Course Overview

In the course of your career you will need to make decisions regarding how to manage, compensate, and motivate people. These are not trivial decisions; they have distinct consequences that can affect the success of your organization. As many managers and organizations now realize, effectively managing an organization’s human assets can serve as a key source of competitive advantage. As such, decisions about managing people must be carefully thought out with regard to the organization’s strategy, environment, and goals.

In MGT/P 224, we will explore the different choices firm make in governing and managing their workers—decisions as to wages, benefits, working conditions, ways of organizing work, and other management policies and practices. We will analyze employment systems’ fit with firms’ environments and strategies, and the consequences of choices managers make regarding policies and practices. The general goal is to enable you to think both strategically and systematically about managing an organization’s human assets.

This course is divided into two main sections. In the first, we consider the importance of alignment: the alignment of human resource practices with a firm’s external environment, strategy, and culture, and aligning human resource practices so they are internally consistent. In the second section, we focus on a set of issues that are particularly relevant to today’s workforce and rapidly changing organizations.

Required Readings  Course packet

There is no textbook for the course. The readings are drawn from a number of sources. They include some academic articles, excerpts from longer works, cases, and short articles from the popular and business presses. Some additional materials may be distributed as the course progresses.

Course Requirements and Grading

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<th>Requirement</th>
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<td>Group Project &amp; Presentation</td>
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<td>Individual Case Analyses</td>
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<td>Contingent Work Report</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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Your grade will be based on

(1) A group project analyzing the employment systems and management practices of 1 organization of your choice. The project will consist of a paper (12 pages max., double-spaced) as well as a group presentation on the final day of class. It is due **Session 10** and the paper and presentation together are worth **35%** of your grade. More details will be given on the project as the quarter gets underway.

(2) Two individual case analyses of your choosing (based on the Case Analysis Questions for Sessions 2-6 and Session 8), which are together worth **20%** of your grade. **Papers cannot exceed 3 double-spaced pages in length.** Good analyses will present the case issues in relation to the course concepts and the other readings for relevant sessions.

(3) A report due Session 7 based on an interview you conducted with a person who is or has been a contingent worker. **Papers cannot exceed 3 double-spaced pages in length.** Good analyses will provide a clear, detailed description of the relevant HR system (using examples wherever possible) as well as a thoughtful analysis of why these particular characteristics were used and what the consequences were for the firm and the contingent workers. This will be worth **10%** of your grade.

(4) Participation. Participation counts for **35%** of your grade, and includes class attendance, informed involvement in class discussions, cases and exercises. Attendance is critical for your learning in the class – if you cannot attend class, make sure to notify me in advance via e-mail. Participation is evaluated seriously: I appreciate timely, relevant, and interesting contributions that are constructive and contribute toward moving the discussion forward.

(5) I use the following scheme to grade student participation in each class:
   
   3: Excellent
   2: Good
   1: Satisfactory
   0: Absent with reasonable cause and advance notification;
   -3: Absent without cause

**Notice!** For all written assignments:

1. I do not accept late papers.
2. Please adhere to all page limits, using 12 point font size and double spacing (and no fiddling with margins, either!). Any excess material will be ignored.
3. In my evaluations I take into account the quality of writing and presentation, the use of examples, and correctness of spelling and usage in assigning a grade.

**Academic Integrity:** All students who take this course are governed by the University of California's standards of ethical conduct for students, in particular, the sections on academic conduct and integrity. These sections set forth the responsibilities of students and faculty to maintain a spirit of academic honesty and integrity at U.C. Davis. It is essential that you are aware of this code of conduct and the disciplinary actions that may be taken in the event of a violation. A copy of the Code of Academic Conduct may be found in your student handbook or at: http://sja.ucdavis.edu/pdf/CAC.pdf. Further details may be obtained from the GSM Associate Dean or the Office of Judicial Affairs.
Winter 2012: Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Session 1: HRM and the Five Factors
Assigned readings:
- “The Five Factors”, James N. Baron and David M. Kreps, Strategic Human Resources, Ch. 2.
- “Get Big, Stay Small”, Alex Frankel, Punching In: The unauthorized adventures of a front-line employee, Ch. 5.

