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

DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCES
PADM-GP.2135
Fall, 2014

Prof. Robin Postel      Saturday-Sunday
September 20-21, 9am-5pm
October 11-12, 9am-5pm
Office: TBD        Office hours: Weds 10 am-noon
September 10, 17, 24;  
October 1, 8, 15
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or by appointment

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 will take a learning approach to human resources, hence the name Developing Human Resources. We’ll begin by exploring what we mean by development and learning in an organizational context, and what you need to know about human beings to manage their performance and contribute to their development. We’ll take a look at ‘traditional’ human resources management as well as emerging perspectives, and with these different paradigms in mind, we’ll explore key HR responsibilities from the perspective of the line manager’s role in talent management, with organizational learning as a constant background.

Talent management is a set of integrated organizational HR processes designed to attract, develop, motivate, and retain productive, engaged employees. The goal of talent management is to create a high-performance, sustainable organization that meets its strategic and operational goals and objectives.

A learning organization is one that proactively creates, acquires, and transfers knowledge and that changes its behavior on the basis of new knowledge and insights.

We’ll touch on a broad range of specific HR processes such as job design and selection, performance management, learning needs assessment and career development as well as current issues such as inclusion and engagement, and dive deeper into a selected few.

The course focuses on “developing” human resources rather than the traditional notion of “managing” human resources. Its central theme is how HR policies and practices (and, more particularly, how managers embody those 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 experiential activities,
applications, discussions and reflection on students’ experiences at work and in school. While the course will focus on values-based organizations, we will draw on ideas and materials from the public, non-profit and for-profit sectors.

A key objective of this course is to contribute to your own development as a reflective manager. Therefore we will be juxtaposing threads of individual learning/development with organizational learning/development. By the end of the course you should: understand the HR responsibilities (and the associated managerial practices) of an effective manager in a public or nonprofit organization; be aware of traditional approaches to different HR functions as well as newer, learning-oriented approaches; and have an enhanced capacity to reflect on your own behavior as a manager to continually modify your ways of thinking and acting in the world (your own ongoing learning and development) to increase your effectiveness as a manager and leader.

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.
- 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.
- Some of the readings are assigned to provide a breadth of awareness as background to what we will do in class. This means that some of the material will not be discussed in class in its own session but rather it will serve to give context and depth to our conversations.
- 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.
- 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

A note about the readings: there is no ‘text book’ for this course. Instead I have selected a variety of readings that include articles from academic journals, trade books, news articles and
blog postings. I have also included informative or through provoking self-promoting ‘white papers’ by consulting firms who are selling solutions to organizations. In all these selections my goal is not to endorse or judge their specific content, but rather to provide a range of perspectives and examples for the purpose of learning how to think about how HR/talent management practices impact the behavior of people in the organization, and hence impact the performance of the organization.

**Reading journal**

Rather than taking any of the readings as ‘the truth’, I hope to provoke a process of reflection and ideas and making connections. For this purpose, and to support your active participation in class, I would recommend that you read for ideas and linkages. You probably have a well-established process of taking notes by now. If you typically read to prepare for an exam on the content of the reading, I would like to suggest an alternative or two. What I will want to see and hear in your assignments and in class is how you are getting ideas from the readings, how you are questioning what you are reading or have experienced in organizations, and how you are building your own ‘theory’ of human resources practice as a manager (or future manager). We’ll talk about this more in class, but I wanted to give you a heads up as you have quite a bit of reading to do before we meet.

The first suggestion that I have is to play with taking notes as mind maps. (If you are not familiar with mind mapping see [http://lifehacker.com/how-to-use-mind-maps-to-unleash-your-brains-creativity-1348869811](http://lifehacker.com/how-to-use-mind-maps-to-unleash-your-brains-creativity-1348869811)) You may also benefit by thinking of keeping a reading journal instead of ‘classic’ notes. The difference I make is that a journal is intended to record your own thoughts that have been triggered by reading. So you capture ideas from the reading, but journal about what they mean to you. I encourage you to experiment.

**How to read**

My second suggestion is about how to read. As mentioned above, there are a variety of readings, some are lighter, some are more academic. There will not be a test on the material, so you don’t need to read at that level. I would invite you to read as a busy (yet curious) manager who likes to keep up with the field of managing people to inform your own practice. As such, you might be looking (for example) for:

- Something you didn’t know, or that seems counterintuitive, that makes you question yourself and your approach to management;
- Something practical that you can use for an issue you are trying to resolve;
- Something that you thought was a good practice without questioning it, but research doesn’t seem to support it.

The readings are intended to expose you to ideas about various aspects of managing people to achieve organizational results. It is okay to read the introduction and the conclusions, and go back for the detail if you have questions about the conclusions. (Unless you are enamored of quantitative research methodology, don’t worry about mastering the methods aspects!) Some ‘readings’ are intended to serve simply as examples: you don’t need to study these, just to have a look and see what a given organization is doing without assuming that it should be copied in another organization.
Some readings will fascinate you more than others. You can spend more time with those. If you are entirely new to managing people you will read differently than if you have years of experience. So, in short, the goals of reading are to broaden/deepen your own way of thinking about HRM, to question your own practices as well as accepted ‘best practices’, and to prepare you for active participation in our face to face sessions.

