

## **MGT 320 Strategic Issues in Human Resources Spring 2011**

Dr. Pamela Kravitz  
Office: BB 230  
Phone: 609-771-2153  
[kravitz@tcnj.edu](mailto:kravitz@tcnj.edu)

Section 01: 8.00-9.50 am  
Section 02: 10.00-11.50am

### **Course Purpose:**

The purpose of this course is to examine the role of human resource management as a strategic element of organizations. Strategic Issues in Human Resources examines the role of the human resource professional in managing people, along with capital, material, and information assets. The assumption is that all managers are accountable to their organizations in terms of the impact of their human resource activities, and they are expected to add value by managing their people effectively. Familiarity with relevant theory, research and practice enhances the ability of students to make decisions based on accurate diagnoses of situations that involve people- in both domestic and global contexts.

For human resource policies to be effective, they need to be related to the strategic direction of the business. This course emphasizes how strategic human resource management practices can contribute to business success and organizational competitiveness. Students will analyze situations in order to strengthen the linkages. Students will analyze situations in order to strengthen the linkages between managing human resources and the strategic management of an organization as a whole.

Managers must be able to identify effective human resource management practices to design and implement them personally, to work with the Human Resource department, or to purchase these services from an external consultant. This course emphasizes how a manager can effectively manage human resources and highlights important issues in current human resource practice.

### **Course Description:**

The course provides an in-depth examination of how managers align an organization's human capital with its strategic direction. Through the use of readings, assignments, mini-cases, and scenarios, the course will emphasize employment law, job analysis, recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, discipline, and health and safety, all within an ethical framework.

**Prerequisites:** MGT201, or PSY267

### **Course Materials:**

- 1) Required
  - a. Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, and Cardy, *Managing Human Resources* (6th ed). Prentice-Hall.
  - b. *HRSimSelection: Recruitment and selection simulation* by Sturman & James. (You will need a credit card to register at the following site: [www.interpretive.com/students](http://www.interpretive.com/students). This will allow you to play the simulation over the Internet. In addition, you can download a copy of the HRSim manual.
- 2) Suggested Readings
  - a. The Wall Street Journal and/or The New York Times

In order to get the most of the class and work toward a top grade, students will be expected to come to class prepared with each session's readings completed. Class discussion will be used to illustrate, review and supplement the material in your text. To facilitate the application of the course material, students should be prepared to volunteer information gathered from business publications such as The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and/or Business Week.

## **Learning Goals**

### **A. Content**

1. The course focuses on six main topics:

- (a) Employment law
- (b) Job analysis
- (c) Recruitment and selection
- (d) Performance appraisal
- (e) Discipline
- (f) Health and safety.

2. The course will be organized around three key questions. At the end of the course students should be able to answer the following questions:

- (a) What is the role of the human resource professional in successful organizations?
- (b) How can human resource activities be organized and implemented to achieve organizational goals?
- (c) Why is the human resource function increasingly legalized and regulated in contemporary society?

## **Learning Activities**

Students will read a set of journal articles and textbook chapters; listen to lectures and guest speakers; analyze mini-cases and scenarios in small groups; and write individual/group assignments. There is a simulation for this class where you will be responsible for hiring the best three candidates for the position of assistant front office manager at a national hotel chain while controlling costs.

## **Assessment:**

### **1. Participation and attendance**

Participation in class discussions and exercises is an expected and essential behavior in this class; consequently a percentage of the course grade will be based on attendance and participation.

Attendance is also an importance aspect to this course. One cannot learn from the class if you do not attend it. Therefore, students are expected to attend class and chronic absence will result in grade penalties. Should unforeseeable illness, work responsibilities, or family obligations preclude your attending class, please recognize that you are responsible for all missed lectures and discussions. During class an attendance sheet will be passed around and it will be the students' responsibility to sign your name to the sheet.

### **2. Exams**

There will be two closed-book exams during the semester; this includes the final exam. The exams will require you to apply the knowledge from the readings, the text and our discussions in class. Details of the exam format will be provided during the regular class sessions. **NO MAKEUP EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN.** In extreme (and officially excused) emergencies, a makeup exam may be given. I do not give "extra credit" to individual students, so focus on doing well on the evaluation criteria.

### **3. Assignments**

This course focuses on the critical tools Human Resource professionals need to make a tangible connection between their organization's talent base and its sustainable strategic success. The assignments are designed to strengthen a student's knowledge base in the functional Human Resource areas. The assignments are cumulative examples of designing a strategic map for the organization's human capital.

## **Assignment 1: Topic: Current HR Issues**

HR issues are in the news on a regular basis. Media coverage of issues such as discrimination, skill deficiencies, labor negotiations, and workplace violence occur regularly. Each group will identify a current event covered by the media that relates to an HR topic and respond to that event in a (maximum 3 page) analysis. Student written papers must focus on and include answering the following two questions:

- What should HR be doing in light of this event?
- What is the significance of this event from an HR perspective?

