

MGT 4803 001

Managing Human Resources for Competitive Advantage

Course Syllabus - Fall 2026



Course Information

Course Description: Prerequisite: GBA 3001, GBA 3002, and a grade of C- or better in MGT 3613. This course examines how human resource management aids in developing an organization's competitive advantage. Emphasis is on the processes and activities used to formulate HR objectives, practices, and policies to meet the organizational needs and opportunities, guide and lead the change process, and evaluate the contributions of HR to organizational effectiveness. Emphasis is on human resources information systems (HRIS) and human resources data analytics. This course has Differential Tuition.

Credit Hours: 3

Course Modality: Traditional in-person

Meeting Times

Duration: 08/19/2026-12/11/2026

Campus: Main Campus

Location: [BB 3.03.24](#)

Time(s): TR 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM

Learning Goals

At the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Describe the role of human resources management in organizational decision-making
Outcome
You will be able to identify areas of value creation within human resources management.
- Apply core HR metrics and analytical frameworks to real workforce data
Outcome
You will calculate and interpret standard HR metrics from raw employee records, and correctly judge when a given metric is reliable enough to act on.
- Use common statistical programs to evaluate and manage performance
Outcome
You will be able to independently write code to clean messy HR data, run appropriate statistical analyses, and produce clear, audience-appropriate visualizations.

- Construct a data-driven business case with ROI projections for an HR intervention
Outcome
You will be able to produce a written business case that diagnoses a specific workforce problem, ties it to relevant HR literature, and projects a financially sound ROI for a recommended intervention.
- Use AI tools professionally and transparently in analytical work
Outcome
You will use AI tools to support your analytical and written work while documenting that use transparently and demonstrating the critical judgment to revise, correct, or override AI output when appropriate.

Communicate with Me

Instructor Name: Stephen Schwab

Department
Management

Office Location
BB 04.03.30

Student Hours

<http://calendly.com/stephen-schwab-utsa>

Email Address: stephen.schwab@utsa.edu

Preferred Method of Communication

Class Q&A for general inquiries; Use email only for personal messages

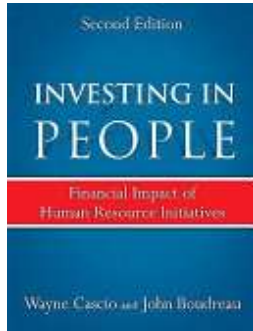
About Me & My Teaching Philosophy

Hello! I am an Organizational Economist and an Assistant Professor of Management at The University of Texas at San Antonio. My research centers around workforce management and organizational performance with a specific focus on the role interpersonal relationships play in maximizing performance. I have a PhD in Managerial Science and Applied Economics from the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School of Business and Master's degrees in health and business administration from Baylor University. I am also a retired Army Lieutenant Colonel with over 21 years of professional and leadership experience. I served as the Chief Financial Officer of Brooke Army Medical Center, a level one trauma center and the Department of Defense's largest hospital. I also served as the Chief Financial Officer for the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, the Department of Defense's largest biomedical research laboratory.

My teaching philosophy has developed over two decades of mentorship and executive leadership experience. I will treat you with respect, provide you the resources you need to learn, be available to you, and hold you accountable. We will work together to meet your goals, whatever they may be. You

can expect my classes to be challenging yet rewarding. I practice "[radical candor](#)" based on the excellent book by Kim Scott.

Course Materials



Investing in People

Subtitle: Financial Impact of Human Resource Initiatives

ISBN: 9781586446093

Authors: Wayne F. Cascio, John W. Boudreau

Publisher: FT Press

Publication Date: 2011-01-01

Edition: 3rd

R for HR

Subtitle: An Introduction to Human Resource Analytics Using R

Required/Recommended/Optional: Optional

Additional Information

Available free at <https://rforhr.com/>

To enhance your learning and adequately prepare for all assignments and assessments, please consider all course materials listed above, along with additional content provided in class, posted to our course site, or included in the Course Schedule, as required reading and study unless indicated as optional.

