

The Foundations of Public Administration Series is a collection of articles written by experts in 20 content areas, providing introductory essays and recommending top articles in those subjects.

Public Sector Human Resource Management

Course Description

Human resource management encompasses the traditional personnel functions of recruitment, selection, training, motivation, compensation, evaluation, discipline, and termination of employees. Each of those tasks demands particular skills. Increasingly, human resource management is being recognized for its strategic importance to organizations and jurisdictions, and is moving beyond its traditional position as a monitor of compliance. This course is designed to provide you with an understanding of the evolution of human resource management policies and practices, and how changes over time reflect shifting societal values and environmental circumstances. Our emphasis is on improving understanding of the historical context and current conditions of public sector HRM and developing basic skills necessary to be an effectively manage human resources.

Within the public sector, many of the most visible and interesting controversies, such as affirmative action, employee ethics, sexual harassment, drug testing, and labor-management relations, are part of human resource management. Human resources also account for the largest percentage of the operating budget for most public agencies, and public administrators must have both an appreciation for the costs of personnel decisions and the ability to project those costs. In addition, constitutional, statutory and regulatory requirements often constrain personnel decisions and actions in the public sector, and public administrators must have a working knowledge of these legal guidelines. Public administrators must recognize the political aspect of human resource management. Human resource management policies and techniques are developed, implemented and evaluated in a public (read *political*) context. Public sector HRM practices effect the selection and experiences of government employees which, in turn, affects public policy. In order to make and implement effective human resource management policies, administrators need an appreciation of the political and historical context in which the policies have developed to date.

In the current environment, a professional public administrator must be prepared to advocate for the strategic importance of human resources, find ways to be flexible and responsive to change, adapt to changing patterns of employment and intersectoral relations, utilize technology to more effectively communicate with prospective and existing employees, and develop more sophisticated and effective methods of measuring and rewarding performance (Ingraham and Rubaii-Barrett, 2007). This course is designed to help prepare the aspiring public administrator and enhance the abilities of the practicing public administrator with respect to the aforementioned challenges.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students should demonstrate a range of knowledge and skill competencies. These competencies, which comprise the course objectives, are listed below.

Knowledge Competencies

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Explain the development of public personnel policies in the United States at the federal, state and local levels;
2. Identify fundamental values guiding public sector human resource management policies and practices, and use examples to illustrate value tradeoffs;
3. Identify and apply major provisions of key pieces of legislation, administrative guidelines and court rulings governing human resource management in the public sector;
4. Discuss the most significant changes and challenges facing public sector human resource management; and
5. Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of one contemporary issue in human resource management and the competencies required to respond professionally, creatively, and ethically to that challenge.

Skill Competencies

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of an organization or jurisdiction's human resource management policies and practices, and develop specific recommendations for moving the organization toward more strategic human resource management (SHRM);
2. Locate and use information gathered through library, electronic, and field research;
3. Communicate ideas professionally and effectively in class discussions, written assignments, and formal presentations;
4. Develop valid performance criteria as part of a comprehensive performance evaluation system; and
5. Apply class material to cases and make decisions regarding employee recruitment, selection, accommodation, training, promotion, compensation, discipline, evaluation and termination in the context of legal, political and value considerations.

Readings

Notes to Instructors:

The readings listed in this syllabus are drawn largely from *Public Administration Review*; a small number of readings from other journals and edited volumes are referenced as well. Brief citations are listed each week; complete citations are provided at the end of the syllabus.

Cases available through the Electronic Hallway or the Harvard University Case Studies in Public Policy Management are also listed throughout the schedule of topics, although faculty are advised to select some, not all, of the cases, for use in their individual course.

