

PA 630 SEMINAR IN PUBLIC PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION
Spring 2009

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Public Personnel Administration is a course designed to introduce students of public administration to the functions, contexts and issues that constitute the field of personnel administration as practiced in the public sector. By the conclusion of this course, students should be able to identify and discuss a wide variety of personnel activities; be knowledgeable about contemporary issues; and understand the values and contexts that compose the public personnel management system. Because effective human resource management is essential to organizational productivity, growth and survival, one of the aims of this seminar is to provide an advanced examination of major issues in the field with an emphasis on practical, theoretical and legal perspectives.

COURSE TEXTS

Human Resource Management in the Public Service Perspective, W. David Patton, et. Al
Public Personnel Administration, N. Joseph Cayer
PA 630 Reader

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class Presentation and Practical Experience:

Each student will pair with one or two other students and be responsible for making a Class presentation and creating a practical experience that relates to the topic that is assigned to you and your teammates. The presentation should be designed to communicate information and material related to the assigned topic. You should not rehash the assigned chapter(s) for your presentation. The presentation should be based on new information related to your topic. This practical experience can be in form of a simulation, game, or case study. You will also need to develop an assessment measure that will indicate the extent to which your classmates learned from the presentation and practical experience. (25%)

Semester Team Research Project and Paper:

A co-authored semester research project and paper is to be based on a contemporary issue in public human resource management that demonstrates the importance of human resource management and its implications for organizational effectiveness. Examples of such issues include but are not limited to topical areas such as Classification, Compensation, Affirmative Action/EEO Policies and Enforcement, Composition of the Workforce/Diversity, Changes in Labor Relations, Downsizing/Layoffs, Employee Benefits, Merit Pay, Recent Changes in Labor and Employment Laws, and Human Resource Information Technology.

The paper should be based on both a thorough literature review (e.g. a review of the pertinent literature/legislation) and field research (e.g. personal research that you do in the field to collect data such as interviews, case studies or survey instruments) assessing at least three local jurisdictions. The literature you review should be thoroughly discussed and provide background for your specific research question. Your field research should either substantiate your hypothesis regarding your research question and/or explain how your finding did not support your assumptions. Your paper should include specific conclusions and recommendations on how human resource management can increase organizational effectiveness/productivity based on your research findings and conclusions.

Papers should be no more than 25 typewritten, double-spaced pages of text (excluding references and endnotes). Your papers should be thoroughly and accurately footnoted/endnoted according to an acceptor format (e.g. University of Chicago Style Guide). Papers will be due on April 28, 2009. Papers may be handed in early in but no late papers will be accepted, except for unforeseen, documents, medical reasons. (60%)

Team Performance Evaluation:

Each team member will complete an evaluation on every member of the team. Evaluations should follow the essay format. Individual strengths and weaknesses should be thoroughly discussed for each team member. These evaluations are also due on the last week of class. Failure to timely turn in performance evaluations will negatively affect your grade.

COURSE OUTLINE

- February 3** Introduction & Public Personnel Frameworks. Patton Chptrs 1-3 and Cayer Ch. 1 Key questions: What are the key values, goals, and functions of Public Personnel Administration? What are the key elements of the personnel management system? Who or what are the sources of support – both internal and external to government for these elements?
- February 10** American Public Personnel History. Cayer Ch. 2 Key Questions: What are the major milestones in the development of American public personnel? What values influence these milestones? How do the values conflict? What are the factors that led to the establishment of the federal civil service and then to civil service reform? What are the apparent improvements in the civil service system?
- February 17** Employee Rights Patton Ch. 4 and Cayer Ch. 7 Key Questions: What rights do employees have in the public work place? Where do these rights come from? Is it ever legal to discriminate in employment? How do employees protect their rights?

February 24 Recruitment Patton Ch. 8 and Cayer Ch. 5 Key Questions: What goals and factors are important for recruitment?

March 3 Planning and Classification Patton Ch. 6 & 7 and Cayer Ch. 3 Key questions: Why is the selection process so critical to personnel? What is test validation and why is it so important? What laws influence the selection process? How do EEO/AA and diversity challenge the traditional approaches to selection?

March 10 & 17
Compensation Patton Chptrs 9 and 10 Cayer Ch. 4 Key Questions
What are the basic purposes of compensation? What is compensation philosophy? What is total compensation? What laws impact compensation?

March 24 Performance Management Patton Ch. 11 Key questions: What are the major purposes of performance evaluation? What are the four characteristics of an effective appraisal system? What is the difference between personality and performance based evaluations? How valid, reliable, and cost-effective are appraisals? What are the legal requirements for a performance evaluation process?

April 7 Training and Development Patton Ch. 12 Key questions: What are the principal elements of the training function? Who should be responsible for training and why? What are effective training strategies? What is the difference between training and education?

April 14 Employment Policies Patton 14 Key questions: What are family friendly policies? What are these policies necessary in today's labor market? What laws support this family friendly approach? What impact do these policies have on organizational cost and productivity? (Team 5 presentation)

April 21 Employee Discipline Patton, Ch. 13 Key questions: What is employee due process?

April 28 Labor-Management Relations Patton Ch. 5 and Cayer Ch. 8 Key questions: What is the legal basis for collective bargaining in the public sector? What are bargaining issues? What are the steps in the collective bargaining process? What is alternative dispute resolution? Should public employees have the right to strike? (Team 8 presentation) Papers Due!

May 5 and 12 Team Paper Presentations