

SYLLABUS

HRD 4420 (formerly 327): Employee Benefits
Section 10941 – Winter 2018

INSTRUCTOR: Michael H. Haynes, Esq. mhaynes@oakland.edu

OFFICE HOURS: Before and after class, and by appointment

CLASS DAY/TIME: Monday, 1:20pm – 4:40pm **LOCATION:** 204 Pawley Hall

COURSE DESCRIPTION (from the course catalog):

Introduction to employee benefits includes planning and administration of programs in changing employment and social contexts. Includes legally required and discretionary offerings such as Social Security, Workers' and Unemployment Compensation, health, disability and life insurance, retirement, pay for time not worked, leaves, flextime, and others as well as benefit costing.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Employee Benefits – A Primer for Human Resource Professionals by Joseph J. Martocchio, 6th ed., McGraw-Hill, 2017. ISBN #9781259712289 *either the 5th or 6th Editions are acceptable*

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to provide students with an introductory overview of employee benefit programs offered in the United States, including information about the field of employee benefits in practice and the legal and regulatory framework applicable to benefits administration.

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate a practical and referential knowledge of mandatory and discretionary employee benefit programs, including basic strategic planning concepts and approaches to development and administration.

COURSE FORMAT

The subject matter for the course will be covered by:

- Traditional class meetings with instructor-led lectures, supported by assigned readings.
- Practical written exercises that emphasize key elements of the employee benefits field that will provide students opportunities to develop relevant skills and apply gained knowledge.
- Interactive and engaging learning activities during class sessions.
- *Moodle*: Supplemental materials will be made available online to provide out-of-the-classroom support throughout the semester (ex. class power points, handouts, articles, etc.)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment	% of Final Grade	Due Date
Knowledge Checks (5)	25% (5% each)	Start of class on assigned dates
“Exploring Health Insurance” Paper	10%	3/12 by start of class
“Change The Law” Paper	20%	4/9 by start of class
Team Benefit Presentations	15%	In class on 4/16
Class Session Participation	5%	
Final Exam	25%	Opens on 4/18 at Noon; Due 4/23 by 11:59pm
Total Possible Grade		100%

All assignments will be submitted through Moodle. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Knowledge Checks – Students will complete five short assignments on Moodle during the first half of the course. Each untimed Knowledge Check will consist of 10 multiple choice questions crafted to assess the student’s understanding of the objective material covered in lectures. Knowledge Checks must be completed by the start of class on each assigned date (see the calendar).

“Exploring Health Insurance” Paper – In order to support understanding of one of the most important employee benefits in today’s workplace culture, students will complete a written assignment focusing on the field of health insurance. This paper must be submitted through Moodle by the start of class on 3/12.

“Change the Law” Paper – While this course is primarily focused on the current state of the employee benefits field, students should have experience analyzing public policy and advocating for change. This written assignment requires students to evaluate current benefits law or regulation, and argue for a change based on that assessment. The paper must be submitted through Moodle by the start of class on 4/9.

Team Benefit Presentations – Students will research and prepare roughly a 20-minute presentation on a unique and trending employee benefit. More details on this project will be discussed in class, but the presentations will be made in class on 4/16.

Class Session Participation – Students will learn a majority of the material through interactive and engaging activities conducted during class sessions. Full points will be awarded to students who volunteer to answer questions and actively participated in class exercises. Students who miss more than three class sessions will lose all five points.

Final Exam – A final exam will be administered on Moodle, consisting of several short essay questions. The exam is designed to evaluate the student’s cumulative understanding of key course concepts. Students will be able to access the exam questions on 4/18 and must submit responses by 11:59pm on 4/23.

GRADING POLICY

Assignments will be graded under the following point system:

Knowledge Checks (5)	25 points (5 pts each)
“Exploring Health Insurance” Paper	10 points
“Change the Law” Paper	20 points
Team Benefit Presentations	15 points
Class Session Participation	5 points
Final Exam	25 points
Total	100 points

*Each point earned translates to 1% of the total course grade

Grading Scale –

Course final grade points are determined from total points earned in the course, using the following ranges.

98 points and above = 4.0	80 – 84.5 = 3.0	65 – 69.5 = 1.5
95 – 97.5 = 3.8	77 – 79.5 = 2.8	60 – 64.5 = 1.0
90 – 94.5 = 3.5	74 – 76.5 = 2.5	Below 60 points = 0.0
85 – 89.5 = 3.3	70 – 73.5 = 2.0	

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is very important to success in this course. Much of the material covered will be from outside the assigned texts and studied solely through class participation and activity. Although the experience of learning should be enough incentive to attend every class, any student who misses more than three (3) class sessions will forfeit all five Class Participation points. If extenuating circumstances arise, please speak to the professor and reasonable accommodations can be made.

COMPUTER/CELL PHONE POLICIES

Laptops, tablets, and other electronic tools are welcome in the classroom for students to take notes or quickly look up relevant information for class discussion engagement. Moodle access during class is encouraged for students to have supplemental materials (power points, handouts, etc.) readily available for reference and support. Students are still expected to be attentive and participate in class, and must be courteous to classmates and the Instructor by refraining from distracting activity.

Please silence your cell phones prior to the start of class. If you need to answer a phone call or engage in a text conversation, please leave the classroom and return when your business is complete. Disruptions caused by cell phones will not be tolerated.

MOODLE USAGE AND SESSION RECORDING

Course materials such as class power points, handouts, and additional reading materials will be posted to Moodle. All assignments must be turned in through Moodle unless otherwise specified, and all exams and assessments will be administered online.

