

Victoria Management School

## **MGMT 405 Human Resource Management**

Trimester Two 2009

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

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#### **COURSE COORDINATOR & LECTURER**

*Dr. Noelle Donnelly*

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#### **ADMINISTRATOR**

*Tania Loughlin*

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#### **Class Times and Room Numbers**

Tuesday 2.40 – 5.30pm RWW128 Railway Building

**Teaching Period:** Monday 13 July - Friday 16 October 2009

**Note:** there is no final examination with this paper. As a project-based paper, all assessment is internally determined.

**Withdrawal dates:** Information available via

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

#### **Introduction**

There is no one 'best' way to manage an organisation's human resources. Human Resource Management (HRM) is characterised by competing and conflicting models and theories, wherein there are few absolutes about how people should be managed. Indeed, the concept of HRM itself is ambiguous, with much variation in its practice. As a result, HRM presents significant issues for the analysis and operation of the employment relationship. In the main, recent trends and developments in HRM have been driven by the changing context of work, as employers seek to remain competitive within an increasingly global environment. To meet some of these challenges, work organisations have adopted more proactive strategies that seek to link the management of employees with wider business concerns of the organisation. The course focuses on this new work context, and the challenges it poses for HRM.

This project-based paper seeks to provide both critical and pragmatic treatment of specific HRM topics, while placing them within a wider theoretical framework. It is designed to provide students with an understanding of key theoretical constructs and the core elements of HRM; so as to foster critical

judgments of the practical issues involved. The course commences with an overview of key HR theories; this is followed by a close review of the main models and frameworks in HRM. These seminar-based sessions are designed to guide students as they develop theoretical understanding and knowledge with which to apply to their individual projects. The latter part of this paper focuses more closely on each individual project and is structured into workshops, designed to provide individually-focused feedback.

### **Learning Objectives**

As an expanding area of study this course has a number of learning objectives. By the end of this paper, students should be able to:

- to understand the wider competitive contexts of HR strategies,
- to bring a broad perspective and knowledge to problem-solving around HR workplace issues,
- to develop and articulate critical thinking and active participation in a group environment,
- to develop HR competencies that make a significant contribution to organizational capability,
- to gain in-depth knowledge of a chosen HR issue while providing a breadth of understanding of HRM theories.

### **PROGRAMME AND COURSE-RELATED LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course will provide students opportunity:

- ✓ to develop oral, written and IT-related communication skills:
  - through active participation class discussion,
  - through the development and presentation of oral and written reports, using narrative, rhetoric and diagrammatic and other schema as forms of presentation,
- ✓ to develop critical and creative thinking skills:
  - through assignments requiring analysis, evaluation, interpretation and synthesis,
  - through debate and classroom discussion,
- ✓ to develop leadership skills:
  - through structuring independent study,
  - through leading a project or group exercise,
  - through fulfilling spokesperson duties and reporting ideas to a class.

### **Teaching Arrangement and Readings**

This paper is project-based and thus structured around a series of milestones with regard to the project. To ensure that each student has the necessary theoretical background to apply to their chosen industry, a number of seminars will be held at the outset of the paper. Students will be expected to prepare summaries of key readings and engage in class discussion in order to facilitate the formation of their critical judgements. To this end, class participation, independent reading and reflection are essential components of the design of this paper. It is expected that students will read widely for this paper. Seminars are designed to introduce concepts, theories and evidence. Students are expected to engage with the relevant material **prior** to sessions so that issues can be explored in greater depth during the session.

There is no core textbook for this course. A set of course readings, along with supplementary reading lists, will be distributed during the first session. Students wishing to obtain copies after that class should contact the HRIR administrator on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of Rutherford House.

For students with no prior or limited HRM knowledge, the following supplementary textbooks are recommended. These books, which are available in the library, introduce the field of HRM and its basic concepts:

Macky, K (2008). *Managing Human Resources: Contemporary Perspectives in New Zealand*. Auckland: McGraw Hill.

Bolton, S. and Houlihan, M. (2007). *Searching for the Human in Human Resource Management*, London: Palgrave.

