

Public Administration 215

Introduction to Public Personnel Management

Instructor: Ronald D. Sylvia

Class location Clark 243

Office: Clark 404M

Office Hours 5 to 6 pm on Thursdays and every other Saturday 3 to 4 pm

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Course Format:

The class will be a combination of lecture, discussion and hands-on case exercises. Each of you will select a paper topic by the second class session. You will be expected to provide a summary of your preliminary research on your topic when it appears in the course calendar. Students may be called upon by name to address concepts from the readings. Students should take the time and effort to read the materials when they are assigned. Opinions and alternative points of view are welcome but cannot, of themselves, substitute for knowledge of the readings. Regular attendance is expected and will enhance your grade simply because you will have knowledge necessary to pass the test that might not otherwise be available. Please do your fellow students and me the courtesy to turn off cell phones and beepers during class.

<http://www2.sjsu.edu/depts/PoliSci/faculty/sylvia/sylvia.htm>

Grading Component

Case analyses	21%
Take Home Exam	29%
Participation/presentations	20%
Term Paper	30%

CASE STUDIES: We will discuss a number of case studies that appear in the book and are linked on the syllabus at the class website. You must come to class ready to discuss all the cases. You must provide a written analysis of three of them.

EXAM: I will give you study questions to prepare for the exams as we go along from topic to topic. They will be directly tied to the lecture/discussion and the texts and will contain no surprises. More credit will be given for analysis and synthesis on the exams than on the mindless

listing of facts and dates. The best essay exams address the questions as written and reach some sort of logical conclusion.

Make-up Policy:

Serious personal illness that can be documented is the only acceptable excuse for not taking exams or presenting papers in a timely fashion. If you are ill, however, you can arrange to take the exam at a later date although you may not anticipate the same questions as your cohorts. Incompletes are discouraged because they slow your academic career and leave loose ends in your and my life. They will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Paper:

What follows is one professor's view on why you will be given the opportunity to write yet another paper. University educated persons have three advantages in the work world over those who merely have knowledge. 1) They have a commanding knowledge of relevant information on a topic. This characteristic may also be found in the knowledgeable person but the university-educated person's facts are usually more up-to-date and better integrated into his or her world view. 2) They develop skills of analytic thinking not normally possessed by the merely knowledgeable person. This analytic capacity is normally framed in the theoretical constructs of the various academic disciplines that the university scholar has pursued. 3) The educated person knows where to find the information he or she needs which means he or she has a working knowledge of the storage and retrieval systems of research libraries and the relevant sources for accessing current knowledge in a given field. 4) The educated person is capable of expressing his- or herself clearly and in a manner consistent with the conventions of appropriate usage.

PAPER REQUIREMENTS: Papers should be a 12 to 15 pages double-spaced typewritten. Papers should contain at least 10 references from the literature of the last 5 years. The topic must be on an aspect of Public Personnel Administration and be approved in advance by the instructor. Students must take care that appropriate citations are used. Direct quotations must be so indicated with quotation marks and a specific reference to the page in the source from which it was taken. **Ideas from others must also be referenced although quotation marks are inappropriate. See: http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct.** Failure to cite your sources constitutes academic misconduct that carries with it serious sanctions. Acceptable citation formats for this class include:

American Political Science Association

American Psychological Association

Modern Language Association

Examples of the above can be found at

http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/citing.htm

Of course, if you buy or borrow a paper from another you will be looked upon as a person without honor and dealt with accordingly. (Even your tearful parents, significant others or organized hate groups will not save you.)

We will spend a part of a class session going over some acceptable formats and styles of paper writing. Paper sources must be from books and articles preferably from the literature of the social sciences. Articles are preferable to books for two reasons. 1) The information is more up-to-date and usually more scholarly. 2) Using articles will make your paper writing much easier. If necessary we will spend an entire class session on how to research and write a paper.

Use of internet sources: The ancient masters say that students are equal at two times in their lives when they are born and when they walk through the dojo door. After these two events, they sort themselves out by ability. Much the same is true of internet sites. They are all linked but they are not all equal, especially in terms of truth accuracy and level of analysis. Fortunately, as public administration students you have access to a great many original source materials through the libraries electronic journal indices and at firstgov.gov. There you may find links to the EEOC the Office Personnel Management and the Merit System Protection Board. Each is chucked full of useful materials.

Books to buy:

Ronald D. Sylvia and C. Kenneth Meyers, Public Personnel Administration, 2nd edition (Ft. Worth: Harcourt, 2002) **THIS BOOK IS FREE FOR DOWNLOADING ON MY WEBSITE IN A PDF FORMAT.**

Norma Riccucci, Public Personnel Management, Current Concerns, Future Challenges 4th edition, (NY: Longman, 2006).