In addition, any one of the following books can be used as a primary text. To assist an instructor in selecting among several options, we provide a brief description of the distinguishing characteristics of each text:

1. Cayer, N.J. (2004). *Public Personnel Administration*, 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. A good general overview text, with short exercises at the end of each chapter. The narrative focuses primarily on the federal government, and the exercises provide students with the opportunity to apply concepts to state and local contexts.
2. Klingner, D.F. & Nalbandian, J. *Public Personnel Management: Contexts and Strategies*. Prentice Hall. This text provides a strong technical orientation and one or more case studies at the end of each chapter.
3. Freyss, S.F. (1999). *Human Resource Management in Local Government: An Essential Guide*. Washington, DC: ICMA. In contrast to many HRM texts, this provides a local government focus. It is clearly practitioner-oriented and does not include much theoretical context for the concepts.
4. Pynes, J.E. *Human Resources Management for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. Pynes takes on the challenge of trying to balance of HR issues in government and nonprofit settings. This book contains little information about the historical development of public personnel in the United States, and focuses primarily on current issues.
5. Nigro, L., Nigo, F., & Kellough, J.E. (2007). *The New Public Personnel Administration*, 6th ed. Thomson Wadsworth. A traditional HR text that includes a strong state government component, especially in the coverage of civil service reforms.

Graded Components

Your grade in this course will be based upon your performance in three areas, each of which includes several components which are described in greater detail below:

1. Class Participation (30%)
2. Individual Research (35%)
3. Team Research and Presentation (35%)

1. Class Participation (30%)

Participation is extremely important in this class and accounts for 30% of your grade. The grade you earn for your participation will depend on both the quantity *and* quality of your contributions to the discussions and your level of professionalism.

In this course, effective participation will require that you prepare outside of class by completing all of the assigned readings prior to each class session, gathering additional information from an array of reputable sources, and making steady progress on your research projects. As current or aspiring professionals in the field, students are also expected to be enthusiastic consumers of material related to their chosen profession. The assigned readings represent the minimum readings required for the course.

Some of the assigned readings are in the form of cases. To prepare for case discussions, you should carefully read and thoroughly analyze the case. Think about the interests of the various stakeholders, and the multitude of issues reflected in the case. Take care to distinguish between facts and implied assumptions. You should be prepared to share your response to the assigned questions, present your analysis, and justify your recommendations. In linking the cases to the other assigned materials, you should be prepared to discuss how material from the course can inform stakeholder actions in the case, as well as how the case scenario can be applied more generally.

Much of the class will be structured as a seminar however there will also be regular group activities and exercises. Students will engage in role playing scenarios to practice and critique essential HR communication skills. Participation in discussions and activities is central to your learning. You are expected to do all of the readings assigned for each class meeting, to delve deeply into those readings, and to engage fully in class discussions, exercises and activities.

2. Individual Research (35%)

Each student will select a current issue in Human Resource Management for in depth research. There are a multitude of topics which a student could research within the scope of this course. For ideas, look ahead in the readings. The individual research project will consist of a written paper (30%) and a short class presentation (5%).

Each paper must be 15-20 pages in length and must include:

1. A description of the current controversies or challenges regarding the issue (why it is relevant for the study of public sector HRM)
2. A review of the literature, which includes, at a minimum:
 - a. An explanation of the history of this issue (major laws or regulations, milestone events, corresponding and competing values)
 - b. A discussion of some comparative perspectives on the issue (how is the issue different in the public, private and nonprofit sectors; how is the issue different at the local, state or national level of government or in different regions of the country; *OR* how is the issue different in the United States and in other countries).
 - c. A review of best practices regarding this issue (describe how this issue is handled in a high performance organization or in a progressive jurisdiction).
3. A discussion of competencies MPA graduates should have regarding this issue (essential knowledge, skills and abilities for effective human resource management on this issue).

Not included in the 15-20 pages are the following components:

1. A Title Page
2. An Abstract
3. Tables and Figures
4. References

For this assignment, students should use books, peer-reviewed journal articles, professional association publications, and electronic sources, and possibly interviews and organizational documents as reference materials. Your writing should reflect the style, tone and approach of professional journals in our discipline, such as *Public Administration Review*, *The Review of Public Personnel Administration*, *The American Review of Public Administration*, and *Public Personnel Management*.