Storey, J. (2001). *Human Resource Management: A Critical Text*. (2nd ed.). London: Thomson Learning.

Legge, K. (1995). *Human Resource Management: Rhetorics and Realities*. London: Palgrave.

### Course Communication

Information relating to this course will be posted on **Blackboard and communicated in class**. An email distribution list of all class members will be collated in the first week. Students must ensure that they are included in this list by submitting their details to the HRIR administrator within the first week. Students should also contact the HRIR administrator if there is any change to their contact details throughout the course.

### Course Assessment

The assessment for this course will consist of the following:

• Proposal (mini scoping document)	10%	Wk 2
• Full Literature Review	20%	Wk 5
• Industry Analysis	20%	Wk 8
• Final Report	30%	Wk 11
• Final Presentation	10%	Wk 12
• Article Commentaries (5 x 2%)	10%	Wks 2-7

The brief for the individual project is as follows:

Identify and critically analyse a contemporary HRM issue within a New Zealand Industry.  
Discuss the main HR challenges and possible solutions currently facing this industry.

#### (1) Proposal – (due week 2) (written submission by Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 4pm)

**10%** will be allocated for the submission of a project proposal (max. of 2 pages). This scoping document should outline the HR issue and industry for investigation (choose an industry for which you can easily access information). Indicate which theoretical approach you intend to take and which HR practices and policies you intend to focus on (be realistic about what you can achieve in a 10 week period). Indicate what sort of data you intend to collect and how you intend to collect it (i.e. company reports, stock market information, company brochures, union newsletters, newspaper articles, government and industry reports, interviews, industry surveys etc.).

#### (2) Full Literature Review (due week 5) (written submission by 12<sup>th</sup> August 4pm) (2,000-3,000 words)

**20%** will be assigned for the submission of a full literature review on your chosen research topic. The purpose of the literature review is to connect the research project to the theoretical literature on the topic. Its purpose is to give you the opportunity to critically examine, in greater detail, the literature related to the research issue or problem you have identified in your proposal. The frameworks or theories identified in this section will form the *tools* with which to evaluate the HRM

issue within your chosen industry. This literature review will form part of the final report in a revised form (*guidelines on conducting a literature review will be discussed and circulated at the first session*).

**(3) Industry Analysis (due week 8)** (written submission by Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> Sept 4pm) (2,000 words)

**20%** of the final marks will be allocated to the industry analysis. This is the context within which the HR issue or theory will be placed. Students should seek to describe the industry and its environment. (*Further details and assessment criteria for the industry analysis will be available on Blackboard*).

**(4) Final Report & Executive Presentation (written report due Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 4pm 6,000 words; Presentation week 12 in class)**

This document is the major output from your research project – to provide an analysis of the HRM issue or problem within the chosen industry. Worth **30%**, this report should outline the HR issue or theory under examination, explain why it is relevant to the chosen industry, and assess the nature of the issue in the industry and, finally, the implications for the industry. A final **10%** will be allocated for the presentation of key findings of your research. While initially providing an overview of the HRM issue or problem within the industry, it is envisaged that students will focus more closely on the outcomes of the analysis and recommendations. (*Assessment criteria for the presentation are available on Blackboard*).

**(5) Weekly Commentaries (5 x 2%)** (1 page each article)

The remaining **10%** of the marks for this paper will be awarded for weekly commentaries of assigned readings. From weeks 2 through to week 7 you will be expected to summarise and comment on the assigned readings for each session. These commentaries will form the basis of the discussions in each seminar.

**Handing in assignments:**

Assignments should be dropped in to **Box 16** on the Mezzanine floor by the due date and time. Late assignments should be handed into the HRIR administrator on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of Rutherford House (Pipitea Campus). All completed assignments must have a cover sheet. The cover sheet is in Annex A. In addition, an electronic form of each assignment should be emailed to the course coordinator by the due date. Students are also requested to keep a copy of all source materials used in their assignments.

**MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS (TERMS)**

To fulfil the mandatory course requirements for this course you must:

1. Attend all scheduled class sessions. Students who are absent from class should contact the course co-ordinator to inform them.
2. Submit all assignments and presentations.

