DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCES
P11.2135/002
Spring, 2009

This syllabus has not been finalized.

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Wednesdays, 6:45-8:25 pm
Room: Silver 701
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or by appt.

Course Description

Designed for public and non-profit managers rather than human resource professionals, this course gives a broad overview of HR dynamics and responsibilities. We’ll begin by considering different approaches to HR and placing them within the overall context of the public sector and non-profit organizations. Then we’ll cover basic personnel functions including recruitment, career development, performance appraisal, providing feedback and job design. Finally, we will explore current issues within personnel management, including diversity and identity at work and the role of unions.

The course focuses on “developing” human resources rather than the traditional notion of “managing” personnel. Its central theme is how HR policies and practices can enhance the learning and growth of individual employees, work teams and the whole organization, thereby ensuring high-level performance. We will emphasize practical application through case discussions and reflection on students’ experiences at work and in school. While the course will focus on values-based organizations, it will draw on ideas and materials from the public, non-profit and for-profit sectors.

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 traditional approaches to different HR functions as well as newer, learning-oriented approaches; and have an enhanced capacity to reflect on and, if you choose, modify your ways of thinking and acting in the world.

Course Expectations

- Since Managing Public Service Organizations is a prerequisite for this course, you will be expected to be familiar with the material from that course. Most importantly, this course assumes that you know how to analyze a case, both for class discussion and for a written memo.
• I’ll often ask you to reflect on your own work experience as part of thinking about and applying new concepts. Many of you come in with at least a year or two of full-time work experience, which should be directly relevant. For those of you without this experience, draw on internships, summer jobs… even your experience as a student in a large organization like NYU may well be relevant.

• You will learn more if you come prepared to reflect on your own experience, your work styles, preferences and behaviors, and your embedded ways of thinking. Given the course’s emphasis on growth and development, you will have opportunities to assess and modify how you think and act in the world.

• As you are graduate students, I assume that you can take responsibility for your own learning. That is an abstract concept, but what it means (to me) in practice is that you do your best to find a meaningful way to connect with the material, to make it relevant for you. It also means that if there is something you don’t understand or is not working for you, you will let me know. You may also have expectations of me -- you can let me know those as well.

• While I hope you will learn from me and the course materials, I also expect that much of your learning -- and mine -- will be from each other. For that reason, class participation is extremely important and, therefore, so is class preparation by doing and reflecting on the readings.

Course Texts

• Required: Course packets are available at the NYU Professional Bookstore.
• All readings will be available on reserve at Bobst Library.
• Check Blackboard every week for announcements, reminders, assignments, etc.

Course Requirements

There are five course requirements; each accounts for a percentage of your grade. Here is an overview:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job description and interview questions</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course feedback memo</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case analysis</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In class</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-line</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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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.

Job Description and Interview Questions: Due February 18 in class. In this assignment, due the week we discuss recruitment, you will provide a 1-2 page job description and 1 page of interview questions, both single-spaced, for your own job or a job you know well, such as your boss or subordinate. A detailed description will be provided.

Course Feedback Memo: Due March 25, in class. In this paper, due the week we discuss giving feedback, you have the chance to give me feedback about the course. It should be about 3 pages, double-spaced, and should follow the suggestions for effective feedback as outlined in the course readings. Your memo will be graded by a fellow class member. A detailed description of the assignment will be provided.

Case Analysis: Due February 25, April 1, April 8 or April 15 in class. In this 5 page, double-spaced paper, you will analyze one of the teaching cases we use for class discussion. (You choose which case you want to use to fulfill this assignment.) It is due the week we discuss that particular case. Specific guidelines for each case will be provided beforehand. Specific cases and dates include:

“Prepare/21 at Beth Israel Hospital” due February 25.
“American Red Cross—South Central Connecticut Chapter” due April 1.
“Executive Women at Link.Com” due April 8.

Final paper: Due April 29 the last day of class. In this 10-page, double-spaced paper, you will, in a sense, develop your own case based on your own experience and then analyze it, using concepts from the course. Teaching cases are generally structured around a protagonist facing a particular dilemma or question. In this paper, you should identify a dilemma or question, related to one of the topics in the course, which you have faced in your work life, either from your current job or a previous one. Now you have a chance to think about that dilemma, with the benefit of new frameworks provided by the course and by other reading. How do you understand this dilemma, using these frameworks? What solutions did you try in the past? What would you suggest now? Further guidelines will be provided.

