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# PSC 460.01: Human Resource Management

Jonathan Tompkins

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

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Political Science 460  
**HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**  
Spring 2002

Professor Tompkins  
Phone: 243-5202  
tompkins@selway.umt.edu

Office: LA 350  
Hours: Anytime I'm not in class.

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 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, take three exams, and submit five writing assignments. Each exam is worth 100 points and the writing assignments 20 points each.

A = 360-400 points (90%)  
B = 320-359 points (80%)  
C = 280-319 points (70%)  
D = 240-279 points (60%)

## READING ASSIGNMENTS

Thurs., Jan. 31

### An Introduction to the Human Resource Function

Read Chapter 1 and prepare answers to the following:

1. What is meant by the term human resources function, what are its five primary tasks, and who is responsible for performing these tasks?
2. What is the distinction between line and staff personnel?
3. 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?

Tues., Feb. 5

### The Political and Social Environment of HRM

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

1. Why is it important to continuously assess factors in your agency's environment?
2. How are HRM policies and practices affected by politics?
3. How are HRM policies and practices affected by changing demographic characteristics?
4. How are HRM policies and practices affected by technological changes?
5. How are HRM policies and practices affected by new laws and a greater willingness to litigate?
6. How are HRM policies and practices affected by negative public attitudes toward government?
7. What does strategic human resource management mean in the context of this chapter, and what does it entail?

Thurs., Feb. 7

### Civil Service Systems and How They are Organized

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 traditional, highly centralized merit system established and 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?

Tues., Feb. 12      Civil Service Systems and How They are Organized, Continued  
 \*\* Assignment #1 due by Monday Feb 18\*\*

Thurs., Feb. 14      Societal Values and Civil Service Reforms  
 Read Chapter 4 and prepare answers to the following:

1. When President 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?

Tues., Feb. 19      Optional Review for Exam

Thurs., Feb. 21      \*\*Exam #1\*\*

Tues., Feb. 26      Job Analysis      \*\*Assignment #2 is due on Thursday, Feb. 28\*\*  
 Read Chapter 5 and prepare answers to the following study questions:

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. When are formal methods of job analysis used, i.e., for what purposes?
7. What are the three types of formal job analysis and what distinguishes each from the others?
8. What is the "inference problem"?

Thurs., Feb. 28      Job Analysis      \*\*Assignment #2 is due today\*\*  
 Be prepared to do Assignment #3 in class; submit it Tuesday, March 5.

Tues., March 5      Job Evaluation and Pay Systems  
 Read Chapter 6, prepare answers to the following study questions, and be prepared to discuss Case 6.1 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 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?

Thurs., March 7      Job Evaluation and Pay Systems, Continued

Tues., March 12      Nondiscrimination Approach to Equal Employment Opportunity  
Read Chapter 7 and prepare answers to the following study questions.

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 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?

Thurs., March 14      Discussion of EEO continued

### **Spring Break**

Tues., March 26      Affirmative Action Approach to Equal Employment Opportunity  
Read Chapter 8, prepare answers to the following study questions.

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?

Thurs., March 28      Affirmative Action, continued

Tues., April 2        Optional Review for Exam

Thurs., April 4       \*\* Exam #2\*\*

Tues., April 9        Employee Recruitment and Selection  
Read Chapter 9, prepare answers to the following study questions,  
and be prepared to discuss Exercise 9.1 (Difficult Issues) 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"?

Thurs., April 11      Employee Recruitment and Selection  
Be prepared to do Assignment #4 in class.

\*\* Assignment #4 is due Tuesday, April 16\*\*

Tues., April 16      Performance Appraisal and Counseling  
 (Skip Chapter 10) Read Chapter 11, prepare answers to the following study questions, and be prepared to discuss Case 11.1 (Managing from Afar) 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?
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, and what are its advantages?

Thurs., April 18      Performance Appraisal and Counseling  
 Be prepared to do Assignment #5 in class.

**\*\*Assignment #5 is due Tuesday, April 23\*\***

Tues., April 23      Personnel Policies and Employee Relations  
 (Skip Chapter 12) Read Chapter 13, prepare answers to the following study questions, and be prepared to discuss Case 13.2 (Troubled Employee) in class.

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 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?

