Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service  
New York University

TALENT DEVELOPMENT  
UNDERSTANDING HUMAN RESOURCES

Fall 2017  
EXEC-GP 2135 and PADM-GP 2135 (Section 002)  
Room: Bobst Library LL150

Professor Robert Wheeler  
robert.wheeler@nyu.edu  
Cell 917-207-2870  
Office Hours: By Appointment

Saturdays, 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
September 9  
September 23  
October 7  
October 21  
November 4  
November 18  
December 9

Course Description

This course is designed for public service managers and leaders and provides a broad overview of talent management dynamics and responsibilities. Regardless of the leadership role you play in organizations, understanding the foundations behind human resources (HR) and talent management is essential to advancing an organization’s mission and goals through its people.

We will focus on the context, challenges and HR-related responsibilities of a manager and leader, including a practical look at essential organizational processes including, recruitment and selection; job design; engagement and professional development; performance appraisal and providing feedback. We will also explore current issues within HR management, such as organizational culture; aligning people and processes to deliver organizational value; identity and inclusion in the workplace; the role of organized labor; succession planning; and other topics.

By the end of the course you should understand the HR responsibilities of a typical manager in a public or nonprofit organization, be familiar with different talent management approaches, and understand tools you can use to encourage your team towards excellence.

Course Format

We will emphasize practical application through selected readings, class discussions, case studies and reflections on students’ prior and current management experiences. Many of our sessions will involve some form of interactive, practical activity.
Course Expectations

• While I hope you will learn from the course materials, I also expect that much of your learning -- and mine -- will be from each other. You are expected to complete all assigned readings prior to class, and be prepared to reflect on and discuss those materials.
• I’ll often ask you to reflect on your own professional experiences as a part of thinking about and applying new concepts.
• Discussing people and processes within organizations can sometimes challenge our boundaries. When reflecting on your experiences, different situations, and the work styles, preferences and behaviors of yourself and others, students are expected be sensitive to when appropriate confidentiality and the need for brevity may be relevant.
• Be open and prepared to challenge and expand your ways of thinking.
• As graduate students, I expect you will take responsibility for your own learning. If there is something you don’t understand or is not working for you, please let me know.
• Students are expected to check NYU Classes regularly for announcements, reminders, assignments, etc.

Course Texts

• Harvard Business Review Course Pack http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/65915084
• Additional readings, study questions, group project info and general announcements will be available through NYU Classes.

Course Requirements

There are five course requirements and each account for a percentage of your grade.

- Reading and Case Study Reflections (4) 20%
- Position Description and Interview Preparation 20%
- Performance Appraisal Critique (group memo and presentation) 20%
- Final Paper 25%
- Class Participation and Attendance 15%

Academic Policies

Please see the NYU Wagner website for information on academic policies and procedures, including the academic code and grading.

Academic Policies, Procedures and Code: https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/code
Grading: https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/grading
Incomplete Grades: https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/policies/incompletes
**Assignment Format**

Written assignments should be double-spaced, have 1-inch margins and use a 12 pt. font. I expect that written work will be your ideas and words or include adequate acknowledgement of their source. All assignments should be proofread before submitted.

We will utilize NYU Classes for written assignment submissions. Submissions should be in MS Word format.

Late assignments will lose one letter grade for each day they are late. If you are facing some kind of serious and urgent situation that could delay turning in the assignment, contact me as soon as possible to discuss other arrangements.

**Overview of Assignments**

- **Reading and Case Study Reflections.** Due four times throughout the semester. See NYU Classes for reading selections and additional details.

Four times during the semester, you will submit a brief (approx. two double space pages) reflection on a selected reading or case study. The objective is for you to react to the reading (not merely regurgitate it) and express an opinion, offer a different point of view, or respond to any prompts provided. In essence, you will apply critical thinking and draft an interesting reflection or case analysis. You may be asked to present a brief summary of your reflection and facilitate a related discussion in class.

