

HRM & Benefits 37:533:318:01
Spring 2025
Monday and Wednesday 2:00 to 3:20pm
LSH B115

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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, society, 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 of public government funded programs with employer provided private programs.
9. How organizations operate regarding funding and 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 questions/answers 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 employees as entitlements, and employer efforts to control or reduce costs to remain competitive in global markets have met with resistance by employees, unions, impacted industries (e.g., insurance, health care), and the government. 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 employer, employee and societal needs. While much detailed information will be covered, the course goals do not include memorization of statistics or specific legislation. Rather knowledge of program characteristics, the impact of work force strategy and understanding what programs might be useful for a specific organization as well as potential problems (e.g., legal, regulatory, tax) will be studied.

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) to 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.

A fairly standard classification of programs will be used to organize the course:

1. Retirement and capital accumulation 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 Canvas to access learning materials, post lectures, make announcements, post discussion items, communicate, and deliver exams, quizzes, exercises and assignments. Be sure to check this site frequently as there will be announcements and instructions.

Attendance:

There is no formal attendance policy for this class. However, attendance will be observed and noted. There will be Canvas question and answer sessions that take place during class and those not participating will lose points on their 10-point participation score. We will also ask questions of students (chosen randomly) and those not present to answer will lose points on their participation score. Please note, students missing more than 10 classes will see a one grade reduction in their final grade. Should issues prevent attendance (illness, personal or connectivity), please be sure to contact me.

Examinations:

There will be two (2) non-cumulative examinations as noted on the course schedule. Each exam will cover approximately one-half of the course material. Each examination will be worth 30% 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), inclement weather (when Rutgers is officially closed), religious holidays, when the instructor emails the class announcing class is suspended or other dire family or personal circumstances.

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

A makeup exam maybe be held at a time convenient to the instructor when all students needing to take the makeup can be present. An examination cancelled by the instructor will be held at the next regularly scheduled class period.

Assignments/Exercises:

Five (5) 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 four (4) exercises are worth 5 points each. The fifth (5) exercise is worth 10 points. Exercises not turned in on the due date without a valid excuse will receive reduced or no points.

Participation:

Everyone starts the class with 10 points for participation. Points will be lost for not being present for the live classes, missing Canvas question and answer sessions or when called on in class and for unacceptable classroom conduct (as described below). Students missing more than 10 classes will see a one grade reduction in their 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 30% of the course score when calculating the final score for the course. Do the work required and you will get the grade. Do not do the work, and you will be held accountable.

Mid Term Examination	30%
Final Examination	30%
Exercise 1	5%
Exercise 2	5%
Exercise 3	5%
Exercise 4	5%
Exercise 5	10%
Participation	10%

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 as well as the Canvas questions and answers 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.

If you do the required work, attend and participate in live class and respond to the in-class Canvas questions and answers sessions when conducted, you will receive a good grade. If you do not do the required work, do not attend or participate in class or respond to the Canvas question and answer sessions when conducted, you will be held accountable and 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.

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

Class	Date	Topic	Important Milestones
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1	1/22	Introduction of course Benefits history and rationale	
2	1/27	Benefits in reward systems, strategies, framework and programs	
3	1/29	Employee and workforce demographics	
4	2/3	Importance of benefits, their role, taxes, impact of aging, social and legislative interests	
5	2/5	Retirement history, Personal Savings and Social Security	Exercise 1 due
6	2/10	Defined Benefit Pensions programs	
7	2/12	Defined Benefit Pension Funding and Accounting	
8	2/17	Retirement and Defined Contribution plans	
9	2/19	Investment of employee and employer contributions	
10	2/24	Deferred Profit Sharing	Exercise 2 due
11	2/26	401(k) programs	
12	3/3	ESOP and Cash Balance plans	
13	3/5	Income Protection Plans, insurance terminology, Workers Compensation and Unemployment Insurance	
14	3/10	Disability Benefits and Life Insurance	Exercise 3 due
15	3/12	Mid Term Examination	Mid Term Exam
	3/17, 3/19	Spring Break	No Classes
16	3/24	Healthcare history, why offered by employers and unique U.S. challenges	
17	3/26	Healthcare costs, coverage and terminology	
18	3/31	Paying for coverage and cost containment efforts	
19	4/2	Section 125 Flexible Benefit programs	
20	4/7	Indemnity, Managed Care, HMO's, POS, PPO's and HDHP's plans	Exercise 4 due
21	4/9	Prescription Drug, Wellness, Dental, Vision and health care trends	
22	4/14	Paid Time Off Benefits	
23	4/16	Work Life Benefits, Dependent Care and Adoption Assistance	
24	4/21	Family Leaves, Employee Assistance Programs, and Educational Assistance, Flextime and Remote Work,	
25	4/23	Outsourcing and Vendor Management	
26	4/28	Communications and Measuring Effectiveness	
27	4/30	What to expect at next level	Exercise 5 due
28	5/5	Final Examination	Final Exam