

**HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY I
COURSE SYLLABUS**

Jie (Jasmine) Feng

WEB SITE: <https://sakai.rutgers.edu>

Office: 200B Janice H. Levin Bldg. Email: jie.feng@rutgers.edu

Office Hours: By appointment (please email me or ask me after class)

Course Description

This course provides an overview of the role of human resource management (HRM) in contributing to organizational effectiveness. The course examines the techniques, policies, processes, strategies, and practices used by companies and/or managers to effectively and efficiently utilize human resources. Students will learn theories and practices in many different “core” areas of human resource management including staffing, performance management, work and job design, training, compensation, and labor relations. We will examine how the business strategy, legal environment, and megatrends in the external labor market affect human resource management. The course will also examine how the human resource functions contribute towards the formulation and implementation of business strategy and achievement of competitive advantage.

Objectives:

The primary goal of this course is to provide students with an understanding and appreciation of the basic functions of human resource management and current practices and issues. By the end of this course, students should think systematically about how environmental forces shape HRM activities, and should be able to describe how specific HR practices can be used to help an organization satisfy its multiple stakeholders. Specific learning objectives include the ability to:

- Create alignment between human resource strategies and business strategies.
- Identify, select, and develop people having the knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Use compensation and other incentives to attract, retain and motivate employees.
- Design work systems that empower employees to contribute to performance.
- Make human resource decisions that are legal and ethical.
- Understand how an employment relationship is like a contract (with both explicit and implicit expectations) and understand the consequences of contract breach.
- Use quantitative tools, where appropriate, to make and explain human resource decisions.

SMLR Learning Objectives

Cognitive Skills and Processes

The cognitive skills and process area reflects the goal for SMLR programs to help students develop skills central to lifelong learning and participation in society and the workplace.

Written & Oral Communication – Communicate effectively at a level and in modes appropriate to an entry level professional.

- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights
- Produce quality research papers with proper convention of attribution/citation
- Produce high quality executive summaries
- Make an argument using contemporary and/or historical evidence
- Present ideas and arguments in a logical and effective way

Knowledge of Theory, Practice and Application

The knowledge of theory and application area reflects the goal for SMLR programs to ensure that students learn the key theoretical and foundation areas of study in their domains and realize opportunities to apply that knowledge to practice situations.

Theoretical Perspectives - Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the practical perspectives, theories and concepts in their field of study
- Evaluate and apply theories from social science disciplines to workplace issues

Required Course Materials

Text: Noe, R. A., Hollenbeck, J. R., Gerhart, B. & Wright, P. M. (2011 or later edition). *Fundamentals of Human Resource Management*. Irwin McGraw-Hill: New York. (ISBN: 978-0-07-353046-8) **Note...CD is not required.**

Optional Text:

Lepak, D. and Gowan, M. (2016). *Human resource management: managing employees for competitive advantage*. Second edition. United States of American: Chicago Business Press.

S. E. Jackson, R. S. Schuler, and S. Werner. *Managing Human Resources*, 11e or later edition (Mason, OH: Thomson/South-Western, Publishing, 2012 or later edition).

Course Web Page:

All class material, including PowerPoint slides for the lectures and all assigned article readings, will be posted on the course's website: <https://sakai.rutgers.edu> (use your ID and password). Please be prepared with the material before coming to class.

We will use the following Sakai@Rutgers features:

- **Content** to access copy of the syllabus, lecture PowerPoint presentations and reading materials for each class.
- **Schedule/News** to check on major activities and due dates.
- **Drop box/Assignment** to submit assignments.
- **Grades** to help keep track of your grades.

I may add some more Sakai@Rutgers features later. Please let me know if you encounter problems or have ideas for other effective ways to use Sakai@Rutgers.

Evaluation

Besides the material presented in class lectures, many personal growth opportunities have been made available for students in the form of open discussion, public speaking, and teamwork. I am confident that each student has unique strengths that he/she may utilize in achieving success in this course. For example, students who best express themselves in writing can excel in the written assignments, while students who are excellent test-takers can show their mastery of the course material in examinations.

