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Class meets Mondays, 5:30 p.m. – 8:10 p.m. in Chesterfield County

PADM 607 is concerned with the general concepts, principles and techniques of personnel administration and employee relations as applied in governmental units and agencies. There is probably no part of public administration that is facing such fundamental challenges and changes as public personnel/Human Resource Management. This course will attempt an overview of this dynamic subject. It will also serve as an introduction to the concepts, practices and problems of modern human resource management.

GOAL OF THE COURSE

The goal of this course is for you to develop sufficient knowledge and skills that will enable you to analyze a governmental human resource management system and make recommendations for improvement. You will be able to describe, discuss, and design HRM systems that will contribute to the development of high performance public and nonprofit organizations. In addition you will develop skills in carrying out selected Human Resource Management applications on a personal computer.

Bloom’s “Taxonomy of Educational Objectives” suggests that Knowledge (K) can be defined as: to describe, to recall, to define, to name, to recognize, to list, etc. Comprehension/analysis/evaluation (C) can be defined as: to understand, to have insight into, to distinguish, to categorize, to analyze, to discriminate, to contrast, to select, to support, to compare. Application (A) can be defined as: to apply, to demonstrate, to use, etc.

GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

The first session will provide an overview of the human resource management system and describe the interrelationship of the elements of such a system. A description and discussion of the course requirements will be provided. As one author of public personnel management states, “Public personnel management involves continuing conflict over values and objectives.” The questions that are crucial to the evolution of this discipline will also be discussed in Session I.

Session II will focus on the major trends affecting the practice of public administration and
today’s public Human Resource Management. An understanding of this context is necessary for us to appreciate the turbulence that surrounds the issues that shape Human Resource Management. Session II will also describe the characteristics and attributes of high performance organizations, and the HRM characteristics that will support HPOs. The contribution of human resource management to this noble endeavor will be the subject of the rest of this course.

Session III will focus on the very important process of job analysis, description, evaluation and classification. Job analysis is sometimes referred to as the foundation of Human Resource Management. One of the most important outcomes of job analysis is job description. It is my opinion that results-orientated job descriptions (RODS) are vital to the success of the other elements of the Human Resource Management system.

Session IV will be concerned with human resource planning—the forecasting of future human resource needs. Techniques and issues concerning this concept will be discussed.

The procurement of new human resources, and the techniques and procedures involved in the recruitment, selection and placement stages of Human Resource Management will make up Sessions V & VI.

Since research has indicated that employees are more motivated to reach organizational goals when timely and accurate feedback on their performance is provided, performance evaluation will be the focus of Session VII.

Sessions VIII and IX will present content and cognitive process theories of motivation. Using these insights to critique typical incentive systems used by governmental organizations will be the focus of Session X.

Certainly one strategy that has been used (and misused) to gain increases in performance is that of training and development. Session XI will describe "best practices" in training design and evaluation.

Session XII will be spent in “catching up” and discussing the topics covered in more detail.

One major aspect of the employee-management relationship is that of disciplinary action and the development of appropriate grievance processing procedures. Session XIII will present the current thinking on this subject. Session XIV will be devoted to an overview of special topics in public personnel administration. Such current issues as the use of Advanced Information Technology in HRM, employee safety and health, mandatory drug testing for public employees and responding to the needs of "troubled" employees are possible topics for this session.

The description provided above presents an ambitious attempt to cover most of the important topics in the important field of public personnel administration. I hope your learning experience will be both enriching and enjoyable.

SPECIAL RESOURCES THAT WILL BE USED IN THIS COURSE

Texts:
Class participants are urged to read the daily papers and other current journals for relevant articles. Materials of importance should be brought to class for discussion. Participants should make themselves aware of the various journals of interest published by the professional associations and universities. I provide a list of examples. BE SURE TO BE FAMILIAR WITH THE ENDNOTES & REFERENCES IN YOUR READINGS.

I am sure that you will find the various computerized databases in the library, such as InfoTrac (social sciences & management literature), Lexis/Nexis (news and law), PsycInfo (psychology), ERIC (education journals), Dow Jones (newspapers & business journals), PAIS (public administration), Dissertation Abstracts (all topics) and Congressional Universe (Congress), useful in carrying out your research. The Social Sciences Citation Index component of the Web of Science database is also a useful research tool. Be sure to discover the resources in the Government Documents section of the library as well — on the web at <http://www.library.vcu.edu/jbc/govdocs/govhome.html>

I have arranged training sessions on the library databases and the use of the Internet. The training session for PADM 607 is scheduled for Saturday, January 25th from 10 a.m. until noon. It will be held in the library computer-training room, on the 3rd floor of Cabell. Since space is limited, please contact the POS-PAD Office at 828-1575 to reserve a space. If you are unable to make the 25th date, please notify me immediately.

PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

You should be alert to the fact that fourteen (14) three-hour sessions have been scheduled for this course during this term. The last session will be held during the examination week.

Since it is expected that you will actively participate in the class discussion, it is necessary that assigned readings be completed prior to class time. YOU SHOULD DEVELOP QUESTIONS THAT WILL HELP YOU BETTER UNDERSTAND THE READING MATERIAL. Class sessions will be spent responding to your questions and presenting new material. You are advised to use the syllabus as an aid in doing the readings. I might even throw in a "pop quiz" just to see if the readings are understandable. The results of such a quiz will not count towards your grade. I also recognize that there is a large amount of reading required and that the educational value of this experience to you is a function of your preparedness so please read each assignment closely. SINCE THE GRADED ASSIGNMENTS WILL REQUIRE REFERENCES TO THE LITERATURE YOU MIGHT FIND IT USEFUL TO TAKE COMPLETE NOTES AS YOU DO THE READINGS.

Class participants must be aware that two supplemental goals of this course are the enhancement of writing skills and of library and electronic media research skills. Therefore participants can expect to spend considerable time doing research for the four written assignments. Experience of previous classes leads me to expect that you will probably spend, at least, an average of 8-12 hours per week doing the work for this course. I would like feedback from you as to the amount of time required to successfully complete the work for this course so please keep track as you do the assignments/readings.
Please make sure that you are clear as to the expectations of in-class and written assignments and that you obtain adequate feedback on your performance. Since an additional goal of this class is the fostering of adequate communication skills, you are urged to examine your written work for deficiencies in clarity of presentation. Specific minimum learning objectives have been identified for each class session. You should achieve those objectives through the readings, class discussions, lecture or any other means. Let me know if you feel that these objectives have not been met.

IT IS EXPECTED THAT CLASS PARTICIPANTS WILL ATTEND EVERY SESSION. ABSENCE FROM A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF ANY CLASS SESSION WILL BE COUNTED AS A FULL ABSENCE.

Unexcused violation of this attendance policy before the mid-point of the class will result in a student being administratively withdrawn. If this policy is violated after the withdrawal deadline, a failing grade will be issued. An excused absent can be discussed, in advance, with us.

After teaching at VCU for more than fifteen and a half years, I have identified three characteristics of those course participants that experience difficulty in my courses.

- They do not do the readings and take good notes before the appropriate class session.
- They miss class sessions (even for good reasons) and do not make plans to record the session or at least get class notes before the next session.
- They do not take my advice to begin the assignments the first night we begin to discuss the topic but rather wait until the weekend before the assignment is due.

If you have doubts about the speed and comprehensiveness of your note-taking, please feel free to record the class sessions. I like to think that each session contains many "golden words of wisdom."

**Graded Assignments**

There will be three groups of graded assignments:

**The Turbulent Environment of Public Human Resource Management**

You will write a scholarly essay describing the various internal and external environmental factors that impact the practice of HRM, and show how these factors affect a public/nonprofit organization with which you are familiar. Due Session VI, 7-10 double-spaced pages. This paper will be assessed based upon:

- The number of factors described,
- The quality of discussion of each factor,
- The quality of discussion of the impact of these factors upon the organization you know,
- The quantity and quality of research demonstrated, and
- Your writing ability.
This assessment will be worth 10% of your total course grade.

Assessments of HRM practices

Each participant will conduct an assessment of a specific element of HRM practices in a public or nonprofit organization. This assessment (resulting in a report of 15-25 double-spaced pages) will consist of three parts:

• Part one: a review of the literature/research which describes how this element should be performed in a high performance organization
• Part two: a description of how this element is performed in a specific public or nonprofit organization
• Part three: recommendations for converting this specific utilization into high performance HRM practice.

More specific information on this assignment will be provided by Session III. This assessment will be worth 30% of the course grade and is due Session XIV.

