Course Syllabus and Schedule

Professor: Dr. Cindy Parker  
Email: cparker8@gmu.edu  
Office: 213 Enterprise Hall  
Phone: (703) 993-4184  
Office Hours: Thursdays 6:00 – 7:00pm (by appointment only – please email me first to set up an appointment)  
Course Website: Blackboard (Courses 9.1): http://mymason.gmu.edu (note: username and passwords are the same as your Mason Mail account)

COURSE OBJECTIVES & FORMAT

Whether a management student plans a career in human resources or not he/she will be making decisions that impact the human capital of the organization. The objective of this course is to teach students how to analyze real scenarios using both theoretical knowledge and analytical problem-solving skills to discover the root problem and provide solutions. This is a case-based course that will require preparation and active discussion during each class meeting. In addition, students will build practical skills in interviewing, HR data analysis, presenting, and problem-solving.

To ensure success in this course, students must have some basic background in the various disciplines of human resources; such as, staffing, performance management, compensation, benefits, and employee relations. Please note that successful completion (grade of C or better) in MGMT 321 - Introduction to Human Resource Management is a prerequisite for this course.

Management Program Learning Goals: Students who are competent in the management discipline will meet the following learning goals (note: goals addressed in this course are printed in bold):

1. Students will understand and apply the theories, models, research findings, and tools related to organizational behavior.

2. Students will understand and apply the theories, models, research findings, and tools related to the management functions of planning, organizing, staffing, leading and controlling.

3. Students will analyze and solve problems creatively.

5. Students will synthesize key aspects of strategic management. (optional: including industry dynamics and creative disruptions, new venture creation, innovative processes, and strategy formulation and implementation)

Course Learning Objectives:

1. To understand the strategic role of human resources management in supporting the business strategies of an organization.

2. To understand how human resources management can help organizations gain a competitive advantage through people.

3. To gain a working knowledge of human resources systems and practices that builds a skilled and motivated workforce.

4. To develop skills in analyzing human resources problems and determining appropriate solutions.

5. To understand the laws and regulations affecting human resources management.

6. To be able to critique and improve various components of a human resources system(s).

7. To demonstrate a practical, working knowledge of human resource systems through the completion of HR system development projects.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

1. Text: Human Resource Management, Mathis & Jackson, 13th Edition. (Note: The text will be used primarily as a reference book to help you with your case analyses. At the end of the semester you will use the text more as we cover new topics. A copy of the text is on two hour reserve in the JC library).

2. HR cases on e-reserve: Use the link and password provided on Blackboard to access the cases on e-reserve, free of charge. **Please access and print these cases as soon as possible to ensure that you have a hard-copy of each case. You will need to bring the cases to class on the day discussed.

3. HR articles and cases from Harvard Business School Publishing: I have created a course area on the Harvard Business Online website where you can order some of the required materials for this course. Each article/case costs $3.95. (Note: You can also find these cases free of charge by searching the e-journals at Mason’s library website. I have provided the author’s names for each case to assist in your search).

Click on the link below to order the course materials.
https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/20484581

If you have not registered with Harvard Business Online, you will be required to do so. This URL will provide you with a list of required materials for use in this course. Electronic course materials are in PDF (Portable Document Format) and should be viewed with Adobe Reader, available free at www.adobe.com. Students can access PDF files of course materials via a link
on Harvard Business Online for six months from the date of purchase.

You will have immediate access to the materials upon placing your order, for subsequent access, you must login to [http://harvardbusinessonline.org](http://harvardbusinessonline.org)

For technical assistance, please view the Quick Tips section or contact Harvard Business School Publishing at 1-800-810-8858 or 617-783-7700. They are open 8am-6pm Eastern Standard Time. They can also be reached at techhelp@hbsp.harvard.edu

Please bring a copy of relevant cases or articles with you to each class, per the course schedule.

