

## Syllabus for HRM-6200

# THE LEGAL AND ETHICAL ENVIRONMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a careful examination of the significant ethical and legal issues facing the human resource professional. While there is a focus on employment law, there is an equally strong consideration of ethical issues, which human resource personnel must address and share with other decision makers in the organization.

### General Aim

The amount of legislation that affects human resources has significantly increased within the last decade. Furthermore, the manner in which we manage our departments, employees, and the organization itself has met with more scrutiny in the past few years. The ethical and legal guidelines a human resource professional must both follow and make certain others follow continually increase. Avoiding litigation is a matter not only of good planning but also training, awareness, feedback, and up-to-date knowledge. This course will bring the student through a history of what has evolved in employment law and ethical behavior in our organizations. Managing today is most complex, and anyone can be held both personally and professionally liable for their behavior no matter how innocent or unintentional an action might be. The course will cover what human resource professionals should do in the new millennium to create a litigiously free and ethical workplace.

## COURSE TOPICS

- Employment relationship: ethics and legal considerations
- Human rights in the workplace
- Ethics and the human resource professional
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Equal employment opportunity and affirmative action
- Discrimination: race, gender, sexual, and affinity orientation
- Discrimination: religion, national origin, age, and disability
- Developing ethical policies in human resource areas
- Evaluating personnel and work behavior
- Employee privacy and rights of employer and employees in the workplace
- Ethics and organizational culture: the relationship among law, morality and employee morale
- Labor law

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- CO 1** Analyze the relationships between ethics, the law, business practices, and organizational results.
- CO 2** Examine ethics and legislation related to discriminatory practices and harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, gender, and affinity orientation.
- CO 3** Develop human resource policies that reflect appropriate ethical behavior.
- CO 4** Apply principles and techniques for evaluating employees and workplace behavior that meet ethical and legal standards in the global environment.

## COURSE MATERIALS

You will need the following materials to complete your coursework. Some course materials may be free, open source, or available from other providers. You can access free or open-source materials by clicking the links provided below or in the module details documents. To purchase course materials, please visit the [University's textbook supplier](#).

### Required Textbook

- Bennett-Alexander, D., & Hartman, L. (2015). *Employment law for business* (8th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.  
**ISBN-13: 978-0078023798**

## COURSE STRUCTURE

**The Legal and Ethical Environment of Human Resources** is a three-credit online course, consisting of **eight** modules. Modules include an overview, topics, learning objectives, study materials, and activities. Module titles are listed below.

- **Module 1: Employment Relationship: Ethics and Legal Considerations**
- **Module 2: The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity**
- **Module 3: Discrimination: Affirmative Action, Race, National Origin, and Gender**
- **Module 4: Discrimination: Sexual Harassment, Age, Gender, and Religion**

- **Module 5: Developing Ethical Policies in Human Resource Areas**
- **Module 6: Evaluating Personnel and Work Behavior**
- **Module 7: Ethics and Organizational Culture: The Relationship among Law, Morality, and Employee Morale**
- **Module 8: Employee Privacy and Rights of Employer and Employees in the Workplace**

## ASSESSMENT METHODS

For your formal work in the course, you are required to participate in online discussion forums and two synchronous events, complete written assignments, and complete a final project. See below for details.

Consult the Course Calendar for due dates.

### Promoting Originality

One or more of your course activities may utilize a tool designed to promote original work and evaluate your submissions for plagiarism. More information about this tool is available in [this document](#).



### **Discussion Forums**

This course requires you to participate in **seven** graded discussion forums. There is also one ungraded but required introductions forum in Module 1.

Communication with the mentor and among fellow students is a critical component of online learning. Participation in online discussions involves two distinct activities: an initial response to a posted question (discussion thread) and subsequent comments on classmates' responses.

You will be evaluated both on the quality of your responses (i.e., your understanding of readings, and concepts as demonstrated by well-articulated, critical thinking) and quantity of your participation (i.e., the number of times you participate meaningfully in the assigned forums). Responses and comments should be properly proofread and edited, professional, and respectful.

Meaningful participation in online discussions is relevant to the content, adds value, and advances the discussion. Comments such as "I agree" and "ditto" are not considered value-adding participation. Therefore, when you agree or disagree with a classmate, the reading, or your mentor, state and support your agreement or disagreement.