Additional Course Information

I use what is referred to as "Ungrading". Ungrading means that you grade yourself! For all of your assignments I will provide feedback but I will not provide a score or grade. Several times during the semester you will self-assess your performance. We will meet to discuss your assessment and compare that with how I think you are doing. My goal is to remove the stress of grades so that you can focus on learning. Generally speaking, my students are harder on themselves than I am and any changes I make are to boost a grade up. We will meet one on one to discuss ungrading and address any concerns you may have during the first two weeks of the semester. Ungrading will make up 20% of your final grade. The remaining 80% will come from attendance, class preparation, and timely/adequate submission of all assignments. See my attendance and due-date policies below:

Attendance Policy

I aim to make class as close as I can to what you will experience as a human resources professional, and in my experience, showing up is more than half the battle. Therefore half of your grade comes from attendance. However, most people in the professional world understand that things happen so you get three "life happens" excused absences during the semester. While you are welcome to share if you would like to, you are not required to tell me why you are going to miss class and I do not require

doctor's notes or any other substantiation. I generally will not approve any excused absences beyond the three given except in very extreme cases.

Note that in order to receive full attendance grade for a session, you must be in class prior to 8:30 AM. I will provide 75% credit to those that arrive during the first 15 minutes of class (8:30-8:45 AM) and half credit for those that arrive within the next 15 minutes (8:46-9:00 AM). Arriving after the first 30 minutes will be treated as an absence.

I will be using iClicker to manage attendance. You are required to participate with the iClicker student app on a smartphone, tablet, or laptop (OR with an iClicker remote; mobile app use recommended). All UT San Antonio student accounts receive a free mobile app subscription. It is your responsibility to complete the Getting Started with iClicker process and follow the steps below to properly get added to my iClicker course and/or register your iClicker analog remote in a timely fashion. If you previously created an iClicker Student account, you will automatically be added when I sync the roster. You are responsible for regularly checking your iClicker records for any discrepancies and bringing them to my attention within 48 hours.

Academic Integrity:

iClicker activities are subject to the UT San Antonio Code of Student Conduct, specifically the section on Academic Dishonesty. Students must not engage in academic dishonesty while participating in iClicker activities. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Checking in while not physically in class
- Having another student check you into class

Students found in violation of these rules may face disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct (Section 203).

Assignment Due Dates

In the professional world, due dates change all the time as people and projects fall behind schedule. Therefore you may request an extension on any assignment provided you make the request in writing through a canvas course message. I will approve this as long as the requested new due date generally fits within the flow of the course. Late assignments without a revised due date may still be submitted for partial credit. 5 percentage points will be deducted per day late until you either submit the assignment or we agree on a revised due date. In other words - you should come talk to me as soon as you realize you are going to need an extension, preferably before the assignment is due but even if it's already past the due date.

Assessments and Assignments

Major Assignments

- **Milestone 1: Company Brief.** Working in groups of four, students will explore their assigned company's initial workforce data and develop two to three data-grounded hypotheses about what may be driving instability in that company's workforce. Each group will submit a one-page brief and present their hypotheses to the class in a 7-minute presentation.
- **Milestone 2: Dashboard Presentation.** Working in the same groups, students will use simulated data for their assigned company to build an HR dashboard in Power BI. The dashboard should be usable by someone with no technical background. Students will present their dashboard to the class in a 5 to 7 minute presentation.
- **Milestone 3: Business Case Analysis.** Working in the same groups, students will conduct a business case analysis of an HR management problem. For this exercise, students will act as if they are members of an organizational strategy consulting firm with expertise in human resources. Each group will present their analysis in a 10 to 15 minute presentation to the class and submit a written report with the background analyses that support it, including their financial projections.
- **Skill Checks and R Exercise.** Throughout the semester there are six short individual skill checks, alternating between Excel and R, designed to confirm you can execute the core techniques we cover in class before you need them for your group's work. Later in the semester you will complete one more substantial individual R exercise using your group's company data, where you choose from a menu of questions ranging from guided to fully open ended, write the code to answer it, produce a visualization, and interpret what you find. You may consult your classmates or me for help on any of these, but you must complete them on your own.
- **Professional AI Memo.** Once during the semester, students will draft a professional memo to their company's CHRO using AI assistance. You are required to use an AI tool as part of your drafting process, and you must submit your initial prompt, the AI's first output, your revised final memo, and a short log explaining what you changed and why.
- **One-on-One Meetings.** Each student must meet with me three times during the semester. During the first meeting we will discuss how you decided to take this course and your personal goals. During the second meeting we will discuss your current performance and any personal or professional challenges you are facing. During the third meeting we will discuss your overall performance during the class, any thoughts you have to improve the class for future iterations, and your goals going forward. You can schedule these meetings using my [calendly link](#).
- **Self and Peer Assessments.** Twice during the semester, students will assess themselves and the other members of their working group. These assessments will help you to reflect honestly on your own performance and those of your peers, and assist me in driving the conversations in our one-on-one meetings.

