

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

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Office hours: Mondays, 3 – 4 or by appointment

**Text:** Cascio, W. F., & Aguinis, H. (2011). *Applied psychology in human resource management* (7th Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

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+	89 - 88% = B+	79 - 78% = C+	69 - 68% = D+	59 - 0% = F
99 - 93 % = A	87 - 83 % = B	77 - 73 % = C	67 - 63 % = D	
92 - 90 % = A-	82 - 80 % = B-	72 - 70 % = C-	62 - 60 % = D-	

### **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/> 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

Beier, M. E., & Ackerman, P. L. (2007). Cognitive abilities in personnel selection and testing. In F. Durso, R. Nickerson, S. Dumais, S. Lewandowsky, & T. Perfect (Eds.), *Handbook of Applied Cognition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (pp. 605-627). West Sussex, UK: Wiley.

### **Week 2 (1/22): Job Analysis**

Cascio & Aguinis, Ch 9

Morgeson, F. P., & Campion, M. A. (1997). Social and cognitive sources of potential inaccuracy in job analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82, 627-655.

Aguinis, H., Mazurkiewicz, M. D., & Heggstad, E. D. (2009). Using web-based frame-of-reference training to decrease biases in personality-based job analysis: An experimental field study. *Personnel Psychology*, 62, 405-438.

Campion, M. A., Fink, A. A., Ruggeberg, B. J., Carr, L., Phillips, G. M., & Odman, R. B. (2011). Doing competencies well: Best practices in competency modeling. *Personnel Psychology*, 64, 225-262.

### **Week 3 (1/29): Job Performance and Performance Appraisal**

Cascio & Aguinis, Ch. 4 & 5

Beier, M. E., & Ackerman, P. L. (2012). Time in personnel selection. In N. Schmitt (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of personnel selection and assessment* (pp. 721-739). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hoffman, B. J., Blair, C. A., Meriac, J. P., & Woehr, D. J. (2007). Expanding the criterion domain? A quantitative review of the OCB literature. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 555-566.

Spence, J. R., & Keeping, L. M. (2009). The impact of non-performance information on ratings of job performance: a policy capturing approach. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31, 587-608.

## **Week 4 (2/5): Measuring Individual Differences**

### ***Job analysis project due***

Cascio & Aguinis, 6 & 7

Binning, J. F., & Barrett, G. V. (1989). Validity of personnel decisions: A conceptual analysis of the inferential and evidential bases. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *74*, 478-494.

Carter, N. T., Dalal, D. K., Boyce, A. S., O'Connell, M. S., Kung, M.-C., & Delgado, K. M. (2013). Uncovering curvilinear relationships between conscientiousness and job performance: How theoretically appropriate measurement makes an empirical difference. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1037/a0034688

Lang, J. W. B., Kersting, M., Hülshager, U. R., & Lang, J. (2010). General mental ability, narrower cognitive abilities, and job performance: The perspective of the nested-factors model of cognitive abilities. *Personnel Psychology*, *63*, 595-640.

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

Cascio & Aguinis, 12 & 13

### ***Legal case study assigned***

Schmidt, F. L., & Hunter, J. E. (1998). The validity and utility of selection methods in personnel psychology: Practical and theoretical implications of 85 years of research findings. *Psychological Bulletin*, *124*, 262-274.

Lievens, F., & Patterson, F. (2011). The validity and incremental validity of knowledge tests, low-fidelity simulations, and high-fidelity simulations for predicting job performance in advanced-level high-stakes selection. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *96*, 927-940. doi: 10.1037/a0023496

Speer, A. B., Christiansen, N. D., Goffin, R. D., & Goff, M. (2013). Situational bandwidth and the criterion-related validity of assessment center ratings: Is cross-exercise convergence always desirable?. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1037/a003521

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

Cascio & Aguinis, 14

Campion, J. A., Outtz, J. L., Zedeck, S., Schmidt, F. L., Kehoe, J. F., Murphy, K. R., & Guion, R. G. (2001). The controversy over score banding in personnel selection: Answers to 10 key questions. *Personnel Psychology*, *54*, 149-185.

