Course Syllabus – PSY 634: Personnel Psychology
Fall Semester 2011, Mondays, 2 – 4:30; SH 462

Instructor: Margaret Beier, Ph.D.
email: beier@rice.edu
Phone: 713-348-3920
Office: SH 429C
Office hours: Wednesday, 3 – 4 or by appointment


Additional readings are provided in PDF format on the course website, accessible through Owlspace.

Objectives
Personnel psychology is generally considered the “I” side of the industrial/organizational equation and encompasses both selection and training. This course is an advanced graduate seminar designed to provide an overview of personnel psychology and as such will examine the theory, research, and practice perspectives of selection and training. My hope is that this course will give you an overview of the field and assist you in formulating your own ideas about the area.

Grading
Class participation (5%)
Daily discussion questions and guest speaker questions (10%)
Job analysis project (10%)
Legal case project (10%)
Proposal presentation (15%)
Research proposal (30%)
In-class exam (20%)

Grades will be calculated on the following scale:

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\begin{align*}
100 \% &= A+ \\
99 - 93 \% &= A \\
92 - 90 \% &= A- \\
89 - 88 \% &= B+ \\
87 - 83 \% &= B \\
82 - 80 \% &= B- \\
79 - 78 \% &= C+ \\
77 - 73 \% &= C \\
72 - 70 \% &= C- \\
69 - 68 \% &= D+ \\
67 - 63 \% &= D \\
62 - 60 \% &= D- \\
59 - 0 \% &= F
\end{align*}
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Class Participation & Daily Discussion Questions
It is essential that you participate in the class discussion. To facilitate class discussion please have at least 2 discussion questions or critical comments for each article/chapter assigned, and bring notes regarding topics that you want to discuss. Note that your daily discussion questions/critical comments should be in-depth as opposed to questions of clarity: The point is to stimulate discussion about the material not to develop a list of terms and information you didn’t understand. We will still address points of clarity, but as graduate students, I expect that you investigate some of these issues on your own first, and then ask in class, via email, or discussion group on the class web-site if you get stuck. Please be prepared to hand in your discussion questions at the beginning of class each week. You will be graded on the quality and promptness of your daily discussion questions. You do not need to write discussion questions for the chapters assigned from the textbook (Cascio & Aguinis).

You will also be asked to generate questions for our guest speaker. These questions are due one week before the speaker visit to allow time to formulate responses. Questions should constructed in a MSWord document and posted in your dropbox on Owlspace.

Your class participation grade will be based on (a) voicing your reflections on the readings (e.g., by noting positive contributions and constructive criticisms), (b) getting others in the class involved, (c) contributing information and experiences that supplement the readings, and obviously (d) attending class and being on time.

Job Analysis Project
The goal of this assignment is to give you some exposure (albeit abbreviated) to the process and outcomes of job analysis. In this exercise, you will practice conducting an interview and direct observation of an individual performing a job. Details about the assignment are posted on the course website. This project is due at the beginning of class on 9/19.

Legal Case Study
The goal of this assignment is to familiarize you with the type of legal issues and cases that are relevant to personnel selection. You will read a variety of cases, but each of you will be assigned to summarize and present one of the legal cases that will be posted on the class website. You will review the briefing and write up a one page summary on the general issues in the case, the key findings relevant to employment (note some cases have issues that are not relevant to the course, use your judgment about what you include), and your interpretation about what this means in a selection context. You will present your case to the class on 10/24.

Research Proposal (Outline/Paper/Presentation)
One of the goals of this seminar is to get you to focus on research in personnel selection. As such, you will develop a research proposal that will include three distinct parts; an outline that you will turn in to me; a presentation given to the class on the last day of class (15% of your class grade), and a written proposal (30% of your class grade). The topic of the proposal is your choice, but it must be relevant to course content, written in APA style, and it should be around 15-20 pages in length. You must turn in a statement of your topic idea for approval by 11/7 (send me an email). The final paper is due on the last day of final’s week (Wednesday, 12/14) at 5:00 p.m. Please provide me a hard copy of your paper in my mailbox in the Psychology Main Office. As backup,
please also provide an electronic version in your Drop Box folder on Owlspace. Presentations will be on the last day of class (Monday, 11/28).

