Legal Aspects of Human Resources Management

Spring 2020 Syllabus

“Employment law is a very dynamic area of the law . . . .”

Judge R. Bryan Harwell
DeWitt v. Darlington County (D.S.C. 2013)

“As society matures and employment law evolves, legislatures have lavished more attention on the policies and practices used by employers . . . .”

Judge Bruce M. Selya
Matamoros v. Starbucks Corp. (1st Cir. 2012)

I. COURSE INFORMATION

Name: Legal Aspects of Human Resources Management (U87 HRM 571)

Where: Online

When: Spring 2019

Credits: Three

II. INSTRUCTOR

Name: Andrew L. Metcalf (LinkedIn | bio)

Phone: 636-399-6390

Email: Andrew.Metcalf@wustl.com

Typically, I check and my WUSTL email in the evenings and respond within 24 hours.
III. Course Description

This class covers employment law. It provides an overview of how laws regulate the decisions that HR professionals, managers, and other business leaders make on a day-to-day basis. This course will increase your knowledge in employee contracts, discrimination, harassment, accommodations for disability and religion, wage and hour, employee leaves of absence, union law, non-compete agreements and trade secrets, and state and local laws that regulate the workplace.

IV. Core Objectives

1. To provide a “hands on” overview of the legal aspects of human resources management. Classes will focus on actual legal issues HR managers face, and practical strategies for addressing those issues.

2. To help students learn about federal and state administrative agencies that impact human resources, including the United States Department of Labor, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the National Labor Relations Board, and others.

3. To give students the knowledge to recognize legal issues in the workplace.

4. To better prepare students for careers in business as human resources professionals.

V. Course Requirements

This is a fully online class on the Canvas system. Login at www.mycanvas.wustl.edu.

Each “module” of this class will last about ten days, with 8 modules total.

In each module, you will usually have to do some combination of three things:

1. Complete a weekly video or reading. Each module begins with a video where you will learn an employment law topic.

2. Complete an interactive discussion board assignment. Each week, you’ll post something on our Canvas forum on an employment law question, and then comment on other students’ posts.

3. Complete a written assignment. Each week, there will be a written assignment. For example, you might be asked to write an email to an employee, or a memo to your boss, or an outline for an upcoming meeting. There might also be a brief quiz.
VI. Grading Guidelines

Your grade will be based on:

1. Completing the weekly videos or readings.
2. Participation in Canvas discussions.
3. Weekly written assignments and quizzes.

Click on “My Grades” in Canvas to see how many points each assignment is worth.

The grading scale is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97 – 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93 – 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 – 76</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>70 – 72</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&gt; 60</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

My goal is to provide you with an opportunity to do well in the course and to allow you to learn the material.

Weekly module assignments will open on Fridays at 12:00am and are due no later than 11:59pm the next Sunday (i.e., 9 days later). I picked these dates in order to give you two weekends to complete each module.

**Participate in the assignments early and often!** There are no opportunities to turn in assignments after the deadline.

I anticipate students will spend about **3 hours per week** on the class (i.e., one hour per credit).

VII. Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Material to Be Covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>➢ At-Will Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ How is the Workplace Regulated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The timing for this module is extended, and has a lot of overlap with module 2, because the course starts on a Monday. So, it overlaps with the second module.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9/18 – 9/27</td>
<td>Discrimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/25 – 10/4</td>
<td>Harassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10/2 – 10/11</td>
<td>Investigations and Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10/9 – 10/18</td>
<td>Family and Medical Leave Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10/16 – 10/25</td>
<td>Accommodations (disability and religion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/23 – 11/1</td>
<td>Wage and Hour (FLSA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10/23(^2) – 11/2</td>
<td>Developing workplace policies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VIII. UNIVERSITY COLLEGE APPENDICES**

**Notice on Technical Requirements and Supported Browsers**

- Canvas works best in the most recent version of all major browsers. You can also [double-check that your browser is supported](#).
- Be sure you have downloaded the most recent version Java and/or a Java plug-in. This free software program helps you to be able to access certain Canvas tools. You can check which version of Java you currently have and update it (if necessary) by visiting [www.java.com](http://www.java.com). Keep Java updated for best results.
- The use of audio and video tools within the content editor may require the use of [Adobe Flash](http://www.adobe.com).

