Course Overview

Although there are many similarities between public and private human resource management (HRM), major differences exist. Through the early 1980s the number of individuals employed by local, state, and federal governments steadily increased as merit systems and court decisions gave public employees increased job security. Concomitantly, however, the late 1970s and early 1980s saw the growth of a nationwide revolt against higher government taxes and the alleged abuses of big government. Citizen groups organized across the country refusing to pay higher taxes to maintain existing programs. Consequently, the public sector entered an era where it could no longer pass on increased service delivery costs to taxpayers or another level of government. As a result, public organizations searched for innovative ways to improve service delivery throughout the 1980s and 1990s to make more efficient use of their work forces. Since that time public organizations have begun to privatize many public human resource management duties and responsibilities.

Thus, throughout, the image of public service declined. Public opinion surveys indicated that the majority of public believed that public servants were overpaid and under worked. Conventional wisdom held that public organizations protected incompetent employees and failed to reward top achievers. As a consequence public organizations faced tremendous pressure to mimic their private sector counterparts by downsizing their operations and holding employees more accountable for performance tied to productivity.

With the dawn of the new millennium, criticism of public work forces remains high. Thus, public employers continue to search for new methods to restore public confidence in their employees.
Many attempt to maintain their work force size by contracting out multiple public functions to the private sector (privatization). Others have introduced aggressive cost reduction programs for managing employee benefits packages. At the same time, political pressures have forced most public organizations to improve their merit pay plans with a focus on productivity improvement and accountability.

Further, political and societal pressures and legal decisions have forced public organizations to focus on making their work forces more representative of society as a whole by eliminating barriers to advancement by women and minority employees. In sum, these trends have forced public organizations to change the way they recruit, select, and evaluate employees.

Thus, HRM in the public sector is replete with paradoxes, processes, and problems (Berman, et al., 2006). These are the focal concerns of this course. Emphasis will be placed on the uniqueness of public organizations and the significance of praxis (relating theory to practice).

To that end, the course is designed as a graduate seminar requiring participants to demonstrate initiative and perform independent study. Discussions of readings will be based on the experiences, knowledge, skills, and abilities of participants, in addition to those of the professor. This will require that all assignments (readings, presentations, and research papers) be completed in a timely manner.

Student Learning Outcomes

- To identify the paradoxes and contradictions in the heritage of public service.
- To understand the changing environment, key principles, and operating characteristics of public HRM.
- To identify the framework of law in public HRM.
- To describe current practices and trends in public HRM.
- To identify the key paradoxes and challenges in recruitment.
- To describe the tactics for enhancing diversity in the work force.
- To recognize paradoxical dimensions in the selection process.
- To understand the fundamentally different uses of position classification.
- To recognize that a compensation system is the result of law and policy, labor markets, job evaluation, and personal contribution.
- To explain the advantages and drawbacks of typical types of performance appraisal.
To identify differences in orientation and behavior between unions and management.

To evaluate emerging efforts for improving the public HRM function.

Required Text Books


Reeves, T. Zane, Cases in Public Human Resource Management, 2ed. Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock Publishers, 2006. (Referred to as TZR on syllabus)


Course Requirements and Grading (Timely Submission of Assignments is Required)

Midterm Examination - 35%

Applied Research Paper - 35%

Case Study and Other Assignments -15%

Class Participation/Threaded Discussions -15%

Expectations for Academic Conduct

As members of the University of West Florida academic community, we commit ourselves to honesty. As we strive for excellence in performance, integrity (both personal and institutional) is our most precious asset. Honesty in our academic work is vital, and we will not knowingly act in ways that erode that integrity. Accordingly, we pledge not to cheat, nor to tolerate cheating, nor to plagiarize the work of others. We pledge to share community resources in ways that are responsible and that comply with established policies of fairness. Cooperation and competition are means to high achievement and are encouraged. Indeed, cooperation is expected unless our directive is to individual performance. We will compete constructively and professionally for the purpose of stimulating high performance and standards. Finally, we accept adherence to this set
of expectations for academic conduct as a condition of membership in the UWF academic community.