**Format:** The course will focus on active learning. Successful active learning requires a major investment from both of us. It is imperative that you study the assigned readings before each class meeting, do a fair amount of thinking, complete the discussion questions, and be prepared to contribute to the class and group discussions/exercises. As you will note in the description of how your course performance is evaluated, I place a significant emphasis on the quality of your preparation and in-class participation. You should become a partner in the learning environment, which means asking questions, sharing your reactions, giving feedback to your colleagues and myself, and staying on top of the workload. This active learning approach results in the development of a dialogue that will further your understanding of issues facing organizations as it relates to human capital.

**GENERAL POLICIES**

**Appointments and E-Mail:** I strongly urge you to contact me to ask questions, clarify assignments, or obtain additional help. Please contact me via email to set up a phone or in-person appointment (cparker8@gmu.edu).

**Absence:** If you miss a class, you may access some materials (e.g., lecture slides) on the course website. I would strongly suggest that you also ask a classmate for his/her notes as our group discussion notes will not be posted. Once you have reviewed a classmate’s notes, if you have targeted, specific questions on material covered, I will gladly meet with you to answer your questions. However, I will not “re-do” the lecture/discussion or provide detailed briefings on the class discussions, nor will I have documented class notes.

**Attendance:** While attendance itself is not evaluated, you cannot earn credit for participation if you are not in class.

**Lateness:** Lateness is disruptive to me and to your fellow students. It is expected that you will attend class on time and be ready for the topic of the day. Habitual lateness will negatively impact your participation grade. Please allow time for traffic or parking problems as these are frequent occurrences in our area and our university.

**Missed assignments:** There are several Discussion Question assignments due during the first few weeks of the semester. Students who enroll after the beginning of the semester will not be permitted to make-up missed Discussion Questions. For other assignments, lateness penalties will be assessed for assignments that are not turned in on the due date. Assignment-specific lateness penalties are described later in the syllabus.

**Inclement weather:** In the event of inclement weather, please consult Mason’s website or call the main information line (703.993.1000). If the University is officially closed, our class will not
meet. If the University remains open during an inclement weather event, our class will meet as scheduled, unless you receive an email from me to the contrary.

**Electronic devices:** Cell phones are to remain off and put away during the entire class. Students who choose to talk on cell phones or text message will be asked to leave the class. You may use a laptop computer during class to review cases, take notes, and complete class simulations. The use of your laptop computer for non-class activities is not permitted and will negatively impact your participation grade. You may be asked to discontinue your computer use if it is distracting to me or your fellow students.

**Special Accommodations:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

**SOM STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR**

The mission of the School of Management at George Mason University is to create and deliver high quality educational programs and research. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni who participate in these educational programs contribute to the well-being of society. High quality educational programs require an environment of trust and mutual respect, free expression and inquiry, and a commitment to truth, excellence, and lifelong learning. Students, program participants, faculty, staff, and alumni accept these principles when they join the SOM community. In doing so, they agree to abide by the following standards of behavior:

- **Respect** for the rights, differences, and dignity of others
- **Honesty and integrity** in dealing with all members of the community
- **Accountability** for personal behavior

Integrity is an essential ingredient of a successful learning community. Ethical standards of behavior help promote a safe and productive community environment, and ensure every member the opportunity to pursue excellence. SOM can and should be a living model of these behavioral standards. To this end, community members have a personal responsibility to integrate these standards into every aspect of their experience at the SOM. Through our personal commitment to these Community Standards of Behavior, we can create an environment in which all can achieve their full potential.

**Honor System and Code:** The Honor System and Code adopted by George Mason University will be enforced for this class. In your work on all written assignments, keep in mind that you may not present as your own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment. You also may not borrow the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment.

All responses to discussion questions to be completed individually. Discussion with other previous or current MGMT 421 students (in any section) with regard to the cases and projects should be limited to format and structure and not include content. No discussion or study aids will be permitted while taking the exam. This course is conducted in accordance with GMU Honor Code procedures. Please see the following website for additional information about the GMU Honor Code: [http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/](http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/)

**Please note:** Faculty are obligated to submit any Honor Code violations or suspected violations to the Honor Committee without exception.
**EVALUATION**

Your learning in this course will be evaluated by the following tools: Discussion Questions, In-Class Participation, Structured Interview Questions Deliverable, Team HR Consulting Project, Team Case Discussion Leadership, and a Final Exam.

