

Strategic Human Resource Management

(21E00051, 6 ECTS)

SYLLABUS

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Instructor's contact information	Course information
Hertta Vuorenmaa E-mail: hertta.vuorenmaa@aalto.fi Office: A515, Main building, Töölö Campus Office hours: Meeting upon request Co-teacher: Kalliopi Platanou E-mail: kalliopi.platanou@aalto.fi	M&IB MSc program, elective course Academic Year 2018-19, Period II Language of instruction: English All course material in MyCourses: https://mycourses.aalto.fi/course/view.php?id=19837

1. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The aim of the Strategic Human Resource Management course is three-fold. First, the students will deepen their understanding of the strategic role of human resources in contemporary organizations, and develop a perspective to HRM as a primarily strategy driven activity. Second, the students learn how strategic objectives and initiatives may be realized in practice and translated into human resource policies and practices. Third, the students will become familiar with some central concepts of organizational behavior as part of their people management skills development.

In addition to these broad learning goals relating to SHRM, the students will have a chance to practice their project and time management skills, and develop their teamwork/communication/client management skills as well as their academic writing and presentations skills.

2. PREREQUISITES

No specific prerequisites. This course is part of M.Sc. studies.

3. CONTENT

The course starts with an introduction to the course and its requirements. The structure of the course is such that the lectures, group and individual assignments are designed to both provide the students with solid knowledge on SHRM and its various dimensions. The course is also an introduction to some of the most important topics of organizational behavior and fosters analytical and critical reflection individually, in group, and in class. Furthermore, the group assignment (conducted in groups of three) together with four visitor lectures will provide the students a way to explore aspects of SHRM and the applicability of academic HRM concepts to real organizational life.

4. ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

1. Attendance is compulsory and you have to be present 9/11 sessions (each session is 2 classes so you are allowed to miss two sessions).
2. Group assignment. Graded (0-5), accounts for 25% of the final grade.
3. Individual assignment. Graded (0-5), accounts for 25% of the final grade.
4. Exam. Graded (0-5), accounts for 50% of the final grade. Note that the lectures and assignments also prepare for the exam.
5. In order to pass the course, you have to pass all the individual elements (i.e., get at least half the points in all elements 1-4).

Grading scale 1-5 will be used.

0-49 points = 0 (fail)

50-59 points = 1

60-69 points = 2

70-79 points = 3

80-89 points = 4

90-100 points = 5

5. ASSIGNMENTS

A. Group assignment (25%)

The group assignment focuses on strategic challenges and choices of HRM, and is loosely based on the principles of problem based learning (PBL). The group meets for the first time during the second lecture and drafts a concrete plan on how it will work on the assignment. The group members are expected to first familiarize themselves with the course literature (pre-selected chapters below) and then meet to discuss, reflect on, and summarize the learnings. The group selects a theme or a question that intrigues it, under the broader heading of “*Strategic HRM in practice. Choices and challenges.*” It then meets with a HR Director in an organization of its choice and conducts an interview, or a discussion based on its selected theme(s) and questions. Finally, the group writes an essay (8-10 pages) that is anchored to the course literature but also presents the findings from the interview analytically. The group prepares a short presentation (10 min) and presents its work on Dec 4, 2018 and turns in a paper version of its essay at the latest on Dec 7, 2018. The group work is conducted in groups of three. More detailed instructions will be provided when the course starts.

The assignment combines academic insights with those of practitioners. Furthermore, it enables the learners to utilize one another’s learning on the key contents of the literature, allows the group to select a theme of its own interest, and as a by-product prepares everyone for the exam.

Literature

Boxall, P. & Purcell, J. (2011): *Strategy and Human Resource Management: Third Edition*. Chapters 1-4:

1. The goals of HRM (1-36)
2. Strategy and the process of strategic management (39-62)
3. Strategic HRM: ‘best-fit’ or ‘best-practice’? (63-96)
4. Strategic HRM and sustained competitive advantage (97-121)

Collings, D.G. & Wood, G. (2009): *Human Resource Management: A Critical Approach*. Chapter 3.

