MGMT 321 – Introduction to Human Resource Management  
Thursdays 7:20 – 10:00pm (Section 003)

Course Syllabus and Schedule

Professor: Dr. Cindy Parker  
Email: cparker8@gmu.edu (preferred method of contact)  
Office: 210 Enterprise Hall  
Phone: (703) 993-4184  
Office Hours: Thursdays 6:00 – 7:00pm (by appointment only – please email me in advance to make arrangements)  
Course uses Blackboard (Courses 9.1): http://mymason.gmu.edu (note: username and passwords are the same as your Mason Mail account).

COURSE OBJECTIVES & FORMAT

Course Description: A broad survey of all areas of human resources management, designed to provide line supervisors and/or staff human resource specialists with a thorough understanding of the role of human resource management and the techniques available to management in making effective use of the human resources of an organization.

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.

4. **Students will integrate key components of human resource management.** (Including: selection, training, compensation, strategic human resource planning, performance evaluation, employee relations, and employment law).

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:  
This class is identified as a Students as Scholars Discovery of Scholarship course, designed to introduce students to scholarship, and include some active or inquiry-based learning. The learn more about Students as Scholars, visit Oscar.gmu.edu.

In this Discovery of Scholarship course, students will:

1. Define the function of human resource management in an organization.
2. Identify the many specific components of an effective human resource program.
3. Integrate organizational human resource needs with concepts of human needs and theories of motivation.
4. Develop skills in analyzing human resource problems and determining appropriate solutions.
5. Demonstrate ability to integrate theoretical concepts into policy decisions regarding human resource matters.

The course will focus on active learning and will mix a lecture-based approach with discussion and application. Research strongly suggests that active learning in conjunction with traditional lecture-based teaching methods is effective for student learning and skill-building. Successful active learning requires a major investment from both of us. You will need to study the assigned readings before each class meeting, do a fair amount of thinking, and be prepared to contribute to the class discussion.

MATERIALS

1. Strongly recommended: Human Resource Management, 15th, Ed. Mathis & Jackson (2017), Cengage Learning. Text can be used as a resource to supplement your MGMT 321 notes and for coverage of new topics. (Note: a copy of the textbook is available for two-hour loan in the JC library). This text will also be used in MGMT 421 (Advanced Human Resource Management).

2. Required: HR Cases on e-reserve: Use the link provided on Blackboard to access the cases on e-reserve. Please access and print these cases as soon as possible to ensure that you have a hard-copy of each case.

**NOTE: Please bring a copy of relevant cases with you to each class, per the course schedule.

Appointments and e-mail. I strongly urge you to contact me to ask questions, clarify assignments, or obtain additional help. It is best to contact me via email to set up a phone or in-person appointment (cparker8@gmu.edu).

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 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

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 in person. 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. If the University closes or our class does not meet in person due to inclement weather, I will make every attempt to create an “on-line” class session (accessible via Blackboard) so that we can remain on schedule and not have to use make-up days at the end of the semester. As such, if we do not meet in person please be sure to check your email for further instructions from me as to how we will stay on schedule.

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. If possible, I would prefer that you do not use a laptop computer or tablet to take notes, as many students become distracted and inattentive by using such devices. If you choose to use electronic methods to take notes, you are expected to use such technology ONLY for class purposes. If either I or your fellow
students become distracted by your use of technology, or if I believe that you are being overly inattentive to the course activities, I will ask you to discontinue using technology during class.

**ABSENCE/LATE ASSIGNMENTS**
If you miss a class, you may access the slides used in class on the course website. I would strongly suggest that you also ask a classmate for his/her notes as it is likely that key points will be brought up in class discussion and may not be captured on the slides. 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 have time to “re-do” the lecture, nor will I have documented class notes.

**Make-up Exams**: Make-up examinations will not be given unless a student has a university-validated excuse that the instructor is notified of in advance of the examination. Without exception, students who request a make-up exam will be asked to provide appropriate documentation before a make-up exam is scheduled. Failure to provide appropriate documentation will result in a score of zero for the exam. Make-up exams must be completed within two weekdays of the original exam date. Per School of Business policy, approval of absence from the final exam must be obtained from the Assistant Dean of Academic and Career Services before a make-up exam will be arranged.

**Attendance**: While attendance itself is not evaluated, you cannot earn credit for assessments if you are not in class. Therefore, it is clearly in your best interest to attend class and arrive to class on time.

**Lateness**: Lateness is disruptive and disrespectful to both me and to your fellow students. Often assessments will be given at the very beginning of the class. No additional time will be allocated for late arrivals for any reason, and you will not be permitted to complete the assessment if it has already been collected. Every effort should be made to be in class on time and ready for the topic(s) of the day. Please allow time for traffic or parking problems, as these are frequent occurrences in our area and our school. In addition, I would prefer that the desks nearest the door be left open for late students so that they may easily find a seat with minimum disruption to the class.

**COMMUNITY STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR**
The mission of the School of Business at George Mason University is to create and deliver high quality educational programs and research. Students, faculty, staff, and alumni that 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 School of Business community. In doing so, they agree to abide by the following Community 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. The School of Business 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 School of Business. Through our personal commitment to these Community Standards of Behavior, we can create an environment in which all can achieve their full potential.

