

# UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Waterloo, Ontario

## HRM 300

Section 1

### Concepts and Issues in Human Resource Management

---

#### COURSE OUTLINE Winter 2003 (Mondays)

Instructor: David H. Park

Telephone: (519)886-5210 x507

Fax: (519) 883-7400

Email: [dpark@equitable.ca](mailto:dpark@equitable.ca)

#### OFFICE HOURS

Before Class 6:30 - 7:00

or By Appointment

Administrative Support: Susan Andrews  
Room HH146 - x2005

The purpose of this course is to help you develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to more effectively manage people. Thus, this course is of importance to those with interests in the field of human resources as well as to managers in any of the other functional areas of business. For any enterprise to operate efficiently, it must have money, materials, supplies, equipment, ideas about the service or products to offer those who might use its outputs, and people (the "Human" resource) to run the organisation. The effective management of people at work, the human resource management function, is the subject of this course. Since people make decisions concerning all other organisational resources--they operate machines, borrow money, and come up with profit-making ideas--human resources management is of major importance to all organisations. In spite of its importance, however, the human resources function has been misunderstood, undermanaged, and mismanaged in many enterprises.

### REQUIRED TEXT

- (1) Stone, T.H., and Meltz, Noah M., Human Resource Management in Canada (Fourth Edition), Dryden, 1993.
- (2) Cawsey, T.F., Deszca, G., & Templar, A.J., Canadian Cases In Human Resources Management, Prentice Hall, Pearson Education Canada, 2002

### EVALUATION

The final grade in the course will be determined from five sources of information:

1)	Class Participation	15%
2)	Group Assignment #1	25%
3)	Group Assignment #2	25%
4)	Group Presentation	10%
5)	Individual Case Project	<u>25%</u>
		<u>100%</u>

### CASE METHOD

The role of the professor is to stimulate and guide the discussion. This may involve the professor asking questions which probe the depth of a student's understanding of the issues, reviewing a theoretical concept which is difficult to understand and encouraging students to present different points of view on an issue. See the attachment: "The Case Method".

### PARTICIPATION

The best classes are ones in which there is interaction among students and the professor, a sharing of ideas which leads to each person discovering for themselves the true meaning of conceptual ideas, realising the subtleties and fine points of a case, and understanding the rationale for various options to handle the problems in a case. In order to create these classes, students must fulfil these expectations which will be used to determine your class participation mark:

- (1) Attendance - It is essential that you attend every class. If for some reason you cannot attend, let me know in advance so that your absence is explained. Absence to prepare for an exam or presentation in this or in any other course is not acceptable.
- (2) Preparation - ***This means reading the assigned material and fully preparing the case.*** You may be called upon to start or to contribute to the class on any day. If for some reason you have been unable to prepare adequately, let me know before the class. This will help you avoid embarrassment.
- (3) Class Participation - I expect you to effectively participate in the class through comments, questions, and analysis. Class participation provides you with an opportunity to develop skills in oral communication.
- (4) Group Participation - You will be expected to participate actively and contribute to your group. You will be provided with a peer evaluation form for your group during the last week of classes.

Note: What you are reading is a course outline. It is a guide to the topics and issues you will be covering. The material is not carved in stone, however, and there will be some degree of variation from what is contained here. If changes are made, they will be carried out with your interest in mind. Thus, topics of current interest may be introduced, or a video may be introduced which is not listed, etc. Keep in mind that changes will be clearly identified during the course.

### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

*Please note that students involved in academic dishonesty may receive a zero grade on the course, and even a notation of academic dishonesty on their transcripts. In this course, academic dishonesty includes copying or use of unauthorised aids in cases or examinations; plagiarism; submission of work generated for another course without prior clearance by the instructor of this course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; and giving false information for the purpose of gaining credit.*

## HRM 300 - Concepts & Issues in Human Resource Management

## “The Case Method”

"Tell me", I'll forget  
"Show Me", I may remember  
"Involve Me", I'll understand

The Socratic method of teaching. Teaching is not a one-way street, with the Instructor talking and the student listening, but rather a two-way exchange in which the student actively participates by questioning, searching and answering.

You can lead a person to a university but you can't make them think. What too often passes for learning is the repetition of facts by students during standardised exams. The case method, however, does not allow the student the luxury of memorising a body of accepted wisdom. Rather, it forces the student to confront a set of facts that demands analysis; and these facts are not necessarily understood by the application of memorised truths.