- Strategic HRM: a critical review (38-52)

Articles

Buller, P.F. & McEvoy, G. M. (2012): Strategy, human resource management and performance: Sharpening line of sight. *Human Resource Management Review*, 22, 43-56. [Please, note that there is similar content in this as in the Boxall & Purcell chapters 3-4.]

Pritchard, K. (2010). Becoming an HR partner. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 20, 2, 175-188.

Boudreau, J. (2015) HR at the Tipping Point: The Paradoxical Future of Our Profession. *People & Strategy* vol 38, 4, 46.

B. Individual assignment (25%)

The individual assignment focuses on people management and engages the student to think about some aspects of organizational behavior that may guide or influence his/her future work. Students are expected to write a reflection essay (max. 1400 words, Times New Roman, 12pt, 1.5 spacing, justified alignment) based on articles (select 1-2 of a list which will be provided to you when the course starts), other course literature, and the lectures under a broad heading of “*How would I manage people in my organization?*”.

Read first, reflect upon the content, and then select a theme, which may be generic or specific. Write an academic essay that utilizes the concepts and ideas you find in the literature. Reflect upon how these ideas might guide your work and your behavior, and what the challenges might be. Focus on some area of interest, e.g. organizational justice, work engagement or motivation, etc. Title as you wish but operate under the broader heading provided. More detailed instructions will be provided when the course starts.

C. Digital exam (50%)

Digital exam is based on the lectures and the literature below. You will be informed about what chapters to focus on in your reading. Both assignments are designed to also prepare you for the exam. The exam consists of one short case study and two essay questions that you answer by selecting them out of three questions provided.

- Boxall, P. & Purcell, J. (2011): *Strategy and Human Resource Management: Third Edition*.
- Collings, D.G. & Wood, G. (2009): *Human Resource Management: A Critical Approach*.

Please note that the exam will be conducted online via the MyCourses platform on December 14, 2018 (14:00 – 18:00) and February 8, 2019 (time to be confirmed). More information will be provided on the first session.

D. SCHEDULE

Time	Topic area	Teachers
Tuesday Oct 29 9:00 – 12:00 @ E-127	Introduction to course and course requirements <u>Please note that to be guaranteed a place on the course you need to be present during the first session!</u>	Hertta Vuorenmaa
	Digitalization of HRM – Brave New HR? Workforce planning as a strategy driven activity. Choices for HRM organization, digitalization and the changing nature of work/HR	Johannes Gartner , Postdoctoral researcher
Thursday Nov 1 09:00-12:00 @ E-127	Introduction to HRM Brief history, definitions, scope, roles, the division of HR work <u>Group work kickoff! Please make sure you either attend or have joined a group & will get started in some other way!</u>	Kalliopi Platanou
Tuesday Nov 6 9:00 – 12:00 @ E-127	What has strategy got to do with it? Approaches to Strategic HRM, HRM-Performance link	Hertta Vuorenmaa
Thursday Nov 8 9:00 – 12:00 @ A-304	Who “does” the HRM and what does that mean? Line managers’ challenging role as the ultimate people managers.	Hertta Vuorenmaa
Tuesday Nov 13 9:00 – 12:00 @ E-127	Large organizations & Strategic HRM + your own reflections	Maria Lundell: HR manager of the year 2012. Opteam, Deloitte Finland, Enfo Oyj, Nasdaq, L’Oreal. Presently Stora Enso.
Thursday Nov 15 9:00 – 12:00 @ E-127	Case Nokia – Strategic HRM + your own reflections	Juha Äkräs: Executive-in-Residence, Aalto University, Co-Founder, Executive Chairman of the Board at Hintsa Performance