Your grade in the course will be based on a midterm exam, a final exam, a group project/presentation, an individual presentation, two current event assignments, and class attendance/participation. I do NOT round numbers for the final grades. (Specific information regarding grading guidelines follows subsequently). The breakdown of points is:

A. Class Participation	10 points
B. Pick One Presentation	10 points
C. Current Events (5 points *2)	10 points
D. Midterm	20 points
E. Final Exam	30 points
F. Group Project/Presentation	20 points
<hr/>	
Total	100 points

Grading scale:

A	90 – 100 points
B+	85 – 89.9 points
B	80 – 84.9 points
C+	75 – 79.9 points
C	70 – 74.9 points
D	60 – 69.9 points
F	0 – 59.9 points

A. Class Participation & Attendance (10 points):

Active participation in class discussions is a critical part of the learning process in order for you to get as much as possible from this course. Class participation is measured in terms of

attendance and the quality of your contributions to the class. If you are absent, you are responsible for being familiar with the material discussed that day.

Class attendance is worth up to 10 points. You will receive 0.5 points for attending class and you can earn up to 0.5 additional points depending on your level of contribution to the class discussion. The amount of additional points that you receive depends upon the quality of your contribution and not simply the quantity of comments, as discussed below.

Your class contributions will be evaluated based on the quality of your input (not "air time" or irrelevancies masking lack of preparation). Specifically, I am looking for the following:

- you contribute to the advancement of the discussion
- you articulate an in-depth understanding of course material
- you persuasively and concisely convey your thoughts
- you willingly test "new" ideas, rather than "play it safe"
- you provoke a dialogue among participants
- you illuminate difficult concepts
- you support comments with specific facts

Approved Absences: In the event that you must miss a class, please **contact me by midnight** the day before. Legitimate excuses include illness (verified with a note from a doctor), inclement weather (when Rutgers Information Service, 732-932-INFO, indicates that Rutgers is closed), or other critical family circumstances. If your absence is approved, then you will have the opportunity to make-up the absence by completing an additional current event assignment (See current-event assignments below). Make-up assignments are due by **7:20 pm the day of next class after your absence**. You can complete the make-up assignment for only **1 approved absence and you will not lose any points for this absence**. But for additional approved absences, you will lose 0.5 point for each absence.

Unapproved Absences: Students who obtain more than 1 unapproved absence will **lose all possible points** available (1 point per class) for class participation and attendance. This deduction will have a major impact on one's grade. In addition, **an exam grade of zero (0)** will be assigned to any student who is absent without a legitimate excuse on the date of a regularly scheduled test.

B. Pick One Presentation (10 points)

For this individual assignment, each student will select one of the articles identified in the optional reading list (see *course website*) and,

1. Present a **brief** synopsis of the article to the class with attention to the following (as applicable to the article) (*4 points*):
 - What is the purpose of the research reported in the article?
 - How does the research relate to one or more of the topics covered in class?
 - What are the **major findings** of this article? Include a brief description of the methods used to test the hypotheses.
 - What are the practical implications of the research findings for the field of HRM?
 - If the article is out-of-date, consider how the findings would change or remain the same in today's business environment.
2. Develop at least **two** discussion questions (*1 points*) and lead a class discussion on the reading (*3 points*).
3. On your last slide, list **two short-answer questions** based on your presentation for potential inclusion on class exams (*2 points*).

A maximum of 15 minutes of class time will be allowed for your in-class presentation and discussion. It is expected that you will use PowerPoint to facilitate your presentation and discussion (**NO MORE than 6 slides**). Please practice so that you do not run over the time limit. Be sure to facilitate class discussion as part of your session. *Note...this is critical for your grade.*

Your Pick One Assignment is to be submitted as a PowerPoint document via *course website* by **midnight the day before your in-class presentation date**. Be sure to submit this assignment to the appropriate dropbox. Name your "Pick One" document: *First initial.Last name.PICK1.ppt*

Again, students will complete this assignment individually. The date for your presentation will be assigned to you through a lottery in class. You will use the *Pick One Preference Sheet* available on the course website to indicate your preference (you may list 3 articles in order of preference) among the articles listed for your assigned presentation date. Please download this Word document, complete it, and upload it @Sakai before 7:20 pm on **due date**. I will try my best to accommodate your highest preference on a first-come first-serve basis.

C. Current Events (5 points x 2):

For each of these **two** individual assignments, read the current business press (*e.g., Wall Street Journal, Fortune, Business Week, NY Times, etc.*) and identify an article (published in 2014-2016) with relevance to a topic we have covered/will be covering in class. **Write a short, double-spaced report of 1 to 2 pages (pages beyond this limit will not be considered)** including:

1. How others can find the article (written reference or on-line link) (*0.5 point*);
2. Very brief synopsis of the article (*2 points*);
3. A discussion of how the article is relevant to a topic(s) covered in class (*1.5 points*)

4. At least two questions that could potentially stimulate discussion among students concerning the article and its relevance to a topic(s) covered in class (1 point).

