?
7. What conditions must be met for the Supreme Court to uphold the constitutionality of voluntary programs?
8. As public policy, why is affirmative action so controversial?
9. Is the merit principle in fact compromised by affirmative action?
10. How are diversity management programs different from affirmative action programs?

Nov. 7 and 9     Employee Recruitment and Selection  
Read Chapter 9 and prepare answers to the following:

1. What is the fundamental purpose of recruitment?

2. What distinguishes institutional from job-specific recruitment, and what techniques does each type of recruitment use?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of internal recruitment for jobs above the entry level?
4. In what way does selection involve the art of prediction, and what predictive strategy or strategies would you use to select the best performers?
5. How is the pool of qualified job applicants determined?
6. What is the distinction between an assembled and an unassembled examination?
7. What is the distinction between criterion-related validity and content validity?
8. Employment testing raises what three fairness issues?
9. Why is the structured interview superior to the nondirective interview?
10. What types of interview questions would give you the most useful answers?
11. Suppose you have four job finalists, what subjective qualities would you look at to ensure a "good fit"?

Nov. 14 and 16

Human Resource Training and Development

Read Chapter 10 and prepare answers to the following:

1. If there is a useful distinction between training and development activities, what is it?
2. What individual and organizational goals does training and development serve?
3. Why is more time and money now being allocated to training and development?
4. What kinds of information do workers need during the orientation phase?
5. What is the goal of job and person analysis?
6. Why are training programs so seldom evaluated systematically to determine their return on investment?
7. What do career development programs entail, and what are the arguments for and against them?

Nov. 21 and 23

\*\*Exam 3 on Tuesday Nov. 21\*\*  
\*\*No class on Thursday Nov. 23\*\*

Nov. 28 and 30

Performance Appraisal and Counseling  
Read Chapter 11 and prepare answers to the following:

1. What are the four purposes that performance appraisal systems may be designed to serve?
2. Is it possible, or desirable, to design an appraisal system to achieve all four purposes?
3. What factors tend to undermine the effectiveness of performance appraisal systems?
4. What are the pros and cons of using trait-based, behavior-based, and results-based performance criteria?
5. What are the two primary approaches to developing performance criteria?
6. Which performance appraisal method would you use for white collar professionals, and why?
7. What takes place at the appraisal interview?
8. How is the Problem-solving approach different from the Tell and Sell and Tell and Listen approaches?

Dec. 5 and 7

Personnel Policies and Employee Relations  
Read Chapter 13 and prepare answers to the following:

1. What does it mean to take a "strategic approach to policy development"?
2. What roles do policy manuals and employee handbooks perform?
3. What is the advantage and disadvantage of Employee Conduct policies of the kind shown in Exhibit 13.2?
4. What is the philosophy behind progressive discipline, and what steps are typically involved?
5. Disciplinary action is taken in what two kinds of situations, and how are these situations handled differently?
6. Generally speaking, what are the employee's due process rights in a disciplinary situation?
7. What does "just cause" mean?



8. Why is it important to document all rule violations and performance problems?
9. What is an employee assistance program and what is its primary purpose?
10. What policies and programs may be adopted to help today's workers balance their personal and work responsibilities?

Dec. 12 and 14

Collective Bargaining and Labor Relations

Read Chapter 14 and prepare answers to the following:

1. What is the basic model of labor relations established by the NLRA of 1935?
2. What arguments were made against applying the NLRA model to the public sector?
3. How was the NLRA model later modified for use in the public sector?
4. Who typically sits around the bargaining table?
5. What is involved at each of the five stages of collective bargaining?
6. What do grievance procedures typically entail?
7. How would you assess the appropriateness of collective bargaining for public agencies?

\*\*Exam 4 is 3:20 pm Monday Dec. 18\*\*