

**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA  
Omaha, Nebraska 68182  
PA 8410-801 Public Personnel Administration  
Fall Semester, 2004**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is a required course for students in the public management, and local government concentrations. It explores the policies, programs, and techniques used in management human resources in the public sector. Specifically, it examines the managerial practices and problems in staffing, structuring, and operating public bureaucracies. It also addresses issues of personnel leadership, neutrality, accountability, performance, challenges resulting from legislation, and the impact of the challenges associated with changing demographics in the workforce.

The material for this class consists of four modules based on the major functions of personnel management - planning, acquisitions, development and sanctions. It will be taught in seminar format rather than the traditional lecture- discussion format.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The main focus of this course is to develop an understanding of the various requirements, activities, and functions associated with personnel management in the public sector. It is the goal of this course that students should have acquired an understanding of the following elements at the end of the semester:

1. the knowledge and skills necessary to act ethically and effectively in the management of human resources.
2. the major political, social, and economic forces that affect human resource management
3. the major theories and techniques currently operative in the field
4. the major unresolved problems currently confronting public personnel management.

Students should also be knowledgeable enough to be able to analyze and solve problems that represent challenges common to public personnel systems.

**TEXTBOOK**

Klingner, Donald and Nalbandian, John. *Public Personnel Management*, fifth edition.  
Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 2003.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### *Written Assignments*

**A. *Results-oriented Job Description (ROD) and justification.*** (100 points)

**DUE: September 21**

Write a results -oriented job description for the position of Minority Recruitment Director described in the assigned case study. In a brief narrative (two pages or less) justify the knowledge, skills and abilities you chose for this position and included in the job description. Why are these elements important to the success of this position? Examples of RODs are found in the textbook.

**B. *Position Paper “The Use of Affirmative Action as a Recruitment and Selection Tool and as a Means of Assuring Social Equity in the Workplace”*** (100 points)

**DUE: October 5**

Students are required to take a position (pro or con) on the above topic. You will be expected to assemble evidence to back up an argument in a convincing and careful way. Rely on data, conclusions and quotations from the readings. You are expected to use the readings we have covered in class, those assigned for the evening *and additional library research if necessary* to help support your position. Papers should be well organized, logical, and forceful. Make sure your argument/position is going somewhere; that you have an endpoint in mind. The essay should be approximately **three, no more than four, pages in length**. Guidelines for writing a position paper are found in the syllabus.

**C. *Group Decision-making Exercise : Case Study 3 “How Should This Management team Work Together?”*** Klingner and Nalbandian pages -258-259 (100 points)

**DUE: October 12**

This assignment is done in two parts. Part one is written and the second part will be done in class. Each class participant will be assigned to a group. Each group is responsible for developing a written response/plan to the scenario posed for it. Written plans should be given to the instructor.

**D. *One Case Study: “Juan Hernandez Vs. The County”*** Klingner and Nalbandian, page 342. (50 points)

**DUE: November 9**

You are required to answer the following question: *Considering Mr. Hernandez’s constitutional rights, do you agree with the hearing examiner’s decision? Why? Using the*

*theories and legal requirements discussed in the chapter, as well as the human resource management theories you've learned thus far, how could this case have been avoided. Be specific.* Your answers should be no more than **two to three pages** typed and double-spaced.

Your responses will be evaluated on:

1. Your ability to explain and justify your answers based on the readings, class discussion, additional research.
2. The ability to communicate the major theories and issues associated with the topic.

Cases will also be assigned for weekly discussion. All students will be expected to analyze the assigned cases prior to class and be ready to discuss them, either as an individual or within a group. Additional guidelines for case analysis are found in this syllabus.

**E. Applied Research Project** (100 points)

**DUE: November 30**

Each student is required to develop and present research related to one of the topical areas presented in this course. Students are expected to *select and observe a government or nonprofit agency in one of the areas of human resource management addressed during the semester*. The focus of the project should be on issues that affect public sector workers or the management of public sector workers. The theories, legal requirements and literature in the field are to serve as the basis for observation. Topics, and a general outline of the anticipated research must be approved prior to the research. **Project topics and outlines are due September 28.** Examples of acceptable topics include "Addressing Violence in the Public Sector Workplace," and "The Effect of Privatization on Public Sector Employees." Topics that have not received prior approval will not be accepted.

