Course Description

This course gives a broad overview of HR dynamics and responsibilities, and is designed for public and non-profit managers rather than human resource professionals. We’ll begin by considering different approaches to HR and placing them within the overall context of the public sector and non-profit organizations. We’ll explore how to create a learning, reflective orientation and how that can enhance interpersonal effectiveness. Then we’ll cover basic human resources/people functions including staffing, job design, career development, performance appraisal and providing feedback. Finally, we will explore current issues within human resources management, including diversity and inclusion at work, and the role of unions.

The course focuses on “developing” human resources rather than the traditional notion of “managing” human resources (or “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 for people and organizations. 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 and will be influenced by concerns for justice and equity, it will draw on ideas and materials from the public, non-profit and for-profit sectors.

By the end of the course you should:

1. Understand the HR responsibilities of a typical manager in a public or nonprofit organization;
2. Be familiar with traditional approaches to different HR functions as well as newer approaches; and
3. Have an enhanced capacity to reflect on the learning from this course, seek out other perspectives, and, if you choose to, 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 will ask you to reflect on your own work experience as part of considering 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 to the course work. For those of you without this experience, I encourage you to draw on your experience with internships, summer jobs, and even your experience as a student in a large organization like NYU.
- You will learn more if you come prepared to reflect on your own experience, your work styles, preferences and behaviors, and your learned 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. What that means in practice is that you do your best to find a meaningful way to connect with the material and to make it relevant to you. It also means that if there is something you don’t understand or something that is not working for you, you will let me know.
- While I hope you will learn from the course materials, and me, 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. Students are expected to read all the required readings before arriving to class. Class participation and attendance will be assessed on an ongoing basis and will contribute to your final grade. Students are expected to draw on required materials, as well as recommended materials and their own research, in course assignments.
- Please read assigned weekly readings prior to the date of class. For example, you are expected to arrive to class on Thursday each week, having read the assigned readings for that week.
Please check NYU Classes frequently – I recommend checking 1-2 times throughout the week. The course material, additional readings, posts and announcements will be posted to the site.

Electronic devices should not be used during the session except for class requirements.

Course Texts

Required: Course packets are available at the Unique Copy Center.


All readings will be available on reserve at Bobst Library.

Check NYU Classes 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 25%
- Performance review recommendation memo: 4-5 pages, double-spaced 25%
- Final paper: 10 pages, double-spaced 20%
- Final class presentation, 3-5 PowerPoint slides 10%
- Class participation 20%

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Total 100%

All papers should have 1 inch margins and use 12 pt. font.

**Papers should be posted on NYU classes one hour before class begins 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.**

Job Description and Interview Questions: Due **February 18**. 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. You will receive a detailed description of the assignment.

Performance Review Recommendation Memo: Due **March 24**. In this 4-5 page paper, due the week we discuss giving feedback, you will submit a memo that makes a specific recommendation for the type of performance review tool your current or former organization should use. Should your organization employ a 360 degree performance review, a traditional performance review with a numeric rating, or eliminate reviews altogether in favor of a consistent feedback model? It should be 3 pages, double-spaced, and should detail the reasons for your recommendation, based on class readings, your own research, and reflection on your organization’s culture and structure.

Final paper and presentations: Due **May 5**, the last day of class. In this 10 page, double-spaced paper, you should identify an issue or question, related to one of the below topics from 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 this issue, with the benefit of new frameworks provided by the course and by other reading. How do you understand this issue now, using these frameworks? What solutions did your organization try in the past to meet the issue? What would you suggest now? Please articulate a position and make a recommendation for your current or former employer, using concepts from the course. Further guidelines will be provided.

Selected topics

- Diversity and inclusion in the workplace
- Building a better recruitment/selection process
- Creating a feedback rich culture
- An HR topic of your choice, sourced from class discussions or materials (with my approval)
You will also put together a 3-5 PowerPoint slide presentation to review with your colleagues in small teams. The PowerPoint presentation should summarize the issue(s) you reviewed in your paper and put forth a specific point-of-view of solutions for the issue(s).

**Academic Policies and Procedures:** Please review these NYU Wagner websites for information on academic policies and procedures, including the academic code and grading.

- Academic Code: [http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/academic-code](http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/academic-code)
- Grading: [http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/grading](http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/grading)
- Incomplete Grades: [http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/incompletes](http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/incompletes)

**Class Participation:** I hope this class will be informal, talkative, humorous and happy. 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, doing the readings, paying attention to the discussion, and contributing thoughtfully. “Thoughtful” contributions are accurate (when describing particular concepts or readings), constructive (when criticizing someone else’s response), specific and implementable (when providing potential solutions), and creative.

Note that in addition to encouraging your voluntary participation, I may occasionally cold call – meaning I may call on people who do not have their hand up. I am more likely to do this if I have the sense that someone is engaged in non-class activities (texting, email, Facebook…) during class.