Cabrera, E. F., & Raju, J. S. (2001). Utility analysis: Current trends and future directions. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *9*, 92-102.

Winkler, S., König, C. J., & Kleinmann, M. (2010). Single-attribute utility analysis may be futile: But this can't be the end of the story: Causal chain analysis as an alternative. *Personnel Psychology*, *63*, 1041-1065.

**Week 7 (2/26):****Group differences and bias**

Cascio & Aguinis, 8

Cullen, M. J., Hardison, C. M., & Sackett, P. R. (2004). Using SAT-grade and ability-job performance relationships to test predictions derived from stereotype threat theory. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 89*, 220-230.

Bobko, P., & Roth P. (2013). Reviewing, categorizing, and analyzing the literature on black-white mean differences for predictors of job performance: Verifying some perceptions and updating/correcting others. *Personnel Psychology, 66*, 91-126.

Berry, C. M., Clark, M. A., & McClure, T. K. (2011). Racial/ethnic differences in the criterion-related validity of cognitive ability tests: A qualitative and quantitative review. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 96*, 881-906.

**No class 3/5 – Spring Break****Week 8 (3/12):****Adverse impact and legal issues*****Legal case study project due***

Cascio & Aguinis, 2

Hough, L. M., Oswald, F. L., & Ployhart, R. E. (2001). Determinants, detection, and amelioration of adverse impact in personnel selection procedures: Issues, evidence, and lessons learned. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 9*, 152-194.

Hattrup, K., Rock, J., & Scalia, C. (1997). The effects of varying conceptualizations of job performance on adverse impact, minority hiring, and predicted performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 82*, 656-664.

DeCorte, W., Lievens, F., & Sackett, P. R. (2007). Combining predictors to achieve optimal trade-offs between selection quality and adverse impact. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92*, 1380-1393.

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

Cascio & Aguinis, Ch 11

Hausknecht, J. P., Day, D. V., & Thomas, S. C. (2004). Applicant reactions to selection procedures: An updated model and meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology, 57*, 639-683.

Ryan, A. M., Sacco, J. M., McFarland, L. A., & Kriska, S. D. (2000). Applicant self-selection: Correlates of withdrawal from a multiple hurdle process. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 85*, 163-179.

Zhao, H., & Liden, R. C. (2011). Internship: A recruitment and selection perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 96*, 221-229.

**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)**

Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (2003). Principles for the validation and use of personnel selection procedures. Bowling Green, OH: Author.

*Uniform guidelines on employee selection procedures.* (1978). (Available in the resource section of OwlSpace.)

**Week 11 (4/2): Training and development**

Cascio & Aguinis, Ch. 15 & 16

Kanfer, R., & Ackerman, P. L. (1989). Motivation and cognitive abilities: An integrative/aptitude-treatment interaction approach to skill acquisition. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 74, 657-690.

Arthur, W., Jr., Bennett, W., Jr, Edens, P. S., & Bell, S. T. (2003). Effectiveness of training in organizations: A meta-analysis of design and evaluation features. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88, 234-245.

Neal, A., Godley, S. T., Kirkpatrick, T., Dewsnamp, G., Joung, W., & Hesketh, B. (2006). An examination of learning processes during critical incident training: Implications for the development of adaptable trainees. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91, 1276-1291.

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

Roulin, N., & Bangerter, A. (2013). Social networking websites in personnel selection: A signaling perspective on recruiters' and applicants' perceptions. *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, 12, 143-151. doi: 10.1027/1866-5888/a000094

James, L. R., McIntyre, M. D., Glisson, C. A., Green, P. D., Patton, T. W., et al. (2005). A conditional reasoning measure for aggression. *Organizational Research Methods*, 8, 69-99.

Kim, Y., & Ployhart, R. E. (2013). 30). The effects of staffing and training on firm productivity and profit growth before, during, and after the great recession. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1037/a0035

**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.