Activities and Grading

Activity	Quantity	Percent of Final Grade
Attendance	26 (29 sessions - 3 excused absences)	50
Professionalism. (Includes Class Preparation, Communication, and Timely Submission of Assignments)		30
Self-Assessment		20
Assignments		
Total		100%

Activity	Quantity	Percent of Final Grade
Skill Checks and Exercises	7	The percent value for these assignments are included in the professionalism and self-assessment portions of your grade
AI Memo	1	
Group Presentations	3	
Business Case Analysis Paper	1	
1 on 1 meetings	3	
Self-Assessment Surveys	2	
Peer Review	2	
Total		100%

Distribution of Course Assignments, Their Quantity, and Contribution to Final Grade.

Grade Distribution and Letter Grade

Letter Grade	Grade Range
A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
F	<60

Course Guidelines for the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

You are welcome to use generative AI programs (ChatGPT, DALL-E, etc.) in this course. These programs can be powerful tools for learning and other productive pursuits, including completing some assignments in less time, helping you generate new ideas, or serving as a personalized learning tool. These programs are especially useful for statistical coding and analyses and for improving writing.

However, your ethical responsibilities as a student remain the same. If you use a generative AI tool to develop content for an assignment, you are required to cite the tool's contribution to your work. In practice, cutting and pasting content from any source without citation is plagiarism. Likewise, paraphrasing content from a generative AI without citation is plagiarism. If you have any questions about appropriate use of AI, please ask me. We will discuss this more during class.

Course Expectations & Policies

Video and Audio Recording

As the instructor of this course, I may record meetings and lessons. You are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class. If the instructor or a UTSA office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required before such use unless an exception is allowed by law. For more information on your privacy and class recordings, review [Student Privacy \(FERPA\) in Virtual Classrooms and Other Educational Recordings](#) and the [Guide to Secure Video Conferencing Tools](#).

Academic Freedom

Academic freedom¹ is a cornerstone of the University. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning.² Each faculty member is entitled to full freedom in the classroom discussing the subject that the faculty member teaches.³ The University of Texas at San Antonio will not penalize or discipline members of the faculty because of their exercise of academic freedom.

Along with this freedom comes responsibility. It is the responsibility of faculty members to ensure that topics taught are related to the classroom subject. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.⁴ It is not the proper role of the university or any outside agency to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive.⁵ Engaging with new ideas and perspectives helps students grow intellectually and is beneficial to the educational process.

1. Statement adapted from Texas A&M University's [Syllabus Statement Regarding Academic Freedom](#)
2. 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure
3. Board of Regents Rule 31004; HOP Policy 4.02
4. American Association of University Professors Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students
5. The Chicago Statement

Syllabus Changes

The syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Any changes/corrections to the course materials, assignment dates, or other updates will be communicated to the students ahead of time. You are responsible for checking Canvas for corrections or updates to the syllabus.

Course Schedule

For a list of important university-wide dates, review [One Stop's academic calendar](#).

Below lists the topics and major assignments due. For individual class session preparation requirements please look at the [Modules page](#)

Topic / Module	Learning Objectives	Activities / Assignments
Session 1 — Thu, Aug 20 Introduction to Strategic HR	Describe the role of human resources management in organizational decision-making.	Group and consulting team formation.
Session 2 — Tue, Aug 25 HRIS Concepts & Introduction to HR Data	Identify how HR data flows through an HRIS and what it can and cannot tell an analyst.	Wave 1 data released (employees.csv, data dictionary, company memo).
Session 3 — Thu, Aug 27 Business Case Framework & Data Ethics	Apply the LAMP framework to structure an HR analytics question; identify data ethics and confidentiality considerations in HR data.	None due.
Session 4 — Tue, Sep 1 Recruitment & Hiring: Concepts	Evaluate recruitment channels and cost-per-hire as predictors of workforce outcomes.	None due.
Session 5 — Thu, Sep 3 Excel Lab: Pivot Tables & HR Metrics	Build a pivot table to calculate core HR metrics (headcount, turnover rate, tenure).	None due.
Session 6 — Tue, Sep 8 Excel Lab: Exploring Your Company Data	Apply pivot table skills to identify workforce patterns in an assigned company dataset.	Skill Check 1 (Excel) due Mon, Sep 7, 11:59 PM.
Session 7 — Thu, Sep 10 First Look at R	Navigate the RStudio environment and load a dataset into R.	None due.
Session 8 — Tue, Sep 15 dplyr Fundamentals	Use core dplyr verbs (filter, select, mutate, group_by, summarise) to manipulate HR data.	Skill Check 2 (R) due Mon, Sep 14, 11:59 PM.