## **Synchronous Events**

You are required to participate in **two** synchronous events that will be held in Edison Live!, our virtual meeting space. These interactive sessions review content and cases and discuss any questions and issues you have. To access the event, click the Collaboration Space link in the Edison Live! section of the course site a few minutes before the designated time. Use the following link for directions and helpful videos about [how to use the Edison Live! tool in Moodle](#). Your mentor will work with the class to propose a time that works best and accommodates the majority.



## **Written Assignments**

You are required to complete **seven** written assignments. These assignments vary in what is requested and the type of responses (e.g., specific questions to be answered, essays to be written, and factual vs. creative work to be done). They can be end-of-chapter questions in the textbook or short essays or memos based on a scenario. They reflect on your reading of the text and understanding of the content. You should develop answers and wherever possible cite sources. These assignments replace the traditional midterm and final examination. Organize your thoughts, cite sources, and edit carefully.



## **Final Project**

You are required to complete a final project that provides you with the opportunity to analyze and evaluate approaches that align ethics and law with business and organizational results. You will analyze a particular issue, provide strategies for improving organizational effectiveness, and demonstrate effectiveness. For complete guidelines and requirements of the final project, please refer to the **Final Project** area of the course website.

## **GRADING AND EVALUATION**

Your grade in the course will be determined as follows:

- **Discussion forums (7)**—20%
- **Synchronous events (2)**—10%
- **Written assignments (7)**—45%
  - **Written Assignments 2, 3, 4, 6 (Textbook chapter questions)**—18%
  - **Written Assignment 1 (2 Essays)**—8%
  - **Written Assignment 5 (3 Memos)**—9%
  - **Written Assignment 7 (Survey, memo, recommendations)**—10%
- **Final project**—25%

All activities will receive a numerical grade of 0–100. You will receive a score of 0 for any work not submitted. Your final grade in the course will be a letter grade. Letter grade equivalents for numerical

grades are as follows:

|    |   |        |   |   |          |
|----|---|--------|---|---|----------|
| A  | = | 93–100 | B | = | 83–87    |
| A– | = | 90–92  | C | = | 73–82    |
| B+ | = | 88–89  | F | = | Below 73 |

To receive credit for the course, you must earn a letter grade of C or higher on the weighted average of all assigned course work (e.g., assignments, discussion postings, projects, etc.). Graduate students must maintain a B average overall to remain in good academic standing.

## **STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS**

### **First Steps to Success**

To succeed in this course, take the following first steps:

- Read the entire Syllabus carefully, making sure that all aspects of the course are clear to you and that you have all the materials required for the course.
- Take time to read the entire Online Student Handbook. The Handbook answers many questions about how to proceed through the course and how to get the most from your educational experience at Thomas Edison State University.
- Familiarize yourself with the learning management systems environment—how to navigate it and what the various course areas contain. If you know what to expect as you navigate the course, you can better pace yourself and complete the work on time.
- If you are not familiar with web-based learning be sure to review the processes for posting responses online and submitting assignments before class begins.

### **Study Tips**

Consider the following study tips for success:

- To stay on track throughout the course, begin each week by consulting the Course Calendar. The Calendar provides an overview of the course and indicates due dates for submitting assignments, posting discussions, and scheduling and taking examinations.
- Check Announcements regularly for new course information.

## **COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

Thomas Edison State University recognizes, values, and relies upon the diversity of our community. We strive to provide equitable, inclusive learning experiences that embrace our students' backgrounds, identities, experiences, abilities, and expertise.

## **ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

Thomas Edison State University recognizes disability as a facet of diversity and seeks to advance access to its educational offerings. Students with disabilities may seek accommodations by contacting the Office of Student Accessibility Services via email at [ada@tesu.edu](mailto:ada@tesu.edu) or phone at (609) 984-1141, ext. 3415. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing may call the TTY line at (609) 341-3109.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

To ensure success in all your academic endeavors and coursework at Thomas Edison State University, familiarize yourself with all administrative and academic policies including those related to academic integrity, course late submissions, course extensions, and grading policies.

For more, see:

- [University-wide policies](#)
- [Undergraduate course policies and regulations](#)
- [Graduate academic policies](#)
- [Nursing student policies](#)
- [Academic code of conduct](#)