

T. Zane Reeves, PhD
PA 551-013 (Problems)
Spring 2016

INVESTIGATING ISSUES IN HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

Instructor information

Your course instructor is a Regents Professor of Public Administration at the University of New Mexico and a practicing labor/employment arbitrator with the National Academy of Arbitrators, Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, American Arbitration Association, California State Mediation and Conciliation Service, US Postal Service/American Postal Workers, Federal Aviation Administration/National Association of Air Traffic Controllers, and Pantex Guards Assoc. /BWXT Corporation. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Southern California and MA from UCLA. Dr. Reeves has authored or co-authored ten books in areas of Hungarian modern history, dispute resolution, labor-management relations and human resources management, as well as numerous academic articles and professional publications. He serves as a grievance hearing officer to a wide variety of public, private, and not-for-profit organizations and was a Personnel Hearing Officer for the City of Albuquerque from 1987 to 2012. Dr. Reeves currently is on the Board of Directors of Outcomes, Inc., Julius Rezler Foundation of Budapest, Hungary, and the City of Albuquerque Personnel Board.

Zane Reeves may be reached anytime at tzane@unm.edu. Office hours are made by appointment only.

Goals

This course is a graduate level independent readings into the concepts, policies, and practices of federal, state, and local jurisdictions in human resource management and development. Particular attention is given to investigating human resources issues in public administration.

Objectives

Students will be encouraged to investigate public human resources management as a systematic approach rather than exploring its fragmented or isolated components, i.e. performance appraisal, affirmative action, testing or labor-management relations. Students are asked to investigate and research consequences or outcomes of HRM decisions in addition to various techniques. Students will weigh different HRM utilization options by criteria of employee morale as well as organizational productivity. Among others, students will investigate the following types of specific HRM administrative skills:

- (1) To weigh competing ethical considerations in making HRM decisions
- (2) To investigate HRM issues by preparing an evidence-based plan.
- (3) To select a fair and neutral investigator
- (4) To collect and analyze reactive and non-reactive data
- (5) To develop sound interviewing skills for structured and non-structured interviews.

- (6) To make findings of fact based on evidence
- (7) To reach reasonable conclusions after considering facts
- (8) To make recommendations for action by decision makers
- (9) To appreciate the following HRM tools and techniques:

In essence, the course combines assigned readings on theoretical issues of human resources management, the importance of policy making in setting expectations for a more productive public bureaucracy, transforming the workplace and the development of specific management skills. Responses to the Discussion Questions should rely on appropriate readings from *Preparing an Evidence-Based Report* and other assigned readings as indicated. Each Discussion Question must also include independent research, with full citations in the References section.

Methodology

The course does not meet in a classroom setting, rather students are required to complete thirteen (13) reading assignments and answer the Self-Assessment exercises at the end of each chapter. There are no deadlines for completion of these assignments, but all must be completed by May 1, 2016. When completed, send assignments electronically to www.tzane@unm.edu. Please do not send hard copies.

Readings

Reeves, T. Zane (2015), *Preparing an Evidence-Based Report*, San Diego: Cognella Academic Publishing. Book may be ordered on-line through *University Readers Student Store* by creating an account (select UNM and the account for PA 525 course).

Course Outline/Assignments and Agenda

1. Ethical considerations in off- & on-duty conduct

- Purposes of HR issue investigations
- Ethics in the Public Service
- Professional ethics
- Ethical considerations for investigators
- Cultural values versus universal ethics
- Readings:** Reeves, Ch. I, "Deciding whether to investigate"
- Answer Discussion Questions for "*Molly O'Rourke's Stand*"

2. Preparing to investigate

- Finding the "facts"
- Collecting and weighing evidence
- Conducting a fair & neutral investigation
- Readings:** Reeves, Reeves, Ch. II, "Preparing to investigate"
- Answer Discussion Questions for "*Trouble in Loboland*"