**“A” Level Participation**
- Is absent no more than once during the semester. Sends email ahead of time to tell professor that s/he will miss class.
- Speaks often (roughly once or twice per class).
- Makes clear, succinct and relevant comments, given the current conversation.
- Is clearly paying attention to the discussion (and not attending to phone, email, etc.)
- Takes risks in answering difficult questions or offering unpopular ideas.
- Is prepared for class, as evidenced by:
  - Providing substantive responses if cold called by professor
  - Applying ideas from the readings to the discussion
  - Challenging or extending ideas in the readings
  - Responses in brief notes submitted at the beginning of class
  - Integrating or contrasting ideas from current readings with previous readings

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

**“C” Level Participation**
- Is absent no more than three times. Doesn’t email professor ahead of time.
- Is often not paying attention.
- Offers input rarely.
- Is unprepared for class.

Finally, I may occasionally ask students to write a brief note reacting to one or more of the readings right at the beginning of class. I may draw on one or more of these notes during class. These notes will also count for a small part of your participation grade.

**Course Overview**

**Introduction to Developing Human Resources**
Week One, January 28: Course Introduction
Week Two, February 4: Human Resources: Basic Functions

**Basic Human Resource Functions**
Week Three, February 11: Job Design
Week Four, February 18: Recruitment
Week Five, February 25: Onboarding and Employee Engagement
Week Six, March 3: Career and Professional Development
Week Seven, March 10: Performance Management and Total Rewards

Week Eight, March 17: Spring Break
Week Nine, March 24: Giving and Receiving Feedback/Mid-Semester Feedback
Week Ten, March 31: Volunteers
Week Eleven, April 7: Legal Environment of HR
Week Twelve, April 14: Diversity & Inclusion (Session I)
Week Thirteen, April 21: Diversity & Inclusion (Session II)
Week Fourteen, April 28: Unions
Week Fifteen, May 5: Final Papers & Presentations and Course Review

Course Readings, Applications and Assignments

Note: If the reading is in the course packet, it will be followed by (course packet). Otherwise the reading is a book or is online. I have provided links to online materials throughout the syllabus.

Another Note: Both applications and assignments are opportunities to apply concepts learned in class to some kind of real world experience or situation. However, assignments are graded, while applications are not.

1. Week One, January 28: Course Introduction

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

2. Week Two, February 4: Human Resources: Basic Functions
   - George, B. and Sims, P. True North: Discover Your Authentic Leadership. Chapters 6-7. NC

3. Week Three, February 11: Job Design

4. Week Four, February 18: Recruitment
   - Bock, Laszlo Work Rules! Chapters 3-5.
   - Helpful Resource(s):


Assignment: Job Description and Interview Questions.

Application: We will have a guest speaker: Catherine Ang, Director of Program Performance and Management at Year Up.

5. Week Five, February 25: Onboarding and Employee Engagement

- Maurer, Roy. “Onboarding Key to Retaining, Engaging Talent,” 
  http://www.shrm.org/hrdisciplines/staffingmanagement/articles/pages/onboarding-key-retaining-engaging-talent.aspx

In-Class Application: In groups, come up with a sketch of the essential elements of a successful onboarding plan for the first 30, 60, or 90 days. A few things to consider:

- Who should be involved in employee onboarding?
- What kinds of activities might help facilitate learning for a new employee?
- How might you introduce a new employee to their responsibilities?

6. Week Six, March 3: Career and Professional Development

  http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/social_sector/what_social_sector_leaders_need_to_succeed
  https://hbr.org/2015/12/nonprofits-cant-keep-ignoring-talent-development
- Helpful Resource(s):
  - The Bridgespan Group. “On-the-Job Development Opportunities for Nonprofit Staff”. 
  - Bridgestar. 2011. 52 free development opportunities for nonprofit staff.

7. Week Seven, March 10: Performance Management and Total Rewards

- Wilkie, Dana. “Is the Annual Performance Review Dead?”
  https://www.compasspoint.org/sites/default/files/docs/Nonprofit%20Compensation%20slideshow%20for%20PP.pdf
  http://www.worldatwork.org/waw/adimLink?id=74764

9. Week Nine, March 24: Giving and Receiving Feedback

- Seiter, Courtney. “The Art and Science of Giving and Receiving Criticism at Work”. 
  http://www.fastcompany.com/3039412/the-art-science-to-giving-and-receiving-criticism-at-work
Assignment: Performance Review Recommendation Memo

Note: During this class I will hand out Mid-Semester Feedback forms and for you to complete

10. Week Ten, March 31: Volunteers


11. Week Eleven, April 7: Legal Environment of HR

- 10 Employment Laws that Supervisors Need to Know: http://www.yourerc.com/blog/post/10-Employment-Laws-that-Supervisors-Need-to-Know.aspx
- Helpful Resource(s):

12. Week Twelve, April 14: Diversity & Inclusion (Session I)


13. Week Thirteen, April 21: Diversity & Inclusion (Session II)

- Helpful Resource(s):
  - https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2015/01/14/how-white-nonprofit-leaders-can-advance-diversity/

In-Class Application: In an in-class exercise, we'll explore the concept of privilege - what it means, who has it, and how it creates advantages for people.

14. Week Fourteen, April 28: Unions

- Helpful Resource(s):
15. **Week Fifteen, May 5: Final Papers & Presentations and Course Review**

- Brief review of course and final papers due, as well as presentations in small groups

**Assignment:** Final papers due and presentations in small groups.