I take grading very seriously and I assign grades with care and thought. Therefore, grades are not negotiable. A grade change is only possible if an error is made recording your grades, which is very rare. In general, the more proactive you are in dealing with your course work, there will be less chance of a grade "problem" or surprise. Remember, you and I are in this together. I want nothing more than for you to succeed and I am willing to work with you so that you can attain your goals.

**Point Values of Each Evaluation Tool:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Tool</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions via Blackboard</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured Interview Questions Deliverable</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team HR Consulting Project</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Case Discussion Leadership</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points Possible</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
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**Grading Scale:**
Your grade will be assigned on a straight scale based on the number of points you earn as noted above. Below is the grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>179 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>174-178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>159-173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>154-158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>139-153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>120-138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 120</td>
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You will work in a team (you will choose the team) to complete two assignments: The HR Consulting Project and Case Discussion Leadership. You will have time during various class sessions to work with your team on either assignment. All other assignments are individual work products.

**Discussion Questions (40 points)**
For each class meeting, you will be responsible for preparing for that day's topic of discussion. Preparation requirements are noted on the course schedule and will vary by topic and may include (but are not limited to) reading cases or articles to be discussed that week. To that end, prior to our in-class discussion of certain topics or cases, you are asked to respond to discussion questions that will be posted on Blackboard. Please consult the syllabus, which specifies the dates that you are responsible for responding to discussion questions.

**No later than the beginning of class,** you are responsible for submitting your responses for the question(s) due that day. Your responses must be entered onto Blackboard (email responses will not be accepted). Late responses will **not** be graded. Failure to respond to a Discussion Question will result in a grade of zero. Each submission is worth a maximum of four
points. Your responses will be graded based on the quality of your answers – your ability to show logic and incorporate course concepts into your responses. Responses that show shallow or basic thinking will receive fewer points than responses that show careful consideration and deliberation. You are not expected to consult external sources in forming your responses to the discussion questions. If you do use external sources (such as your textbook or the case commentaries for the Harvard cases) they must be cited appropriately. Failure to appropriately cite external sources is a form of plagiarism and will be referred to the Honor Committee for investigation as an Honor Code violation.

**In-Class Participation (50 points)**
The advanced nature of this course requires your preparation and willingness to share your insights with the class. Your participation grade will be formally evaluated through the quality of your contributions to our class case discussions, contributions to and engagement in class exercises, questions for guest speakers, etc. Prepare for case discussions by thoughtfully considering the questions at the end of each case and be prepared to share your insights and solutions. Verbal contributions to class discussions will be the most significant contributing factor toward your participation points. Your participation points will be based on the quality of your contribution (e.g., incorporating course and HR/management concepts, adding unique insights or ideas, identifying less-obvious solutions or underlying issues).

In addition to verbal contributions, respectful and professional behavior will also contribute to your participation points. These behaviors include, giving full attention to class exercises, remaining attentive during lectures, keeping mobile electronic devices off, arriving to class on time and remaining present during the duration of the class. Arriving late to class, leaving at the break, text messaging, and disrupting class will reduce your participation points.

