COURSE OBJECTIVES & FORMAT

This course will expose students to the strategic role human resources play in maximizing the value of the workforce. Organizations in today's economy rely not only on the knowledge and skills of their employees, but also on their engagement with the work and each other and their commitment to the organization's mission. As such, the management of human talent is a responsibility of every manager, in partnership with the HR function, and is vital to the success of any organization. The coverage of course concepts will be approached from both from a general manager's perspective as well as from an HR perspective. Students in this course will be acquainted with current talent management matters facing organizations in today's business environment and will be challenged to generate and debate creative solutions to prevalent issues.

MBA Program Learning Goals Assessed in this Course

Knowledge of Functional Business Disciplines: Our graduates will demonstrate knowledge of all core functional areas of business and an ability to integrate them into a meaningful firm-level perspective.

Ethics and Social Responsibility: Our graduates will demonstrate knowledge of the legal and ethical environment of management and business social responsibility.

Course Learning Objectives. At the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Understand the strategic role of human resources management in supporting the business objectives of an organization.

2. Identify human resource systems and practices available to build a skilled and motivated workforce.

3. Explain the laws and regulations affecting human resources management as well as to apply ethical decision making to situations involving human resources.
4. Critique, improve, and integrate various components of a human resources system.

5. Demonstrate skill in analyzing human resource problems and determine appropriate solutions.

**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 reading assignments, and be prepared to contribute to the class and group discussions. *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.* 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. Class time will be divided between lecture, group work, and class discussion of articles and concepts.

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**REQUIRED MATERIALS**


**Harvard Business Review (HBR) Articles:** Go to library.gmu.edu, click on “e-Journals” and search for Harvard Business Review. Click on the year as noted in the course schedule to find the articles.

**Course Pack:** A set of readings from Harvard Business Online is required for this course. Please, click on the link order the course materials: [https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/23439759](https://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/23439759)

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. You will have access to the 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://hbsp.harvard.edu](http://hbsp.harvard.edu) and click on “My Coursepacks”. If you have any problems please 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

**Membership (optional):** *Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Student Membership*. Go to [www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org) for information and benefits.

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**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 (vgrady3@gmu.edu).

**Absence:** 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 our group discussions will not be captured on the slides.

- **SCHOOL OF BUSINESS 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 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 School of Business 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. 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.

Honor System and Code: The Honor System and Code adopted by George Mason University will be enforced for this class: [www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode](http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode). 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 acknowledgement. Also, you may not borrow the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgement. Please note: Faculty are obligated to submit any Honor Code violations or suspected violations to the Honor Committee without exception.

Writing Guidelines: Unless otherwise specified, all writing assignments should be formatted as follows: double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, and 1-inch margins. To cite and reference professional or academic sources, please use APA style. Specific instructions for in-text citations and referencing are found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 6th Edition or at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/).

Electronic Devices: These items (including Blackberries, PDA’s, Laptops, etc.) are to remain silent and put away during the entire class.

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.

Late Assignments: All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. A 5% deduction of points will be taken for every 24 hours the assignment is late. NO assignments will be accepted after one week from the time the assignment was due.

EVALUATION

Your learning in this course will be evaluated by the following components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Total Points</th>
<th>% Of Grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic HR Initiative</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Case Discussion</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation/Team Contribution</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Team Case Discussion (15%) As a team or pair, choose a case from the list provided in the Team Case Discussion instructions. Your team will lead a discussion of the case and present relevant laws, concepts, HR practices, and recommendations to the class on the date a related topic is being discussed (see class schedule for dates for each case). In addition, a 2-page (single spaced) executive summary is required including: key questions and/or assumptions pertinent to the case to be considered by the class, your group’s answers to these questions, review of relevant laws, professional standards, ethics, etc. pertinent to the case/incident, and recommended actions that should be taken with a rationale.
The grade will be based not only on substantive content, but also on how thoughtful and provocative the team’s questions are and how well the discussion engages the audience (i.e., debates, role-plays, audience participation, etc. are encouraged!). You must be present on the day your group is to lead the case discussion in order to receive credit. Each group member must have an equal role in the presentation. Complete instructions for this assignment are posted on the Blackboard site.

Strategic HR Initiative. (25%) Due: Proposal – February 16th; Final Paper - April 6th
The purpose of this assignment is to identify an opportunity for implementing a strategic HR initiative that will have measurable benefits for an organization. You may choose to develop this initiative for a current or previous employer or for an organization in which you have access or are familiar. Complete instructions for this assignment are posted on the Blackboard site.

Participation/Team Contribution (10%)
The nature of this course requires your preparation and willingness to share your insights with the class. Your participation grade will be formally evaluated through submission of assignments, the quality of your contributions to our class discussions, engagement in team case discussions, questions for guest speakers, etc. Prepare for these opportunities by reading the assigned material before coming to class and be prepared to provide your insights and views on the course topics and cases. Your participation points will be based on the quality of your contributions (e.g., incorporating course concepts, adding unique insights or ideas, identifying less-obvious solutions or underlying issues).

Please note: There are written assignments that will be handed in during class as specified in the course schedule.