**Technical Support**

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\(^2\) To fit everything in, modules 7 and 8 will run concurrently. There will not be much homework for module 8, however,
This is a fully online, technology-based course. Because computers are not perfect, plan on having technical issues at least once during the term. While this can cause some incredibly frustrating moments, the overall benefits of the technology do outweigh any issues that may arise. Just be ready to contact technical support in the event of difficulties. Send an email to student.technology@wustl.edu or call 935-8200 with any questions/problems concerning Canvas. (This is technical support for any problems you experience within the Canvas classroom only, not other external software). For additional Canvas support:

- Chat with a Canvas Support Agent (accessible by clicking “Help” in lower left corner of the classroom)
- Call the Canvas Support Line (Students) +1-844-865-2581

“Netiquette” Statement on Internet Communication

- Remember your audience. If you would not say it in a face-to-face classroom, do not include it in the online discussions either. Consider what you write, as it is a permanent record and can be retrieved easily. Use courtesy and common sense in all your electronic communications.
- Write in complete sentences and check spelling before you post anything in class.
- DON'T TYPE IN ALL CAPS. This is hard to read and is considered "shouting."
- Respect the opinions of others and be sensitive to the diverse nature of people in the class. Keep in mind that although you cannot “see” your classmates, you can show respect for individual differences. Diversity issues may include the following and others: race, ethnicity, religion, disabilities, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, marital status, urban vs. rural dwellers, etc.
- No profanity will be allowed. This includes writing in punctuation. For example, ##%$#! is considered profanity and is not permitted. Also, language expressed in inappropriate acronyms is not acceptable.

Expectations for Student Attendance (Canvas log-ins, response to emails, discussions, hours per week students should expect to devote to the class, etc.)

You are expected to have an active presence within Canvas (our online classroom) and that is one of the ways in which I will monitor your attendance in the course. I am able see when last you logged into Canvas and how much time you’ve spent in various areas of the classroom. The class is not self-paced because we have specific due dates for all assignments, but you will work on the course at your own convenience within those parameters. Lack of participation in discussions or not answering email messages sent to you will be considered lack of attendance and will result in a loss of points.

Statement Regarding Course Evaluations

I sincerely value your feedback about this course. University College students are encouraged to submit course evaluations at midterm and end-of-semester.

Statement Regarding Grades of “Incomplete”
Grades of *incomplete* are rare and are reserved for medical crises or other documented emergencies occurring late in the semester. Incompletes are reserved for students who were otherwise making satisfactory progress in the course prior to the emergency and will be allowed at the instructor’s discretion.

**Statement Regarding Academic Honesty**

Students are bound by the University College policy on academic integrity in all aspects of this course. All references to ideas and texts other than the students’ own must be so indicated through appropriate footnotes, whether the source is a book, an online site, the professor, etc. All students are responsible for following the rules outlined in the document regarding the university academic integrity policy. All students are expected to abide by proper citation and attribution techniques.

**Academic Support:**

All University College students are encouraged to take advantage of the following Academic Support services on campus:

- **The Learning Center:** The Learning Center provides access to academic peer mentoring, assists students with essential study and test-taking skills, and offers disability resources to students in need.

- **Writing Center:** The Writing Center staff members are writers helping writers through the process of revision. They are undergraduate students, graduate students and faculty members who love to write and to help others clarify their thoughts and ideas. The Writing Center and The Speaking Studio at Washington University in St. Louis provide free, one-on-one tutoring to all WUSTL students for any writing or public speaking project. Students interested in using the Writing Center should call in advance to make an appointment.

- **Arts & Sciences Computing:** Arts & Sciences Computing operates two labs that are open to students, faculty, and staff.

- **Library:** Washington University Libraries boast an impressive array of services, including course reserves, interlibrary loan, reserved study spaces, the Arc Computing Lab, and so much more.

**Student Accommodations**

Washington University is committed to providing equal opportunity for students with disabilities. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) assists students with disabilities by providing services and arranging for reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access and equal academic opportunities. Students wishing to request services or accommodations must register and provide appropriate documentation to the DRC. The DRC serves as a resource and advisor to students with disabilities and welcomes opportunities to consult with students, families, faculty, and staff. This online course has been designed with accessibility in mind. Be sure to visit the Canvas accessibility statement for more information on these features and reach out to your instructor should accessibility issues arise.
Inclusive Learning Environment Statement

The best learning environment—whether in the classroom, studio, laboratory, or fieldwork site—is one in which all members feel respected while being productively challenged. At Washington University in St. Louis, we are dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere, in which all participants can contribute, explore, and challenge their own ideas as well as those of others. Every participant has an active responsibility to foster a climate of intellectual stimulation, openness, and respect for diverse perspectives, questions, personal backgrounds, abilities, and experiences, although instructors bear primary responsibility for its maintenance.

A range of resources is available to those who perceive a learning environment as lacking inclusivity, as defined in the preceding paragraph. If possible, we encourage students to speak directly with their instructor about any suggestions or concerns they have regarding a particular instructional space or situation. Alternatively, students may bring concerns to another trusted advisor or administrator (such as an academic advisor, mentor, department chair, or dean). All classroom participants—including faculty, staff, and students—who observe a bias incident affecting a student may also file a report (whether personally or anonymously) utilizing the online Bias Report and Support System.

Preferred Name Policy for Students
The Preferred Name policy at Washington University in St. Louis lets students change their names in most university information systems without pursuing a legal name change. Learn how!