3. The fair and neutral investigator

- Investigator competence and character
- Purposes of the investigation

Organizational trust level
 Employees as investigators
Readings: Reeves, Ch. III, “The neutral investigator”
 Answer Discussion Questions for *“Following in Solomon’s Footsteps”*

4. Gathering reactive data

Uses of reactive and non-reactive data in investigations
 Structured and non-structuring interviewing
 Preparing structured interviews
 Knowns, unknowns, and known unknowns
Readings: Reeves, Ch. IV., “Crafting the Skillful Interview”
 Answer Discussion Questions for *“Rowdy in Roswell”*

5. The Fact finding investigation

Improving perceptual skills
 Fact finding reliability
 Beliefs as facts
 Who is Bill Clinton?
 Evaluating evidence
Readings: Reeves, Ch. V, “Finding Facts”
 Answer Discussion Questions for *“Case of the Missing Chick”*

6. Inferring facts from evidence

Confusing evidence as facts
 What are *not* facts?
 Distortion tendencies
 Analyzing evidence for facts
 Human biases
Readings: Reeves, Ch. VI, “Inferring Facts from Evidence”
 Answer Discussion Questions for *“The Grinch who Stole Mardi gras”*

7. Disconnects between facts and conclusions

Separating beliefs from conclusions
 Conclusions derived from personal experiences
 Memory distortions
 Making credibility assessments
Readings: Reeves, VII, “When Facts Don’t Add Up”
 Answer Discussion Questions for *“Making Dixie Cups”*

8. Investigating just cause

Accusatory investigations
 Role of intuition
 Tests of just cause & Standards of proof
 Non-disciplinary discharge investigations
Readings: Reeves, Ch. VIII., “Jumping to Conclusions”
 Answer Discussion Questions for *“Power Surge in OKC”*

9. Disciplinary recommendations

Adverse Actions as Management Right

Progressive Discipline

Negligent Actions

Documentation and Interviewing

Readings: Reeves (to be distributed in advance)

Answer Discussion Questions for “*The Suspension of Nurse Kevin*”

10. Fact finding recommendations

Making recommendations for disciplinary action

Non-traditional disciplinary options

Reform and rehabilitation

Preparing appropriate recommendations

“Nudging” the decision maker

Readings: Reeves, Ch. IX., “Making Disciplinary Recommendations”

Answer Discussion Questions for “*Culture Clash at Ramah Navajo*”

11. Writing a persuasive report

Format, style and presentation

Preliminary feedback

Handling remand and rejection

Timeliness issues

Writing persuasively

Readings: Reeves, Ch. X, “Writing a Persuasive Report”

Answer Discussion Questions for “*Medical Marijuana in Coquille*”

12. Investigating harassment claims

Four types of harassment claims

Designing a fact finding investigation

Making a recommendation for resolution

Readings: Reeves, Ch. XI, “Gender Discrimination Investigations”

Answer Discussion Questions for *Reasonable Suspicion in Gillette*

13. Investigating problems, not people

Investigating for problem solving

Formulating an investigative plan

Avoiding the blame game

Readings: Reeves, Ch. XII, “The Problem-solving investigation”

Answer Discussion Questions for “*Phoenix Rising*”

Criteria for Evaluation

Students are expected to complete all course assignments in a professional and timely manner. Specifically, the evaluation criteria are as follows:

All case studies must be completed by May 1, 2016. Students should prepare written responses to the discussion questions at the conclusion of each case study. Response papers will be graded by: 1) the quality and depth of analysis, 2) expository writing style, 3) professionalism [grammar, spelling, and presentation], 4) and incorporation of outside [non-assigned] readings and research.

Students also may earn extra credit by attending the class discussions of *Molly O'Rourke* and *Nurse Kevin* on the appropriate dates.

Students will be graded by the following criteria:

- A+ All Self-Assessment assignments must be outstandingly written
- A Excellent contribution on all case studies
- A- Solid contribution on most case studies
- B+ Excellent contribution on a majority of case studies
- B Solid contribution on a majority of case studies
- B- Solid contribution on at least half of case studies
- C+ Unacceptable level of performance on most case studies