Class Participation: As noted in the course expectations, I consider class participation to be central to our ability to learn from each other. I do understand that individuals have different ways of participating. The participation grade, therefore, will be based on three elements:

- Class discussion: This includes attending each class, paying attention to the discussion, and contributing thoughtfully. It also means having done the readings and being fully prepared to answer questions.
• On-line discussion: We will form on-line discussion groups by the second or third week of class. Postings are due by 9 a.m. Wednesday. Please post about every other week, for a total of 6 postings over the course of the semester. (Fewer postings will lower your participation grade; more postings will increase your grade). I will post questions related to the readings each week on Blackboard as suggested topics for the on-line discussion, but you do not have to restrict yourself to these questions.

Shoot for half a page or so; no more than a page. I am not looking for a mini-essay or formally written comments. Rather, I am interested in your reflections and reactions to the topic, the readings, and the questions I’ve posted, as well as to your group members’ postings. Write what comes to mind; don’t ponder too long. I am always interested in hearing about relevant work or life experiences, but your general thoughts are welcome as well. I will not respond to the postings, but will read them every week and may bring up some points in class.

• Applications: Every week in class we will apply the readings to some kind of practical case or experience. This will include discussions of teaching cases, bringing in our own cases, reflecting on our experience at work or school, and so on. The week’s application is listed under the readings for that week. The applications require some work before class, which will range from just a few minutes of reflection to preparing a case to a graded assignment. Doing the application, whatever it is, and being ready to discuss it in class will also be an important part of your participation grade.

• **What I look for in both in-class and on-line participation.** The basics of good writing and communication: Comments which basically say the same thing over and over suggest that someone is just trying to fill up space. Comments which go on at length, but end without a clear point or question, are less useful to others. New ideas, different angles, fresh perspectives are always welcome. And connecting your point to the reading shows to me that you’ve not only done the reading, but are actively trying to engage with it.
Course Outline

Introduction to Developing Human Resources
Week One, January 21: Course Introduction
Week Two, January 28: Human Resources in Public and Non-Profit Organizations
Week Three, February 4: Individual Learning
Week Four, February 11: Learning, continued

Basic Human Resource Functions
Week Five, February 18: Recruitment
Week Six, February 25: Job Design
Week Seven, March 4: Career Development
Week Eight, March 11: Performance Appraisal
**SPRING BREAK**
Week Nine, March 25: Giving Feedback
Week Ten, April 1, Volunteers

Current Issues in Human Resources
Week Eleven, April 8: Gender at Work
Week Twelve, April 15: Race at Work
Week Thirteen, April 22: Unions
Week Fourteen, April 29: Course Review

Course Readings, Applications and Assignments
[Note: If the reading is available on Blackboard, it is followed by “on-line.” The other readings (except the two books) are in the course packet.]

[Another Note: Both applications and assignments are homework, but applications are not handed in and count towards your participation grade. Assignments are handed in and are separately graded.]

Week One, January 21: Course Introduction

Application: Identify “burning questions” about human resources based on work experiences

Week Two, January 28: Human Resources in Public and Non-Profit Organizations

**Application:** Prepare case: “A Change of Leadership at the Local Education Authority” Case from the Electronic Hallway Network, Cascade Center for Public Service (on-line). [Note: this case cannot be used to fulfill the case analysis assignment.]

**Week Three, February 4: Individual Learning**


• [For those of you who have read this book for another class, you can either re-read it (there’s a lot in there to digest) or you can read the first four chapters of Kegan, R. and Lahey, L. L. 2001. How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. Do this reading as your assignment for both this week and the next week. The entire class will be reading later chapters of this book for Week Nine. The book is available at the Professional Bookstore.]

**Application:** Prepare a two-column case for small group discussion. I must receive these by 11pm on Monday, February 2.

**Week Four, February 11: Learning, continued**


• [For those of you who have read this book for another class, see Week Three.]

**Application:** Small group discussions of two-column cases.

**Week Five, February 18: Recruitment**


• “Legal Guidelines for Interviewing” Boston College website.

**Assignment:** Job Description and Interview Questions.

**Week Six, February 25: Job Design**


**Application:** Prepare case: “Prepare/21 at Beth Israel Hospital” Case A, Harvard Business School 9-491-045.
Week Seven, March 4: Career Development


Application: TBA

Week Eight, March 11: Performance Appraisal


Application: TBA

** SPRING BREAK**

Week Nine, March 25: Giving Feedback


Assignment: Course Feedback Memo

Week Ten, April 1: Volunteers


Week Eleven, April 8: Gender at Work

• The Opt-Out Revolution (3 short pieces)


Week Twelve, April 15: Race at Work


Week Thirteen, April 22: Unions

Application: We will have a guest speaker.

Week Fourteen, April 29: Course Review
Application: Students will meet in small groups to discuss final paper.