Class Schedule:

Introduction:

Sylvia's Lungs

Discussion: What are the implications of conceptualizing the human resource function as primarily a line v. a staff function?

History of Public Personnel Mgt.

Notions of Patronage and Merit

The evolution of the merit principle

The impact of the Carter Reforms

State and Local Merit Systems

Sylvia: 1-54

Riccucci: 1-17

Riccucci: 126-143

Discussion: What are the cultural/political origins of government personnel systems?
What are the implications of combining merit compliance and personnel administration under the same administrator?

What, if anything, is the downside to dispersing the personnel functions among several agencies? At what point should synthesis occur?

Political Limitations and Job Rights of Public Employees

Cases: Patronage or Cronyism Sylvia 30

Keep Your Stick on the Ice... Sylvia 33

[Big Britches](#)

[Brown Act](#)

Discussion:

Is there any validity to the charge that government employees are second class citizens by dint of their government service?

What is meant by a property interest in a job?

What is the difference between substance and procedural due process?

What is the purpose and process third party review?

Human Resources Planning

Sylvia: 129-142

Riccucci: 163-176

Discussion: Can human resource planning be usefully separated from organization strategic planning?

When organization executives refuse to plan strategically, are human resources specialists absolved of their planning responsibilities?

What are the steps in the human resources planning process and how can MIS systems improve the process?

Recruitment

Sylvia: 35-150

Riccucci: 144-162

Cases: [Whom to Hire](#)

Recruitment Exercise: Sylvia: 151-154

Discussion: What is meant by the terms proactive and passive recruitment systems and why should it matter to line managers?

Why does the instructor believe that recruiting is the one area in which career managers can have meaningful long term impacts on the agencies?

What is the appropriate balance between personnel and line managers in the recruitment process?

Given the limitations of civil service, how can managers hope to significantly influence the recruitment process?

EEO and Affirmative Action

Sylvia: 57-86

Riccucci: 51-92

Case: A proud tradition of Affirmative Action: Sylvia 87-88

Reasonable Accommodations

Discussion: Is there a meaningful difference between EEO and Affirmative Action?

To what can we attribute the evolution of the public debate from whether or not to have equality of opportunity to one of how much affirmative action is warranted?

What is the difference between proactive affirmative action and quota systems?

What are the elements that must be present that to justify the use of quotas?

To what degree should minority group members be compensated for past injustices to others in their group?

Should damages for discrimination be limited to actual damages or be extended to punitive compensation?

Should gays and lesbians be included under the protections of the civil rights act?

Women in the Work Place

Sylvia: 95-101

Case Trust and Commitment: Sylvia 101-103

[Promise her Anything](#)

Discussion: How should society cope with the realities of the two-paycheck family and the single parent phenomenon? As we grow richer and more efficient, should we begin to compensate home workers who provide child nurturing and development as well as the ethical training of the next generation. What must a woman do to swim with the sharks, take up biting, wear a bow tie or merely be twice as good as her male counterparts?

Has the advent of substantial numbers of women in the workforce fundamentally changed the rules of the dynamics between the sexes? Is courting in the workplace hereafter disallowed? Are there now different rules for inter-sexual dynamics for the workplace and the rest of society?

Classification/Compensation

Sylvia: 143-166

Case: Sylvia 176-191

Discussion:

Why would a noted personnelist say that classification is the triumph of process over purpose?

What is the meaning of the terms rank in the corps, rank in the person and rank in the position?

How would a shift to the Deming principles of management impact on government classification and compensation systems?

Employee Development

Sylvia: 223-236

Discussion:

To what degree should employees be held responsible for their own professional development?

If training is so critical, why is it the first thing to be cut-back in times of retrenchment?

Performance Appraisal

Sylvia: 207-227 and 291-316

Riccucci: 177-189

Cases: Sylvia 223-225 and pp. 316-323

Ferris' Day Off

Discussion:

What are the relative merits of open-ended, semi-open and highly structured appraisal instruments?

Can performance appraisal be usefully integrated into management operating systems?

How can performance appraisal systems be balanced so as to maximize their utility for employee development and the basis of merit pay systems?

Labor Relations /Grievance Process

Sylvia: 243-274

Riccucci: 110-125

Discussion:

Why are there so many separate labor laws covering government employees while the entire private sector can largely be covered by one set?

What are the tests of a grievance used by arbitrators and hearing examiners?

Is it realistically possible to consult with labor on issues that are not covered in the contract without risking management's rights as defined in the contract?

Pay and Employee Benefits:

Sylvia: 195-204

Discussion: Can money motivate? Realistically, can public managerial compensation be brought into line with the private sector?