I will track participation points throughout the semester and post your participation points on Blackboard after our final class. I will provide participation feedback at mid-semester. If you have any concerns about your participation grade at any point during the semester, please ask me.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Examples of Typical Behaviors (not all inclusive; use as a guideline only)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50/50</td>
<td>Demonstrates <strong>consistent</strong> (nearly every class) on-time attendance, preparation, and constructively participates in all class activities and discussions; consistently demonstrates insight by asking questions, making statements that add to and facilitate the class discussion, or building upon others' comments. Consistently demonstrates respect for professor and other classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43/50</td>
<td>Usually (most classes) constructively participates in all class activities and discussions; demonstrates insight by asking questions or making statements that are relevant, add to, and facilitate the class discussion. Usually demonstrates respect for professor and other classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35/50</td>
<td>Demonstrates consistent attendance and preparation; makes little to no verbal contributions to class discussions, but participates in class activities; may occasionally arrive late to class. Generally demonstrates respect for professor and other classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/50</td>
<td>Demonstrates inconsistent attendance/timeliness/preparation in class activities; may occasionally be unengaged in class activities and/or is disruptive/distracting or disrespectful in class; is frequently not prepared, regularly arrives late to class; occasionally uses laptop/cell phone, etc. during class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0/50</td>
<td>Demonstrates consistently poor attendance and consistently poor preparation; is unengaged or fails to participate in class activities; may be disruptive/distracting or disrespectful in class to others; occasionally uses laptop/cell phones, etc. during class.</td>
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Structured Interview Questions Deliverable (20 points)
Following our structured interviewing workshop and using job analysis information, you will be asked to create three structured interview questions for use in interviewing candidates for a specific position. Each question must include a lead question, appropriate probing (follow-up) questions, and a descriptive rating scale. You must submit your deliverable to SafeAssign (on Bb) and bring a paper copy to class on the due date. Late deliverables will receive a three point deduction immediately and an additional one point deduction for each 24 hour period of lateness. No deliverables will be accepted 72 hours past the due date/time. Additional instructions are provided on Blackboard.

Team HR Consulting Project (30 points)
Instructions for this project are posted on Blackboard. Your individual grade will be based on my assessment of your final deliverable and your team member’s assessment of the quality of your individual contributions. The due date for the final deliverable is noted on the syllabus. One team member must submit your final deliverable to SafeAssign (on Bb), and bring a paper copy to class on the due date. Late deliverables will receive a three point deduction immediately and an additional one point deduction for each 24 hour period of lateness. No deliverables will be accepted 72 hours past the due date/time. Further materials and instructions will be provided on Blackboard. Instructions will be reviewed in class.

Team Case Discussion Leadership (15 points)
Your team will facilitate the discussion of one of our cases. Your team will choose a case from the list provided in the instructions on Blackboard. Your team will lead a discussion of the case and present relevant laws, concepts, HR practices, and conclude with your recommendations to the class (see instructions or class schedule for dates for each case). Your team will have the opportunity to choose a case during our 3rd class meeting.

Final Exam (45 points)
The final exam will take place during finals week (see syllabus for the specific date/time). The exam will be cumulative and require integration of all course topics. The format of the final exam will be short answer/essay.
Course Schedule

Unless otherwise specified, readings (cases, articles, chapters) must be complete before the class period when they will be discussed. Readings can be downloaded from e-Reserves or Harvard Business School Publishing, as noted in course syllabus (links to each source are provided on Blackboard). Please note that the assigned readings and assignments are subject to change. Adjustments will be discussed throughout the semester so please keep current.

August 29 - Class 1
- Review syllabus
- Discuss Strategic HR Management

September 3 – Last day to add, last day to drop with no tuition penalty

September 5 - Class 2 – Strategic HR cases
- Due – Discussion Question 1 (submit to Bb BEFORE the beginning of class)
- Bring a calculator to class
- Case Discussions
  - Evaluating the Recruiting Function (e-Reserves)
  - The Human Resource Function of Harrison Brothers (e-Reserves)
- Choose Teams, select case

September 12 - Class 3 – Employee Selection Structured Exercises (see “Employee Selection Structured Exercises” section of Bb for materials)
- Read (or re-read) the Basic of Validity
- Read the Employee Selection Structured Exercises Student Workbook
- Bring a copy of the Employee Selection Structured Exercises Student Workbook (paper or electronic) to class

September 19 - Class 4 – Employee Selection Structured Exercises (finish, if needed), Selection cases, begin Structured Interviewing (if time allows)
- Finish Employee Selection Structured Exercises
- Due: Discussion Question 2 (submit to Bb BEFORE the beginning of class)
- Case discussions
  - We Googled You (Harvard, author: Diane Contu)
  - The Ethical Selection Dilemma at Integrity Motors (e-Reserves)

September 26 - Class 5 – Structured Interviewing
- Structured Interviewing workshop

September 27 – Final drop deadline
October 3 - Class 6 – Employment law, guest speaker
- Due: Discussion Question 3 (submit to Bb BEFORE the beginning of class)
- Case discussion: Fat Chance (Harvard, authors: Brownwyn Fryer & Julia Kirby) – facilitated by Mr. Stern

