

School of Management

MGMT 405 Human Resource Management

Trimester 1, 2016

COURSE OUTLINE

Prescription

Recent developments in human resource management have been driven by the changing context of work, as employers seek to remain competitive. This course focuses on this new work context and the challenges it poses for human resource management.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this paper, students should be able to:

1. Analyse and synthesise the wider competitive contexts of different HR strategies,
2. Employ a range of problem-solving techniques to solve a variety of HR workplace issues,
3. Participate actively in a group environment,
4. Carry out an in-depth investigation into a particular HR issue in the context of a broad understanding of HRM theories.

Course Content

This course looks at Human Resource Management (HRM) theories, and how they might be applied (or not) in the real world. HRM theories are competing and conflicting. There is no one 'best' way to manage an organisation's people, but some things seem to work better than others.

HRM is evolving rapidly in response to globalization, technology, economic circumstances and the rise of individualism. Consequently, many organisations have adopted more proactive strategies that seek to link employee management with wider business concerns. This course focuses on both the theory and the practice of HRM, and how well both respond to the challenges posed by emerging factors.

In this project-based course students conduct and present a paper on a particular industry or organisation, the HRM challenges it faces, and possible solutions. This year, several organisations are interested in engaging with students, as student assignments can help address workplace issues. Please indicate your interest in doing a solution oriented literature review for an organisation. Students are encouraged and facilitated to work closely with industry practitioners.

The course seeks to provide both critical and pragmatic treatment of specific HRM topics. It is designed to provide students with an understanding of how business strategy, organisational behavior and HRM link together.

The course commences with an overview of key HR theories, and a close review of the main models and frameworks in HRM. These seminar-based sessions are designed to develop understanding and knowledge which can then be used in 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. The course includes case studies and guest visitors.

Trimester Dates

Teaching Period: Monday 29th February – Friday 10 June (final assignment due through Turnitin at end of study week)

Withdrawal from Course

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 11th March 2016.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 13th May 2016. After this date, students forced to withdraw by circumstances beyond their control must apply for permission on an 'Application for Associate Dean's Permission to Withdraw Late' including supporting documentation. The application form is available from either of the Faculty's Student Customer Service Desks or [online](#).

Names and Contact Details

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Website: www.vuw.ac.nz/vms

Office hours: Mondays are good. Please email to book an appointment.

Course Administrator

Celine Ronze

Room: RH1022, Rutherford House

Phone: 463 5358

Email: celine.ronze@vuw.ac.nz

Class Times and Room Numbers

Monday 09:30 - 12:20

Railway West Wing RWW315

Course Delivery

Delivery of this course is structured around a series of milestones with regard to each student's project. To ensure the necessary theoretical background to apply to their chosen industry or organisation, students lead seminars on selected papers and the broader, surrounding literature. Students are expected to prepare critical reviews of key readings and engage in class discussion in order to facilitate the formation of their critical judgements. Seminars are designed to introduce

concepts, theories and evidence. To this end, class participation, independent reading and reflection are essential components of the design of this paper. It is expected that students read widely for this paper and to engage with the relevant material **prior** to sessions so that issues can be explored in greater depth during the session.

Please attend seminars and be prepared to participate by having read readings for that week. Students will be asked questions in the lecture.

Readings

There is no core textbook for this course. A set of course readings, along with supplementary reading lists, will be distributed via Blackboard.

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:

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

Bryson, J & Ryan, R (2012) *Human Resource Management in the Workplace*, Pearson Education, Auckland.

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

Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of at least 50%, students must submit all assignments and complete scheduled 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.

These requirements exist because delivering quality work to tight deadlines is a key skill for graduates.

Students who are absent from class should contact the course co-ordinator to inform them.

If you believe that exceptional circumstances may prevent you from meeting the mandatory course requirements, contact the Course Coordinator for advice as soon as possible.

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat

Expected Workload

Students can expect the workload to be approximately 12 hours per week of student work, including both scheduled contact time (lectures, tutorials, workshops) and outside class.

Assessment

The Assessment Handbook will apply to all VUW courses: see <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf>.

The assessment for this paper will consist of the following:

Assessment item	Weight	Date
Critical Review	20%	Weeks 2-8
Proposal (scoping document)	5%	Week 3 Tuesday 15 March 4pm
Literature Review	15%	Week 5 Friday 8 March 4pm
Industry Analysis	15% +5%	Week 8 & 9 Presentations Monday 2, 9 May Written Wednesday 18 May 4pm
Final Report & Presentation	30% + 10%	Weeks 11 and 12 Final Oral Presentations 23 and 30 May Written Friday 10 June 4pm

The brief for the individual project is as follows:

(1) Critical Review (variable due dates weeks 2-8) (**max. 2000 words each**)

20% of the total marks for this paper will be awarded for the submission and presentation of a critical review of selected course readings. Students will be expected to prepare a written critical review of the assigned topic and lead a discussion within class. Students are required to position the readings **within the broader literature on the topic** and also to respond to questions relating to the readings. Students should email their discussion questions to the course co-ordinator by 4.00 pm on the Thursday prior to their presentations. Presenters are expected to identify key critical questions relating to the readings and lead the discussion of these in class. Individual presentations should be no longer than 30 minutes. Each student will be expected to respond to issues raised by other class members. A copy of each review will be made available to the class on blackboard.

(2) Proposal (due **Tuesday 15 March 4pm**) (max two pages page single spaced)

5% will be allocated for the submission of a project proposal on which the remaining assignment will be based. This scoping document should outline the HR issue and industry or organisation for investigation (choose an industry or organisation 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.).

(3) Literature Review (due **Friday 8 March 4pm**) (max 2,000 words)

15% 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 proposal 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 available on Blackboard*).

- (4) Industry Analysis** Week 8 & 9
Presentations Monday 2, 9 May
Written Wednesday 18 May 4pm (max 2,000 words)

20% of the final marks will be allocated to the presentation (5%) and submission of an industry analysis (15%). This is the context within which the HR issue or theory will be placed. Students should seek to describe the industry and its environment. (*Guidelines on how to approach the industry analysis will be available on Blackboard*).

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.

Students may also choose to focus on a particular employer as a case study – using background interviews and publicly available information. Please see the course supervisor early if you wish to do this.

- (5) Final Report & Presentation** Weeks 11 and 12
Final Oral Presentations 23 and 30 May
Written Friday 10 June 4pm (findings, analysis and conclusions sections max. 2,500 words)

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 or organisation, 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*).

Handing in assignments

Completed assignments are to be submitted **by the due date** through Turnitin on the Course's Blackboard page.

Penalties

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.

Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. Turnitin is an on-line plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and submitted to Turnitin. A copy of submitted materials will be retained on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

Student feedback

Past students have indicated they benefit and enjoy the interaction with industry, and that the course is good at improving communication, critical thinking and other useful skills. This year, in direct response to some other student feedback, practitioners will witness student presentations less often, and I will be clearer about course requirements.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details made available to VUWSA, the course coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the course coordinator on behalf of students.

Communication of Additional Information

Blackboard is the standard means of digital communications – so please check it regularly.

Link to general information

For general information about course-related matters, go to <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/general-course-information>

Note to Students

Your assessed work may also be used for quality assurance purposes, such as to assess the level of achievement of learning objectives as required for accreditation and academic audit. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of VBS programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.
