

POLS 543: Human Resource Management

Fall 2006

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I. Course Overview

The author of one of the textbooks for this class, Dennis Dresang, writes “The essential tasks of public personnel management are to attract and identify competent people for government positions and to design work and provide a setting that encourages employees to work energetically, creatively, and ethically” (p. 1). Thus personnel or human resource management encompasses such basic “technology” as planning for personnel needs, writing job descriptions, designing compensation systems, and evaluating performance. It also includes interpreting and applying laws, such as those regarding sexual harassment and workers’ rights, and applying good management practices to help motivate employees and enhance the organization’s capacity to accomplish its mission.

In summing up Dresang writes, “Public personnel management, in short, includes concern for both the generic issues of human behavior in organizational settings and the specific needs of public sector accountability in a democracy” (p. 2). The course is thus concerned with good management practices in pursuit of serving the public interest. We will learn basic techniques and methods of human resource management but always keep an eye on how personnel management relates to overall organizational management.

This course focuses on public sector organizations. The management practices and techniques have application across public and private organizations. However, as we shall see, public sector organizations have certain legal and political constraints on their behavior that are not experienced by private sector organizations.

II. Required Texts

Dennis Dresang Public Personnel Management and Public Policy, 4th edition
ICMA Human Resource Management in Local Government, 2nd edition

III. Course Requirements and Graded Assignments

There will be discussions and exercises held during each class. You are expected to be an active participant in those activities. This means that you need to read assignments before class so that you will be prepared to make informed contributions. Graded assignments are as follows:

	<u>Percent of Grade</u>
1. 4 memos (5% each)	20%
2. 2 exams (25% each)	50%
3. Research paper	<u>30%</u>
Total	100%

IV. Four Memos

These memos are based on case materials which will be provided in a separate handout. They are to be **2-page maximum** of single spaced text (12 point font, one-inch borders), and are to be formatted as follows: to the left at the top of the first page (1) list the date; (2) address the memo to me, Dr. Keith Snavelly; (3) indicate that the memo is from you and sign next to your typed name; (4) reference the subject of the memo; (5) follow with the text of your memo.

Example

September 19, 2006

To: Dr. Keith Snavelly, Professor
MPA Program

From: Brilliant Student (initial here)

RE: Recruitment strategy to fill Fire Chief position

In the text of the memo you should (1) briefly state the subject of your memo; (2) give your analysis of the problem or situation as instructed; and (3) make recommendations if requested. *This is a worthwhile practical exercise.* In your professional life you are likely to be asked to prepare memos in which you need to get right to the point in addressing an issue, give information and analysis as directed in a succinct fashion and make your specific recommendations. You are thus challenged to state your thoughts clearly and informatively in a limited amount of space. Be sure to carefully edit your memos. Spelling, typographical and grammatical errors can seriously detract from the quality of the memo and can stand in the way of getting your message across.

V. Research Paper

You will investigate a human resource topic of your own choosing and write a research paper of approximately 10 pages of text. You will want to investigate a topic with a clear, sharp focus that can be treated in an informative way in this short paper. For example, you would not propose to write a paper on performance appraisals in general. There are whole books devoted to the subject. But you could propose to investigate a particular form of performance appraisal, discussing the methodology and its benefits and shortcomings. Look through the textbooks for this class for research paper ideas. I also encourage you to consult with me and we can discuss your paper topic.

A. Research Paper Proposal

On September 28 you are to turn in a research paper proposal. This must be computer printed, double spaced, and contain the following:

1. Title Page: include the tentative paper title and your name.
2. Research Question: State the research question you are investigating. Think carefully about this question as it defines the paper you will be writing.

Example: *What strategies do law enforcement agencies use to recruit women and*

how effective are they? A question like this would lead you to document problems law enforcement agencies (perhaps local or federal) encounter in recruiting women, examine some specific female recruitment strategies, and critique the strategies used.

3. **Abstract:** Write a one-paragraph summary of the topic and how you will investigate it in your paper.
4. **Outline:** Prepare an outline of the paper, listing the major subheadings.
5. **Bibliography:** Provide a list of a minimum of eight appropriate references from books and professional journals. Do not use popular journalistic web sites but only those that provide scholarly research by practitioners and academics, and sites that contain useful and accurate data. *Use the APA bibliographic style.*

B. Research Paper

The research paper is due December 5. **Papers must abide by the following guidelines:**

1. Attach a title page with your name and the paper title.
2. Text of approximately 10 pages. Be sure and use appropriate subheadings.
3. Attach a reference list (titled, References) at the end of the paper. This should contain only sources cited in the body of the paper.
4. Number pages, beginning at the first page of the text, not beginning with the title page.
5. Computer print, double space, use one-inch margins, 12 point font.
6. Use the APA style format for in-text citations and the list of references. **Do not make up your own reference system.** Your paper must be properly cited and referenced. That includes any internet sources you may use. Failure to properly document sources constitutes plagiarism and can result in failure in the class.

Carefully edit the research paper proposal and the research paper before turning them in. Check for grammatical errors, misspellings, sentence structure, proper citation and referencing format, etc.

Schedule of Topics, Readings and Assignments

Chapter Assignments

		<u>Dresang</u>	<u>ICMA</u>
<u>Aug.</u> 22-24	World of HR: Background & Current Trends	1, 2	
29	Trends: Continued	6	
<u>Aug.</u> 31- <u>Sep.</u> 7	Planning, Budgeting First memo due: September 7	7	1 (pp.1-7)
<u>Sep.</u> 12-14	Analysis, Classification	8	1 (pp. 8-32)
19-21	Pay & Benefits	14	6
26-28	Social Equity Research proposal due: September 28	4	
<u>Oct.</u> 3-5	Recruitment & Selection Second memo due: October 5	10	2
10-12	First Exam/Training	11	
17-19	Motivation/Productivity	5	7
24-26	Performance Appraisal	9	3
<u>Oct.</u> 31- <u>Nov.</u> 2	Employee Rights, Health & Safety Third memo due: Nov. 2	3, 12	5
<u>Nov.</u> 7-9	Discipline Fourth memo due: Nov. 9	13	8
14-16	Collective Bargaining	15	4
28-30	Ethics		
<u>Dec.</u> 5-7	Summing Up Research paper due: December 5	16	9
14	Final exam		