October 10 - Class 7 – Performance Management cases, Compensation Exercise
- Due: Structured Interview Questions (see instructions on Bb, submit to SafeAssign, bring a paper copy to class)
- Due: Discussion Question 4 (submit to Bb BEFORE the beginning of class)
- Case discussions:
  ◦ The Coach Who Got Poached (Harvard, author: Idalene F. Kesner)
  ◦ Indispensable (Harvard, author: John Beeson)
- Begin Designing a Pay Structure Exercise (all exercise materials on located in the “Designing a Pay Structure Exercise” section of Bb)
  ◦ Read the Designing a Pay Structure Student Workbook
  ◦ Bring a PAPER copy of the Student Workbook to class
  ◦ Bring a laptop computer to class (with Excel), if possible.
  ◦ Download Compensation Exercise worksheet to laptop before class

October 17 - Class 8 – Compensation Exercise, Briefing on Consulting Project
- Finish Designing a Pay Structure Exercise (all exercise materials on located in the “Designing a Pay Structure Exercise” section of Bb)
  ◦ Read the Designing a Pay Structure Student Workbook
  ◦ Bring a PAPER copy of the Student Workbook to class
  ◦ Bring a laptop computer to class (with Excel), if possible.
  ◦ Download Compensation Exercise worksheet to laptop before class

October 24 - Class 9 – HR/Management Career Panel, Compensation cases
- Due: Discussion Question 5 (submit to Bb BEFORE the beginning of class)
- HR/Management Career Panel
- Case discussions:
  ◦Allocating Merit Raises (e-Reserves)
  ◦ When Salaries Aren’t Secret (Harvard, author: John Case)
- Team time (if time allows)

October 31 - Class 10 – Retention cases, Union/Labor Relations
- Due: Discussion Question 6 (submit to Bb BEFORE the beginning of class)
- Case discussion:
  ◦ Why Are We Losing All Our Good People? (Harvard, author: Edward E. Lawler III)
  ◦ Mommy-Track Backlash (Harvard, author: Alden M. Hayashi)
- Begin Union/Labor Relations
- Read textbook Chapter 17
- Team time
November 7 - Class 11 – Employee Relations cases, Union/Labor Relations
- Due: Discussion Question 7 (submit to Bb BEFORE the beginning of class)
- Case discussions:
  ◦ Caught in the Act (e-Reserves)
  ◦ Can He Wear an Earring to Work? (e-Reserves)
  ◦ The Reign of Zero Tolerance (Harvard, authors: Ben Gerson, Janet Parker, Eugene Volokh, Jean Halloran, and Michael G. Cherkasky)
- Finish Union/Labor Relations
- Team time

November 14 - Class 12 – Union/Management Relations case, Risk Management and Worker Protection
- Due: Discussion Question 8 (submit to Bb BEFORE the beginning of class)
- Case discussion:
  ◦ Does This Company Need a Union? (Harvard, author: Constantine Von Hoffman)
- Risk Management and Worker Protection
- Read textbook Chapter 15
- Team time

November 21 - Class 13 – Risk Management and Worker Protection cases, Global HRM
- Due: Team HR Consulting Project (see instructions on Bb, one team member must submit final deliverable to SafeAssign, bring a paper copy to class)
- Due: Discussion Question 9 (submit to Bb BEFORE the beginning of class)
- Case discussions:
  ◦ Drug Testing Problem at Standard Chemical (e-Reserves)
  ◦ Spiked Milk (e-Reserves)
  ◦ Debra Taylor (distributed in class)
- Global HR

November 28 – Thanksgiving recess, no class

December 5 – Class 14 – Global HR cases
- Due: Discussion Question 10 (submit to Bb BEFORE the beginning of class)
- Case discussions:
  ◦ Fred Bailey: Innocent Abroad (e-Reserves)
  ◦ Selecting a Manager for a Nigerian Facility (e-Reserves)
- Review for Final Exam

December 12 - Final Exam, 1:30 – 4:15pm