Students who fail to satisfy the mandatory requirements for this course but who obtain 50% or more overall, will be awarded a "K" grade. Standard fail grades (D or E) will be awarded when the student's overall course mark falls below the minimum pass mark, regardless of whether the mandatory course requirements have been satisfied or not.

**MGMT 405 COURSE CONTENT 2009**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPICS</b>	<b>DUE DATES</b>
14 <sup>th</sup> July	Course Overview and Introduction	
21 <sup>st</sup> July	The Origins and Overview of HRM Proposal presentations	<i>Written Commentaries</i> <i>Written Proposal due</i> <i>Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July</i>
28 <sup>th</sup> July	The Theoretical Constructs of HRM	<i>Written Commentaries</i>
4 <sup>th</sup> August	The Management of Employee Voice in Unionised and Non-Unionised Environments	<i>Written Commentaries</i>
11 <sup>th</sup> August	Reading week	<i>Written Literature Review</i> <i>due 12<sup>th</sup> August</i>
18 <sup>th</sup> August	The Management of Flow: Talent Management and Careers	<i>Written Commentaries</i>
24 <sup>th</sup> August-	<i>Mid Trimester Break</i>	
8 <sup>th</sup> Sept	The <i>Human Side</i> of HRM: Developing Skills and Capability	<i>Written Commentaries</i>
15 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Presentation of Industry Analysis & Discussion	<i>Industry Analysis due</i>
22 <sup>nd</sup> Sept	Workshop	
29 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Workshop	
6 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Workshop	<i>Final Report Due</i> <i>7<sup>th</sup> October</i>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> Oct</b>	<b>Final Presentations &amp; Course Summary</b>	<i>Final Presentations</i>

## MGMT 405 COURSE CONTENT

### **WEEK 2 OVERVIEW OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (HRM)**

- READINGS** Bryson, J. (2006). 'HRM in New Zealand', chapter 6 in Nankervis, A., Coffey, J., and Chatterjee, S. (eds), *Perspectives of Human Resource Management in Asia Pacific*. Melbourne: Pearson Education
- Legge, K. (1995). 'HRM: rhetoric, reality and hidden agendas', in J. Storey (ed.) *Human Resource Management: A Critical Text*. London: Routledge
- Pfeffer, J. (1994) 'Competitive Advantage Through People', *California Management Review*, Winter.

### **WEEK 3 THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS OF HRM – STRATEGIC HRM MODELS**

- READINGS** Martin-Alcazar, F., Romero-Fernandez, P. and Sanchez-Gardey, G. (2005). 'Strategic Human Resource Management: integrating the universalistic, contingent, configurational and contextual perspectives', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 16 (5): 633-659.
- Boxall, P. (1996). 'The Strategic HRM Debate and the Resource-Based View of the Firm', *Human Resource Management Journal*, 6(3): 59-75.
- Purcell, J (1999) 'Best practice and best fit: Chimera or cul-de-sac', *Human Resource Management*, 9(3): 26-41.

### **WEEK 4 THE MANAGEMENT OF VOICE IN UNIONISED AND NON-UNIONISED ENVIRONMENTS**

- READINGS** Flood, P.C, Gannon, M.J. and Paauwe, J. (1996) 'Managing Without Unions: A Pyrrhic Victory' in *Managing Without Traditional Methods: International Innovations in Human Resource Management*, London: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, pp. 147-93.
- Dundon, T., Wilkinson, A., Marchington, M. and Ackers, P. (2004) 'The Meanings and Purpose of Employee Voice', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 15 (6): 1149-1170.

### **WEEK 6 THE MANAGEMENT OF FLOW : TALENT MANAGEMENT & CAREERS**

- READINGS** Lewis, R. E. and Heckman, R. J. (2006). Talent Management: A Critical Review. *Human Resource Management Review*, 16: 139-154.
- Reitman, F and Schneer, J. (2008). Enabling the new careers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Organization Management Journal*, 5: 17-28.
- Beer, M., Spector, B., Lawrence, P., Quinn Mills, D. and Walton, R. (1984). Managing Human Resource Flow. In *Managing Human Assets*. New York: Free Press.