Students must have their topics approved by the instructor. In selecting a topic, students are encouraged to select a topic that addresses some component of one or more of the major HRM issues identified by Ingraham and Rubaii-Barrett (2007). Within these broad issue areas, students should narrowly focus their attention to avoid the pitfalls of inadequate detail and superficial analysis. In addition to the research paper, each student is expected to deliver a 10 minute polished professional presentation to the class on their findings, and to provide and reference appropriate handouts as part of the presentation.

3. Team Research Project (35%)

Working in teams which will be determined by the second week of the semester, students will select a public organization or small jurisdiction to conduct an Organizational Human Resource Management Profile and Assessment. It is not necessary to select an organization with a defined HR department or a designated director of personnel. All agencies have HR issues even if they do not have separate HR departments. The Team Research Project consists of a written report (30%) and a short presentation to the class (5%)

Your task for this project is to gather information from published documents, interviews with agency officials, and other sources that permit you to describe and evaluate human resource management policies and practices in the agency. Your broad charge is to analyze the extent to which and manner in which the agency or jurisdiction is dealing with the major HRM issues identified by Ingraham and Rubaii-Barrett, namely Strategic Human Resource Management, Managing Modern Merit, and Flexibility and Responsiveness to Change. To accomplish this task, your report should include:

1. a description of the organization, including its mission, size, scope, number and types of employees;
2. an explanation of the values espoused by the organization related to recruitment, retention, motivation, evaluation, discipline, etc.;
3. a review of major human resource management policies and practices;
4. an assessment of the effectiveness of human resource management in the organization, including the fit between philosophy and operating policies, and the extent to which the organization is addressing the major challenges identified by Ingraham and Rubaii-Barrett (2007); and
5. specific recommendations (short and long term) for improving one or more aspects of human resource management in the organization. For this, you may focus on the recruitment and selection practices, training and development processes, performance appraisal systems, use of technology, labor-management practices, use of volunteers, etc.

To prepare for this project, students will need to obtain instructor approval of the agency selection as well as the interview questions that will probe for information on human resource management values, policies and practices of the organization. Interviews may be conducted in person, by phone, or via email, depending on the location of the agency and the preferences of the agency officials.

The Team Report should be prepared in a format and style appropriate for delivery to the agency or jurisdiction administrator, including a transmittal cover letter, a title page identifying the names of all team members, an executive summary highlighting the research findings and recommendations, and a clearly organized and professionally written report. Each team will make a 10-15 minute presentation to the class on the findings of their research which will serve as the basis for collective discussion of the broader issues within class.

Grading Criteria

Grading of Class Participation

Class participation will be graded separately for each class session. In each class, your participation will be scored using the following scale:

- A The student engages in active and informed participation that contributes to the quality of discussion; the student demonstrates mastery of the course material, adds insights and provides direction for the class; the student refers to materials beyond assigned readings; the student plays an active role without dominating the class discussions; the student is a role model for professionalism communication.
- A- The student is an active and informed participant and demonstrates full understanding of the assigned readings and homework tasks; the student is able to make connections between course materials and topics from other courses and/or current events; the student demonstrates professional communication.
- B+ The student actively participates in class discussions and incorporates assigned readings into the discussions; the student demonstrates an ability to see connections between and among assigned readings; and the student meets most of the standards of professional communication.
- B The student participates regularly in class discussion; the student demonstrates familiarity with and a basic understanding of the assigned readings; the student demonstrates completion of assigned homework tasks; and the student generally meets some of the standards of professional communication. This is the minimal expectation of performance.
- B- The student participates only sporadically, demonstrates lack of understanding of some of the readings, demonstrates failure to complete some of the assigned tasks, and/or does not engage in professional communication.
- C The student participates only when called upon and/or demonstrates lack of familiarity with most or all of the assigned readings or assigned tasks and/or does not engage in professional communication.
- D The student is in attendance but not participating or is absent with a documented medical, family or work emergency.
- F The student is absent from class without a documentation of a medical, family or work-related emergency.

NOTE: Day-to-day scheduling conflicts at work or home do not constitute emergencies.

Grading of Written Assignments (Individual Paper and Team Reports)

To receive a grade in the “A” range, you need to demonstrate that you have gone well beyond the criteria of acceptable quality graduate work in all aspects of the assignment. The quality of your writing must be polished and professional, your analysis must be of such outstanding quality that I am impressed with your comprehension of the material, your insights on the issues, and the recommendation you present. You must demonstrate that you have far exceeded the expectations of resources used for your projects.

