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 Unique Copy Center.
- NOTE: All books are available at Amazon.com and used copies can be quite inexpensive.
- 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:

- Job description and interview questions: 2-3 pages, single-spaced 10%
- Course feedback memo: 3 pages, double-spaced 10%
- Case analysis: 5 pages, double-spaced 25%
- Final paper: 10 pages, double-spaced 35%
- Class participation 20%
- Total 100%

All papers should have 1 inch margins and use 12 pt. font.
Papers should be posted on Blackboard one hour before class begins on the day they are due; if not, they will be considered late. (Instructions for posting will be provided.)

***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 16 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 23, 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 23, March 30, April 6 or April 13 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. The case “A change of leadership at the local education authority” read for the second week cannot be used 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 23.
“American Red Cross—South Central Connecticut Chapter” due March 30.
“Executive Women at Link.Com” due April 6.

Final paper: Due April 27 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: I hope this class will be informal, talkative, humorous and happy. I encourage you to think out loud and try out ideas in class. As noted in the course expectations, I consider class participation to be central to our ability to learn from each other. Furthermore, being an effective manager requires – at a minimum -- sharing one’s ideas and thoughts in small and large groups. Therefore, class participation is a major component (20%) of the grade. This
includes attending each class, paying attention to the discussion, and contributing thoughtfully. It also means having done the readings and being prepared to answer questions.

I do understand that some students may be reluctant to speak in the full group. Therefore, the participation grade will be based on participation both in the full group and in small groups, though full group participation will count for roughly 3/4 of the total. Also, at the end of the semester, I will ask students to identify the classmates from whom they learned the most (whether from full or small group discussion). The results will also be factored in to the participation grade.

“A” Level Participation
- Absent no more than once during the semester. Sends email ahead of time to tell professor that will miss class.
- Offers input often (roughly once per class). Note: offering input does not mean you will always be called upon.
- Comments are clear, succinct, and relevant to the current conversation.
- Takes risks in answering difficult questions or offering unpopular ideas.
- Is prepared for class, as evidenced by:
  - Applying ideas from the readings to the discussion
  - Challenging or extending ideas in the readings
  - Integrating or contrasting ideas from current readings with previous readings

“B” Level Participation
- Absent no more than twice. May not send email to professor ahead of time.
- Offers input occasionally.
- Comments are sometimes unclear, long-winded or not relevant to discussion.
- Answers questions but rarely takes risks.
- Is prepared for class (see above)

“C” Level Participation
- Absent no more than three times. Doesn’t email professor ahead of time.
- Offers input rarely.
- Is unprepared for class.

Course Outline
Introduction to Developing Human Resources
Week One, January 19: Course Introduction
Week Two, January 26: Human Resources in Public and Non-Profit Organizations
Week Three, February 2: Individual Learning
Week Four, February 9: Learning, continued

Basic Human Resource Functions
Week Five, February 16: Recruitment
Week Six, February 23: Job Design
Week Seven, March 2: Career Development
Week Eight, March 9: Performance Appraisal
**SPRING BREAK**
Week Nine, March 23: Giving Feedback
Week Ten, March 30, Volunteers

Current Issues in Human Resources
Week Eleven, April 6: Gender at Work
Week Twelve, April 13: Race at Work
Week Thirteen, April 20: Unions
Week Fourteen, April 27: Course Review

Course Readings, Applications and Assignments
Note: If the reading is available on Blackboard, it is followed by “on-line.” Readings that will be handed out in class are designated by “hand-out.” The other readings (except the three 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 19: Course Introduction

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

Week Two, January 26: Human Resources in Public and Non-Profit Organizations


Week Three, February 2: 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 Friday, January 29.**

**Week Four, February 9: 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 16: Recruitment**
- “Legal Guidelines for Interviewing” Boston College website. (on-line)

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

**Week Six, February 23: Job Design**

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

**Week Seven, March 2: Career Development**

**Application:** TBA
Week Eight, March 9: Performance Appraisal


Application: TBA

** SPRING BREAK**

Week Nine, March 23: Giving Feedback


Assignment: Course Feedback Memo

Week Ten, March 30: Volunteers


Week Eleven, April 6: Gender at Work

- The Opt-Out Revolution (3 short pieces)

Week Twelve, April 13: Race at Work


Application: Prepare case: Scott, E. “Diversity Programs at the New England Aquarium” from the Case Program at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Week Thirteen, April 20: Unions


Application: We will have a guest speaker.

Week Fourteen, April 27: Course Review

Application: Discussion about brief case handed out in class. Also, students will meet in small groups to discuss final paper.