Again, only **two** current event reports are required to be submitted. You do have the option of writing up an additional current event report (an optional third one, besides the two required ones) in which case your lowest grade will be replaced. All reports must be submitted via the appropriate drop boxes at *Sakai@Rutgers* before 7:20 pm on the designated days (see Course Calendar). If you fail to submit the two required reports on time, you will lose all 10 total points possible for this assignment.

D. Mid-Term Exam (20 points) and E. Final Exam (30 points):

The mid-term and the final exam will be in-class and closed book exams. Therefore, successful completion of the two exams will require you to be familiar with all of the concepts and tools discussed. The exam may include questions from course material covered in class, relevant chapters of the textbook, in-class skill exercises, and classmates' Pick One presentations. The exam format will comprise multiple-choice questions and several short answer questions. **The final exam is not cumulative and will only test you on material covered in class after the mid-term exam.**

F. Group Project/Presentation (20 points):

This is a group assignment. Your group should consist of 3-4 people. The purpose of this assignment is to allow you to become familiar with an organization of interest to you and to examine how the organization, along with its components of the HR strategy, is aligned with the organization's business strategy. You will want to apply the concept of the HR Diamond (to be introduced during the 2nd/ 3rd week of class) to address how the roles, rewards, and people aspects of your organization of choice can be utilized to create a sustainable competitive advantage.

Choosing your Company. Firstly, your team will be responsible for choosing a company to present on. There is no limit to the size or type of company that you may choose to present on. To keep this assignment interesting, I would prefer to not have two teams present on the same company. Therefore, all teams will be required to notify me of their choice of company **via email before the deadline**. Companies will be chosen on a first-come first-serve basis and those groups that decide quickly will have the most options.

Your group presentation should include the following:

1. Describe Goals and Strategy (4 points). Describe your company's goals and the generic strategy (e.g., cost leadership vs. differentiation) it uses to compete in its product market. Then be more specific about the business strategy. For example, what is unique about its product or its customer experience?
2. Describe HR Strategy (6 points). Describe the roles, rewards, and people policies/practices of your company. Then focus on **one area** (i.e., roles, rewards, or

- people), and discuss a policy or practice within this area that has changed or is a candidate for change. Describe what practices were followed previously or are followed currently. What is the new approach? What is the rationale for a change? How will the change improve the organization's ability to successfully execute its business strategies? This vertical alignment issue is THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR PRESENTATION. You may wish to distinguish between what the organization believes the practice accomplished/will accomplish and what your own critical eye suggests.
3. Identify Consequences for Horizontal Alignment (7 points). How does/will the change in practice/policy affect horizontal alignment between roles, rewards, and people aspects of the firm? A few thoughts and observations would be helpful.
 4. Q & A (3 points)

Researching your Company. The most likely sources of information in studying your company would be either personal experience/personal contacts or profiles of the companies in business periodicals such as *Harvard Business Review*, *Industry Week*, *HR Focus*, *HR Magazine*, *World at Work*, *Compensation and Benefits Review* and also in *Fortune*, *Business Week*, the *Wall Street Journal* and other newspapers.

Another option is to interview a key person at the company you wish to study. If you decide to rely on personal contacts or personal experience as the basis for your presentation, please give careful consideration as to whether you will be able to obtain sufficiently detailed and quantitative information. Otherwise it may be difficult to get beyond a very general level of description and analysis.

The Presentation. You will submit your **Presentation Slides** and **Peer Evaluation Form** via the Sakai@Rutgers before 7:20 pm on the day of the presentation. Peer Evaluation Form will be done confidentially through Sakai before your presentation. According to the peer assessment, a maximum of 2 points will be adjusted to your individual grades. Your presentation should take between 10 and (NO MORE THAN!) 20 minutes without questions. The class will then have time to ask you questions.

Optional!! EXTRA CREDIT (2 POINTS). Your group will submit a very brief **Supplementary Report** (One-slide PPT or One-page word document) of your presentation via the Sakai@Rutgers **after your presentation** and before 7:20 pm before the deadline. This Report can include any supplementary information (e.g., some statistics or alternative explanations) to better address the questions from your presentation.