Session 2: Internal alignment of HR Practices
Assigned reading:
- “Consistent HR Practices,” Baron and Kreps, Strategic Human Resources, Ch. 3.
- Case: “Club Med” A and B
  Case Analysis Questions:
  1. Evaluate Club Med’s HR system, including recruitment, training, placement, and performance evaluation. Is this system internally aligned?
  2. How do these HR practices fit with the external environment and with Club Med’s strategy?
  3. What would you change at Club Med?

Session 3: HRM as Competitive Advantage
Assigned readings:
- “Distinctive Human Resources as Firms’ Core Competencies,” Peter Cappelli and Anne Crocker-Hefter, Organizational Dynamics, 24(3), 1996, p. 7-22
- Case: Harrah’s Entertainment, Inc.
  Case Analysis Questions:
  1. What are Harrah’s HR practices, and how are they aligned (or misaligned) with its strategy?
  2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Harrah’s gainsharing program?
  3. What advice would you have for Winn about her recommendation to Loveman?

Initial Project Status Report Due
Your group should submit a short written summary that includes:
- Group members’ names and emails
- The organization you plan to study
- The contacts you have or plan to establish

Have one representative from your group prepared to give a quick summary to the class that includes the organization you plan to study and contacts at that organization you plan to interview (or how you plan to go about establishing those contacts). You should also note any interesting issues you hope to investigate and any questions/concerns you have regarding your project during this report.
Session 4: HRM and Organizational Culture
Assigned readings:
- Case: “Perlegen Sciences.” Linda Hill.

Case Analysis Questions:
1. What are the characteristics of the HR system at Perlegen?
2. How do they fit with its culture and its external environment?
3. What would you recommend to Margus with regard to integrating Brandeau? What would you suggest to Brandeau?

Session 5: Organizational Change
Assigned readings:
- Case: Dreyer’s Grand Ice Cream

Case Analysis Questions:
1. Perform a Five Factors analysis of Dreyer’s current situation. (e.g., What is Dreyer’s strategy, it’s culture, relevant aspects of the way work is organized, etc.)
2. How well does Dreyer’s HR policies fit with these factors?
3. Is a restructuring of HR policies warranted given the current situation?

Session 6: Knowledge Work
Assigned Readings:
- Case #1: “The Case of the Part Time Partner”
- Case #2: “Beyond the Part Time Partner: A Part Time Law Firm?”
- The Transformation of the Big Law Firm, Marc Galanter and Thomas Palay.

Case Analysis Questions (based on the Galanter and Palay reading!)
1. What are key characteristics of the traditional HR model of large law firms—the “Cravath” model? Is this model internally well aligned, and how?
2. How is this model changing, and how are changes in the “Five Factors” of the legal environment/profession prompting this?
3. What is the result of these changes in terms of outcomes for partners? For associates?
Session 7: Contingent Work
Assigned reading:
  • Case: “Contingent Workforce Planning at Motorola, Inc.”

Contingent Work Report due: Interview someone who is or has been a contingent worker about the characteristics of the HR system they were under. Provide an assessment of why these particular characteristics were used (refering to aspects of the firm’s external environment, strategy, or culture to the extent possible) and the consequences of the HR practices for the firm and for the contingent workers.

* Definition of a contingent worker (according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics): “Contingent workers are persons who do not expect their jobs to last or who reported that their jobs are temporary. They do not have an implicit or explicit contract for ongoing employment.”

Project Status Reports due.
No written report is due. Have one representative from your group prepared to give a quick summary to the class of the progress that you have made to date, any interesting issues you have encountered during your investigation and plan to analyze in-depth, and questions/concerns you have regarding your project during this report.

Session 8: Project-based Work
Assigned readings:
  Case Analysis Questions:
    1. What are the key characteristics of the film project environment and employment system?
    2. How does this system fit with the environment (and do you see any misalignments)?
    3. What outcomes result from this system? Describe outcomes for both the firms and the workers.

Session 9: Diversity in the Workplace
Assigned readings:
  • Case: Karen Leary

Session 10: Final Project Presentations