A grade of B or B+ represents acceptable quality graduate level work. To earn a grade in this range, your written material must be clearly written, easy to follow, free of spelling and grammatical errors, formatted according to an accepted style manual. Your analysis should reflect a good understanding of the course material and your ideas and recommendations should follow logically from your analysis and evaluation.

Grades of B- or below reflect work that is below graduate quality. A grade of B- will be awarded if *either* the material submitted is not well written *or* the analysis presented is too superficial *or* not all required issues are addressed. Grades of C+ or below apply when more than one of the above weaknesses is present.

All written work completed outside of class must be typed or word-processed. Hand written work will not be accepted. If you submit a handwritten assignment, you will receive a score of zero (0) points for that assignment. Handwritten work will be accepted only on assignments or exercises completed in class. Students are expected to submit assignments that meet professional standards in both content and style. Professional content requires thorough research and the demonstrated ability to articulate logical and insightful arguments and critical thinking skills. Professionalism in style demands that written assignments be professional in appearance, clearly written, and free of grammatical, spelling, and syntax errors.

Grading of Presentations

To receive a grade of “A” on the presentation, students must: 1) make a polished presentation, 2) present for designated length of time, 3) demonstrate an understanding of and ability to apply course material to their topic, 4) seamlessly integrate PowerPoint slides or other presentation technology with the presentation, 5) deliver information without reading from notes, 6) maintain student interest, 7) demonstrate expertise, and 8) provide informed answers to reasonable questions. A grade of A- will be awarded if any *one* of the above conditions is not met; a grade of B+ will apply if any *two* of the conditions is not met; and so on.

Academic Honesty

Public administration and public service demands the highest ethical standards among its practitioners. Plagiarism, cheating, falsifying information, etc. will not be tolerated. Such actions will result in a failing grade for the assignment or the course, depending on the severity of the infraction. All students are expected to abide by the rules of the University, College and Department. It is your responsibility as a student to know what constitutes plagiarism and how to correctly reference documents and give credit to other people for their ideas that you cite. If you have any doubts about proper conduct, check with me or err on the side of caution.

Late Penalties

Late assignments will be penalized one full letter grade for each 24 hour period (or portion thereof) the assignment is late. Penalties begin accruing 5 minutes after the beginning of class. Assignments that are more than 4 days late will not be accepted and will be assigned a grade of F (0 points). This penalty applies equally to late assignments due to excused and unexcused absences. Only in the case of an emergency will an assignment be accepted late without a penalty. If you anticipate a problem due to other obligations, complete and submit the assignment early.

Tentative Schedule of Topics & Assignments

Note: Full citations for the readings listed below are provided in the accompanying List of References.

PART I: The Big Picture

Week 1

Topics:

The Scope of Human Resource Management

Key Concepts for Research Projects

Course Requirements & Expectations

Readings (in class):

Ingraham & Rubaii-Barrett (2007) Human Resource Management as a Core Dimension of Public Administration, *The Foundations of Public Administration Series*. ASPA/PAR website (<http://www.aspanet.org>).

Week 2

Topics:

The Development of Public Personnel Policies in the United States

Core Values and a Values-Tradeoff Model of HRM

Readings:

Articles from *Public Administration Review*:

Cogburn, J.D. (2005)

Gladieux (1952)

Ingraham and Rosenbloom (1989)

Kellough & Selden. (2003)

Newland, C.A. (1976)

Selden, Ingraham and Jacobson. (2001)

Thompson, J.R. (2006)

West and Durant. (2000)

Assignments Due:

Individual Research Topic must be approved.

Team assignments made in class for Team Research Projects.