Projects will be presented on November 30. A synopsis of the project presentation is to be given to each seminar member and a final project outline is to be given to the instructor at the time of the presentation. Presentations should be *no longer than ten to twelve minutes*. Papers are to be **no more than 25 pages in length**. Complete guidelines for this assignment are found in the syllabus

**F. Readings Critiques** (10 points each - 100 points)

**DUE: On the same data as the reading is assigned**

In addition to the Klingner and Nalbandian text, approximately sixteen additional readings have been assigned. Students are to select and critique ten (10) of those readings. Critiques should present a brief summary of the article, paying particular attention to the author's point of view. The summary should then be followed by an analysis/critique of what the author has written. A detailed description of how to critique articles can be found at:

<http://www.uwgb.edu/esms/sss/critique.htm>

**Class Presentation** (50 points)

Seminar participants are responsible for developing a class lecture or discussion corresponding to one of the topics presented in the course. This requires researching the topic, presenting the

research and developing any necessary class materials to enhance discussion. The research should begin with a *very brief* summary of the assigned readings for the evening, but this should not be the only literature used. It is expected that additional articles, books and points of view other than those found in the texts will be explored to broaden the scope of the topic. New developments and recent research are encouraged as a part of the presentation. Presentations should be **no more than twenty minutes in length. An outline or abstract of the presentation should be given to each seminar participant, as well as any other handouts that can be used to augment the presentation. A copy of the entire presentation and the bibliography should be given to the instructor at the time of the presentation.**

Presentations will be graded on the following basis

- Clear explanation/definition of the topic (5 points)
- Summary of theoretical/policy background (20 points)
- Research/Analysis of topic (10 points)
- Knowledge/clarity of presentation (10 points)
- Creativity in presentation (5 points)

## GRADING

Grades will be determined on the basis of the following point system :

1 ROD	100
1 Position Paper	100
1 Project	100
1 Case Study	50
Readings Critiques	100
1 Group Exercise	100
Class Presentation	50

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TOTAL	600
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**Final Letter Grades will be derived as follows:**

600-580	A+	479-460	C+
579-560	A	459-440	C
559-540	A-	439-420	C-
539-520	B+	419-400	D+
519-500	B	399-380	D
499-480	B-	379-360	D- 359 below F

### Incomplete Grades

All assignments are due on the date indicated unless you have a documented illness, or a family or work emergency. Late assignments will result in a decrease in grade by one letter (for example, an "A" becomes a "B"). At the end of the semester, the only condition on which an

incomplete will be given as a final grade will be as the consequence of a serious illness of either the student, an immediate family member, or there is a documented work or family emergency.

### **Late Assignments**

All assignments are due on the date indicated unless you have a documented illness, or a family or work emergency. Assignments not turned in on the due date for any other reason will result in a decrease in your letter grade by one letter (for example, an "A" becomes a "B").

### **Quality of Work**

Graduate level work is required for all assignments. It is expected to be free of errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Work requiring research **MUST** follow the appropriate citation rules. Written assignments will be graded based on:

1. analytical ability - this includes critical thinking and the ability to compare and contrast ideas, arrive at conclusions, and support arguments;
2. focus - how well the assignment meets the required objectives; and
3. presentation - clarity, organization, grammar and spelling

Students may find it helpful to purchase a book on general writing style (e.g., *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White), and/or a research paper style guide (e.g. Turabian or the American Psychological Association). A helpful web site for appropriate writing and formatting papers is <http://www.uwsp.edu/psych/apa4b.htm>. It is CRUCIAL that proper methods of citation be used when using an author's ideas or actual words (see the university's policy on plagiarism). Direct quotes from another source require a page number in the in-text citation). The references given at the end of the paper should include all sources cited in the text, and must be formatted in an acceptable and consistent style.

### **Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to conduct their academic affairs in an honest and responsible manner. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in academic work shall be subject to disciplinary actions (*2003-2004 Graduate Catalog. University of Nebraska - Omaha*). For the complete list of factors deemed dishonest please refer to the section on Academic Integrity in Graduate Catalog.

## POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

Each student is required to take a position (pro or con) on the topic, “*The Use of Affirmative Action as a Recruitment and Selection Tool and a Means of Assuring Social Equity in the Workplace*” Selecting the pro side of the argument means you agree that affirmative action strategies should be used to recruit and hire minority candidates. Selecting the con side of the argument means you disagree. You will be expected to assemble evidence to back up an argument in a convincing and careful way. Rely on data, conclusions and quotations from the readings covered thus far, those assigned for the week, and additional research if necessary to help support your position. Papers should be well organized, logical, and forceful. Make sure the argument/position is going somewhere and that you have an endpoint in mind. The essay should be approximately *three to four pages in length*, and double-spaced. Papers will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- Clear definition of the issue (10)
- Importance of the issue to public personnel management (10)
- clear articulation of position taken (10)
- evidence to support position (45)
- logic of the argument presented (15)
- paper organized in logical and easy flowing manner (5)
- writing free from syntax errors (5)