### **WEEK 7 THE HUMAN SIDE OF HRM – DEVELOPING SKILLS & CAPABILITY**

- READINGS** Grugulis, I. (2007). Skills at work. In I. Grugulis, *Skills, Training and Human Resource Development; A Critical Text*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bryson, J. (2007). Human resource Development or developing human capability? In S. Bolton & M. Houlihan (eds). *Searching for the Human in Human Resource Management: Theory, Practice and Workplace Contexts*. Palgrave Macmillan. (this reading will be available on Blackboard).

## Penalties- for Lateness & Excessive Length of Assignments

- (i) In fairness to other students, work submitted after any deadline will incur a penalty for lateness. **The penalty is 5% for each day it is overdue, unless there is a valid reason as to why it is late and this is accepted by the course coordinator. Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays** will be included when counting the number of days late. Assignments received **more than 7 days after the due date** will not be accepted and the student will **automatically fail the Mandatory Requirements**.
- (ii) Course Outlines provide a signal to student of forthcoming workload, dates of submission etc, and thus student study plans should take account of course requirements across all courses. Consequently, workload issues related to other courses and employment will not be accepted as reason for dispensation from mandatory requirements or waiver of penalties. **Extensions** to submission deadlines for any assigned work will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**.
- (iii) Students who are unable to comply with any of the mandatory requirements should make a written application for an extension to the due date for submission of assigned work or for waiver of a penalty, **in advance**, to the course coordinator, providing documentary evidence of the reasons of their circumstances.

All such applications must be made **before** the deadline and be accompanied by documentary evidence, eg a medical certificate, or counsellor's report that indicates the degree of impairment, and for how long the student has been impaired. Please be sure to ask at the time of consultation for the degree of impairment to be stated in any certificate you provide to support your case.

- (iv) In the event of unusual or unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. serious illness, family bereavement or other exceptional events), that precludes an application in advance, students should make contact with the course coordinator, as soon as possible, and make application for waiver of a penalty as soon as practicable.
- (v) Word limits should be adhered to, especially so when they provide a guide to limiting the student's coverage of a topic. Assignments exceeding the word limit by over 10% will have 5 marks deducted.

## GRADING GUIDELINES

The following broad indicative characterisations of grade will apply in grading assignments and the exam:

A+	excellent performance in all respects at this level
A	excellent performance in almost all respects at this level
A-	excellent performance in many respects at this level
B+	very good, some aspects excellent
B, B-	good but not excellent performance at this level
C+, C	work satisfactory overall but inadequate in some respects
D	poor performance overall, some aspects adequate
E	well below the required standard
K	failure to achieve mandatory course requirements and have achieved at least an average "C" over all the assessment. Note this is a failing grade.

## Referencing

There are many different styles of referencing and the Faculty of Commerce & Administration at VUW has decided to make APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style the common standard across the Faculty. The Commerce and Central Libraries hold the APA Style Guide. You can also access

the information from the online VUW library site:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/library/research/reference/referencingguides.aspx>

### **Email Contact**

Students wishing to contact staff by email should adhere to the following instructions:

Include the **Course Code**, your **Name**, your **Student ID** and the **Topic** in the subject area of the email, eg

MGMT405\_Smith\_John\_3012345900\_Ass1 Query

All students must use their VUW SCS email account and ID. Otherwise, email will be classified as Spam and will be dumped without being read. All emails with attachments will be dumped, unless requested by staff.

**For the following important information follow the links provided:**

#### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

#### **General University Policies and Statutes**

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/academic.aspx>

#### **Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices**

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fca/studenthelp/Contactus.aspx>

#### **Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme**

[http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/mentoring/](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/mentoring/)



ANNEX A



**Victoria Management School**

**MGMT 405 Assignment Cover Sheet**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Due:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Submitted:** \_\_\_\_\_

*I have read and understood the university policy on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism.  
I declare this assignment is free from plagiarism.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Extension of the due date (*if applicable*)

**Please attach a copy of the note authorising your extension.**

*Date extension applied for:* \_\_\_\_\_

Extension granted until: \_\_\_\_\_

Extension granted by: \_\_\_\_\_