Week 3

Topics:

Some Unique Aspects of *Public Sector* Human Resource Management

Public Service Motivations

The Legal Context

Readings:

Articles from *Public Administration Review*:

Hayford, S.L. (1985)
Hays (1993)
Houston & Cartwright (2007)
Jaegal and Cayer (1991)
Koenig, H. (1997).
Koenig (1998).
Lee & Greenlaw (2000).
Lyons, Duxbury and Higgins (2006)
Nalbandian (1989)
Perry & Wise (1990)??? (1993)???
Walter (1992)

Other Readings:

Riccucci (2006)
Stein. (2003)

Assignments Due:

Tentative bibliography for the individual research project must be submitted.
Selection of agency/jurisdiction for team research project must be approved.

PART II: The Nuts and Bolts of Human Resource Management

Week 4

Topics:

Determining Staffing Needs
Recruitment: Attracting the Right Applicants
Selection: Using Valid Methods to Identify the Best

Readings:

Readings from *Public Administration Review*:
Lewis & Frank (2002)

Other Readings:

Ban, Drahnak-Faller, and Towers (2003)
Hamman, Desai, and Mitchell. (1993)
Roberts. (2003)
Shoenfelt and Pedigo (2005)

Stohr-Gillmore, Stohr-Gillmore, and Kistler. (1990)

CASE: The Overcrowded Clinic (Electronic Hallway)

Week 5

Topics:

Compensation: From Rigid Classification to Flexible, Performance-Based Pay

Benefits: Responding to the Diversity and Mobility of Employees

Motivation of Employees: Public Service Motivation or Something Else?

Orientation, Training and Professional Development of Employees: Investing in Organizational Assets

Readings:

Readings from *Public Administration Review*:

Alkadry and Tower (2006)

Corson, (1961)

Ingraham and Barrilleaux (1983)

March (1980)

Romzek, B.S. (1985)

Rosow, J.M. (1976)

Other Readings:

Cayer (2003)

Chiappetta (2005)

Perry (2003)

Roberts (2001)

Roberts (2003)

CASE: Washington State Workers' Compensation Administration (Harvard)

CASE: The Division of Water Resources (Electronic Hallway)

Week 6

Topics:

Labor Management

Unions and Collective Bargaining

Readings:

Readings from *Public Administration Review*:

Chandler and Feuille (1991)

Douglas (1992)

Kearney and Hays(1994)

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Naff (1991)

Newland (1968)

Other Readings:

Calo (2006)

Kearney (2003)

Reeves (2006)

CASE: Labor Relations in the US Employment Service Reorganization (Electronic Hallway)

CASE: Case of Disgruntled Employee (Harvard)

Week 7

Topics:

Performance Appraisals

Providing Constructive and Timely Feedback

Discipline and Termination

Readings:

Readings from *Public Administration Review*:

Ammons and Rodriguez. (1986)

Ingraham (1993)

Lewis (1997)

Nigro (1982)

Other Readings:

Daley (2003)

Haraway (2005)

King and Wilcox (2003)

Pagan and Franklin (2003)

Selden (2006)

CASE: The Problem of Tom (Harvard)

CASE: Police Performance Appraisal in New York City (Harvard)

Week 8

Topics:

In-Class Presentations of Individual Research Projects

Assignments Due:

Individual Research Papers Due

PART III: The Future of HRM

Week 9

Topics:

Strategic HRM: What, Why and How

Readings:

Readings from *PAR*:

Hays & Kearney (2001)
Ingraham, Selden & Moynihan. (2000)
McGregor (1988)
Poister and Streib (2004)

Other Readings:

Crumpacker and Crumpacker (2004)
Daley (2006)
Daley and Vasu (2005)
Donald, Lyons, and Tribbey (2001)
Perry (1993)
Seldon and Jacobson (2007)

CASE: Ellen Schall and the Department of Juvenile Justice (Electronic Hallway)

Week 10

Topics:

Managing Modern Merit
Structuring Systems to Reward Individual and Team Performance

Readings:

Readings from *PAR*:

Durant et al. (2006)
Ingraham (2006)
Woodard. (2005)

Other Readings:

Kellough and Selden (1997)
Gabris and Ihrke (2000)
Sanders (2004)
Thompson and Lehew (2000)

CASE: Merit Pay at the Department of Health (Harvard)

CASE: Pruning and Productivity: Negotiating “Gainsharing” with Forestry Workers in New York City (Harvard)

Week 11

Topics:

Flexibility and Responsiveness to Change: Shifting Sector Boundaries

Readings:

Readings from *PAR*:

Fernandez and Smith (2006)

Haque (2001)

Moe (2001)

Other Readings:

Fernandez, Rainey, and Lowman. (2006).