Tuesday Nov 20 9:00-12:00 @ E-127	Developing human resources in knowledge intensive organizations Approaches to HR development, competencies, talent. What is talent anyway?	Hertta Vuorenmaa
Thursday Nov 22 9:00 – 12:00 @ E-127	Sustainable HRM, diversity and the role of organizational justice Sustainability, diversity, the concepts of organizational justice, and psychological contract.	Hertta Vuorenmaa
Tuesday Nov 27 9:00 – 12:00 @ E-127	Small Startup & Strategic HRM + your own reflections	Jami Laes: CEO & Co-Founder @futureplaygames. Previously EVP Games @Rovio, VP Global Studios @Playfish, VP, Global Studios and GM, Helsinki @DChocGames
Thursday Nov 29 9:00 – 12:00 @ E-127	From performance management to work engagement and well-being – Future of Work Connecting organizational realities and organizational psychology	Hertta Vuorenmaa Kalliopi Platanou
Tuesday Dec 04 9:00-12:00 @ E-127	Group presentations Also: course wrap-up!	Students Hertta Vuorenmaa
Thursday Dec 07, by 18:00	DL for Group assignment and Individual assignment.	
14.12. 2018 14:00 – 18:00	Exam. (REMEMBER TO SIGN UP FOR EXAMS!) TO BE CONFIRMED Digital exam on MyCourses	
08.02.2018 To be confirmed	Exam. (REMEMBER TO SIGN UP FOR EXAMS!) TO BE CONFIRMED Digital exam on MyCourses	

E. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The same general criteria which can be found on the table below apply to the assignments and the exam. The nature of the assignment will be taken into account. The assessment is based on **an overall assessment** of the structure, content, perspective, use of sources and style of the text, and this assessment is guided by the ideas in the matrix below.

Fail	1	3	5
No coherent structure, the discussion does not proceed in a logical manner. Not of required length.	The structure of the text is patchy and inadequate.	The structure of the text is fairly clear and the arguments are mostly presented in a logical, consistent and factual manner.	There is a very clear and coherent structure in the text. The discussion proceeds in a logical and insightful manner.
The text does not correspond to the title/topic and does not demonstrate that source texts have been studied. Relevant issues are not distinguished from irrelevant. Factual errors.	The text corresponds to the title but demonstrates only superficial knowledge of the literature. Some factual errors and/or it dwells too much on irrelevant points.	The text corresponds to the topic, relevant points are discerned from irrelevant ones and there are attempts to understand relations between different issues. As a rule, the text does not contain factual errors, even though some misunderstandings may be present.	The text corresponds to the title and does not contain factual errors. All assertions are well argued, and relations between different issues have been understood in an insightful manner. Relevant is distinguished from irrelevant.
The text does not present any thoughts or reflections by the student.	There is some independent reflection and thought by the student. Issues are approached from different perspectives, but presentation of the arguments is superficial and remains on the level of an opinion.	The text contains critical thought by the student. Reflection by the student is present throughout, and issues are analyzed from a variety of viewpoints.	The text contains relevant and well-argued points by the student. Original and new perspectives are well connected to the sources. The text contains insightful arguments and good examples. The student's own analytical thought is evident throughout.
The text is plagiarized or the text does not demonstrate knowledge of the literature.	The text demonstrates superficial knowledge of the sources. Lots of errors and misunderstandings.	The text demonstrates good understanding of the source literature. There may be some small misunderstandings.	The text demonstrates very good knowledge of the sources. There are no misunderstandings. Sources have been applied in a versatile, insightful and critical manner.
The text contains lots of grammatical errors and poor spelling. It is impossible or very difficult to read the text and the language is very imprecise.	It is difficult to read the text. The language is imprecise and contains grammatical and spelling mistakes.	The language used is presentable and good, and there are no major spelling or grammatical mistakes.	The text is fluid, finished, precise and a good example of scientific writing.

F. COURSE WORKLOAD

Classroom hours	33
Class preparation	23
Assignments	100
Exam	4
Total	160h (6 ECTS)

G. ETHICAL RULES

Aalto University Code of Academic Integrity and Handling Thereof>

<https://into.aalto.fi/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=3772443>