## GUIDELINES FOR ANALYZING CASE STUDIES

For a fuller consideration of a case, and especially for cases arising in actual administration, a systematic method of analysis can be followed that includes:

1. determining the issue/problem
2. assembling facts bearing on a problem
3. clarifying the problem by defining the issues
4. proposing and evaluating suggested courses of action
5. determining which course(s) of action seems best in view of circumstances

Once the basic dilemma or difficulty in the case is defined and the possible course(s) of action determined, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What are the likely consequences of the action?
2. Is the course of action a temporary expedient or a long-term solution?
3. Will it be acceptable to the people involved?
4. What group(s) will best be served by the decision?
5. Is the decision in the interest of good government?
6. Is the decision ethically right?
7. Is the decision equitable for all concerned?

Because there are no right or wrong answers to cases, they enrich our ability to think and reflect about our practice and the assumptions that guide us, consciously or unconsciously.

## PROJECT GUIDELINES

Each student is required to briefly research and analyze an issue deemed to be critical to public personnel management. The project should focus on a specific human resource policy, program, or management technique as it is applied in a public or nonprofit agency. This is not a traditional research project that entails a review of the literature only. This project is designed to help you explore human resource management questions or issues that you find interesting by observing it in an agency, analyzing what is being done, comparing it to its theoretical prescription and/or legal requirements, and making recommendations.

The format of the paper is to be as follows.

1. **Introduction.** A brief introduction clearly stating the issue studied. It should include the issue/problem's development overtime, the political and organizational context, its relevance to the study of public administration, and the challenges this issue poses for public management. This segment of the paper presents a concise and clear statement of the research question, as well as the likely outcome(s) of not addressing the issue/problem.
2. **Analytic Framework/Literature Review.** Presents a full and balanced review of theoretical and practice-oriented concepts drawn from the appropriate literature, comparing and contrasting different perspectives and analyzing their application to the research question. This is sometimes referred to colloquially as the "literature review." The purpose of a review of previous research and various theoretical approaches to a topic is to develop an analytic framework that establishes the elements of the project, lays out the theoretical basis of the project, and integrates the project into the larger body of systematic knowledge about public management and public policy.
3. **Agency observations and Findings.** Describes the findings relative to the research questions with analysis and interpretation of the data or evidence collected. What things were observed in the agency? Did the observations reflect the theoretical background presented in the literature review?
4. **Conclusions.** Discusses the potential impact of the research on the agency observed and the public interest. Relates findings to previous research, and existing theory and practice (revealed in the review of the literature). Identifies areas for future research.
5. **Recommendations.** Presents implications and recommendations derived from the findings as appropriate. It focuses on suggestions on how to better address this issue within the organization and better address the public interest. Recommendations should reflect evidence from the researched literature.
6. **References.** A complete and accurate list of references must be included. Please use APA style [author and date in parenthesis]. Consult the appropriate style manual for format. All tables, figures and graphics should be included in the body of the report as close as possible to the text discussion of the item. Appendices may be used to include lengthy and detailed material not directly discussed in the body of the report. This might

include material such transcripts of in-depth interviews, frequency distributions of survey items, and special computations related to the project (e.g., details of a benefit/cost analysis).

## 7. **Attachments**

Projects will be graded on the basis of the following criteria:

- Introduction. Clear explanation of the topic and its relevance to the study of public administration (15 points)
- Analytic Framework. The literature is current and relevant to the issue studied, and is presented in a scholarly manner (20 points)
- Agency observations/Findings (15 points)
- Conclusions (20 points)
- Recommendations. Should adequately reflect the findings and inform (based on observation and literature review) for improvements, changes or adaptations in an addressing the issue (20 points)
- Ability of the topic to present new and/or critical issues in public management (5 points)
- Project format-ability to follow guidelines (5 points)

# CLASS SCHEDULE

## ***INTRODUCTORY MODULE: Background to Public Personnel Management***

### **8/31 Historical Background and Functions of Public Personnel Management**

- A. Klingner and Nalbandian, chapters 1 and 2
- B. Daniel, Christopher. *Curbing patronage without paperasserie*. **Public Administration Review**. Jul/Aug 1993. Vol. 53, Iss. 4; pg. 387, 4 pgs
- C. **DISCUSSION QUESTION.** Considering the four traditional values and the three emerging anti-government values of public personnel management what ethical and political dilemmas can result when these elements conflict?