Klingner (2003).

Lawther (2003).

Lawther (1999)

Mastracci and Thompson 2005.

McDonnell and Salisbury (2005).

Ravitch and Lawther (1999)

CASE: Extreme Hiring Makeover: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (Harvard)

Week 12

Topics:

Flexibility and Responsiveness to Change: Advances in Technology

PAR Readings:

Kim, Soonhee, and Hyangsoo Lee. 2006 The Impact of Organizational Context and Information Technology on Employee Knowledge-Sharing Capabilities. *Public Administration Review* 66 (3), 370–385.

Readings:

Other Readings:

Byrd and Ikerd. (1992)

Coursey (2005)

Dawes (1994)

Kim(2005)

Lan, Riley, and Cayer (2005)

Lewis and Hu (2005)

Smith et al. (2001)

CASE: Technology in the Washington State Park System (Electronic Hallway)

CASE: Stepping Up to the Net: The Land Trust Alliance's Efforts to Make Strategic Use of the Internet (Harvard)

CASE: Info/California: Where Do Electronic Government Tellers Belong? (Harvard)

Week 13

Topics:

Flexibility and Responsiveness to Change: Increasing Diversity

Readings:

Readings from *PAR*:

Bailey (2004)

Bruce and Reed (1994)

Chadwin, et al (1995)

Hale (1999)

Kelly (1998)

Kim and Lewis (1994)

Lewis (1997)

Murray, et al. (1994)

Saltzstein, Ting and Saltzstein (2001)

Sisneros (1993)

Soni, V. (2000)

Wise and Tshirhart (2000)

Other Readings:

Arai et al. (2001)

Ball and Haque (2003)

Gossett (2006)

Guy (2003)

Mani (2003)

Ospina and O'Sullivan (2003)

Rubaii-Barrett and Wise (2007)

CASE: Diversity Programs at The New England Aquarium (Harvard)

CASE: The Case of the Unfriendly Management Trainee (Harvard)

CASE: The Case of the Ombudsperson's Actions (Harvard)

CASE: The Case of the Friendly Behavior (Harvard)

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Week 14

Topics: Team Project Presentations
Assignments Due: Team Reports Due

Week 15

Topics: Synthesis

List of References

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- Alkadry, Mohamad G., and Leslie E. Tower. 2006. Unequal Pay: The Role of Gender. *Public Administration Review* 66(6): 888-898.
- Ammons, David N., and Arnold Rodriguez. 1986. Performance Appraisal Practices for Upper Management in City Governments. *Public Administration Review* 46(5): 460-467.
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- Chandler, Timothy, and Peter Feuille. 1991. Municipal Unions and Privatization. *Public Administration Review* 51(1): 15-22.
- Chiappetta, Tina Ott. 2005. Managing Healthcare Costs. *Public Personnel Management* 34(4): 313-320.
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- Coursey, David H. 2005. Human Resource Management Challenges in Government Information Technology. *Review of Public Personnel Administration* 25(3): 203-206.
- Crumpacker, Martha, and Jill M. Crumpacker. 2004. Elevating, Integrating, and Institutionalizing Strategic Human Capital Management in Federal Agencies Through the Chief Human Capital Officer. *Review of Public Personnel Administration* 24(3): 234-255.
- Daley, Dennis. 2003. The Trials and Tribulations of Performance Appraisal: Problems and Prospects on Entering the 21st Century. In *Public Personnel Administration: Problems and Prospects 4th ed*, edited by Steven W. Hays and Richard C. Kearney. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
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- Douglas, Joel M. 1992. State Civil Service and Collective Bargaining: Systems in Conflict. *Public Administration Review* 52(2): 162-172.
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Foundations of Public Administration

Human Resource Management – Syllabus

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