Completion of nine PC Projects for Human Resource Management

Each participant will complete nine of the following PC Projects for HRM in the Beutell book (Chaps 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, and 16). If you want to submit one of the others let us know. For six of these projects (you decide which) you will submit a 3-page (maximum) scholarly, researched essay on current practices in this HRM element. Each essay will be assessed based on 1) your demonstrated knowledge of the specific HRM element; 2) your knowledge of current thinking, issues, and research about this element; 3) your ability to link this HRM element to one or more attributes of High Performance Organizations and to show how this element can contribute to achieving HPOs; 4) the quantity and quality of your research; and 5) your writing ability. Each PC project and essay will contribute to 8% of your total grade. I assume that each essay would require at least half a dozen or more different, outside references, including a good representation of research articles. Four should be turned in before the last date to withdraw from the course, Friday, March 21. Each of the other three (without essays) is worth 4% of your total grade. Each of the PC assignments is due at the beginning of the session, the week after that topic is discussed in class.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TURNED IN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SESSION INDICATED. LATE PAPERS WILL BE PENALIZED. Since each of these will require time to complete, you might find it useful to begin the assignment as soon as you receive it. Each of these written assignments should reflect graduate level work. That is, the written work meets the objectives of the assignment, is in clear, correct English and shows conceptual understanding of major issues with pertinent points discussed in a way that demonstrates some creativity or originality (rather than merely stringing together a series of quotes). There should be a good grasp of reading material evidenced in the written assignments. These assignments will require research into materials additional to the assigned readings. IT IS EXPECTED THAT EACH ASSIGNMENT WILL USE BOOKS, RESEARCH ARTICLES AND ELECTRONIC SOURCES AS REFERENCE MATERIALS. These written efforts should reflect the writing style, tone and approach of such professionally-orientated journals as the Public Administration Review, Public Productivity & Management Review, The Academy of Management Review, The Review of Public Personnel Administration, and/or Public Personnel Management.

Class participants should use a standard manual of style, such as the American Psychological Association, and use its suggested format in all written work. Please indicate on the
assignment which manual of style you are using.

After the first assignment, any written assignment that, in my opinion, does not reflect graduate-level writing performance including the use of a "manual of style," will be returned ungraded and the revised submission will be considered late.

IN ADDITION EACH PARTICIPANT WILL BE EXPECTED TO READ THE CLASS BLACKBOARD SITE AS FREQUENTLY AS POSSIBLE, AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK, CERTAINLY BEFORE EACH CLASS SESSION AND TO POST A MESSAGE AT LEAST ONCE EVERY TWO WEEKS. I will use the Blackboard site to communicate with class participants about changes in class schedule/requirements, useful resources, current events, etc, and as a medium to facilitate communication between class participants. You access Blackboard through its URL address http://blackboard.vcu.edu. Your VCU e-mail login is to be used, as is your VCU e-mail password. Blackboard contains an online student manual, which you should master as soon as possible. If you don’t already have a VCU e-mail account, you must immediately go to the VCU website (www.vcu.edu), click on “Information Technology” then “students” and follow the instructions to create an account. If you also don’t have a VCU Onecard, I would assume you need to follow the instructions for “incoming students.” E-mail me if you still have problems. I will use Blackboard to bring to your attention current events relevant to this course, post lecture notes, and bring to your attention other required resources. I want you to share useful information. Since I might send either individual or group e-mails to you using Blackboard, you should make it a point to read your VCU e-mail daily.

I am discouraging the use of "Incompletes". Please make every effort to complete all of the assignments before the end of the grading period. If, for some unavoidable reason you must request an "Incomplete," you must notify me in advance and complete the necessary paper work. However, when the incomplete assignment is turned in, it will be considered late, unless there is an approved excuse such as illness. Unless written approval from me for an extension is granted, all incompletes must be satisfied within 30 days of the end of the semester. Likewise, if you decided to withdraw from this course you must do it before the tenth week of class, and after completing the necessary paper work.

In the current VCU Resource Guide, which can be found on the VCU Web site under “Students” is a description of the University’s Honor System. It describes "Pledged" and "Unpledged" assignments. Just to confuse you, the assignments in this course will be a hybrid of these two concepts. You are encouraged to share useful resources and to discuss your potential responses to these assignments and to both offer and to receive assistance in using the electronic spreadsheet in completing assignments two and four. However cheating, plagiarism, the facilitation of academic dishonesty, abuse of academic materials, stealing, or lying will be considered violations of the VCU Honor System.

Please be aware of VCU’s Sexual Harassment Policy and “Disruptive” Student policy, which can be found in the Resource Guide.

You should be aware of the conditions of the VCU’s Grade Review Procedure (which can be found in the VCU Resource Guide).

Special Notes: