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SMLR Learning Objectives: This course is designed to help students attain the following SMLR learning objectives:

(I) Written and 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

(II) Quantitative Skills – Apply appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods for research workplace issues.

- Formulate, evaluate, and communicate conclusions and inferences from quantitative information
- Apply quantitative methods to analyze data for HR decision making including cost-benefit analyses, ROI, etc. (HRM)
- Apply qualitative methods appropriately, alone and in combination with quantitative methods

(V) Understanding Context - Evaluate the context of workplace issues, public policies, and management decisions

- Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person's experience of, and perspectives on work.
- Analyze a contemporary global issue in their field from a multi-disciplinary perspective.
- Analyze issues related to business strategies, organizational structures, and work systems.
- Analyze issues of social justice related to work across local and global contexts (LSER).
- Analyze issues related to the selection, motivation, and development of talent in a global context (HRM).

(VI) Application – Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance

- Apply concepts and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work.
- Understand the legal, regulatory and ethical issues related to their field.
- Develop human resource management functional capabilities used to select, motivate, and develop workers (HRM).
- Understand the internal and external alignment and measurement of human resource practices (HRM).

Course-Specific Learning Goals: Upon completion of this course students should understand:

1. The role of benefits from the employee and employer perspective.
2. How benefits actually work and are utilized within an organization.
3. How organizations use benefit programs to further their business strategies.
4. The impact of government, tax, law and regulation on benefit practices.
5. The different types of benefit programs and how employers utilize to reach their HR objectives.

6. The underlying costs and value of benefit programs.
7. The ways organizations select, deliver, administer and communicate benefits to employees.
8. The interaction and integration of public, government funded programs with employer provided private programs.
9. How organizations operate regarding funding, governance and grievance resolution of benefit programs.
10. The role of employee benefits in a total rewards program.

Texts:

There is no text book for this class. The course material is composed of the Lectures, discussions, Canvas quizzes and Assignments/Exercises. Readings will be assigned from time to time. Students will be accountable for such materials both in terms of questions during class and the examinations.

Course Description:

Employee benefits have become an increasingly large portion of labor costs for employers. Benefits are viewed by most employees as entitlements, and employer efforts to control or reduce costs to remain competitive in global markets have met with stiff resistance by employees, unions and impacted industries (e.g., insurance, health care). Given that setting, it is critical that human resource professionals 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 strategy.

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 both employer and employee needs. While much detailed information will be covered, the course does not require the memorization of detailed statistics or specific legislation but rather a knowledge of program characteristics, the impact on the work force and the alignment to the business.

Additionally, an understanding of the ways organizations integrates mandated programs (e.g., Social Security, Medicare, Worker's Compensation and Unemployment Insurance) 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., medical plan choices, savings elections) meet their needs. Recent trends in benefits management, including cost controls, cost shifting programs, and other strategies as well as the outsourcing of benefits administration will be covered.

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

1. Retirement and Savings programs
2. Income protection benefits
3. Health care programs
4. Paid time off
5. Legally required plans
6. Work/Life benefits

Course Delivery Format:

The course delivery mode is an "in classroom" setting. We will be utilizing the Canvas learning management system to access materials, post lectures, make announcements, post discussion items, communicate, and deliver course assignments. Be sure to check this site regularly as there will be announcements and instructions.

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend class and attendance will be observed and noted. There will be Canvas quizzes that take place during class and those not participating will lose points on their participation score (students taking quizzes outside of the classroom setting, unless approved, will be penalized doubly on their participation score). Missing more than 8 in-class quizzes will result in an automatic one grade reduction to the final grade. Should issues prevent attendance (illness, personal, etc.) please be sure to contact me.

Examinations:

There will be two (2) non-cumulative examinations. Each exam will cover approximately one-half of the course material. Each examination will be worth 20% of the course grade. An examination grade of "0" will be assigned to any student who does not take the examination without a legitimate absence excuse on the date of a regularly scheduled test. Legitimate excuses include illness (verified by a note from a doctor), religious holidays, or other dire family or personal circumstances. Please contact me immediately should a student not be able to take the examination on the scheduled date.

Students with accommodation needs should present a statement to that effect with appropriate documentation as early in the semester as possible, but certainly prior to the first examination.

