Employee Relations and Legal Aspects of Human Resources Management

MGMNT X 450.34
Summer 2011 Syllabus and Outline
UCLA Extension Course No. W5016

July 7, 2011—September 1, 2011

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I. Introduction

Course Description. This course is designed for the human resources management (“HRM”) generalist practitioner or any other person preparing for a career as a specialist in labor/employee relations. Instruction provides a survey of significant law and regulations that affect the practice of human resources management in the United States, California, and selected additional states. All phases of the HRM responsibility are covered—from recruitment through termination. Instruction balances the rights and responsibilities of employees and management to provide a productive, harmonious, and efficient work environment while meeting business objectives.

Although the standards for performance in this course shall be high, there is no law (of which the Instructor is aware) which rules out having fun while learning.

TOPICS:
1. overview of employment, employment law and the HRM function
2. wage and hour
3. benefits
4. equal employment opportunity and affirmative action (includes harassment/discrimination)
5. labor/employee relations
6. safety laws, rules and regulations (includes OSHA and state-OSHA).

Course Objectives: Students may expect to learn and work on all phases of the human resources (“HR”) responsibility, ranging from the rights and responsibilities of employees and management to HR’s responsibilities to state and federal government. The HR function shall be studied for its contributions as to how best meet business objectives, while providing a productive, harmonious, safe, and efficient work environment.

II. Course Requirements
Prerequisite Course/Waivers: This course requires as a prerequisite the course entitled Elements of Human Resources Management or the consent of Dr. Adams. Students wishing to discuss any consent/waiver issues should contact Dr. Adams at the e-mail address shown above. Students who have more than 2 (two) years of experience in HRM positions should not expect problems in applying for a waiver. Students with less than 3 (three) years of experience in HRM should contact the Instructor and be prepared to discuss the reasons why they do not need to satisfy the prerequisite.

Required Text/Materials: The required texts for this course are entitled:

1. Textbook No. 1 is The Employer's Legal Handbook, 10th Edition authored by Fred. S. Steingold, Esq., ISBN 978-1-41331-390-1, Nolo Press, Publication Date: May 2011. Students should carefully note that the required text is updated (online at nolo.com) **and these important updates are a portion of the textbook and will be tested upon;** and


III. Grades

Grading criteria: The grading criteria for the course will be based on a total scoring system consisting of 100 points and composed of the following factors:

1. Class participation: 20% (20 point maximum)
2. Assignment #1: 10% (10 point maximum)
3. Assignment #2: 10% (10 point maximum)
4. Assignment #3: 10% (10 point maximum)
5. Assignment #4: 10% (10 point maximum)
6. Mid-Quarter Examination: 10% (10 point maximum)
7. Scavenger Hunt: 20% (20 point maximum)
8. Final examination: 10% (10 point maximum).

The following grade scale will be used:

- 90-100 points = A- to A+
- 80-89 points = B- to B+
- 70-79 points = C- to C+
- 60-69 points = D- to D+
- 0-59 points = F
Grades will be rendered promptly; UCLA Extension requires Instructors to have final grades computed and reported upon course completion. The Instructor will give unofficial sub-grades to all students during the pendency of the course (i.e., after completion of each assignment, examination or project) and at the course completion date.

Students experiencing difficulties or issues affecting their grades shall consult with Dr. Adams without delay in order to effect any proposed work-out and/or solution. As professionals, both Instructor and student are expected to conduct themselves under a high standard.

Any disputes over any grade are required to follow the procedures enumerated below as a condition precedent to any further action:

1. prepare a detailed, written submission delivered solely to the Instructor;
2. await the Instructor’s written response;
3. respond to the Instructor’s response in a timely manner, and respond solely to the Instructor;
4. await the Instructor’s response;
5. any resultant change of any grade may result in the Instructor re-grading other of the student’s assignments, with a concomitant result, either raising (or lowering) the student’s overall grade.

Failure to comply with this class policy will result in an immediate penalty of minus-10 point reduction in the student’s class participation grade, which will result in a full letter lowering of that student’s class participation score. Following posted chain-of-command is a critical feature of HR and HRM, and will be so enforced in the class.