- **Position Description and Interview Preparation: The Importance of Bringing in the Right People.** Due Friday, October 6 at 11:55 p.m. via NYU Classes

For this assignment, you will find an example of a poorly written job description/posting for a nonprofit/public service position. You will research the nature of the organization and the position, revise the description, and create interview questions for it. Your submission will include a brief summary of the organization (250 words or less,) the original and revised position descriptions, and your interview outline with questions. **You will bring two copies of this assignment to class on October 7 (in addition to the NYU Classes submission). Additional details will be posted on NYU Classes.**

- **Performance Appraisal Review Process: Making Performance Reviews Effective for the Organization and Staff.** Presentation outline (draft) due Tuesday, November 14 at 11:55 p.m. via NYU Classes; executive memo due Friday, November 17 at 11:55 p.m. Presentations will be made in class November 18.

For this assignment, you will work in groups and critique the performance evaluation processes and forms currently in use in a selected organization. You will review this from the perspective of the organization, the manager and the employee, offer critical analysis and make recommendations for a revised evaluation process. You will present your findings and recommendations in a two to three (2-3) page executive memo and 10-minute group presentation. Additional information regarding this assignment will be disseminated in class October 7.
Final Paper: How Culture Defines an Organization and Its Implications On Employee Engagement. Due on or before Sunday, December 17 at 11:55 p.m. via NYU Classes.

Drawing on the readings, lectures, class discussions, as well at least three additional sources not covered in class, you will analyze the culture of an organization you have worked for or been closely engaged with, consider its talent development practices and the related impact on employee engagement, and make suggestions for improvement. More details will be provided later in the semester.

Class Participation

I hope this class will be interesting and talkative. I encourage you to think out loud and try out ideas in class. Bringing “people issues” from your professional experience and other activities is encouraged and will add to the depth and practicality of what we are discussing.

As noted in the course expectations, class participation is central to our ability to learn from each other. Furthermore, being an effective leader requires – at a minimum – active listening, and sharing one’s ideas and thoughts in small and large groups. Therefore, class participation is a key component (15%) of your overall grade. This includes having read the assigned materials, attending each class, paying attention throughout the discussion, and contributing thoughtfully.

Use of laptops, phones and/or other devices to engage in non-classroom activity is not permitted.

I will regularly ask students to write a brief response to one or more of the readings at the beginning of class, and I may draw on these responses during our class discussion. These response notes will also count toward your participation grade.

In summary, earning a full-participation grade requires:

- No absences (we meet seven times). If late, notifies professor in advance.
- Demonstrates active listening and offers input often regularly.
- Comments are thoughtful, clear, succinct, and relevant.
- Takes risks in answering difficult questions or offering unpopular ideas.
- Is prepared for class, as evidenced by applying ideas from the readings to class participation and discussions; challenging or extending ideas in the readings; and, integrating or contrasting ideas from current readings with previous readings.
# Course Schedule and Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>September 9</td>
<td>Course Overview and Intro</td>
<td>Student Survey (8/31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>September 23</td>
<td>Recruitment and Selection</td>
<td>Reading Reflection 1 (9/22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>October 7</td>
<td>Engagement and Retention</td>
<td>Position Description/Int. Questions (10/6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>October 21</td>
<td>Performance Management</td>
<td>Reading Reflection 2 (10/20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>November 4</td>
<td>Diversity and Inclusion</td>
<td>Reading Reflection 3 (11/3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>November 18</td>
<td>Leading Change</td>
<td>Group Pres. and Memo (11/14-18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>December 9</td>
<td>Succession Planning</td>
<td>Reading Ref. 4 (12/8) and Final (12/17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Assigned readings should be completed before the class in which they are listed.*

## September 9: Course Overview and HR Introduction

⇒ Complete student survey [https://goo.gl/forms/8f9t98SxrW5RLNAJ3](https://goo.gl/forms/8f9t98SxrW5RLNAJ3) by August 31, 2017.