The underlying philosophy of the case method is that people must be taught to think well in the presence of new or changing situations and arrive at reasoned courses of action. In this way the method emphasises judgement as much as understanding, moreover, it attempts to develop skill of judgement as much as understanding, moreover, it attempts to develop skill of judgement which can be applied to situations in the real world. The case method confronts students with realistic human events, and then requires students to analyse, evaluate, and make recommendations about those events.

### The Role of the Instructor

Just as there is no such thing as a typical case method teaching style, the responsibilities of an instructor using the case method can be summarised as follows:

1. Assign cases for discussion.
2. Act as a member of the group delegated, to provoke argumentative thinking.
3. Guide discussion through remarks and questions toward points of major importance.
4. Take a final position on the viewpoint discussed - if necessary

To accomplish this the Instructor may:

1. Ask further questions
2. Restate and reconstruct what has been said
3. Voice his/her own opinions and draw upon his/her knowledge of the facts

To open a discussion an instructor may ask such questions as:

1. Do you see a problem in this case? If so, what is it?
2. Would someone volunteer (brownie points) to give us a brief sketch of the facts in this case?
3. What is happening in this case?

Additionally the instructor may invite a student to play the part of one of the managers who has a central role in the case. Thus, the instructor might ask, "What would you do if you were Jones?"

Discussion leaders frequently summarise or attempt to interpret a student's remark(s). It helps to confirm what a student actually meant, and it helps to insure that other students interpreted the remark(s) correctly. In a large number of cases, the student will want to qualify a remark once the instructor has interpreted it. This has the welcome consequence of encouraging the student to reflect upon the nature of the view(s) being expressed and the reasons for it.

An instructor may block a direct question from a student. What a student asks a specific question about the material, the instructor may decide that to answer the question would stifle the thinking of other students. Hence the instructor may reply by saying, "What does the class think?" or "my opinion is "x", but is that really the right opinion?" In short, turn the question into a catalyst rather than a retardant of ongoing discussion.

The following are sample questions asked by case-method instructors:

Where does this lead?  
Do others agree (disagree)?

You said X. May I add Y?  
Do you mean X?

Do you have more to say about Y?  
Is your point related to Mr. Smith's?

Do you think this is true in all cases?  
What does that have to do with the bigger question?

An instructor can do more than ask questions. He/she can identify unstated assumptions that one of the participants is making and hold them up to class for inspection. If a discussion is really dragging, the instructor can ask what's wrong about the process of the discussion itself. When a discussion is well underway, it is not unusual for an instructor to retire to an inconspicuous place and simply observe.

### The Role of the Student

In the case method, the active co-operation of the student is essential. Most of the previous schooling habituates the student to the role of a receiver. In the case method, the previous schooling must be undone. The student must learn the habit of being active, of being a force in the teaching process. First, he/she must learn to synthesise material. Although, infrequently an instructor's summary of the main lines of the preceding discussion will help the student to integrate important aspects of the discussion, ordinarily the student must undertake the act of synthesis. Equally important, the student must learn to separate irrelevant from relevant information. (Cases are frequently constructed intentionally, to contain both kinds.) The student must invest sufficient time in preparing a case to make the discussion productive. With other methods of teaching, a failure to prepare is problematic; with the case method, it is disastrous.

Most often, students benefit from preparing and discussing a case in small pre class groups (study groups). In such a group they often discover crucial items, explore different viewpoints; more over they gain experience in the presentation of ideas. Discouragement is routine when students begin the case method. They jump to the conclusion that they are making no progress because they are accustomed to defining "progress" differently. After discussing a few cases, they recognise that all issues have not been resolved, and may be left with the sense of incompleteness. It is like hearing a piece of music with no resolving chord. Gradually, however, the student will experience a growing confidence in their ability to analyse complex material.

### Shortcomings of the Case Method

The case method is not fool proof. Like any other method it is susceptible to the foibles, biases and failings of those who use it. At its worst it becomes a boring exposure to the prejudices of others.

Cases necessarily oversimplify business situations. Whereas a case can imitate reality by demanding decisions on the basis of incomplete facts (no real-world decision-maker has all the facts), cases are at odds with reality in presenting a "static" rather than "dynamic" decision making context. A case presents a situation in which the action has already occurred, but every day situations unfold gradually, and every hour brings fresh information to the decision maker(s), hence the skills of knowing when to seek new information, and of knowing when the proper moment has arrived to make a decision, are not developed by the case method.

Essential to a good case discussion is adequate discussion time. A case done hurriedly is an unrewarding experience in which most of the analysis is either superficial or wrong. This leads to frustration and discouragement with the entire method. Although the case method is an excellent method for most students, a few students may benefit little, if at all. However, this is not a characteristic drawback of the case method per se, since every approach to teaching misses some students. Indeed, a special advantage of the case method is that it can bring an enthusiasm for learning, particularly for students who have been turned off by more traditional methods.