Standards for Written Assignments

Students are expected to read, understand, and comply with the requirements of the Fifth Edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) for all assignments and manuscripts. This includes the Ethical Standards for the Reporting and Publishing of Scientific Information included therein. All work submitted for this course must be the student's own and may not have been used whole and/or in part for any other purpose without the professor's prior written permission (if in doubt you must ask the professor).

Assistance

Students with special needs who require specific examination-related or other course-related accommodations should contact the Director of Disabled Student Services (DSS), dss@uwf.edu (850) 474-2387. DSS will provide the student with a letter for the instructor that will specify any recommended accommodations.

Schedule of Assignments

Week 1: Building an Online Community (Online Learner Orientation)

Review and complete the Online Orientation, student D2L training, and complete your student biography in the D2L “Classlist” link.
Participate in the group threaded discussion under the “Discussion” link.

Review the HRM Syllabus, Research Paper Guidelines and Requirements, Motivation Humor, instructor’s vita, and the several HRM articles in the “Important Course Information” link.

Week 1: Public Human Resource Management (A Contextual Overview)

· BBWW: Chapter 1: “The Public Service Heritage: Context, Continuity, and Change”
· FC: Introduction and Chapter 1: “Equity and Distributive Justice as Outcome Fairness”
· Participate in the Online Discussion in the “Discussion” link.

Week 2: Employee and Management Rights and Responsibilities (The Legal Environment of Human Resource Management - Employee Rights and Responsibilities)

· BBWW: Chapter 2: “Legal Rights and Responsibilities: Doing the Right Thing”
· FC: Chapter 2: “Process as Procedural and Interactional Justice”
· TZR Case Study on Employee Due Process: “Sergeant Preston of the Yukon Police”
· Submit a 2-page paper answering the discussion questions at the end of the TZR case study.
· Participate in the online discussion.

Week 3: Recruitment and Selection (Applying the Merit Principle)

· BBWW Chapter 3: “Recruitment: From Passive Posting to Head-Hunting”
· FC Chapter 3: “Two Theoretical Syntheses”
· TZR Case Study on Recruitment and Selection: “Deer Valley Hires a new Coach”
· Submit a 2 page paper answering the discussion questions at the end of the TZR case study.
· Participate in the online discussion.

Week 4: The Selection Process (Centralization vs. Decentralization)

· BBWW Chapter 4: “Selection – From Civil Service Commission to Decentralized Decision Making”
· FC Chapter 4: “Organizational Justice and Staffing Decisions: On the Horns of a Justice Dilemma?”
· TZR Case Study on Promotion: “Tom Collins Doesn’t Mix Well”
· Submit a 2 page paper answering the discussion questions at the end of the TZR case study.
· Participate in the online discussion.

Drop box opens to begin approval process for course applied research papers.

Week 5: Position Classification (Job Analysis and Evaluation)
· BBWW Chapter 5: “Position Management: Judicious Plan or Jigsaw Puzzle?”
· TZR Case Study on Job Evaluation: “Some Counselors Are More Equal Than Others”
· Submit a 2 page paper answering the discussion questions at the end of the TZR case study.
· Participate in the online discussion.

Week 6: Employee Compensation (Direct and Indirect Compensation)
· BBWW Chapter 6: “Compensation: Vital, Visible, and Vicious”
· TZR Case Study on The Fair Labor Standards Act: “Flexing to Avoid Overtime”
· Submit a 2 page paper answering the discussion questions at the end of the TZR case study.
· Participate in the online discussion.

Week 7: Midterm Examination
· Complete the midterm examination.
· Submit the completed midterm examination in the “Drop box” link.