Thurs., April 25      Personnel Policies and Employee Relations, continued

Tues., April 30      Collective Bargaining and Labor Relations  
 Read Chapter 14, prepare answers to the following study questions, 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 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?

Thurs., May 2      Discussion of Collective Bargaining Continued

Tues., May 7      Optional Review for Exam

Thurs., May 9      \*\*Exam #3\*\*

#### WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

##### Assignment #1. The Structure of Personnel Systems. Due Monday, February 18

Using the internet, determine the extent to which Montana and Massachusetts state governments possess the characteristics of a traditional merit system and write a 3-4 page paper comparing the two systems. Traditional merit systems are characterized by:

- 1) an independent Civil Service Commission that makes personnel rules in accordance with law, hears certain types of personnel appeals from employees, and sometimes administers the personnel system (actual administration is often turned over to executive agency).
- 2) a centralized system for testing and screening job applicants.
- 3) specific statutory provisions requiring merit hiring, prohibiting patronage, and penalizing those who apply political pressure to influence who gets hired.

**Montana:** [www.montana.gov](http://www.montana.gov). Click on government, then Montana Constitution and Laws. Click on Montana Codes, then Montana Codes Annotated 2001. Go to Title 2 Government Structure and Administration, and then read the first few parts of Chapter 18 State Employee Classification, Compensation, and Benefits. Also read Title 49, Chapter 3, Part 2, Paragraph 201. Do you see any merit system characteristics reflected in law? Does Montana follow a commission model or executive personnel office model? (Note that Chapter 18 is administered by the Personnel Division in the Dept. of Administration; Title 49 by the Human Rights Office).



**Massachusetts: [www.state.ma.us](http://www.state.ma.us)** 1) Under Find, click on Organizational Listing. Under Exec. Office for A&F, click on Civil Service Commission. Read the history and FAQs. Go back to Organizational Listing. Under Exec. Office for A&F, click on Human Resources Division. Figure out how personnel administration is shared between these two offices. Does Massachusetts follow the commission model, the executive personnel office model, or a hybrid.

2) Go back to state homepage. Under What We Publish, click on Laws and Regulations, then General Laws of Mass. Click on Link to a Specific Chapter, then type in 31 in the chapter box, and click on Get Link. Click on MGL - Chapter 31 - Table of Contents and then read till you bleed. Which characteristics of a merit system are reflected in law?

### Assignment#2, An ADA Analysis, Due Thursday, Feb. 28

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. 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.

### Assignment #3, Position Description, Due Tuesday, March 5

Complete Exercise 5.2 (p. 97). Note that the last sentence in Exhibit 5.8 (p. 94) should read as follows: "IV. Job Requirements and Qualifications (list all minimum KSAOs and the means by which they are typically acquired." Note also 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 16

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 23

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 use it as a model. 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.

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

1. Define the HR function as a core management function, including its primary tasks and who is responsible for carrying them out. In addition, identify the assumptions of HRM as a theoretical perspective (but not the other three perspectives).
2. Write an essay explaining what a merit system is, identifying four traditional merit principles, and explaining from an HRM theoretical perspective the deficiencies of traditional merit systems.

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, explaining the values each was intended to achieve, and assessing whether a proper balance of values has been achieved.

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

1. Scientific management theory 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. Drawing upon the relevant chapters in the textbook, define the concept of job standardization and discuss some of the problems with each of the foregoing prescriptions.
2. Define internal pay equity and external pay equity, identify the tools governments use to maintain each type of equity, and explain why it is next to impossible for compensation managers to maintain both at once. Provide examples as appropriate.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Define the adverse impact theory of discrimination and the kind 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.
6. Explain the purpose of utilization analysis and how it is conducted in the context of a voluntary affirmative action program. Provide examples as appropriate.

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

1. Explain why 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?
2. Although everyone seems to think that appraising work performance is necessary, rarely do workers or managers feel it is done well. Describe the "perfect" appraisal system for a social

services agency primarily for use with child protective care caseworkers. Discuss a) which purposes you will emphasize, b) what type(s) of criteria you will use; c) how the appraising will be done (e.g., by which method); and d) how you will handle the feedback/counseling stage (e.g., which of the three approaches). (Be sure to explain why in each instance).

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. Define the NLRA model of collective bargaining and explain how it has been modified for use in the public sector by the various states. Also, discuss how collective bargaining has altered the practice of personnel management and whether it has been a positive development.