### Summary

The case method, though not foolproof, offer clear rewards. Socrates' insight that knowledge cannot simply "be told" is reflected in the case method's emphasis on analysis, discussion, and decision making. Like any method, it is subject to the failing of its practitioners. Like any other method, it must be carefully adapted to the special territory it covers. Handled properly it can spark the search for skills and values of utmost import. It can, perhaps more effectively than any other method, demonstrate the need for intellectual solutions to practical problems.\*

\*Paraphrased from the introduction to "Case Studies in Business Ethics", Thomas Donaldson, Loyola University of Chicago, Prentice Hall, 1984

## ASSIGNMENTS/GROUP PROJECTS

### GROUP ASSIGNMENT #1:

## PURPOSE

Group Assignment #1 is designed to have your group start the process of thinking strategically while managing the Human Resources function in an organisation. Consider the following scenario:

Your organisation, ABC Corporation, is a highly automated manufacturing facility located in Cambridge, Ontario. It has been announced that: a) Because of increased business, a second shift of 60 production workers, plus 8 new engineers will be added in 2003; and b) because the company has roots in the Netherlands, and the European Community has a need for your product, a new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility employing 150 people, will be built near Amsterdam in 2004. You are the Director Human Resources for ABC. Before any actual recruiting takes place, you know it is necessary to analyse the overall environment for each situation and start planning for the future..

## NATURE OF THE TASK

In groups no larger than five, analyse all factors which must be considered from a Human Resources standpoint when planning for both the Cambridge situation as well as for the new Dutch plant. Consider the existing workforce, their role in the future organisation and the impact the plans will have on them. Clearly state any assumptions your group has made. This assignment is worth 20% of your final grade.

Maximum Length: 12 typed, double-spaced pages (appendices may be attached)

Due Date: January 27, 2003

## GROUP ASSIGNMENT #2:

### PURPOSE

Group Assignment #2 serves a variety of purposes. Foremost among these is that it allows you to apply the concepts discussed in the course, to an organisation. It will develop and strengthen your skills in the areas of teamwork, analysis, organisation and planning, and oral and written communication.

### NATURE OF THE TASK

In groups no larger than five, describe and critically evaluate a human resources management activity used by an organisation you are acquainted with. (\*) Based on your analysis, suggest ways of improving the way the organisation manages this activity. Your group is to submit a written report, and make a presentation to the class. You may choose any of the human resource activities described in the course outline. This assignment is worth 30% of the final grade, and the presentation is worth 10%.

Maximum Length: 12 typed, double-spaced pages (appendices may be attached)

Due Date: March 17, 2003

\* The organisation may be one for which you have worked or are working for (part-time, summers, etc.) or one which you have contacted which will allow you to interview HR personnel and allow analysis of an activity. Your presentation should not identify the actual firm...only present your findings, analysis and recommendations.

## INDIVIDUAL CASE:

### Purpose:

As an individual case project, you will be asked to analyse a Human Resources management situation and prepare a response to a number of questions in order to provide advice and recommendations to deal with the situation presented.

### Nature of the Task:

Case #2 from the text "Canadian Cases in Human Resources Management" deals with a number of Human Resources problems and issues. You will assume the role of Human Resources Consultant and analyse the situation, answering the questions provided, and submit a report.

Answer the following in your analysis: (you are expected to provide general commentary and recommendations beyond simply answer these questions, but answers to these questions must be contained in your report)

1. What are the specific human resource problems at Frontier Printers? How might they be resolved? What should be addressed first?
2. Bonnie has hired you as an HR consultant to develop a job description for each of the positions in Frontier Printers. What steps would you follow in conducting a job analysis of the different positions?
3. Develop a staffing strategy and a specific staffing plan for the position "Manager of the Mail Service Department" that Bonnie will soon have to develop.
4. What would you recommend as a long-range HR strategy for Bonnie?

Due Date: March 31, 2003

Maximum Length: 12-15 typed pages, double-spaced (11-pt-type minimum) Appendices may be attached.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCELLENT WORK (for both group assignments)

Some of the characteristics common to these successful efforts are as follows:

- 1) An executive summary.
- 2) A table of contents.
- 3) An introductory paragraph which discusses the significance of your chosen topic to an organisation.
- 4) Use of outside sources of information (e.g., journal articles, reference books, government documents, and interviews with other organisations.)
- 5) Thorough, practical, and creative recommendations for improving the present system. Details concerning recommendations (e.g., interview questions) may be put in the appendices.
- 6) Use of a style guide for footnotes, references, tables, headings and bibliography.
- 7) Draw your paper to a logical summary, include concluding statements.
- 8) How well you do on this and other assignments is directly related to how effectively you can organise and present your ideas. One of the best writing guides to enable you to improve your writing style is the Elements of Style by Strunk and White. It is short (80 pages), funny, and very useful.

