

University of Hong Kong
School of Business
Semester 1 2010-2011

BUSI0034A&B Human Resource: Theory and Practice

Lecturer: Dr. Derek Man
Email: dman@business.hku.hk
Office: Room 512 Meng Wah Complex
Phone: 2859-1121

Course Description

This course introduces the basic topics of human resource management. It provides the students with an understanding of what the job of a human resource manager involves. In addition to covering the basic theoretical concepts, the course also allows the students to have some hands-on practice as a human resource manager.

Course Objectives

1. Cover the basic concepts of human resource management
2. Provide the students with the capability to apply theoretical knowledge in simulated and real-life settings
3. Develop the students' ability to work in teams

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- 1a. Identify the difference between Personnel and HR management
- 1b. Understand the major functional areas within HRM
- 1c. Articulate the importance of a strategic HR perspective
- 2a. Identify some of the key skills required for the current HRM practice
- 2b. Explain how HR initiatives can add value to the bottom line
- 2c. Demonstrate critical thinking when presented with HR issues
- 2d/3a. Design an organizational study to analyze current HR practice
- 3b. Prepare and present structured reports

Alignment of Program and Course Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes	Course Learning Outcomes
Acquisition and internalization of knowledge of major business disciplines	1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b
Application and integration of knowledge	1c, 2b, 2c, 2d/3a, 3b
Inculcating professionalism and leadership	1b,2b,2d/3a
Developing global outlook	2a,2b,2c
Mastering communication skills	2c, 2d/3a, 3b

Pre-requisite

It is required that you have taken BUSI1007 Principles of Management or other introductory management courses prior to taking this course. Management theories and concepts help form the foundation for good human resource management. You are assumed to have mastered the fundamental theories and concepts in management.

Teaching and Learning Activities

We meet twice for three hours every week. Class format is a combination of short lectures, seminars and discussions. As the name of the course implies, we will apply the theories and concepts through practice in various ways, including case studies, discussions, exercises and activities. In other words, do not expect to just come and take notes. You have to actively participate in the class discussions and activities.

Assessment

Assessment will be a combination of the followings:

Class Participation	15%*
Individual Project	20%
End of Term Test	25%
Group Assignment(s) & Project (HR in Action)	40%
Total	100%

* Please note that class participation forms an integral part of your assessment. You are encouraged to actively participate in all classroom discussions and activities. In order to be a good HR manager, you need to be outspoken and show great initiative in your work performance.

Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessment
Identify the difference between Personnel and HR management	Lectures, discussions, exercises, activities	Class participation, group assignment, individual assignment, term test
Understand the major functional areas within HRM	Lectures, discussions, exercises, activities	Class participation, group assignment, individual assignment, term test
Articulate the importance of a strategic HR perspective	Lectures, discussions, exercises, activities, seminars, case studies	Class participation, group assignment, individual assignment, term test
Identify some of the key skills required for the current HRM practice	Lectures, discussions, exercises, activities, seminars, case studies	Class participation, group assignment, individual assignment, term test
Explain how HR initiatives can add value to the bottom line	Lectures, discussions, exercises, activities	Class participation, group assignment, individual assignment, term test
Demonstrate critical thinking when presented with HR issues	Discussions, exercises, activities, group assignment	Class participation, group assignment, individual assignment, term test
Design an organizational	Lectures, discussions, exercises,	Class participation, group

study to analyze current HR practice	activities, seminars, case studies, group assignment	assignment, individual assignment, term test
Prepare and present structured reports	Exercises and case studies, group assignment	Group assignment

Text Book

Gary Dessler & Tan Chwee Huat, Human Resource Management: An Asian Perspective. Prentice-Hall, 2009. (2nd Edition)

Class Schedule ¹

Week	Week of	Topic(s) & Supplementary Readings ²	Assigned Textbook Chapter(s) ²	Things to Do/ Remarks ³
1	Sep 1	The Strategic Role of HRM	Ch. 1 & 3	
2	Sep 6	The Strategic Role of HRM Job Analysis “Where the HR function can play a part” “How is your HR department perceived in your organization?”	Ch. 2 & 4	
3	Sep 13	HR Planning and Recruitment The Legal Environment in HK	Ch. 5	
4	Sep 20	Employee Testing and Selection “The definitive guide to recruiting in good times and bad”	Ch. 6	Sep 23 (Thru) Holiday: No Class
5	Sep 27	Employee Testing and Selection “Are you a high potential?”		
6	Oct 4	Interviewing “Why are we losing all our good people?”	Ch. 7	
8	Oct 11	Training and Development “Mentoring millennials”	Ch. 8	