Class sessions will be recorded (audio and computer screen only) and posted for student access on Moodle.

UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC CONDUCT POLICY

All members of the academic community at Oakland University are expected to practice and uphold standards of academic integrity and honesty. Academic integrity means representing oneself and one's work honestly. Misrepresentation is cheating since it means students are claiming credit for ideas or work not actually theirs and are thereby seeking a grade that is not actually earned. Following are some examples of academic dishonesty:

- a. **Cheating on examinations.** This includes using materials such as books and/or notes when not authorized by the instructor, copying from someone else's paper, helping someone else copy work, substituting another's work as one's own, theft of exam copies, or other forms of misconduct on exams.
- b. **Plagiarizing the work of others.** Plagiarism is using someone else's work or ideas without giving that person credit; by doing this students are, in effect, claiming credit for someone else's thinking. Whether students have read or heard the information used, they must document the source of information. When dealing with written sources, a clear distinction should be made between quotations (which reproduce information from the source word-for-word within quotation marks) and paraphrases (which digest the source of information and produce it in the student's own words). Both direct quotations and paraphrases must be documented. Even if students rephrase, condense or select from another person's work, the ideas are still the other person's, and failure to give credit constitutes misrepresentation of the student's actual work and plagiarism of another's ideas. Buying a paper or using information from the World Wide Web or Internet without attribution and handing it in as one's own work is plagiarism.
- c. **Unauthorized collaboration** on computer assignments and unauthorized access to and use of computer programs, including modifying computer files created by others and representing that work as one's own.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Students with disabilities who may require special accommodations should make an appointment with campus Disability Support Services, 106 North Foundation Hall, phone (248) 370-3266. Students should also bring their needs to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible by providing the "Letter of Accommodations" created by DSS. For academic help, such as study and reading skills, contact the Academic Skills/Tutoring Center, 103 North Foundation Hall, phone (248) 370-4215.

WRITING CENTER

The Oakland University Writing Center is open to OU students, faculty, and staff in all disciplines at any stage of the writing process. The center provides writers with an interested and supportive audience of well-trained consultants who help both novice and expert writers explore ideas, revise drafts, and develop the skills to craft polished works.

Located on the Kresge Library second floor, the Writing Center offers free services to students to help with writing mechanics, suggest improvements, and polish final drafts. Although walk-ins are generally accommodated, students should schedule an appointment by calling (248) 370-3120 or by visiting the Writing Center's website www.oakland.edu/ouwc/

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Students are expected to complete the assigned reading for each class in advance of the class.

Class Meeting Date	Topics Covered	Assignments Due
January 8	Review of Syllabus Introductions of Students Introduction to Employee Benefits	
January 22	EB Ch.1 Introducing Employee Benefits What are Employee Benefits? Sources and Types of Benefits Strategic Planning and Benefits <u>Moodle Reading</u>	
January 29	EB Ch. 2 Psychology/Economics of Employee Benefits Benefits as an Exchange of Value The Psychological Value of Benefits Who Pays for Benefits? <u>Moodle Reading</u>	<u>Knowledge Check #1</u> due 2/5 by start of class
February 5	EB Ch. 3 Regulating Employee Benefits Regulating Discretionary Employee Benefits Anti-Discrimination Regulations PPACA/HIPAA/COBRA <u>Moodle Reading</u>	<u>Knowledge Check #2</u> due 2/12 by start of class
February 12	EB Ch. 5 Employer Sponsored Health Insurance How the U.S. Health Insurance System Works The Affordable Care Act <u>Moodle Reading</u>	
February 26	Health Insurance – Continued Choosing a Health Insurance Plan Understanding Costs and Coverage Options	<u>Knowledge Check #3</u> due 3/5 by start of class
March 5	EB Ch. 4 Employer Sponsored Retirement Plans ERISA Defined Benefit vs. Defined Contribution Plans The Future of Retirement Benefits <u>Moodle Reading</u>	<u>Knowledge Check #4</u> due 3/12 by start of class
March 12	EB Ch. 7 Social Security Government-Mandated Social Security Programs Medicare Unemployment Insurance <u>Moodle Reading</u>	<u>“Exploring Health Insurance” Paper</u> due 3/12 by start of class <u>Knowledge Check #5</u> due 3/19 by start of class

March 19	EB Ch. 6 Disability, Workers' Comp, and Life Insurance Short-Term vs. Long-Term Disability Life Insurance Workers' Compensation Programs <u>Moodle Reading</u>	
March 26	EB Ch. 8 Paid Time Off and Flexible Work Schedules Holidays, Vacations, Sick Time, Personal Leave FMLA, Military Leave Flex Time and Overtime <u>Moodle Reading</u>	
April 2	EB Ch. 9 Accommodation and Enhancement Benefits Wellness Programs Tuition/Adoption/Family Assistance Programs Work-Life Balance Policies <u>Moodle Reading</u>	
April 9	EB Ch. 10 Managing Employee Benefits System Flexible vs. Traditional Benefit Plans Communicating Benefits Cost Controls <u>Moodle Reading</u>	<u>"Change the Law" Paper</u> due 4/9 by start of class
April 16	<u>Team Benefit Presentations</u> Final Exam Preparation	
April 23	FINAL EXAM (Moodle) – no class meeting Exam opens at Noon on Wednesday April 18	<u>Final Exam</u> due 4/23 by 11:59pm

Three steps to success in HRD 4420:

1. Read the assignments
2. Engage in class
3. TRY!

Try: verb, to attempt to accomplish or complete something (Merriam-Webster.com)