In addition, your contribution to your team case discussion project will also be part of your participation grade. You will have the opportunity to evaluate yourself and the other team members on the quality of their contribution to the project. The team contribution rating form is posted on Blackboard. I encourage you to review this form before you begin work on the project so you will know for what you and others will be held accountable.

I will track participation points throughout the semester. If you have any concerns about your participation grade at any point during the semester, please ask me.

Exams: Mid-Term (25%); Final Exam (25%)
Exams provide the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to apply knowledge of topics covered in this course. The exams will be taken in class using the Blackboard site. The exam questions will be short answer/ essay format and you be able to refer to your notes and course reading material when preparing your typed answers. However, accessing any other information, including websites, during the exam is not allowed and would constitute an honor code violation. Please note: This exam is an individual assignment. Communicating with or sharing information with others about the exam will constitute an honor code violation.

GRADING SCALE
Your grade will be assigned based on the number of points you earn as noted above. Below is the grading scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>193-200</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>187-192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>180-186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>174-179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>167-173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>160-166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>140-159</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 140</td>
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</table>
Please note that the assigned readings and assignments are subject to change. Adjustments will be discussed throughout the semester so please keep current.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics and Activities</th>
<th>Required Reading and Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1     | 2/2  | • Course introduction and review of syllabus & assignments  
|       |      | • Management/HR Partnerships  | Read Syllabus and Assignments  
|       |      |                         | **Text:** Chapter 1 – Managing Strategic HR Today |
| 2     | 2/9  | • Strategic Human Capital Proposal Discussion  
|       |      | • Recruitment and Retention  
|       |      | • Managing Age in the Workplace  | **Text:** Chapter 3 pgs. 58-66; **Chapter** 8 – Managing Employee Engagement and Retention pgs. 236-240  
|       |      |                         | **HBS Coursepack:**  
|       |      |                         | • *Practical Tools for Management Decisions: Making the Numbers Work for You  
|       |      |                         | • *Cost-Benefit Analyses for HR Interventions  
|       |      |                         | *These readings are references for your Strategic HR Initiative paper  
|       |      |                         | **Other Articles:**  
|       |      |                         | • How Gen Y and Boomers Will Reshape Your Agenda, HBR, July-August, 2009.  
|       | 2/16 | • Strategic HR Initiative Proposal—Peer Review  
|       |      | • Team Case Discussion  
|       |      | • Selection  
|       |      | • Behavioral Interviewing  | **DUE:** Strategic HR Initiative Proposal—**PEER REVIEW**  
|       |      |                         | **Text:** Chapter 4 – Testing and Selecting Employees pgs. 100-111; 119-126; Chapter 3 pgs 66-89;  
|       |      |                         | **Other Articles:**  
|       | 2/17 | **LAST DAY TO DROP COURSE**  
|       | 2/23 | • Management and the Law  
|       |      | • Team Case Discussion  | **SUBMIT Paper Copy of Strategic HR Initiative Proposal**  
|       |      |                         | **Text:** Chapter 2 - Managing Equal Opportunity and Diversity  
|       |      |                         | **Guest Speaker:** Stephen Stern, Employment Attorney  
|       |      |                         | **Other Articles:**  

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</table>
|       |      | • Team Case Discussion • Security, Health and Benefits | **Guest Speaker:** Brian Hanfling, Senior Consultant in Health & Group Benefits, Towers Watson  
*Text:* Chapter 10 - Protecting Safety and Health & Ch. 7 pgs. 203-211 |
| 5     | 3/2  | • Mid-Term Exam • Team Case Discussion | **Guest Speaker:** Marnie Milhiser, Compliance and Risk Management Officer for Johnson Sterling, Inc  
**In-Class Case Discussion:** The Use of Social Media for Employee Recruitment and Selection |
| 6     | 3/9  | • Performance Management • Team Case Discussion | **DUE:** Case Analysis – Alex Sander  
*Text:* Chapter 6: Performance Management, Appraisals, and Careers  
**HBR:**  
- Fear of Feedback, HBR, April 2003  
- How to Motivate Your Problem People, HBR, January 2003  
**HBS Coursepack:**  
- A Day in the Life of Alex Sander Case  
- Feedback that Works, Harvard MGMT Update, 2009  
**Guest Speaker:** Shelley Kirkpatrick, Director of Assessment Services, Management Concepts |
| 7     | 3/16 | • Compensation • Ethics • Team Case Discussion | *Text:* Chapter 7 – Compensating Employees pgs. 187-203; 211-215  
**HBR:**  
- A Simpler Way to Pay, HBR, April 2001  
- Six Dangerous Myths About Pay, HBR, May-June, 1998 |
| 8     | 3/23 | • Career Management • Team Case Discussion | **Guest Speaker:** Professor Richard Larsen – Practical Career Advice  
- “Five Surefire Tips for Great Career Conversations—Without Fear”  
| 9     | 3/30 | • Team Case Discussion • Strategic HR Presentations | **DUE:** Strategic HR Initiative |
| 10    | 4/6  | • Final Exam Due | |

**SHRM Code of Ethics:** [http://www.shrm.org/about/Pages/code-of-ethics.aspx](http://www.shrm.org/about/Pages/code-of-ethics.aspx)