		“How Gen Y & boomers will reshape your agenda”		
7	Oct 18	Reading week		Reading Week: No Class Oct 18: Visit to Labor Tribunal (to be confirmed)
9	Oct 25	Performance Management and Appraisal “Getting 360 feedback right”	Ch.9	Oct 26: Submit Project Progress Report
10	Nov 1	Career Development “Managing oneself”	Ch. 10	
11	Nov 8	Compensation and Benefits “How to keep your top talent”	Ch. 11,12 & 13	
12	Nov 15	HR in Action Presentation		
13	Nov 22	HR in Action Presentation		Nov 25: Collection of Individual Log-book
14	Nov 29	HR in Action Presentation		

1. Subject to changes
2. Please note that you are supposed to have read the assigned supplementary readings and textbook chapter(s) **before** coming to class. You are expected to participate in class discussions, activities and exercises based on the assigned readings for the particular week. Additional supplementary readings and case studies may be distributed in class.
3. Additional individual/group assignments may be given in class.

Guidelines for Individual Project – HR Log-book

The objective of the individual project is for you to develop an awareness of the existence of HR issues surrounding our daily lives. For each of the topics that we discuss in the course, you are to collect one or more articles (newspaper clips, journal articles, web-pages etc.) and create a log-look. Accompanying each article is your analysis/commentary (things learned, reactions, critical comments etc.) At the end, a conclusion should be included integrating all the topics and summarizing what you have learned from your collection and the course as a whole. This should be an on-going process throughout the course and the log-book might be collected from time to time for continuous assessment and evaluation. The evaluation criteria will be based on the relevance of the articles, the richness of the collection and the quality of your analysis/commentary.

Due Date for Individual Log-book: On or Before Nov 25 (Thursday) class time No late submission will be accepted.

Group Formation

You are to work in groups of 8-9 (depending on class size) on both the group assignments and project in the course. As HR is very much about people and teamwork, the objective of the group assignment(s) and project is for you to develop the skills needed to both manage and work in a team situation. To ensure diversity, you will be assigned to a group instead of forming one by yourselves. In order to be assigned to a group, you must be present in class at least for the first few weeks. To avoid having free-riders in your group, a peer-evaluation will be conducted at the end, so that you will have a chance to evaluate each of your group-mate's performance and contribution to the group. Ratings of you and comments from your peers will be taken into account when determining your final grade.

Guidelines for Group Assignment – Weekly Discussion

The objective of the group assignment is for you to get familiarized with your group members prior to the group project and to get more involved in class discussions. There are some supplementary readings accompanying the topic taught each week. Your group is assigned to be responsible for leading a class discussion on the supplementary reading(s) for the week. You can choose to lead the discussion in whatever way you like or deem appropriate (summary presentation, Q&A session, role-play etc.) Evaluation criteria will be based on the thoroughness of analysis of the article(s), implications drawn and the engagement of the participants.

Guidelines for Group Project – HR in Action: Is there a gap between HR theories and practice?

The objective of the group project is for you to get a chance to apply the concepts and theories from the book in a **real life situation**. It is hoped that by taking a look at what is happening around you, you can develop an awareness of the existence of the actions and interactions of day-to-day HRM practices in the real world.

Your group will conduct a case study on a **real organization** of your choice. The idea is to examine one (or more) selected topic(s) from this course and see how it/they can be applied in real life settings. In particular, you are to find out if there is any gap/discrepancy between HR theories and practice. You can analyze one specific topic (e.g. employee selection or career development) in depth or discuss how various topics interact and work together (e.g. recruitment, compensation, training and development, performance appraisal as one package) in one particular incident or scenario.

Sample Project Ideas

The followings are only suggestions for what you can do. Please do not be limited by these few choices.

1. Find a suitable organization and examine the role of HR in the organization. What are the special HR initiatives taken and how are they able to help contribute to the success of the organization?

2. Find a suitable organization and identify one or two illustrative jobs within the organization. Evaluate the various HR dimensions that pertain to the job(s). The various dimensions can cover the topics of recruitment, selection, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation etc. How effective are these policies? What is your evaluation? What would you do differently?
3. Conduct a study or survey to examine and compare the HR policies (one or more) between different organizations in the same industry, or in different industries. What are the differences? Why are there differences? (e.g. McDonald's vs KFC, McDonald's vs Café de Coral, HKU vs Hong Kong Bank, Parkn Shop vs Wellcome ...)
4. Conduct a case study of an organization (e.g. Hong Kong Bank, the School of Business at HKU, or from your summer job experience) and examine any HR policy changes and issues through the course of time (e.g. change of management and leadership, job designs etc.). What are the (strategic) implications and related HR issues?
5. Compare and contrast how different HRM concepts and theories applied in different industries or environments (e.g. IT industry, dot com companies, small enterprises, international conglomerates, non-profit organizations etc.). Support your arguments with live examples.
6. Any other ideas you can think of. The list is endless. If you are unsure of it, discuss it with your lecturer.

