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PSC 460.01: Human Resource Management

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Political Science 460
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Spring 2006

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Course Description

This course introduces students to the field of human resource management. It focuses on the knowledge and 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 Text

Packet of readings available in the UC Bookstore.

Course Requirements

Students are required to read all assigned readings, be prepared to discuss them in class, take three exams, and submit five writing assignments. Each exam is worth 100 points and the writing assignments 20 points each.

A = 372-400 points
B = 332-347
C = 292-307

A- = 360-371
B- = 320-331
C- = 280-291

B+ = 348-359
C+ = 308-319
D+ = 268-279

Special Assignment for Graduate Students

Graduate students are required to develop a 1-2 page (double-spaced) case study based on personal experience that raises an important personnel problem or issue. Students are then required to identify appropriate analytical questions and proceed to write a 3 page analysis of the case.

Reading Assignments

- Thurs., Jan. 26 An Introduction to the Human Resource Function
Read Tompkins Chapter 1.
- Tues., Jan. 31 Strategic Human Resource Management
Read Tompkins Chapter 2 and Tompkins' article "SHRM in Government."
- Thurs., Feb. 2 Centralized Merit Systems
Read Tompkins Chapter 3 and the Pendleton Act of 1883.
- Tues., Feb. 7 Centralized Merit Systems, continued
** Assignment #1 due by Tuesday Feb 14**
- Thurs., Feb. 9 Societal Values and Civil Service Reforms
Read Tompkins Chapter 4.
- Tues., Feb. 14 **Optional Review for Exam**
- Thurs., Feb. 16 ****Exam #1****
- Tues., Feb. 21 Job Analysis and the Theory of Job Standardization
Read Tompkins Chapter 5 and excerpt from Congressional Report.

Assignment #2 is due Thursday
- Thurs., Feb. 23 Job Analysis, continued
Be prepared to do Assignment #3 in class; submit it Tuesday, Feb. 28.
- Tues., Feb. 28 Job Evaluation and Pay Systems
Read Tompkins Chapter 6.
- Thurs., March 2 Job Evaluation and Pay Systems, Continued
Monday is last day to drop course without petition
- Tues., March 7 Nondiscrimination Approach to Equal Employment Opportunity
Read Tompkins Chapter 7.
- Thurs., March 9 Discussion of EEO continued

Tues., March 14 Affirmative Action Approach to Equal Employment Opportunity
Read Tompkins Chapter 8.

Thurs., March 16 Affirmative Action, continued

Tues., March 21 ****Optional Review for Exam****

Thurs., March 23 ****Exam #2****

Spring Break

Tues., April 4 Employee Recruitment and Selection
Read Tompkins Chapter 9.

Thurs., April 6 Employee Recruitment and Selection
Be prepared to do Assignment #4 in class as a group.

****Assignment #4 is due Tuesday, April 11****

Tues., April 11 Performance Appraisal and Counseling
Read Tompkins Chapter 11.

Thurs., April 13 Performance Appraisal and Counseling
Be prepared to do Assignment #5 in class as a group.

****Assignment #5 is due Tuesday, April 18****

Tues., April 18 Personnel Policies and Employee Relations
Read Tompkins Chapter 13.

Thurs., April 20 Personnel Policies and Employee Relations, continued

Tues., April 25 Collective Bargaining and Labor Relations
Read Tompkins Chapter 14.

Thurs., April 27 Discussion of Collective Bargaining Continued

Tues., May 2 Optional Review for Exam

Thurs., May 4 ****Exam #3****

Writing Assignments

Assignment #1, The Structure of Personnel Systems, Due Tuesday, February 14

After reading Chapter 3, write a 3-4 page paper (double-spaced) comparing and contrasting the state personnel systems of Massachusetts and Montana on two dimensions: 1) organizational structure (commission, executive office, or combination model); and 2) extent to which the state has a centralized merit system (clearly stated merit principles; centralized screening, testing and certification according to the rule of three).

Deduce answers by visiting each state's website. For Massachusetts, go to www.mass.gov. On the left side of the page, click on State Government, then Branches and Departments, and then Alphabetic List. The two agencies you are interested in are organized under a cabinet level department called Administration and Finance. First, find the Civil Service Commission and read about its history and FAQs. Second, find and read about the Human Resources Division. Figure out how the personnel function is shared between HRD and the Civil Service Commission (e.g., who makes personnel rules, who implements personnel rules, and who performs the judicial role if someone claims the rules have been broken).

Go back to the homepage, click on state government, click on link to "search laws" under About State Government, find Chapter 31 of Massachusetts General Laws (MGL), and then read till you bleed. (www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl). Which of the above characteristics of a centralized merit system are reflected in law?

For Montana, go to www.montana.gov. Click on government, then state agencies, then Administration Department (DOA), then State personnel division, which is a unit within DOA. Read about us. Next, go back to the Montana homepage, click on government, then Montana Constitution and Laws, and then on Montana Codes. Go to Title 2 Government Structure and Administration, and then read the first few parts of Chapter 18 State Employee Classification, Compensation, and Benefits. (If Montana has characteristics of a centralized merit system you will find them here).

Assignment#2, An ADA Analysis, Due Thursday, Feb. 23

Complete Exercise 5.1 on page 96. (two or three pages, double-spaced). Use pages 153-157 as a resource. **Note:** This assignment calls for a PLAN characterized by a series of steps. Don't give me conclusions. Don't tell me what you did do. Explain what you will need to do at each decision step to be in compliance with the ADA. Begin with whether the law even applies to you as an employer.

Assignment #3, Position Description, Due Tuesday, Feb. 28

Complete Exercise 5.2 (p. 97). Note the advice provided on p. 95.

****Each student must submit his or her position description separately****

Assignment #4, Supplemental Application Form and T&E Scoring Form, Due Tuesday, April 11

You are a department personnel officer. Using the interview technique for conducting job analysis, you recently wrote a position description. You also evaluated the job's worth and assigned it to an appropriate pay grade. You have now received authorization to fill the vacant position. The line manager has asked you to recruit applicants and design a system for evaluating their training and experience. Your assignment is to write a Supplemental Application Form and a T&E Scoring Form similar to those shown in Exhibits 9.4 and 9.5. Keep in mind that years of experience is not always the best indicator that KSAOs are possessed; education and specialized training may be pertinent as well.

Suggestion: Proceed sequentially, listing all required KSAOs before identifying appropriate SAF questions and evaluative criteria. Remember, its training and experience you wish to determine.

Assignment #5, Performance Appraisal Form, Due Tuesday, April 18

You are a department personnel officer. You recently helped recruit and select a new employee. The line manager has now asked you to develop a performance appraisal form that will help her assess the performance of the new employee (no applicable appraisal method is currently in place). You decide to use the critical incident technique of job analysis and to construct appropriate BOS's. Working as a group, and using the critical incident technique (pp. 89-90), identify six behaviors that "define a superior employee" in this position. Next, construct and submit an appraisal form comprised of at least six behavioral observation scales.

This is much harder than it first seems. Some suggestions: 1) Avoid listing traits, KSAOs, or tasks. The idea is to identify discrete behaviors, behaviors that supervisors associate with superior performance. 2) Take a look at Exhibit 11.7, p. 258, but don't plagiarize. Behaviors must be generated from personal observation. 3) Since you are not equally familiar with the position, help the position incumbent identify critical behaviors by asking probing questions.

Exam Questions

Note: Your grade in the course depends on the quality of your essay responses. Reasoning and logical development are vitally important. Don't respond in a superficial or formalistic manner. Remember to:

- 1) place the essay in an appropriate context by establishing its importance/significance in the introductory paragraph.
- 2) begin each paragraph with a topic sentence borrowed from your essay outline.
- 3) back up your key points with analysis, e.g., by providing examples and explaining the significance of each key point.
- 4) stick to the issue (don't use the shotgun approach).

Exam #1 (Two questions will be drawn randomly in class)

1. Write an essay demonstrating your understanding of the HR function as a core management function and the partnership that is required between line and staff officers to carry it out.
2. Write an essay demonstrating your understanding of centralized merit systems in terms of both principles and defining characteristics. In doing so, also distinguish between the commission and executive personnel office models.
3. 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 and assessing whether a proper balance of societal values has been achieved.

Exam #2 (Two questions will be drawn randomly in class)

1. The theory of job standardization holds 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 him or her. Write an essay demonstrating your understanding of this theory and offering a critique of it. (Note that you will need to draw on more than one chapter).

2. You are the manager of the IT unit in state government and you are having trouble hiring and retaining computer specialists. You want to raise the rate of pay for these positions but find out that it isn't so easy. Write an essay explaining what it is about content-based job evaluation systems that makes your task so difficult, why it is next to impossible for you to maintain both internal and external equity at once, and what you think you should do. Provide examples as appropriate.
3. Define the disparate treatment theory of discrimination as articulated by the courts, provide some examples of disparate treatment, and explain what things a manager should do or not do to reduce the risk of a disparate treatment law suit.
4. Define the adverse impact theory of discrimination and the kinds of situations in which adverse impact is likely to occur. Identify the legal standards articulated in the Griggs decision 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 is violated.

Exam #3 (Two questions will be drawn randomly in class)

1. Explain why it is difficult to predict who will prove to be the best employee from among the many job applicants from which you have to choose. Assuming you are free to design the selection process for your agency, what selection strategies would you adopt and why?
2. Although everyone seems to think that appraising work performance is necessary, rarely do workers or managers feel it is done well. Write an essay describing and justifying the type of system you would put in place as the manager of a bureau comprised mostly of white collar professionals.
3. An employee has reportedly taken a punch at his supervisor. Describe how you will respond in your role as officer manager. Define due process and just cause and explain how you will observe them in considering disciplinary action against this employee.
4. Write an essay describing the NLRA model of collective bargaining and explaining how it has been modified for use in the public sector.