Course Syllabus – PSY 634: Personnel Psychology  
Spring 2014, Wednesdays, 1-3:30; SH 460

Instructor: Margaret Beier, Ph.D. 
email: beier@rice.edu  
Phone: 713-348-3920  
Office: SH 429E  
Office hours: Mondays, 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:  
100 % = A+  
99 - 93 % = A  
92 - 90 % = A-  
91 - 89 % = 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
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 be 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 (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 2/5.

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. Each of you will be assigned to summarize and present one legal case that will be posted on the class website; however, all students should familiarize themselves with all cases so you can participate in class discussion. You will review the briefing and write 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 3/12.

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 3/26 (send me an email). The final paper is due on the last day of final’s week (Wednesday, 5/7) at 5:00 p.m. Please provide
me a hard copy of your paper in my mailbox in the Psychology Department main office or in the I/O area. As backup, please post an electronic version in your dropbox folder on Owlspace. Presentations are scheduled for the last two class meetings and students should plan to talk for about 30 minutes.

**Grading criteria (for presentation and proposal):**

**Presentation:**
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.

**Proposal:**
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 administered on Owlspace during finals week. I will post it on the last day of classes. It is due on the last day of finals (5/7 at 5 p.m.). The exam will be in short-essay format and will require integration of the material learned over the course of the semester. You will have 3 hrs to complete the exam, which will be timed on Owlspace. The exam is open book/open note but be careful – you will likely not have enough time to look up answers/references. The 3 hr countdown starts when you open the exam so make sure you have everything you need before you launch it (e.g., a quiet spot, power, your notes, etc.). If you experience technical difficulties, contact me immediately. The exam is an independent activity covered by the honor code.

**Disabilities and special needs**
If you have a documented disability and need academic assistance in this or any other course, you should inform me within the first two weeks of classes. All discussions will remain as confidential as possible. You may also need to register with the Disability Support Services, especially if unusual accommodations are needed.

**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 (1/15): Syllabus review and overview of measurement
Syllabus
Cascio & Aguinis, Ch. 1


Week 2 (1/22): Job Analysis
Cascio & Aguinis, Ch 9


Week 3 (1/29): Job Performance and Performance Appraisal
Cascio & Aguinis, Ch. 4 & 5


Week 4 (2/5): Measuring Individual Differences

*Job analysis project due*

Cascio & Aguinis, 6 & 7


Week 5 (2/12): Predictors used in selection

Cascio & Aguinis, 12 & 13

*Legal case study assigned*


Week 6 (2/19): Decision making in selection

Cascio & Aguinis, 14


**Week 7 (2/26):**  
**Group differences and bias**  
Cascio & Aguinis, 8

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**No class 3/5 – Spring Break**

**Week 8 (3/12):**  
**Adverse impact and legal issues**  
*Legal case study project due*  
Cascio & Aguinis, 2

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**Week 9 (3-19): Applicant reactions and recruiting**

Cascio & Aguinis, Ch 11

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Week 10 (3/26): Life from the field: Dr. Jonathan Levine visit (Industrial Psychologist & Technical Authority at BP)
Research proposal topic to me for approval (email)


Week 11 (4/2): Training and development
Cascio & Aguinis, Ch. 15 & 16


Week 12 (4/9): Wrap up and current issues in personnel psychology


Week 13 (4/16) & Week 14 (4/23): Student presentations

Final exam will be posted after the last day of classes (4/25) and will be due on the last day of finals (May 7) at 5 p.m.

May 7, 2014 (5:00 p.m.). Hard copy of your research proposal in my box; electronic copy attached to your dropbox folder in Owlspace.