Accommodations Based on Sexual Assault

The University is committed to offering reasonable academic accommodations to students who are victims of sexual assault. Students are eligible for accommodation regardless of whether they seek criminal or disciplinary action. Depending on the specific nature of the allegation, such measures may include but are not limited to: implementation of a no-contact order, course/classroom assignment changes, and other academic support services and accommodations. If you need to request such accommodations, please direct your request to Kim Webb (kim_webb@wustl.edu), Director of the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center. Ms. Webb is a confidential resource; however, requests for accommodations will be shared with the appropriate University administration and faculty. The University will maintain as confidential any accommodations or protective measures provided to an individual student so long as it does not impair the ability to provide such measures.

If a student comes to me to discuss or disclose an instance of sexual assault, sex discrimination, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking, or if I otherwise observe or become aware of such an allegation, I will keep the information as private as I can, but as a faculty member of Washington University, I am required to immediately report it to my Department Chair or Dean or directly to Ms. Jessica Kennedy, the University’s Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to speak with the Title IX Coordinator directly, Ms. Kennedy
can be reached at (314) 935-3118, jw kennedy@wustl.edu, or by visiting her office in Umrath Hall, Rm. 001. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to Sheryl Mauricio (314-935-4174 or smauricio@wustl.edu), Associate Dean for Students and Director of Student Conduct, or by contacting WUPD at (314) 935-5555 or your local law enforcement agency.

You can also speak confidentially and learn more about available resources at the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center by calling (314) 935-8761 or visiting the 4th floor of Seigle Hall.

Bias Reporting

The University has a process through which students, faculty, staff and community members who have experienced or witnessed incidents of bias, prejudice or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University’s Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team.

General Tips for Success in the Online Classroom

Welcome to our online course! The following is a list of helpful information that represents habits of students who have succeeded in online courses. These tips should help each of you to have a positive experience as well.

1. GET STARTED: Remember that this online course begins on day one of the semester. Log in early during the first week to print the syllabus, become oriented to the online classroom, and get to know your professor and classmates. Waiting until the end of the first week to get started may derail your efforts to succeed before you know it.

2. STAY ORGANIZED. Bookmark our course websites (Canvas, Online Dictionary, other websites indicated by professor etc.) Create a special binder or folder to organize any printed materials. Study time will be easier and more fruitful if you are organized and up to date.

3. INTERACT WITH YOUR CLASSMATES. Students who study in small groups or pairs tend to be more successful. You can help each other to understand difficult points in the unit simply by participating regularly in the Discussion Forums.

4. SHOW UP & ASK QUESTIONS. Visit me in office hours occasionally for extra discussion as needed. Make an appointment and we can talk in real time via collaboration software or phone. You can also email me any questions that arise or post them in the “Questions?” discussion forum.

5. DO THE READING. The assigned reading is a valuable part of the course. Students who consistently stay up to date on the reading tend to receive higher grades than those who do not. In this class, the reading will consist of…. which will prepare you to participate in the classroom discussion forums.
6. **STUDY “OFFLINE” SOMETIMES.** Although this is an online course, you need not do all of your studying online. Spend time studying away from the computer by taking notes on the readings.

7. **DON’T PROCRASTINATE.** Procrastination will ruin your experience in the class in several ways. Not only does it prevent you from learning what you are here to learn, but it will also cause you to lose a lot of points. Refer to the list of assignment due dates in this syllabus and follow the steps outlined in the study guide in order to better understand how to pace yourself appropriately.

8. **HANG IN THERE!!** If this is your first online class, the experience may challenge you at first, but as long as you keep up with the reading and follow your professor’s instructions, you will develop an understanding of the rhythm of the course after the first unit. See me for help as needed, I am your resource and I want to see you succeed and enjoy this course!

### Guidelines for Discussion Forum Participation

1. Be sure to write in the **subject line** to whom your message is addressed. Changing the subject line is the number one way to make sure your post is noticed by the intended recipient.

2. Be sure to **sign your name** at the bottom of your messages. Writing your name at the end of each message helps to clarify the author and helps your classmates remember who you are.

3. Before responding to a particular discussion topic, be sure to **complete the reading assignment** of the corresponding unit. Remember that the discussion topics are specifically tied to the readings. Be sure to take your time and write meaningful discussion forum postings. Your ideas and content are important, and issues such as grammar, spelling, accents, vocabulary, and sentence structure count as well. Be sure your posts are well edited before you submit them, since unedited posts do not receive full points.

4. Participate in each discussion over **several days** within the lesson and avoid waiting until the due date to get started. Each discussion requires several posts from you, including replies to classmates. Waiting until the last day to participate minimizes the opportunity to interact your classmates and me and makes discussion participation much less meaningful for you. It will also result in a loss of points.

Finally, the discussion forums are meant to be **fun**! Check in often to communicate with your classmates and me.