Presentations should outline the research question, briefly review the literature, present the proposed study (e.g., methods), proposed analysis, and anticipated results. Grading criteria for the presentation are clarity of presentation and ability to answer questions from the audience. Class members are expected to provide feedback and to ask questions during the presentations. The maximum amount of time for the presentations will be determined by the number of people in the class (e.g., 150/N).

Grading criteria for the proposal are:
Adequacy of literature review
Rationale for hypotheses
Meaningfulness of research question
Feasibility of the study (it should be something that can actually be done)
Soundness of proposed methodology and analysis
Clarity of presentation (including APA style)
*Please note that you may NOT turn in a proposal that you have written for another course or graduate school requirement (e.g., your MS proposal) to meet this course requirement.*

Your grade will be deducted 5 points for every day (i.e., 24 hr period) your paper is late.

**Final exam**
A final exam will be given during finals week. The exam will be in short-essay format and will require the integration of the material learned over the course of the semester. The exam is typically administered over Owlspace.

**Disabilities and special needs**
If a student has a documented disability and needs academic assistance in this or any other course, he or she should so inform the instructor within the first two weeks of classes. All discussions will remain confidential. Students should contact the instructor after class, during office hours, or by e-mail. The student may also need to register with the Disability Support Services, especially if unusual accommodations are needed. Before providing accommodations, instructors must have accommodations letters from the Disability Support Services office.

**Academic Integrity**
You are expected to follow the Rice University Honor Code. Any form of scholastic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) can result in a variety of negative consequences (not the least of which is failing this course). You can go to [http://www.plagiarism.org/](http://www.plagiarism.org/) to find out more information about plagiarism if you have any questions (and, of course, you may contact me directly).
Course Schedule
Topics, readings, and assignments tentatively follow the schedule below. Due dates for class assignments will not change, but dates for seminar topics might. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Extensions will not be granted. Five percentage points will be deducted for every day (i.e., 24 hr period) an assignment is late.

Week 1 (8/22): Syllabus review and overview of measurement
Syllabus
Cascio & Aguinis, Ch. 1


Week 2 (8/29): Job Analysis
Cascio & Aguinis, Ch 9


9/6 – Labor Day (no class)

Week 3 (9/12): Job Performance and Performance Appraisal
Cascio & Aguinis, Ch. 4 & 5


**Week 4 (9/19): Measuring Individual Differences**

*Job analysis project due*

Cascio & Aguinis, 6 & 7


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**Week 5 (9/26): Predictors used in selection**

Cascio & Aguinis, 12 & 13

*Legal case study assigned*


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**Week 6 (10/3): Decision making in selection**

Cascio & Aguinis, 14


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10/10, Mid-term recess – no class
Week 7 (10/17):
Group differences and bias
Cascio & Aguinis, 8


Week 8 (10/24):
Adverse impact and legal issues
*Legal case study project due*
Cascio & Aguinis, 2


Week 9 (10/31): Applicant reactions and recruiting
*Questions for Mort McPhail visit due*
Cascio & Aguinis, Ch 11


Week 10 (11/7): Life from the field: Dr. Mort McPhail visit (Sr. Vice President and Managing Principal at Valtera)

Research proposal topic to me for approval (email)


McPhail CV and McPhail Experiences (available on Owlspace).

Week 11 (11/14): Training and development
Cascio & Aguinis, Ch. 15 & 16


Week 12 (11/21): Wrap up and current issues in personnel psychology


Week 13 (11/28): Student presentations
Final Exam – Date, time, and location – TBD

December 14, 2010 (5:00 p.m.). Hard copy of your research proposal in my box in the Psychology Main Office. Electronic copy attached to your Drop Box folder in Owlspace.