Responses should begin with a full citation of the media source and a brief summary of the event. This should be followed by the student's perspective on the event within the context of HR. In order to get credit for the assignment, please attach a copy of the article to your paper. We will be discussing the consequences to the business environment, the organization and its members. Be prepared to fully, but informally discuss your article in class.

### **Assignment: Simulation**

More information on this assignment is given later on in the syllabus and in class.

Criteria used to evaluate student accomplishment:

#### **(a) Participation and Attendance: Grade Performance Standard**

- A The student participates actively in the course, is always prepared, and attends at least 20 sessions.
- B The student engages less often but in an acceptable manner, is generally prepared and attends at least 20 classes
- C The student engages sporadically in class discussions, is not constant in their quantity and quality of class preparation and attends at least 15 classes
- D Attends 15 class sessions or shows little or no participation
- F Attends fewer than 15 class sessions

#### **(b) Assignments**

I expect professional, high-quality work on all assignments. These are the criteria I will use to determine grades for your written work:

- Skill in which you applied the learned concepts to the specific human resource issue(s).
- Ability to justify your decisions. These must be presented in a clear and concise manner and will be strongly considered in the grading process.
- Grammar and spelling will be considered in determining your grades. If, while reading your paper I come upon a third misspelled word, you will receive your paper back for a rewrite (minus 10 points).
- All written assignments are to be typed and printed using a 12-point Arial or Times New Roman font with standard one-inch margins. Please DO NOT put your assignments in a plastic binder.

Just as on a paying job, deadlines for assignments are to be handed in on time. Completing assignments late will result in an automatic 10 points per day penalty (max. 30 points). Not completing assignments is considered unacceptable performance and will result in no credit for the assignment. Grades assigned to papers are non-negotiable.

### **Grade Performance Standard**

A = Outstanding work. The "A" student has demonstrated superior mastery in the important aspects of the course- knowledge of concepts and application to business problems. The "A" student writes and speaks clearly, insightfully, and creatively.

B= Above average work. The "B" student has mastered most of the fundamental course concepts, and is able to apply the most important concepts to business problems. The student generally writes well, although there is room for improvement, and communicates clearly.

C = Average work. The "C" student understands the most important concepts, and is able to apply some concepts to business problems. Written communication is adequate, but could use improvement.

D = Below average work. The "D" student has significant gaps in their knowledge of management concepts, and has difficulty applying this information to business problems. Both written and oral communication needs improvement.

F= Failing performance

Grades will be calculated in the following ways:

Participation and attendance –	5 %
Assignments –	
Current issue article and write-up	10 %
Simulation*	25 %
Exam 1	30 %
Exam 2	30 %
	<u>100 %</u>

\*You will be graded on three major aspects of the simulation:

1. **Rationale:** Degree and quality of justification for your choices, including the evidence used to support your decisions; evidence linking choices to overall company strategy.
2. **Costs:** return on investment achieved by your system; degree of improvement over previous system, budget management.
3. **Analysis:** extent to which system and outcomes are critically evaluated; quality of suggestions for continuous improvement.
  - Each group member will receive the same grade assigned for the project. However, there will be an anonymous peer review at the end of the course. Your grade of all group work will be adjusted within the participation and attendance section based on confidential points determined by other group members in your group. Individual grades may be reduced if there is clear evidence that you are not adding value to the group. The peer evaluation criteria will be posted on SOCS. Individuals may be fired from a group for criteria to be discussed with the professor.

Course Performance Standard

I do not grade on a curve nor do I “round-up” to the next whole number. I do not give “extra credit” so please do not ask. The grades and grade ranges are as follows:

A 94-100%	B 83-86.99%	C 73-76.99%	D 60-66.99%
A- 90-93.99%	B- 80-82.99%	C- 70-72.99%	F less than 60%
B+ 87-89.99%	C+ 77-79.99%	D+ 67-69.99%	

Academic Honesty Policy

If a student is caught cheating, the appropriate TCNJ authorities will be notified. See the Undergraduate Catalog for rules and procedures regarding academic honesty.

Students with Disabilities

The College of New Jersey is committed to a policy of reasonable accommodation and services to persons with disabilities. Any student with special needs must bring this to my attention as soon as possible with written documentation, but not later than the second week of class.

## HRSimSelection

This simulation involves redesigning the methods used to select candidates for the position of *Assistant Front Office Manager* at Juniper Hotels. As you work through this, don't lose sight of the end goals – you need to:

- a) improve the performance of new hires, and
- b) increase the return on investment for the hiring process.

