An interview is a “conversation with a purpose”. When it comes to the management of work organizations the use of the interview is ubiquitous. The “purpose” to which it is put incredibly varied. It is also true that the impact of an interview, no matter how it is used, has major consequences. For the individual, employment opportunities or promotions can be won or lost. For managers the quality of their work team can be put at risk. And for the organization how the interview is used will have an impact on the quality of the work force that is employed and thus on the kind of benefits or risks that its employees might bring to the workplace.

This Honors Seminar is designed to explore the current status of the interview as applied to work contexts.

There is both a “practice” and a “science” associated with the interview. The goal of the seminar is to acquaint students with current organizational practices and the most recent research findings regarding the nature and dynamics involved when using the interview to make important personnel decisions. We will focus on the application of the interview to such contexts as recruiting, selection, promotion, performance management, criminal investigation and certifications. We will adopt a multiple stakeholder perspective. We will examine interview dynamics as experienced by those affected by its use including candidates, managers and third parties. In doing all of this we will identify best practices. Finally, the seminar will look toward the future. We will imagine potentially new formats or new applications for the interview. We will uncover what kind of studies must be
conducted so that any new applications are built on the best research evidence possible. Thus readings, class discussions and assignments will be geared toward stimulating students’ thinking about the kind of future research which will truly advance our understanding and our knowledge on the dynamics of the interview.

Professor: Richard Klimoski
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Office: 214 Enterprise Hall
Phone: (703) 993-1828
Office Hours: Wednesday 3-4 (by arrangement only)
Course Uses Blackboard: http://mymason.gmu.edu


Goals
As a result of taking this course, you will be able to:

- Describe the major forces that influence the behavior of individuals as they participate in an interview in work settings
- Better interpret technical papers regarding the interview
- Envision the way that the interview is likely to evolve in light of new technologies and business practices.
- Be more effective when participating in the interview as a manager or as a candidate

Course Standards
As participants in an honors course I will expect you to take responsibility for learning and performing well. This will involve a commitment to expend the effort required to carefully read and master course material and to ensure the timeliness and quality of assignment work products. Because we will be using a seminar format you should also be prepared to fully participate in class discussions and in doing so, to contribute to the learning of your class mates.

Assignments

1. Articles: For most meetings, you will be expected to locate and read a scientific article published in one of the many academic journals that report research findings on the interview. These include the Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology, Academy of Management Journal, International Journal of Selection and Assessment. The choice of
the article to present will be yours to make. But the content covered should correspond to
the topic that we will be covering in class at the time. You should prepare a summary of the
article according to the format provided and submit this summary via Blackboard by the
date assigned. Also bring a hard copy to class.

2. Articles briefing. During our class sessions you will be expected to describe the article that
you read and then go on to entertain questions. The goal will be to ensure that the other
students in the class are fully briefed. Guidance on how to do this will be provided. But your
briefing should be sufficiently detailed to include such things as the study’s purpose and why
the topic is important, the research methods employed, the way that the study contributes
to our knowledge or how the results might be applied by managers.

3. Participation. This is at the core of a good Honors Seminar experience. You will be expected
to come to class prepared to discuss the material assigned. You should also plan to pose
questions or otherwise engage fellow students in discussions regarding the articles that they
choose to present. You will also have many opportunities to add value to class sessions by
sharing your views and critical analysis regarding the material that might present.

4. Term project-Option A: Literature review. This involves a review of the technical literature
on a topic related to the interview. You can choose the topic because it is important to
understanding the dynamics of the interview or is of personal interest for you. But you
should select a topic because you feel that doing so would help us gain a better
understanding of a key aspect of the interview as applied to the world of work. The paper
should demonstrate your capacity for analytic thinking, for making clear and compelling
arguments regarding the conclusions you wish to present and for good writing. Your paper
should build on no fewer than ten original sources.

5. Term project-Option B: Field study. This involves engaging with one or more respondents
who are involved in conducting one of the specialized interviews being discussed in the
course. The goal is to gain first hand insights relative to the nature and challenges of using
that interview form in professional work. It will also be important to learn the practitioner’s
view regarding the kind of research that should be conducted to help him or her meet some
of these challenges from this field study. More details on this assignment will be provided.

Potential interview types (applications) that might be chosen for this assignment include:
- Work force recruiting interview (e.g. civilian or military)
- Work force selection interview
- Training performance feedback interview
- Job performance feedback interview
- Job promotion interview
- Forensic (criminal investigation) interview
- Court/litigation interview (divorce, child custody)
- Security clearance interview
- Clinical/psychiatric interview
- Competency/certification/licensing interview
- Market research interview
- Focus group interview
- Political preference polling interview
- Census data gathering interview
6. **Presentation of lessons learned from the term project.** Students will have an opportunity to provide a briefing to the class at the end of the semester relative to what they learned from doing their term project. Guidance will be provided on how to do this.

**Grading**

Articles (submitted according to schedule): 20%

Articles (briefed): 10%

Term project draft: proposal topic/rationale: 20%

Project presentation: 10%

Term Project: 20%

Class participation: 20%

**Logistics**

**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 (rklimosk@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. 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.

**Cell Phones, Pagers.** These items are to remain off and put away during the entire class.

**Laptops, Tablets, Smartphones.** To be used in class only to support class discussions or learning goals.

**Community 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 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 Management (SOM) 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. 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. 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](http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=1039#Honor)
Course outline/schedule

January 23

Welcome

Introductions/personal experience with the Interview

Course overview, review of syllabus

Orientation: The many applications of the Interview in the world of work

Text: Chapter 1

January 30

Validity/comparative benefits of the Interview

Text: Chapter 2

Article 1 due


February 6

Psychological constructs assessed in the Interview

Text: Chapter 6, 7, 8

Article 2 due


February 13

Interview structure

Text: Chapter 9, 10

Article 3 due

February 20

Judgment and Decision making in the Interview

Text: Chapter 3, 12, 13,

Article 4 due


February 27

Interpersonal processes/impression management in the Interview

Text: Chapter 4, 17, 18

Article 5


March 6

Techniques/ approaches used to elicit insights or information in the Interview

Text: Chapter 10, 16

Article 6 due


Term project proposal due

March 13

No class-Spring Break

March 20

Training/preparation for the Interview

Text: Chapter 14, 15, 19

Article 7 due

March 27

Contextual forces affecting interview practices and processes

Text: Chapter 11

Article 8 due


April 3

The Interview and global/cross-cultural issues

Text: Chapter 21

Article 9 due


April 10

No class (Presentation preparation)

April 17

Presentations

April 24

Presentations

May 1

Presentations

May 4

Term paper due (may be submitted earlier)

(11/29/12)