In order to maintain a respectful and distraction-free learning environment,

- Be unobtrusive when entering late
- Do not interrupt me or classmates
- Please turn off all cell phones and other handheld electronic devices
- Attend class on time

HONOR SYSTEM AND CODE
The Honor System and Code adopted by George Mason University will be enforced for this class. I take honor code violations very seriously and will not hesitate to forward all suspected violations to the Honor Committee for review and adjudication. For a full description of this code please refer to the following url:
http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=1039#Honor

Group participation is permissible during in-class small group exercises and while studying for Exams. Discussion with other previous or current MGMT 321 students (in any section) with regard to the HR System Proposal assignment should be limited to format and structure and not include content. Outside sources consulted in your HR System Proposal must be appropriately cited with the body of your paper and on the reference page. No discussion or study aids will be permitted while taking exams, and students will not be permitted to leave the classroom once they have begun their exam. No discussion between students about any aspect of the exams or assessments is permitted.

EVALUATION
Your learning in this course will be evaluated by the following tools: Examinations, HR System Proposal, and Assessments.

Examinations (135 points). Three exams (non-cumulative, 45 points each) will consist of objective test questions (e.g., multiple-choice, true/false) and short-answer/short-essay questions. The exams will cover the chapters assigned in the book, additional assigned readings, and any information (e.g., videos, cases) covered or discussed during class. Students are required to bring SCANTRON forms (available in the bookstore) and #2 pencils to each of the exams. I will provide paper for the written portion of the exam. I will post an exam study guide on Blackboard approximately five calendar days before each exam. In addition, I will hold a question and answer session about the student guide during the class meeting immediately prior to each exam.

Recruiting Proposal (20 points). You will write a proposal for developing a recruiting strategy for a specific job. Detailed instructions for this assignment are provided on Blackboard – please review these instructions, which will be discussed and clarified shortly after the first exam. To turn in your paper, you must submit your paper to SafeAssign on Blackboard – you do NOT have to provide me with a paper copy of your paper. In order to be considered “on time,” your paper must be submitted no later than the beginning of class on the due date. Your paper will not be graded until it is submitted to Blackboard.

I will create two different SafeAssigns for the paper: Draft and Final. The “Draft” SafeAssign is for your use only. You can submit a draft version of your paper to the “Draft” SafeAssign to check for plagiarism issues. I will not view or grade papers submitted to the “Draft” SafeAssign. You must
submit your final paper (the one I will grade) to the “Final” SafeAssign. Please let me know if you have any questions about SafeAssign or the paper submission process.

Late submissions: HR Proposals are due at the beginning of the class period on their due date. If you do not submit your paper to the “Final” SafeAssign by the beginning of class on the due date, four (4) points will be deducted immediately. Two (2) additional points will be deducted for each 24 hour period of lateness. NO paper will be accepted after 72 hours from the time the proposal was due.

**Assessments (25 points).** Before each class you are expected to read the assigned material (text AND cases, if applicable). Throughout the course of the semester there will an opportunity to show that you are prepared through short pop-quizzes or in-class writing assignments. These assessments are meant to check that you have read and understood the material so that the class discussion will be maximally beneficial to you and your fellow students. **Helpful tip:** Please consult the course schedule and note the dates that we will be discussing each HR case. Be sure to read each case before the class period when it will be discussed.

There will be seven assessments, each worth five points. Your two lowest assessment grades will be dropped and your highest five assessment grades will count toward your Assessment point total. Therefore, there will be no make-up assessments if you miss one, regardless of the reason. Please note that there may be more than one assessment in a single class period, or they may be none. Assessments are unannounced and can be given during any point during the class session. **Please do not ask me before class if there will be an assessment on a particular day (as noted above, assessments are unannounced).** There will be limited time provided to complete each assessment, and no extra time will be provided for late arrivals. Assessments must be completed during the class period assigned, and will not be accepted outside of class.

Points for quizzes will be earned by correctly answering multiple choice and/or short-answer questions related to the topic(s) of the day. Points for writing assignments will be earned by fully addressing the question, making clear connections between concepts from the readings or cases, and integrating material discussed in class. **Note:** I reserve the right to assign “0” points to students who leave class after turning in an assessment.

**Interview Preparation and Practice (20 points).** Your professional development is important to me, and I want to do my part to ensure that you are prepared to enter the job market (if you aren’t already there!). Having strong interviewing skills is key to obtaining a job, as interviewing is the primary selection tool used by most organizations. It is important to develop your interviewing skills now so that you are sufficiently prepared for real-life interviews. Therefore, as part of this course you will complete several activities related to interview preparation and practice. First, you will review an interviewing preparation webinar created by University Career Services and take a brief assessment on Blackboard to verify your understanding of the webinar’s content (5 points). Second, using a web-based interviewing practice tool, you will video record yourself acting as a candidate in a simulated interview. I will grade the video of your interview using the grading rubric on Blackboard (15 points). Please note the due date for the webinar assessment and video on the syllabus. You are welcome – and encouraged - to complete this assignment at any point during the semester. **Students who complete the interview assessment AND interview video at least one week prior to the deadline will receive two points of extra credit.**

Late submissions: The deadline for completing the interview assessment and interview video is the beginning of class on the date specified on the syllabus. If the webinar assessment is not completed on time, one point will be deducted immediately. An additional point will be deducted for each 24 hour period of lateness. No assessments will be accepted after 48 hours from the due date. If the video interview is not completed on time, four (4) points will be deducted immediately. Two (2) additional points will be deducted for each 24 hour period of lateness. NO video will be accepted after 72 hours from the time it was due.