### Phase I – Defining the Selection Process

- Register for the simulation: [www.interpretive.com/students](http://www.interpretive.com/students)
- Download and read the student manual (available from the simulation website)
- Meet with your group to discuss your overall strategy, goals and approaches to the situation; refer to the job description and other information contained in the student manual to help you with this step.
- Discuss ideas for how you can improve the staffing process at Juniper.
- Review the available options (e.g., resumes, cognitive tests, job simulations, etc) and their associated costs.
- Discuss costs with your group in the context of your overall strategy and goals, and settle on a budget for the selection system.
- Clarify the reasons why your approach should be better than the existing system.
- Settle on a rationale for your staffing strategy and describe the plan in writing. Your report should include: (a) discussion of the key points that you considered as a group, (b) how you arrived at your approach, (c) what approach you will take (a diagram can be used here), (d) your projected expenses, including the “Projected cost per hire”, and (e) how you plan to evaluate the quality of your decisions once the system is implemented.
- NOTE: Up to this point, you are *not* reviewing any candidate files, and you are only using the simulation website for reviewing the manual, job description, previous approach, and options and costs.

### Phase II – Implementation and Evaluation

- Now you are ready to implement the system.
- First, the “team leader” should log in to the simulation website, click “Selection Budget”, and enter the numbers that were chosen by the group during the planning phase of the project.
- Once all projected costs are entered, and are verified to be accurate, click the button to “finalize Budget and start the simulation”
- As you review candidates, describe the evaluation criteria- what are you liking for? Why? Are you evaluating candidates by committee or individually? Why? Be clear about the criteria that you are using to make decisions, who is making them, and so forth. Document your decision process in the report (build on what you submitted for Phase I).
- Once you have agreed on your top 3 choices, select “make Offer” button for each candidate
- Now you are ready to evaluate the system
- Discuss the results of the new selection system with your group; how did your top choices work out? Is the system effective? How do you know? Is it better than the previous system? Did you achieve the goals that you set out initially? Were there any variances in your budget? Why? Are there other changes that you would make to improve your system?
- Record reactions and observations about the staffing process, as well as anything that was surprising, difficult, unusually challenging, and so forth
- Make final changes to your report & submit the final copy.

• **TENTATIVE LECTURE TOPICS (Topics and readings are subject to change)**

Jan 18	<b>Introduction to Human Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Class</li> </ul>
Jan 21, 25	<b>Introduction to Human Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Text: Emerging HR Challenges (Chapter 1)</li> <li>○ Article: “Linking human resources and business strategies” Dyer, L</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ethical Dilemma: Whose job is it anyway?</li> </ul>
Jan 28, Feb 1, 4	<b>Legal Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Text: Understanding Equal Opportunity and the Legal Environment (Chapter 2)</li> <li>○ Article: “Sexual harassment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century-e-harassment in the workplace” Towns &amp; Johnson</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Feb 8, 11, 15	<b>Job Analysis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Text: Managing Work Flows and Conducting Job Analysis (Chapter 3)</li> <li>○ Article: “Job analysis for Personnel Selection” Algera &amp; Geuter</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Exercise: Writing job descriptions</li> </ul>
Feb 18, 22	<b>Recruitment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Text: Recruiting and Selecting Employees (Chapter 4)</li> <li>○ Article: “How to hire employees effectively” Innis &amp; Kleiner</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Feb 25, Mar 1	<b>Selection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Text: Selecting Employees (Chapter 4)</li> <li>○ Article: “Making Diversity Pay” Labich</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Exercise: Whom do we hire?</li> </ul>
Mar 4	<b>Resource allocation</b>
Mar 7, 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FALL BREAK</b></li> </ul>
Mar 15, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Review Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4</b></li> <li>• <b>Exam 1 – Mar 18</b></li> </ul>
Mar 22, 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simulation work</li> </ul>
Mar 29	<b>Employee Separations, Downsizing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text: Employee Separations (chapter 5)</li> <li>• <b>Simulation Phase I and II due (March 29th)</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Apr 1, 5	<b>Performance Appraisal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Text: Appraising and Managing Performance (Chapter 6)</li> <li>○ Article: “Behind the mask: The politics of employee appraisal” Longenecker</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Apr 8, 12	<b>Rewarding Performance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings:</li> <li>• Text: Rewarding performance (chapter 7)</li> </ul>
Apr 15, 19	<b>Discipline</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Text: Respecting Employee Relations (chapter 8)</li> <li>○ Article: “The difficult employee” Stumpf</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Mini Case: “George Cotter Blows the Whistle</li> </ul>
Apr 22	<b>Occupational Health and Safety</b> <b>Strategic Issues in Human Resources</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Text: Managing Workplace Safety and Health (chapter 9)</li> <li>○ Article: “Bringing it all together: The Impact of Strategic Human Resources” Lado</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ethical Dilemma: Should employees be punished for unhealthy lifestyles?</li> </ul>
Apr 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review (Chapters 7, 11, 14, 16)</li> </ul> Last day of classes
May 2-6	Final Exams