- **Required:** Frederic Laloux, 2014. *Reinventing organizations: a guide to creating organizations inspired by the next stage of human consciousness*. Brussels, Nelson Parker. Available at Professional Bookstore (or you may be able to get the book less expensively at Amazon.) You can also download an electronic copy from the book’s website and pay what you think the book is worth to you. [http://www.reinventingorganizations.com/pay-what-feels-right.html](http://www.reinventingorganizations.com/pay-what-feels-right.html)
- **Required:** Stone, D., Patton, B. and Heen, S. 2010. *Difficult Conversations*. New York: Penguin Books. Available at Professional Bookstore (or you may be able to get the book less expensively at Amazon.)
- See below for a list of other readings (available online)
- Check NYU Classes every week for announcements, reminders, assignments, etc.

**Course Requirements**
There are four course requirements; each accounts for a percentage of your grade. There are two kinds of course requirements: graded and credit/no credit. Graded assignments will get a percentage of points of the total for that assignment (e.g. 30 out of 35) and will receive individual feedback; credit/no credit assignments will receive the total number of points (10 per assignment) but no individual feedback if they are sufficient. The first time a credit/no credit assignment is returned ‘no credit’, you have the option to redo the assignment for credit (with no penalty), in which case I will give individual feedback so you know what I see as missing (you only have one such ‘get out of jail free card for the course). I will give collective feedback on both kinds of assignments in class.

There are two graded and two credit/no credit assignments.

**Graded:**
- Talent management topic notes: 2-3 pages, single-spaced (maximum 1500 words) 25%
- Final paper: 5-7 pages, single-spaced (maximum 3000 words) 35%

**Credit/no credit:**
- Class participation 20%
  (based on your participation journals/reflections, 10% for each of two)
- Class participation (based on my assessment) 20%

Total 100%
All papers should have 1 inch margins and use 12 pt. font and be single spaced.

Papers should be posted on NYU classes by the time and on the day they are due; if not, they will be considered one day late. (Instructions for posting will be provided.)

Late assignments will lose one letter grade for each day they are late (which begins immediately after the posting deadline). 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.

In addition to the course requirements, I will occasionally ask you for short inputs and I may conduct a 'pulse' survey. These will not be graded, but I hope you will participate.

I will provide separate detailed instructions for each assignment.

**Introducing yourself:** This is a few questions that I would like to ask you about your experience and interests. There is no grade for this, but I consider it part of your participation. The questions are online in assignments. Due Monday, September 8 by noon.

**Participation reflection for first weekend:** I would like to know how you assess your participation, so I am asking for you to take notes or keep a participation journal/log, and to write a reflection about your participation after the first weekend. Detail instructions can be found online under assignments. Due Wednesday, September 24 by noon.

**Talent management topic notes (topic to be selected during first weekend):** You will be responsible for leading a session on one of the following HR topics: Competencies, Job design, Recruiting, Onboarding, and Career development on the first day of the second weekend. The selection will be by lottery during the first weekend, so you may not get your first choice. I'd like to see your individual notes even though you will be sharing the topic with other student in class. Detailed instructions are online in assignments. Due Wednesday, October 8 by noon.

**Participation journal for second weekend:** This assignment is the same as for the first weekend (although I may revise the instructions or give additional guidelines after seeing your first weekend reflections, so check for an updated version before the second weekend). Due Wednesday, October 15 by noon.

**Final paper:** In this 5-7-page, single-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. 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. Due Wednesday, December 3 by noon.
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 of the grade (40%, 20% based on your participation journal/reflection and 20% based on my assessment). This includes attending all sessions, paying attention to the discussion, and contributing thoughtfully. It also means having a sense of the issues in the readings and being prepared to share your reflections and questions on the readings in class.

As our class is intensive (over two weekends instead of weekly sessions), missing a day means missing 25% of the class. Therefore any absences will have a serious impact on your learning and your grade. Please discuss with me as soon as possible if you think you will have a problem attending all sessions to see what the impact will be.

Class session Saturday/Sunday September 20-21
- Introduction to Developing Human Resources
- Talent management in public and nonprofit organizations
- Conversation as a core business practice
- Self-as-instrument
- Feedback
- Inclusion/diversity
- Preparation for HR topic assignment

Class session Saturday/Sunday October 11-12
- Engagement
- Competencies
- Job design
- Recruitment
- Onboarding
- Career development
- Performance management
- Learning and development
- Organizational learning and culture
- Preparation for final paper

Course Readings, Applications and Assignments
Other than the texts mentioned above, the readings are all available online (there is no course packet).

Note: As this class is being taught over two weekends rather than a weekly meeting, you will have to pace your reading to be ready for each weekend. Instead of laying out the readings
week by week, I am listing them by theme, and whether they will be used in the first or second weekend. Even though the first class meeting is not until September 20, I strongly recommend that you start reading from Week One of the semester.