For Presentation:

- 9) Use professional overheads for your presentation.
- 10) Practice your presentation. Practice it again.
- 11) Involve all group members in the presentation.
- 12) Be creative in the group presentation (i.e. - have a debate or role playing to illustrate on the issues).
- 13) Your presentation should be interesting and informative for the class.
- 14) Please arrange to meet me if you have any questions concerning the assignments.

**Note:** To assure a measure of equity, grade participation marks will be partially based on peer evaluations for group assignments. Each group will submit peer evaluations after the second written report is submitted. Peer rating forms will be distributed in class.

### CLASS SCHEDULE

SESSION #1 January 6/03

**Topic:**

Human Resource Management in Canada: A Time of Change and Challenge  
Identifying and Responding to the Challenge

Reference: Stone & Meltz, Chapters 1 & 2  
Work: Course Introduction, Assignment of Groups,, Discussion of Assignments

SESSION #2 January 13/03

Topic: The Challenges Confronting Human Resources Management  
Case: Hallington Utilities Services – Page 6 of case text  
Case Questions: Define Marions issues.  
What should be her “New HR Visions & Plans” for HUS?  
Reference: Stone & Meltz, Chapters 1 & 2

SESSION #3 January 20/03

Topic: The Challenge of Human Rights  
Video: “Sexual Harassment in the Workplace”  
Case: Propmore Corporation - to be handed out in class January 6 & 13  
Case Question: What should Don Bradford do?  
Reference: Stone & Meltz, Chapter 3

SESSION #4 January 27/03

Topic: Human Resources Planning  
Case: Genetro Limited – page 43 of Case text  
Case Questions: What recommendations should Kerry make to the Board?  
Reading Assignment: Stone & Meltz, Chapter 4

*Group Assignment #1 Due – January 27*

SESSION #4 February 3/03

Topic: Job Analysis and design  
Video: “Patagonia”  
Case: The Norris Company – page 125 of Case text  
Case Questions: 1) What is Chet Craig’s job?  
2) What is right and wrong about his job?  
3) How will his job change over the next five years?  
4) Develop performance objectives for Chet Craig.  
Reference: Stone & Meltz, Chapter 5

SESSION #6 February 10/03

Topic : “Fit” in an organisation  
Case: A Matter of Fit – page 144 of Case text  
Case Question: Why was Lydia fired?  
How could this have been prevented?  
Reference: Stone & Meltz, Chapter 8  
Video: “All in a Day’s Work”

Reading Week - February 17 - 21

SESSION #7 February 24/03

Topic: More Effective Interviews and Other Selection Techniques  
Case: Burnaby Glass – page 131 of Case text  
Question: Who should be hired? Why?  
Reference: Stone & Meltz, Chapters 6 & 7

SESSION #9 March 3/03

**Topic:** Training and Development - Designing/Evaluating  
**Discussion:** How Effective is Training & Development in Canada  
**Case:** Canadian Products (A) and (B) – page 157 of Case Text  
**Case Questions:** 1) What has gone wrong with the training program? Why?  
2) How does the training program match the needs of Canadian Products?  
3) What should Sharon Cliff do?  
**Reference:** Stone & Meltz, Chapter 9  
**Video:** Quad Graphics

SESSION #9 March 10/03

**Topic:** Benefits and Compensation  
**Case:** Who Will Benefit – Page 189 of Case text  
**Case Question:** What should Eileen do?  
**Reference:** Stone & Meltz, Chapter 12  
Also READ only “After the Merger” – Case text page 207 for class discussion

SESSION #10 March 17/03

**Topic:** Occupational Health & Safety  
**Case:** Northern Copper Corporation – page 254 of Case text  
**Case Question:** Identify the factors that led up to and contributed to the series of accidents at Northern Copper.  
**Reference:** Stone & Meltz, Chapter 14

*Group Assignment #2 Due- March 17*

SESSION #10 March 24/03

**Topic:** Quality of Working Life  
Restructuring and Productivity Improvement  
**Case:** Pacific Mines - page 281 of Case text  
**Case Questions:** What are the major alternatives for Brian?  
**Reference:** Stone & Meltz, Chapter 16

SESSION #11 March 31/03

**Group Presentations**

*Individual case analysis due- March 31*