Assignments/Exercises:

Four (4) assignments/exercises are to be done out of class (homework) and turned in via Canvas (the tentative dates are indicated on the class schedule). The exercises will be posted on Canvas. The first three (3) exercises are worth 5 points each. The fourth (4) exercise is worth 10 points. Exercises not turned in on the due date without a valid excuse will receive reduced or no points. The Assignments/Exercises represents 25% of the final grade.

Participation:

Everyone starts the class with 15 points for participation. Points will be lost for not being present for the live classes, missing in-class quizzes, when called on in class and for unacceptable classroom conduct (as described below). And additional 20 participation points can be earned for in-class or out-of-class tasks. Participation represents 35% of the final grade.

Grading:

Grades will consist of the following components. Note that each examination will earn a grade of 0 to 100. Grades on the two examinations will be adjusted to account for 50% of the course score when calculating the final score for the course. Be present in class and do the work required and you will get the grade. If you are not present and do not do the work, and you will be held accountable.

Mid Term Examination – 20%

Final Examination – 20%

Exercise 1 – 5%

Exercise 2 – 5%

Exercise 3 – 5%

Exercise 4 – 10%

Participation – 15%

Participation Extra Credits – 20%

Grading Scale:

A = 90 -100

B+ = 85 -89

B = 80- 84

C+ = 75-79

C = 70-74

D = 60-69

F = 59 or below

Lecture Notes:

The PowerPoint slides for the lectures, the Lecture Questions (and Answers) as well as other class materials will be posted on the course's Canvas website.

Academic Honesty:

The rights of students will be protected to ensure that test scores are related to competence in the subject matter. Therefore, all examinations will be carefully monitored. If cheating is detected, it will be prosecuted under university policies.

Classroom Conduct:

It is assumed that students will conduct themselves in a professional, personal and socially responsible manner while attending class.

Your Grade:

Finally, if you attend and participate fully in class and you do all the required work, you will receive a good grade. Conversely, if you choose not to attend or participate fully in class and do not do the all required work, you will be held accountable and, I can assure you, that your grade will suffer.

Please note, the syllabus is preliminary and subject to change based on circumstances that might present themselves during the course of the semester.

Anticipated Schedule and Dates are subject to change based on course progress.

Class	Date	Topic	Important Milestones
1	1/21	Introduction of course Benefits history and rationale	
2	1/26	Benefits in reward systems, strategies, framework and programs	
3	1/28	Employee and workforce demographics	
4	2/2	Importance of benefits, their role, taxes, impact of aging, social and legislative interests	
5	2/4	Retirement history, Personal Savings and Social Security	Exercise 1 due
6	2/9	Defined Benefit Pensions programs	
7	2/11	Defined Benefit Pension Funding and Accounting	
8	2/16	Retirement and Defined Contribution plans	
9	2/18	Investment of employee and employer contributions	
10	2/23	Deferred Profit Sharing	Exercise 2 due
11	2/25	401(k) programs	
12	3/2	ESOP and Cash Balance plans	
13	3/4	Income Protection Plans, insurance terminology, Workers Compensation and Unemployment Insurance	
14	3/9	Disability Benefits and Life Insurance programs	
15	3/11	Mid Term Examination	Mid Term Exam
	3/16, 3/18	Spring Break	No Class
16	3/23	Healthcare history, why offered by employers and unique U.S. challenges	
17	3/25	Healthcare costs, coverage and terminology	
18	3/30	Paying for coverage and cost containment efforts	
19	4/1	Section 125 Flexible Benefit programs	
20	4/6	Indemnity, Managed Care, HMO's, POS, PPO's and HDHP's plans	Exercise 3 due
21	4/8	Prescription Drug, Wellness, Dental and Vision	
22	4/13	Paid Time Off Benefits	
23	4/15	Work Life Benefits, Dependent Care and Adoption Assistance	
24	4/20	Family Leaves, Employee Assistance Programs, and Educational Assistance	
25	4/22	Flextime, Remote Work, Housing, Business Travel, and other benefits	
26	4/27	Outsourcing, Vendor Management, Communications and Measuring Effectiveness	
27	4/29	What to expect at next level	Exercise 4 due
28	5/4	Final Examination	Final Exam