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PSC 522.01: Human Resource Management

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Political Science 522
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Fall 1996

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Hours: Anytime I'm not in class

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the field of human resource management. 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 human resource 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 study questions in class, take a final exam, and complete five homework assignments. The final exam is worth 100 points and the homework assignments are worth 20 points each.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Sept. 12 An Introduction to the Human Resource Function
Read Chapter 1 and prepare answers to the study questions listed below.

1. What is the distinction between personnel administration and human resource management, both as a field of study and an area of professional practice.

2. What is meant by the term human resource function, what are its five primary tasks, and who is responsible for performing these tasks?
3. What is the distinction between line and staff personnel, and why is the relationship between line managers and personnel officers not always a harmonious one?
4. What are the assumptions of HRM as a theoretical perspective?

Sept. 19 The Political and Social Environment of HRM

Read Chapter 2, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, and be prepared to discuss Cases 2.1 and 2.2 in class.

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. Why is it important to continuously assess factors in your agencies environment, what does strategic human resource management mean in the context of this chapter, and what does it entail?

Sept. 26 Civil Service Systems and How They are Organized

Read Chapter 3 and prepare answers to the study questions listed below.

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 a classic, highly centralized merit system typically 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?

Oct. 3 Societal Values and Civil Service Reforms

Read Chapter 4 and prepare answers to the study questions listed below.

1. When President Washington selected civil servants to fill positions in the new government, what values was he most concerned with?
2. What is the 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?

Oct. 10 Job Analysis

Read Chapter 5, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, complete Exercise 5.1 and submit it in class today (1-3 pages double-spaced), and be prepared to do Exercise 5.2 in class and submit your PD by Monday Oct. 14.

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. What are the three types of formal job analysis and what distinguishes each from the others?

8. When are formal methods of job analysis used, i.e., for what purposes?

Oct. 17. Job Evaluation and Pay Systems

Read Chapter 6, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, and point-factor the PD you wrote last week, submitting it by Monday Oct. 21 (further instructions will be given in class).

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 fact 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. To what does the term "comparable worth" refer?
8. What is a pay equity study and how is one conducted?
9. Why is comparable worth so controversial?

Oct. 24 Nondiscrimination Approach to Equal Employment Opportunity

Read Chapter 7, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, and be prepared to do Exercise 7.1 in class (Sexual Harassment in the Workplace).

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 do job applicants and employees pursue Title VII complaints?
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 in 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 Affirmative Action Approach to Equal Employment Opportunity
Read Chapter 8, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, and be prepared to discuss Case 8.1.

1. How would you define the affirmative action approach to EEO and what 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 does utilization analysis entail?
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 Employee Recruitment and Selection

Read Chapter 9, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, be prepared to do Exercise 9.1 in class, and write a Supplemental Application Form and Training and Experience Scoring Form, submitting them Tuesday Nov. 12 (further instructions will be given in class).

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 Human Resource Training and Development

Read Chapter 10, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, and be prepared to discuss Case 10.1 in class (Who Failed Whom?)

1. If there is a useful distinction between training activities 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 in the context of training?
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 Performance Appraisal and Counseling

Read Chapter 11, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, be prepared to discuss Case 11.1 and Exercise 11.1 in class, and write a performance appraisal form, submitting it Monday Dec. 2 (instructions will be given in class).

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?
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 and what are its advantages?

Nov. 28 Thanksgiving Holiday

Dec. 5 Personnel Policies and Employee Relations

Read Chapter 13, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, and be prepared to discuss Case 13.2 in class (The Case of the Troubled Employee).

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 an employee's due process rights in a disciplinary situation?
7. What does "just cause" mean?
8. Why is 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 Collective Bargaining and Labor Relations

Read Chapter 14, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, and be prepared to discuss Case 14.1 and Exercise 14.1 in class.

1. What is the basic model of labor relations established by the NLRA of 1935?
2. What arguments were made against applying the NLRA 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?

Dec. 19 Final Exam (Hopefully in LA 344 at 4:10 pm)

EXAM QUESTIONS (Five questions will be drawn randomly; you will write on four)

1. Demonstrate your understanding of HRM by defining it as a) a field of study, b) an area of professional practice, and c) a theoretical perspective. In doing so, distinguish between HRM and traditional personnel administration.
2. You have just been appointed director of the state's Personnel Division. Aware of the limitations of traditional personnel administration, you wish to adopt a strategic human resource management approach. Define the latter term, explain what kinds of things the Division will need to do to get beyond traditional personnel administration, and discuss the factors that will limit your success in this regard.
3. Define the term merit system, identify traditional merit principles, and explain, from an HRM perspective, the deficiencies of traditional merit systems (commission model with centralized testing, rule of three, etc.)
4. Civil service reforms do not happen by accident; they are products of shifting societal values. Write an essay identifying the key reforms contained in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, explaining the values each was intended to achieve, and assessing whether a proper balance of values has been accomplished.
5. Define job analysis, explain what role job analysis plays in preparing a job description, and explain how more formal methods of job analysis may be used to develop a valid employment examination.
6. The logic of scientific management states that jobs should be defined scientifically through careful job analysis, that their worth should be determined scientifically by evaluating job content, and that the job incumbent should be paid according to the demands the job places on the incumbent. Discuss some of the problems with this job centered-logic.
7. Define internal pay equity and external pay equity, identify the tools by which governments try to maintain each type of equity, and explain why it is next to impossible for compensation managers to maintain both at once.

8. Define equal employment opportunity and draw out the conceptual and practical distinctions between the nondiscrimination approach and the affirmative action approach to EEO. Finally, offer an assessment of both approaches as public policy.
9. Define the disparate treatment theory of discrimination and explain what things a manager should do or not do to reduce the risk of a disparate treatment law suit.
10. Define the adverse impact theory of discrimination and explain how to conduct adverse impact analysis, including use of the 80% rule. Also explain your responsibilities as a manager if the 80% rule has been violated.
11. Explain the purpose of utilization analysis and how it is conducted in the context of voluntary affirmative action programs.
12. Selection is essentially a matter of predicting from limited information who will prove to be a highly successful job incumbent. Assuming you are not subject to a centralized merit system, what selection strategies would you adopt and why?
13. You have just been hired as the training director for a major state agency. Explain your task, assuming that you wish to take "a systematic approach to training." Also explain the task of the line supervisor under this approach.
14. Although everyone seems to think appraising worker performance is a good idea, rarely do workers or managers feel it is done well. Describe the "perfect" appraisal system for your social services agency. Discuss a) which purposes you will emphasize; b) what types of criteria you will use; c) how the appraising will be done; and d) how you will handle the feedback/counseling stage. (Be sure to explain why in each instance).
15. An employee has reportedly taken a punch at his boss. Define due process and just cause and explain how you, as office manager, will observe them in considering disciplinary action against this employee.
16. Define the NLRA model of collective bargaining and explain how it has been modified for use in the public sector. Also, discuss some of the challenges that labor relations pose for managers.