*MGMT 321: Syllabus and Course Schedule*
**Extra Credit.** The only extra credit opportunity offered in this class is related to early submission of the Interview Preparation and Practice assignment (described above). *Please note that under no circumstances will extra credit be offered to individual students.*

**GRADING**

I take grading very seriously and I assign grades based strictly on the number of points earned and the grading scale presented on the following page. In general, the more proactive you are in dealing with your coursework throughout the course of the semester, the less of a likelihood there will be of a grade "problem" or surprise. I am committed to grading assessments, papers and exams in a timely fashion and will post points on Blackboard on a regular basis. Please check your grades on Blackboard throughout the semester so that you know where you stand with regards to points. *If you are concerned about your grade, please see me as soon as possible so that I can provide advice about how to make the most of future opportunities to earn points.* Remember, I want nothing more than for you to succeed and I am willing to work with you so that you can attain your goals.

**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>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Please note that the assigned readings are subject to change. Read text and cases prior to class on the assigned date. Adjustments will be discussed throughout the semester so please keep current.

- **Text** = Mathis and Jackson Textbook
- **HR Cases** = Human Resources Cases on e-reserve (see the link on Blackboard to access the cases. Print/bring each case to class on the day of its discussion)

**September 1**

Topic: Course Introduction  
Bring a copy of the syllabus with you to class  
Topic: Human Resource Management in Organizations  
Read Text: Ch. 1

**September 5**

Labor Day – University closed, no class

**September 6**

Last day to add classes, last day to drop with no tuition penalty
September 8  
Topic: Individual/Organization Relations and Retention; Equal Employment Opportunity (begin)  
Read Text: Ch. 5; Text: Ch. 3, Appendix C, Appendix F

September 15  
Topic: Equal Employment Opportunity  
Read Text: Ch. 3, Appendix C, Appendix F  
*Read HR Cases: “Bad Hair Day” or Religious Custom?  
*Read The Basics of Validity (document posted on Blackboard)

September 22  
Topic: Equal Employment Opportunity (finish); Human Resource Strategy and Planning; Case discussion; Exam 1 Review  
Read Text Ch. 2; Read HR Case: *Someone Has to Go: A Tough Layoff Decision*

September 29  
Exam 1 (Chapters 1 – 3, 5). No lecture after exam

September 30  
Final drop deadline

October 6  
Topic: Workforce, Jobs, and Job Analysis, Recruiting High Quality Talent (start)  
Read Text: Ch. 4; Ch. 6

October 13  
Topics: Recruiting High Quality Talent (finish); Selecting Human Resources (start)  
Read Text: Ch. 6; Ch.7, Appendix D, Appendix E

October 20  
Topic: Selecting Human Resources (finish), Selection case  
Read Text: Ch.7, Appendix D, Appendix E  
*Read HR Cases: Job Analysis and Hiring Decisions at Ovania Chemical*  
Due: Recruiting Proposal (submit using the “Final” SafeAssign link on Blackboard)

October 27  
Topic: Total Rewards and Compensation, Variable Pay  
Read Text: Ch. 11 & 12

November 3  
Exam 2 (Chapters 4, 6, 7, 11, 12), No lecture after exam

November 10  
Topic: Training Human Resources; Talent, Careers, and Development  
Read Text: Ch. 8; Ch. 9  
Optional: Extra credit deadline for Interviewing Preparation and Practice Assignments (complete interview assessment and video interview no later than the beginning of class on this date to receive two points extra credit)
November 17
Topic:  Training Case, Performance Management and Appraisal
Read Text: Ch. 10
Read HR case:  The Training and Development Dilemma at Whitney and Co.
Due:  Interviewing Practice and Preparation (Assessment must be completed by beginning of class, video of interview must be completed by the beginning of class. You may complete these assignments early!).

November 24
Thanksgiving Recess – no class

December 1
Topic:  Performance Management cases, Employee Rights and Responsibilities
Read Text: Ch. 15
Read HR Cases:  Goodyear Ends Ratings System Ahead of Discrimination Suit; Realigning HR Practices at Egan’s Clothiers

December 8
Topic:  Employee Rights cases, Managing Employee Benefits, Review for Exam 3
Read Text: Ch. 13
Read HR Cases:  Wrongful Discharge or Simply “Poor Performance?; Ok- Who’s Telling the Truth?

December 15, 7:30 – 10:15pm (exam administered in regular classroom)
Exam 3 (Chapters 8, 9, 10, 13, 15)