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PSC 522.01: Human Resource Management

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Political Science 522
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
Fall 1998

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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 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).

Steven Hays and Richard C. Kearney, Public Personnel Administration (Prentice-Hall, 1995).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to read all assigned readings, be prepared to discuss study questions in class, take three exams, and complete five homework assignments. The exams are worth 100 points each and the homework assignments 20 points each. (A=90%; B=80%).

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Sept. 3 An Introduction to the Human Resource Function

Read Chapter 1 in Tompkins and prepare answers to the following study questions:

1. What is the distinction between personnel administration and human resource management as a field of study?
2. What is meant by the term human resources 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?
4. Why is the relationship between line managers and personnel officers not always a harmonious one?
5. What are the assumptions of HRM as a theoretical perspective?

Sept. 10 The Political and Social Environment of HRM

Read Chapter 2 in Tompkins and Chapters 1 and 2 in Hays and Kearney, prepare answers to the following study questions, 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 Chapter 2, and what does it entail?

Civil Service Systems and How They are Organized

Read Chapter 3 in Tompkins prepare answers to the following study questions, and begin working on Assignment #1 (Due Sept. 17):

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?

Sept. 17 Societal Values and Civil Service Reforms

Read Chapter 4 in Tompkins and Chapter 4 in Hays and Kearney, and prepare answers to the following study questions:

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?

Sept. 24 ****In-Class Exam****

Oct. 1 Job Analysis

Read Chapter 5 in Tompkins and Chapter 17 in Hays and Kearney, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, complete Exercise 5.1 (Assignment #2) and submit it in class today (1-3 pages double-spaced), and be prepared to do Exercise 5.2 in class (Assignment #3).

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. In what situations are formal methods of job analysis used?
7. What are the three types of formal job analysis and what distinguishes each from the others?
8. What is the "inference problem"?

Oct. 8 Job Evaluation and Pay Systems

Read Chapter 6 in Tompkins and Chapter 8 in Hays and Kearney, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, and submit your completed position description 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. 15 Nondiscrimination Approach to Equal Employment Opportunity

Read Chapter 7 in Tompkins and Chapter 15 in Hays and Kearney, 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. 22 Affirmative Action Approach to Equal Employment Opportunity

Read Chapter 8 in Tompkins and Chapter 14 in Hays and Kearney, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, and be prepared to discuss Case 8.1 in class.

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 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?

Oct. 29 Employee Recruitment and Selection

Read Chapter 9 in Tompkins and Chapter 6 in Hays and Kearney, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, be prepared to do Exercise 9.1 (Difficult Issues) in class, and be prepared to do Assignment #4 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. 5 ****In-Class Exam**** ****Assignment #4 is due today****

Nov. 12 Human Resource Training and Development

Read Chapter 10 in Tompkins and Chapters 5 and 9 in Hays and Kearney, 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. 19 Performance Appraisal and Counseling

Read Chapter 11 in Tompkins and Chapter 7 in Hays and Kearney, prepare answers to the study questions listed below, 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?
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. 26 ****Thanksgiving Vacation****

Dec. 3 Personnel Policies and Employee Relations

Read Chapter 13 in Tompkins and Chapters 11 and 18 in Hays and Kearney, 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. 10 Collective Bargaining and Labor Relations

Read Chapter 14 in Tompkins and Chapter 12 in Hays and Kearney, 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?

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment #1, Personnel System Structure, Due Sept. 17: Describe the organizational structure of the personnel system of any of the 50 states by visiting its website (class handout). Try to deduce its structure by reading those Titles in the state's statutes dealing with personnel administration/ government employees. There are often hyperlinks to state agencies as well. Look for Department of Personnel, Department of Administration, Civil Service Commission, etc. Write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) description which, among other things, explains 1) whether it is organized according to the commission model, the executive personnel office model, or some hybrid; and 2) the extent to which it possesses the features of a classic, highly centralized merit system.

Assignment #2, An ADA Job Analysis, Due Oct. 1: Complete Exercise 5.1 (two or three pages, double-spaced). Use pages 153-157 as a resource. Note: Don't tell me what you did do, or would do, but what you will need to do.

Assignment #3, Position Description, Due Oct. 8: Complete Exercise 5.2. Note that the last sentence in Exhibit 5.8 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.

Assignment #4, Supplemental Application Form and T&E Scoring Form, Due Nov. 5:

You are a department personnel officer. Using the interview technique for conducting job analysis, you recently wrote a position description. 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 analytically and sequentially, listing all required KSAOs before identifying appropriate SAP questions and evaluative criteria for each.

Assignment #5, Performance Appraisal Form, Due Dec. 3: 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 but do not use it as a model for your particular position; behaviors must be generated from personal observation. 3) Since you are not equally familiar with the position, help the position incumbent in your group identify critical behaviors by asking probing questions.