Whatever topic you have come up with, the emphasis of the project is for you to get some primary data and information on some of the HR practices in the real world. It is also important that your approach be practical and **evaluative**, other than descriptive. You are required to interview and talk to some real people in the field, rather than just collecting secondary information. You need to attach **at least two name cards** (original copy) of some of the people you have talked to, together with your written assignment. It is always important to collect information and consider different opinions from multiple sources and perspectives (e.g. from both management and employees). Listening to just one side of the story can be misleading and biased. Whatever topic you decide on, one of your objectives is to analyze if there is any gap/discrepancy between HR theories and practice. You are to compare the textbook theories with the actual practice in the field. If the organization is not practicing what is recommended, why is that the case? What recommendations would you offer to the organization so that it can do better? Are the theories too idealistic to be practised in the real world? What would it take for the organization to follow good practice as suggested by the HR theories in the textbook?

What It Means for You

Given that HRM is something that is practiced in the real world, the idea is for you to take a practical approach in this project by actually collecting some first-hand information in a real life setting, other than just reading your textbook. Because you should decide early on in the course what you want to do, it means you have to skim through the topics to be covered in the entire course in order to select the one(s) you want to work on. Since it takes time to identify and approach a specific organization, you need to start your project **early**. In addition, you might have to read **ahead** on the topic(s) you have selected. If you wait till the topic(s) is/are discussed in class, it might be too late. **You need to inform your lecturer of your topic by submitting a project plan and progress report** (a three/four-page write-up of who your target organization is, what you are to analyze and a set of mile-stones to accomplish).

Assessment of Group Project

You will give a 20-minute presentation of your findings and submit a written report (no more than 10 pages – 12-point font and double-spacing). Assessment will be based on your presentation, creativity, initiatives, richness of your report and quality of analysis.

Due Date for Written Report: On or Before **Dec 2 (Thursday), 5:00 p.m.** No late report will be accepted.

Standards of Assessment

Grade	Performance
A+, A, A-	Very active participation in class and web discussions. Provide accurate analysis to all problems and issues covered and discussed; and give detailed and insightful responses to all questions
B+, B, B-	Active participation in class and web discussions. Provide accurate analysis to most problems and issues covered and discussed; and give detailed responses to most questions
C+, C, C-	Moderate participation in class and web discussions. Provide accurate analysis to a few problems and issues covered and discussed; and give detailed responses to a few questions
D+, D	Inactive participation in class and web discussions. Provide inaccurate analysis to most problems and issues covered and discussed; and give unclear responses to most questions
F	Inactive participation in class and web discussions. Provide inaccurate analysis to almost all problems and issues covered and discussed; and give poor responses to almost all questions

Academic Dishonesty

The university regulations on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced! Please check the University Statement on plagiarism on the web: <http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism/>

References

Drucker, P. (2005). Managing oneself. *Harvard Business Review* 83(1), 100-109.

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Lawler, E.E. III (2008). Why are we losing all our good people? *Harvard Business Review*, 86(6), 41-51.

Martin, J. & Schmidt, C. (2010). How to keep your top talent. *Harvard Business Review*, 88(5) (May 2010 issue), 54-61.

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Peiperi, M.A. (2001). Getting 360 feedback right. *Harvard Business Review*, 79(1), 142-147.

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BUSI0034 Personal Information Sheet

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. The information will help me get to know you better.

Subclass: A / B

Year: 1 / 2 / 3 / 4

Group #:

Group Name:

Your Name:
(please include English name)

Student no:

Major at HKU:

Email address:

Field of Study in previous / secondary school (e.g. Math, Biology, Commerce etc.):

Interest / Hobbies:

Name **at least** one special characteristic (physical or non-physical) about you that will help me remember you better:

Have you heard anything about this course? (If yes, what?) How do you think this course might help you in your future career? What is/are your expectation(s) of this course?

What other courses are you currently taking?

Do you have any suggestions for this course? Anything else you want me to know?

Please attach a **recent** photo below (not limited to just a passport photo – but I have to be able to recognize you!)