- Capelli, P. *Why We Love to Hate HR ...and What HR Can Do About It.* Harvard Business Review, July-August 2015. (coursepack)
- *The Ten Employment Laws Every Manager Should Know.* HR Specialist, 2013. [http://www.thehrspecialist.com/2783/The_10_Employment_Laws_Every_Manager_Should_Know.hr?cat=tools](http://www.thehrspecialist.com/2783/The_10_Employment_Laws_Every_Manager_Should_Know.hr?cat=tools)
- Review and be familiar with the NRLA [https://www.nlrb.gov/resources/national-labor-relations-act](https://www.nlrb.gov/resources/national-labor-relations-act) and related employee rights [https://www.nlrb.gov/rights-we-protect/employee-rights](https://www.nlrb.gov/rights-we-protect/employee-rights)
Reading Reflection #1 due 11:55 p.m. Friday, September 22 via NYU Classes.

- Review the 2015 Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey Results from Nonprofit HR. [Link to survey]
- *Four Things Your Recruitment Strategy is Missing.* Nonprofit HR. August 11, 2015. [Link to article]
- Heathfield, S. *How to Develop a Job Description.* The Balance. July 24, 2016. [Link to article]
- Reilly, K. *Job Descriptions That Win: 3 Outstanding Examples.* LinkedIn Talent Blog. April 8, 2014. [Link to article]
- *Common Interview Mistakes.* CBS Newswatch. March 6, 2007. [Link to article]
- Murphy, M. *The Hidden Flaw in Behavioral Interviewing.* Forbes. December 2014 [Link to article]
- Weingarten, R. *10 Ridiculously Smart Questions You Should Ask in a Job Interview.* The Ladders. August 1, 2017. [Link to article]
- Dutton, J. and Reed, L. *Values-Based Approach to Candidate Selection: One Hiring Manager’s Approach.* Center for Positive Organizations, WDI Publishing. December 3, 2014. (coursepack)

October 7: Engagement and Retention through Onboarding, Coaching and Career Dev.

Position Description and Interview Preparation assignment due 11:55 p.m. Friday, October 6 via NYU Classes.

- *Successful Onboarding: Follow the 5 C’s.* Business Management Daily. October 21, 2011. [Link to article]


• Han, A. and Grousbeck, I. *Huntington University*. Stanford Graduate School of Business. April 23, 2012. (coursepack)


• Cecchi-Dimeglio, P. *How Gender Bias Corrupts Performance Reviews, and What to Do About It*. Harvard Business Review. April 12, 2017. (coursepack)


---

**October 21: Performance Management**

⇒ Reading Reflection #2 due 11:55 p.m. Friday, October 20 via NYU Classes.

⇒ Midterm course feedback survey distributed.


• Cecchi-Dimeglio, P. *How Gender Bias Corrupts Performance Reviews, and What to Do About It*. Harvard Business Review. April 12, 2017. (coursepack)

November 4: Diversity and Inclusion

⇒ Reading Reflection #3 due 11:55 p.m. Friday, November 3 via NYU Classes.

- Hoffman, A. *How Do We Get There? EDF Manages a New Diversity Plan*. ERB Institute, University of Michigan, WDI Publishing. April 25, 2017. (coursepack)

November 18: Leading Change

⇒ Group presentation outline (draft) due Tuesday, November 14 at 11:55 p.m. via NYU Classes; group executive memo due Friday, November 17 at 11:55 p.m.
⇒ Group presentations today (November 18).

• Research the theory of “Appreciative Inquiry” and come to class prepared to discuss what it is and how you would apply it when implementing change in your organization or another relevant scenario.

December 9: Succession Planning and Course Review

⇒ Reading Reflection #4 due 11:55 p.m. Friday, December 8 via NYU Classes.
⇒ Final paper due 11:55 p.m. Sunday, December 17 via NYU Classes.
⇒ Come to the final class prepared to discuss where we have been as a group, what worked well for you, and any recommendations you have that would improve the course.


***