Unexcused late assignment postings suffer a full grade lowering per day.

IV. Student Participation

1. Participation standards: Participation in this course is vital for the student. The course syllabus shall set forth the minimum number of postings for the week. Students shall be given liberal time allotments to complete the assignments; however, the deadlines posted in the course syllabus are firm. Students wishing to alter stated time deadlines may expect rigorous examination of their reasons for so requesting. Please remember that this course is a pre-requisite course for sitting for the HR certification examination. Class Participation represents 20% of the student’s total grade, so students are required to participate in the form of
   (1) student comments to assignments at the proper comment log-in sites provided per assignment,
   (2) exhibiting teamwork with your student partners,
(3) promptly resolving disputes or disagreements in a professional manner (this is the essence of HR work in the corporate world),
(4) posting all comments and assignments in a timely manner,
(5) communicating respectfully to all members of the class as well as the class Instructor,
(6) exhibiting a certain amount of zeal for the information you are learning and the work of others, and
(7) complying promptly with all lawful instructions and directives from the Instructor.

2. Communications: Standard English shall apply to all assignments and all communications. Any disputes over style will be resolved by reference to leading style manuals (Chicago Manual, MLA, APA, Harvard Blue Book, etc.) The communications within this course shall be conducted, in part, as communications within any Fortune 500 company. This is to aid in the student’s preparation for advancement within or onto high-quality HR departments. As the HR function is blended more and more with functions formerly provided by legal professionals, the quality “bar” has been raised for HR personnel. This course will reflect this trend and train the student to position himself/herself to take advantage of future opportunities in the HR profession. Many former students of this course have commented to the Instructor that the information they were learning was of immediate help in their current workplace. All assignments shall be transmitted in 12 or 13 point font size, in Times New Roman or Arial font type only, with page numbers “footer-ed” at the bottom of each page. All students are expected to use appropriate internet hyperlinks/URLs in the body of their assignments, where applicable. Proper English text and grammar is required (no e-mail abbreviations or related “e-speak” shall be graded).

3. E-mail: Students must show the subject matter of their e-mail communications and/or Blackboard assignment postings to the Instructor through the use of the “Re:” box. For example, students turning in assignments must label their transmission as “Re: A. No. 1; [title of assignment].” Instructor responses are keyed upon the “Re” designation. Please be sure to use this function in communications with the Instructor. All E-Mail shall be transmitted in 12 or 13 point font size, in Times New Roman or Arial font type only, with page numbers “footer-ed” at the bottom of each page.

All students are expected to use appropriate internet hyperlinks/URLs in the body of their assignments, where applicable. Proper English text and grammar is required (no e-mail abbreviations or related “e-speak” shall be graded).

V. Class Procedures
1. **Reading assignments**: The course book reading assignments are the foundation for all active assignments and examinations. Preparation is essential for success. “Recommended” reading assignments may be necessary for successful completion of various active assignments. Students should remember that HR law and practice is based upon careful reading and re-reading of detailed materials. Statutes and regulations are sometimes difficult to digest. The examinations for this course are closely linked to what we shall be reading.

2. **Active assignments**: Active assignments are those with numbers: “Assignment No. 1.” This course shall have four (4) active assignments. These assignments are structured to allow the student to “get his/her feet wet” at a progressive learning pace. Each assignment is based upon the previous assignment; this technique reinforces previously learned material and “sets” the learning process by utilizing comprehensive retention models. The Instructor’s express intent is to help prepare students for the real world by training in real world situations.

3. **Scavenger Hunt**: The highlight of the course is the individually or group-assigned Scavenger Hunt. The Scavenger Hunt is a fun way of combining online course learning with HR information searches, including both online searches and traditional methods (e.g., library). The quality of the Scavenger Hunt is directly related to the teamwork and effort expended by the class.

4. **Quiz, Mid-Quarter and Final Examinations**: It would not be a class without exams. This course will, therefore, have a Quiz, Mid-Quarter, and Final Examination.