Readings for themes covered in the first weekend
Within a theme I suggest that you read the readings in that order as I think that might help to layer the ideas; however you may want, to be reading multiple themes at the same time.

**Theme One: Overview of HR and talent management**
- Laloux, Frederic, 2014. *Reinventing organizations: A guide to creating organizations inspired by the next stage of human consciousness*. Brussels, Nelson Parker. Part 1 (chapters 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3) and chapters 2.1 and 2.2. This reading is intended to illustrate a new way of thinking about organizations and human resources practices.
  - Johns Hopkins University Talent Management Framework (provided as one example of a non-profit organization’s approach)

**Theme Two: Role of the manager: Self as instrument**
**Theme Three: Conversation as a core business process**


**Theme Four: Feedback**


**Theme Five: Inclusion and diversity**


For perspectives on diversity and inclusion in another format, please also have a look at these videos:


Race [http://www.harikondabolu.com](http://www.harikondabolu.com/) scroll to find the appearance on the Late Show with David Letterman on March 26th, 2014


UNFPA: An example
You will find a folder of selected HR documents from UNFPA, an intergovernmental organization in the UN family. You can dip into these as you wish. If his travel schedule allows, the Director of HR will come the first weekend as a guest speaker, and these documents might trigger questions that you would like to ask him.

Readings for themes discussed in the second weekend

Theme One: Engagement

Theme Two: Talent management—Specific HR systems, tools and practices
Note: While I expect that you will all at some point read all the readings (being curious graduate students eager to learn), for the second weekend you are only required to read the items that correspond to your selected topic under Theme Two (detailed instructions for this assignment will be provided separately). The topics will be selected during the first weekend by lottery, so you may not get your first choice.

For all five topics:
Link your topic to previous readings including neuroscience, inclusion, etc., where relevant. Use the index of key structures and practices in Laloux, Frederic, 2014. Reinventing organizations: A guide to creating organizations inspired by the next stage of human consciousness to find pages relevant to your selected topic. See also 2.5 for HR practices in general.
Theme Two-a: Competencies

- Sanchez, J.I. and E.L. Levine, What is (or should be) the difference between competency modeling and tradition job analysis?, Human Resources Management Review, 19 (2009) pp 53-63
- See also UNFPA revised competency framework in UNFPA folder online

Examples:

Theme Two-b: Job design

- Oldham, G.R. and J. R. Hackman, Not what it was and not what it will be: The future of job design research, Journal of Organizational Behavior, vol 31, (2010), pp 463-479. Read up to page 473 (from work design for teams is optional)
- Tasler, N., Help your best people do a better job, Bloomberg Businessweek, March 26, 2010 http://www.businessweek.com/managing/content/mar2010/ca20100325_310839.htm

Example:
- Rutgers University, How to design a job (no date) http://uhr.rutgers.edu/uhr-units-offices/consulting-staffing-compensation/hiring-toolkit/how-design-job

Theme Two-c: Recruitment

- Boston College, Legal guidelines for interviewing, Updated: July 15, 2013 http://www.bc.edu/offices/hr/resources/eqo-jobfair-legalguidelines.html
- Video: Emery, Michael, HR Director, UNFPA, Competency based interviewing https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3-WKWpNI3I
Theme Two-d: Onboarding

- Saratoga, Best practices for retaining new employees: New approaches to effective onboarding, PricewaterhouseCoopers (no date)
- Ferri-Reed, J. "Onboarding strategies to supercharge millennial employees", The Journal for Quality & Participation, July 2003

Theme Two-e: Career development

- Kaplan, D. M. Career anchors and paths: The case of gay, lesbian and bisexual workers, Human Resources Management Review, vol 24 (2014) pp 119-130. You read part of this article for the theme of inclusion, this time read the remaining parts.
- Career anchors Edgar Schein, handout, Wales College of Medicine, Cardiff University
- OHRM (United Nations), Career development guide, 2007. (Scan as an example of what career development looks like in the international public sector; read Chapter 4: The manager as career coach.)

Theme Three: Performance management

• See also two examples of ROWE in subfolder for this theme.

**Theme Four: Learning needs assessment**
• CIPD, Identifying learning needs in organisations, Learning and development, The operational level (updated 2006) [http://www.cipd.co.uk/nr/rdonlyres/2ae22874-1d3c-4912-bbd9-1c148a9e8a44/0/1843981645sc.pdf](http://www.cipd.co.uk/nr/rdonlyres/2ae22874-1d3c-4912-bbd9-1c148a9e8a44/0/1843981645sc.pdf)

**Theme Five: Organizational culture for learning and performance**

**Theme Six: Self-as-instrument**
• Manzoni, J.-F. and J.-L. Barsoux, “The Set-up-to-fail syndrome”, *Harvard Business Review*, March-April 1998 (if short on time, read at least the ‘no harm intended’ cartoon and the ‘in with the in crowd, out with the out’ table)