Week 8:

Part I: Employee Benefit Policies and Programs
· BBWW Chapter 7: “Family-Friendly Policies: Fashionable, Flexible and Fickle”

Part II: Evaluating Employee Performance (Appraisals and Pay for Performance)
· BBWW Chapter 9: “Appraisal: A process in Search of a Technique”
· FC Chapter 5: “Organizational Justice and Performance Evaluation: Test and Trial Metaphors”
· TZR Case Study on Performance Evaluation: “To Protect and Serve”

· Participate in the online discussion.

Week 9: Training and Development (Knowledge Management and Learning Organizations)

· BBWW Chapter 8: “Training and Development: Creating Learning Organizations”

· TZR Case Study on Employee Training and Development: “Fearless Freddy Fuego”

· Submit a 2 page paper answering the discussion questions at the end of the TZR case study

· Participate in the online discussion.

Week 10: Labor-Management Relations (Unions and Collective Bargaining)

· BBWW Chapter 10: “Unions and the Government: Protectors, Partners, and Punishers”

· TZR Case Study on Collective Bargaining: “Handling the Hanford Patrol”

· Participate in the online discussion.

Week 11: Employee-Management Relations (Discipline and Grievance Handling)

· FC Chapter 6: “Organizational Justice and Conflict Management: Social Accounts, Third Parties, and Grievance Systems”

· FC Chapter 7: “Towards a General Theory of Fairness”

· TZR Case Study on Conflict Resolution and Grievance Handling: “Too Many Christmas Carols in the Winter Festival”

· Participate in the online discussion.

Week 12: Issues of Workplace Justice

Read the Following Articles (in the content link under important


· BBWW Chapter 11: “HRM and Productivity"

· FC Chapter 8: “Future Directions”

Course Research Papers Due: Final papers must be electronically submitted to and received by the instructor not later than the date specified in the drop box link. All approvals for projects must be submitted in the appropriate drop box for approval by the specified date. Please note that research papers are due before the end of the semester. It is the students’ responsibility to ensure that papers are approved and submitted in a timely manner. Late papers will be substantially discounted in grade unless due to a personal emergency. Please refer to the Research Paper Guidelines in the “Important Course Information” link, as well as the Research Paper drop box for the correct submission dates (drop box will be opened early for those who wish to submit their papers early).

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RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES

The major intellectual project of the directed study is the research paper. The paper must be written in APA format and style. To that end, students are expected to read, understand, and comply with the requirements of the Sixth Edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) for all assignments and manuscripts. This includes the “Ethical Standards for the Reporting and Publishing of Scientific Information” included therein. All work submitted orally and/or in writing for this directed study must be the student’s own and may not have been used whole and/or in part for any other purpose without the professor’s prior written permission (if in doubt you must ask the instructor). All written assignments submitted are subject to being examined using Turnitin software to ensure that the work is the student’s.

Students should select a research paper topic consistent with their personal interests and intellectual curiosity that can be well managed within semester time parameters, based upon academic and other workloads. Thus, it is important to keep the focus of the research paper
narrow by defining an “angle on” or “dimension of” public sector human resource management. The instructor is available to assist you in this effort. Please note that the instructor must approve your paper topic in advance (this should be accomplished by dropbox discussions with the instructor and occur prior to the midterm examination if possible).

It is expected that the formal paper will be carefully researched and well written. Toward that goal, the paper must use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The completed paper shall be a minimum of 15 pages in length and not exceed 20 pages (excluding cover, endnotes, appendices, and references/bibliography). The paper must be submitted in a timely manner. Late papers will be substantially discounted in grade, unless the delay is caused by a documented illness and/or personal emergency.

Research papers will be graded based upon the following criteria:

1. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation (proofread and spell check).
2. Knowledge and understanding of the assigned readings and classroom discussions.
3. The ability to integrate knowledge from different sources (texts, library research, class discussions, assigned case studies and real life situations).
4. Analysis of materials to reach conclusions and support them in an organized, coherent manner.
5. Compliance with minimum/maximum length and submission requirements (as well as APA standards).