## ***MODULE ONE: The Planning Function***

September 7 - 28

### **9/7 Strategic Human Resource Management**

- A. Klingner and Nalbandian, chapter 3
- B. Tompkins, Jonathan. *Strategic human resources management in government: Unresolved issues*. **Public Personnel Management**, Spring 2002. Vol. 31, Iss. 1; pg. 95, 16 pgs **Database:** Ebscohost
- C. **DISCUSSION QUESTION.** Tompkins discusses several unresolved issues that affect the ability of public personnel managers in their efforts to connect agency goals with the management of human resources. Based on the information presented in the text, how can these issues be resolved?

### **9/14 Human Resource Planning and Productivity**

- A. Klingner and Nalbandian, chapter 4
- B. Chi, Keon S., Arnold, Kelly A., and Perkins, Heather M. *Privatization in State Government: Trends and Issues*. **Spectrum**. Fall 2003. Vol. 76, Iss. 4; pg. 12, 10 pgs **Database:** Ebscohost
- C. Amundson, Norman E., Borgen, William A., Jordan Sharalyn, and Erlbach, Anne C. *Survivors of Downsizing: Helpful and Hindering Experiences*. **The Career Development Quarterly**. Mar 2004. Vol. 52, Iss. 3; pg. 256, 16 pgs **Database:** Ebscohost
- D. **DISCUSSION QUESTION.** Public employees have been deeply affected by government's move toward privatizing services. Why is this a strong argument

against privatization? What is the personnel manager's role in assuring responsiveness to the public while protecting the rights of public employees?

- E. **CASE DISCUSSION: Case Study 2: Privatization.** Klingner and Nalbandian, pages 107-108. **How should the city council decide? Why?**

**9/21 Job Analysis, Classification and Evaluation**

- A. Klingner and Nalbandian, chapter 5
- B. Urbanek, Steve J., **Job Analysis: a Local Government's Experience.** Public Personnel Management, Fall97, Vol. 26, Issue 3 **Database:** Ebscohost
- C. **DISCUSSION QUESTION: Who's Most Qualified to be Minority Recruitment Director** Klingner and Nalbandian, page 125. Who would you hire. Why?
- D. **ASSIGNMENT DUE: Results-Oriented Job Description.** Write a results - oriented job description for the position of Minority Recruitment Director described in this week's case study. In a brief narrative (two pages or less) justify the knowledge, skills and abilities you chose for this position. Why are these elements important to the success of this position?.

**9/28 Compensation and Benefits**

- D. Klingner and Nalbandian, chapter 6
- E. Gustafson, Bobette. M. **Skill-based pay improves PFS staff recruitment, retention, and performance [patient financial services]. Healthcare Financial Management** v. 54 no. 1 (January 2000) p. 62-3 **Database:** Ebscohost
- F. **DISCUSSION QUESTION.** What is the impact of skill-based pay, competitive benefit packages and family friendly policies on recruiting, motivating, and maintaining public employees?
- G. **PROJECT TOPICS DUE**

***MODULE TWO: Personnel Acquisition Activities***  
**October 5**

**10/5 The Staffing Function: Recruiting the Best and Brightest While Considering Social Equity**

- A. Klingner and Nalbandian, chapters 7 and 8
- A. Lawton, Anne. ***The Meritocracy Myth and the Illusion of Equal Employment Opportunity.*** **Minnesota Law Review**, December 2000. Vol. 85, No. 2, 587-662 **Database:** Ebscohost
- B. **CASE DISCUSSION: Case Study 2: Social Equity vs Employee Rights.** Klingner and Nalbandian, page 180. **Develop and acceptable plan**
- C. **ASSIGNMENT DUE: POSITION PAPER: "The Use of Affirmative Action as a Recruitment Tool and a Means of Assuring Social Equity in the Workplace"**

**MODULE THREE: The Personnel Development Function**  
**October 12 - November 2**

**10/12 Employee Leadership and Development**

- A. Klingner and Nalbandian, chapters 9 and 10
- B. Brewer, G. A., Selden, S. Coleman, and Facer, R. L. *Individual conceptions of public service motivation. Public Administration Review*. Vol. 60, Iss. 3; 2000, pg. 254, 11 pgs **Database:** Ebscohost
- C. Jurkiewicz, Carole L.; Massey Jr., Tom K.. *What motivates municipal employees: A comparison of supervisory vs. non-supervisory personnel. Public Personnel Management*, Fall97, Vol. 26 Issue 3, p367, **Database:** Ebscohost
- D. **GROUP ASSIGNMENT. Case Study 3, "How Should This Management Team Work Together?"** Klingner and Nalbandian, pages 258-259. **Answer question number 3.** Each group is responsible for submitting it's position in writing. Each group is to consider the background information provided as well as the likelihood of the acceptance of their position given the information and constraints of the other groups.  
Group #1 - division directors  
group #2- department heads  
Group #3 members of the city manager's office