VI. Syllabus Schedule

**WEEK 1.**

→**Introduction**: Posting Bios [students post their bios at the bio icon—name, rank and serial number; something interesting about yourself; what you seek from the course, etc..]. Bios are a required task. In the Bio posting please acknowledge that you have read the Syllabus and are bound thereby. **Please post Bios by July10.**

→**Reading Assignment**: July7--Syllabus; July7—July10: Textbook No. 1 (*Employer’s Legal Guide*)—Chapter 1: HIRING; Chapter 14: LAWYERS AND LEGAL RESEARCH: pp.277-end (Legal Research); Textbook No. 2 (*O’Conner’s Federal Employment Codes Plus*)—Internet Guide (p. 1253); Popular Names Table (pp. 1216-1227); Summary Chart of Federal Employment Law (pp. 1228-1230).

→**Assignment No. 1**: Due July14. Net Research. Each student shall search for and find five (5) websites [4 federal law-based sites and 1 state-based
site] of use for the HR professional, review the sites, write and post a short written review [one paragraph: no fewer than 3-4 sentences] for each site at the Communications/Assignments forum, at “Assignment No. 1.”

**WEEK 2.**

→Reading Assignment: July10—July17: Textbook No. 1 *(Employer’s Legal Guide)*—Chapter 2: PERSONNEL PRACTICES.

→Assignment No. 2: Due July21. Online Quiz.

**WEEK 3.**

→Reading Assignment: July21—July24: Textbook No. 1 *(Employer’s Legal Guide)*—Chapter 3: WAGES AND HOURS; Chapter 4: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS; Textbook No. 2 *(O’Conner’s Federal Employment Codes Plus)*—FLSA Exemption Chart (pp. 1231-1234); Executive-Employee Test Flowchart (p. 1235); Administrative-Employee Flowchart (p. 1236); Learned or Creative Professional Flowchart (p. 1238); Computer-Professional-Employee Flowchart (p. 1239).

→Assignment No. 3: Due July28. Summaries. Each student shall identify five (5) legislative acts [4 federal acts and 1 state act] which affect worker’s wages and benefits, write a short synopsis [6-8 sentences] upon each act and post on the Communications/Assignments Assignment No. 3 forum. The postings must be made on July28 between the hours of 8pm-12 midnight Pacific (if you are in an overseas [non-U.S.] time zone or non-Pacific Standard/Daylight Savings Time zone, please notify Instructor to make special arrangements).

**WEEK 4.**

→Reading Assignment: July28—July31: Textbook No. 1 *(Employer’s Legal Guide)*—Chapter 6: FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT; Chapter 8: ILLEGAL DISCRIMINATION. Textbook No. 2 *(O’Conner’s Federal Employment Codes Plus)*—EEOC Discrimination Charge Timetable (pp. 1240-1241); EEOC Discrimination Charge Flowchart (p. 1242); Summary of Anti-retaliation Statutes (pp. 1243-1249).

→Mid-Quarter Examination. Due Aug4. The Mid-Quarter exam will be cumulative and open book/open web.

**WEEK 5.**

→Reading Assignment: Aug4—Aug7: Textbook No. 1 *(Employer’s Legal Guide)*—Chapter 7: HEALTH AND SAFETY; Chapter 9: WORKERS WITH DISABILITIES.
→Assignment No. 4: Due Aug11. Special Assignment. **To be discussed online prior to assignment.**

**WEEK 6.**
→Reading Assignment: Aug11—Aug14: Textbook No. 1 (*Employer’s Legal Guide*)--Chapter 10: TERMINATION; Chapter 5: TAXES.

→Scavenger Hunt Team Selections due **Friday Aug12**: post at appropriate Forum.

→Scavenger Hunt: Due Aug25. To be announced and assigned. Team Chats: to be announced.

**WEEK 7.**
→Reading Assignment: Aug18—Aug21: Textbook No. 1 (*Employer’s Legal Guide*)--Chapter 12: INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS; Chapter 13: UNIONS.

→Scavenger Hunt: Due Aug25. To be announced and assigned. Team Chats to be announced.

**WEEK 8.**
→**Final examination week.** Final Exam is due Sept1. The final exam will be cumulative and open book/open web. The Final Exam is scheduled to be posted on **Saturday, Aug27.** Final Exam results should be posted by Sept5.

END.