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Spring, 2012  
Thursday  
4:30 – 7:10  
Room 106

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**Texts:** Assigned readings on class schedule. Other readings may be assigned from time to time. Students will be accountable for such materials on exams.

**Fundamentals of Employee Benefit Programs , 6<sup>th</sup> ed.** (2009) Washington, DC: Employee Benefit Research Institute. (Assigned chapters on web at <http://www.ebri.org/publications/books/index.cfm?fa=fundamentals>)

**EBRI Databook on Employee Benefits** (various dates) Washington, DC: Employee Benefit Research Institute. (Assigned chapters on web at <http://www.ebri.org/publications/books/index.cfm?fa=databook>)

### **Course Description:**

Employee benefits have become an increasingly large portion of labor costs for most employers. Benefits are viewed by most employees as entitlements, and employer efforts to control or cut costs to remain competitive in global markets have met with stiff resistance by employees, unions, civil employees, impacted industries (e.g., insurance, health care), and the government. Given that setting, it is critical that human resource professionals (who are frequently caught in the middle of the conflict) understand how individual benefits programs work, what strategies and options are available to organizations, and how benefits programs can be integrated into reward systems, human resource programs and, most importantly, the business.

The perspective taken in this course is that of the employer (and HR professional), and the goal is an understanding of how an employer can design, implement and administer a benefits program that serves major employer, employee and societal needs. While much detailed information will be covered, the course goals do not include memorization of detailed statistics, subclauses of obscure legislation, or similar materials, but rather knowledge of program characteristics, the impact of employee demographics on what programs might be useful/valuable for a specific organization and potential (legal, regulatory, tax) problems that would require further research before implementation.

An understanding of the ways organizations integrate mandated programs (e.g., Social Security, Medicare, State Disability) with their own benefit programs is important. Similarly, an understanding of options in administration of programs is necessary, as is the nature of employee communication programs useful in enabling employees to help make sure their benefits choices and benefits-related behaviors (e.g., savings patterns) meet their needs. Recent trends in benefits management, including cost controls, cost shifting programs, and other benefits strategies as well as the outsourcing of benefits administration will be covered.

Because of the wide variety of benefits available, a fairly standard classification of programs will be used to organize the course:

1. Retirement and other capital accumulation programs
2. Income protection benefits

3. Health care programs
4. Paid time off
5. Miscellaneous benefits, including services

**Anticipated Midterm and Final Examinations:**

The **midterm** will consist of ten questions based on the materials covered to that point. Questions will be based on lecture material and reading assignments. Each question will take a few paragraphs to answer. The **final** will consist of a take-home case study, with ten questions based on case information. Coverage includes general material from the entire semester, but with specific program material from the second half of the semester as well.

**Anticipated Grading Components:**

Midterm Examination	30%
Final Examination	30%
Project	40%

**HR616  
Employee Benefits  
Spring 2012  
ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings (F = Fundamentals; D – Databook)</b>
January 19	Introduction, Benefits as part of rewards systems Benefit strategies	
January 26	The environment for benefits programs National and employee demographics Cost considerations Social and legislative considerations	F – Ch. 1, D – Ch. 1,2,3,4 D - Appendix A,C
February 2	Retirement and other capital accumulation programs Social Security Individual savings Defined benefit pension programs	F – Ch. 2,3,4,5,6 D – Ch 5,6,7,8,9, 10,23,24,25
February 9	Defined contribution pension programs Profit sharing	F - Ch. 7,12 D – Ch 11,21,22
February 16	Thrifts / 401(k) plans / ESOPS Cash balance plans	F - Ch. 8,9,10,11 D – Ch 12,13,14
February 23	Accounting, funding and taxation	F – Ch. 13,14,18,19 D – Ch 17
March 1	Workers compensation Unemployment Insurance Disability insurance Life insurance	F – Ch. 30,32,33,34,35, D – Ch. 50, 52, 53
March 8	<b>MIDTERM EXAMINATION</b>	
March 22	Medical and other health benefits Hospitalization/ medical care Surgical and major medical Cost containment initiatives	F – Ch. 20,24,25,26, 27,28,29 D – Ch. 26,27,28,33,34,35,37
March 29	HMOs, PPOs, managed care programs Long term care insurance Dental, drug, vision and hearing programs	F – Ch. 21,22,23,36 D – Ch. 29,30,31
April 5	Paid time off benefits	F – Ch. 31 D – Ch. 44,45

April 12	Other benefits: Dependent care, family leave programs EAP's, legal services, financial planning Property and liability insurance Parking	F – Ch. 36,37,38,39,40 D. – 46,47,49,54
April 19	Plan Administration Outsourcing and Vendor Management Flexible Benefit/Cafeteria plans	F – Ch. D – Ch. 48, Appendix E
April 26	Employee Communication	
May 3	FINAL EXAM <b>PROJECT DUE</b>	