**10/19 NO CLASS - Fall Break**

**10/26 Performance Appraisal**

- A. Klingner and Nalbandian, chapter 11
- B. Roberts, Gary E. **Employee Performance Appraisal System Participation: A Technique that Works. Public Personnel Management**, Spring 2003, Vol. 32, Issue 1 **Database:** Ebscohost - Business Source Premier
- C. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Klingner and Nalbandian discuss several performance appraisal instruments/systems. Which is the most comprehensive considering:
- the four operational functions
  - considers both administrative efficiency and employee rights
  - employees all (or most of the characteristics of effective appraisal (rating)
  - is fair
  - is most closely associated with merit

**11/2 Health and Safety**

- A. Klingner and Nalbandian, chapter 12
- B. Chenier, Errol. **The Workplace: a Battleground for Violence. Public Personnel Management** Winter98, Vol. 27, Issue 4 **Database:** Ebscohost

- C. Shumaker II, Thomas A.; Feldstein, Allison L. *Employer Liability for Workplace Violence. Public Management*, April 2004, Vol. 86 Issue 3, p34 **Database:** Ebscohost
- D. **CASE DISCUSSION: Case Study 2, “In Hindsight We Could See It Coming”** Klingner and Nalbandian, page 310. *Answer questions number 2 and 3, pages 311 and 312.*

**MODULE FOUR: Public Employee Sanctions**  
**November 9 -December 7**

**11/9 Legal, Constitutional, and Ethical Issues**

- A. Klingner and Nalbandian, chapters 13
- B. Guffey, Cynthia J.; Helms, Dr. Marilyn M.. *Effective Employee Discipline: A Case of the Internal Revenue Service. Public Personnel Management*, Spring 2001, Vol. 30 Issue 1, p111 **Database:** Ebscohost
- C. Radin, Tara J.; Werhane, Patricia H.. *Employment-at-will, Employee Rights, and Future Directions for Employment. Business Ethics Quarterly*, April 2003, Vol. 13 Issue 2, p113, **Database:** Ebscohost
- D. Andrisani, Danielle N. *Employer 1/n Employee Rights on the Internet: Is There an Effective Balance? Journal of Internet Law*, Sep2000, Vol. 4 Issue 3, p24 **Database:** Ebscohost
- E. **ASSIGNMENT DUE: Case Study: Juan Hernandez Vs. The County.** Klingner and Nalbandian, page 342. *Considering Mr. Hernandez’s constitutional rights, do you agree with the hearing examiner’s decision? Why? Using the theories and legal requirements discussed in the chapter, as well as the human resource management theories you’ve learned thus far, how could this case have been avoided. Be specific.*

**11/16 Collective Bargaining**

- A. Klingner and Nalbandian, chapter 14
- B. Mosher, Lanning S. *Facing the Realities of Public Employee Bargaining. Public Personnel Management*, Jul/Aug78, Vol. 7 Issue 4, p243, 6p, **Database:** Ebscohost
- C. Stephens, Elvis C. *Resolution of impasses in public employee bargaining. Monthly Labor Review*, Jan76, Vol. 99 Issue 1, p57 **Database:** Ebscohost
- D. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What factors influence either the opposition or acceptance of unions by public managers?

# 11/23 NO CLASS - Thanksgiving

**11/30 FINAL PROJECT DUE**

**STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**

**9/14 Human Resource Planning and Productivity**  
**Greg Hood**

**9/21 Job Analysis, Classification and Evaluation**  
**Heather Harrison**

**9/28 Compensation and Benefits**  
**Megahn Schafer**

**10/5 The Staffing Function: Recruiting the Best and Brightest While Considering Social Equity**  
**Jeff Hastings**

**10/12 Employee Leadership and Development**  
**Leslie Clark**

**10/19 NO CLASS - Fall Break**

**10/26 Performance Appraisal**  
**Brad Johnson**

**11/2 Health and Safety**  
**Krissy Motzner**

**11/9 Legal, Constitutional, and Ethical Issues**  
**Courtney Miller**

**11/16 Collective Bargaining**  
**Rachel Black**

# **11/23 NO CLASS - Thanksgiving**

**11/30 FINAL PROJECT DUE**