Topic / Module	Learning Objectives	Activities / Assignments
Session 9 — Thu, Sep 17 Company Brief Presentations	Present a data-grounded workforce hypothesis to a non-technical audience.	Milestone 1 Company Brief due Wed, Sep 16, 11:59 PM. Presentation.
Session 10 — Tue, Sep 22 Company Brief Presentations	Present a data-grounded workforce hypothesis to a non-technical audience.	Presentation
Session 11 — Thu, Sep 24 Absenteeism & Statistics Touchpoint	Interpret descriptive statistics (mean, median, standard deviation, distribution shape) in an HR context.	None due.
Session 12 — Tue, Sep 29 Performance Management	Evaluate the structure and limitations of performance review data.	Wave 2 data released (performance.csv, managers.csv).
Session 13 — Thu, Oct 1 R Lab: Joining & Exploring Wave 2 Data	Join relational datasets in R and derive team-level metrics not directly present in the source data.	Skill Check 3 (R) due Wed, Sep 30, 11:59 PM
Session 14 — Tue, Oct 6 AI in HRM	Evaluate the role and risks of AI and algorithmic decision-making in HR, including bias and disparate impact.	Skill Check 4 (R) due Mon, Oct 5, 11:59 PM.
Session 15 — Thu, Oct 8 Data Visualization + ggplot2 Introduction	Build audience-appropriate data visualizations in R using ggplot2.	None due.
NO CLASS — Oct 12–13 Fall Break	—	—
Session 16 — Thu, Oct 15 Introduction to Power BI	Import HR data into Power BI and establish relationships between tables.	R Exercise due Wed, Oct 14, 11:59 PM.
Session 17 — Tue, Oct 20 Building HR Dashboards + DAX	Write DAX measures to calculate HR metrics (turnover rate, tenure, absence) in Power BI.	None due.
Session 18 — Thu, Oct 22 Dashboard Lab	Apply DAX and visualization skills to build a working dashboard draft using an assigned company's data.	None due.

Topic / Module	Learning Objectives	Activities / Assignments
Session 19 — Tue, Oct 27 Dashboard Design & Polish	Apply data visualization design principles to improve dashboard clarity for a non-technical audience.	None due.
Session 20 — Thu, Oct 29 Dashboard Presentations	Present an interactive HR dashboard to a non-technical audience.	Milestone 2 Power BI Dashboard presented live. Submit slides on Canvas Assignments tab.
Session 21 — Tue, Nov 3 Retention & Turnover Concepts	Apply the cost-of-turnover framework to estimate the financial impact of voluntary departures.	Wave 3 data released (compensation_events.csv).
Session 22 — Thu, Nov 5 Business Case Framing	Structure a business case argument supported by external evidence and course readings.	None due.
Session 23 — Tue, Nov 10 R Lab: Data Cleaning	Identify and correct realistic HR data quality issues (mixed formats, duplicates, outliers, missing values) in R.	AI Memo due Mon, Nov 9, 11:59 PM
Session 24 — Thu, Nov 12 R Lab: Regression for HR Decisions	Build and interpret a linear probability model predicting voluntary employee departure.	None due.
Session 25 — Tue, Nov 17 R Lab: Cohort & Survival Analysis	Apply survival analysis to correctly estimate time-to-departure while accounting for censored observations.	Skill Check 5 (R) due Mon, Nov 16, 11:59 PM.
Session 26 — Thu, Nov 19 ROI & Financial Modeling	Build a turnover cost and return-on-investment model in Excel.	
Session 27 — Tue, Nov 24 Business Case Lab: Working Session	Synthesize a semester's analysis into a coherent, defensible business case recommendation.	Skill Check 6 (Excel) due Mon, Nov 23, 11:59 PM.
NO CLASS — Nov 25–27 Thanksgiving	—	—

Topic / Module	Learning Objectives	Activities / Assignments
Session 28 — Tue, Dec 1 BCA Presentations	Present a data-driven business case with a financial return-on-investment projection to a leadership audience.	Submit presentations through Canvas prior to class
Session 29 — Thu, Dec 3 BCA Presentations	Present a data-driven business case with a financial return-on-investment projection to a leadership audience.	None Due
Dec 9 Week Final Exam Period — No Exam	Reflect on individual growth and course experience.	Third one-on-one meeting with instructor (self-scheduled). Milestone 3 Written Report due Friday, Dec 11, 11:59 PM.

Essential Student Information

- **Important:** Bookmark and visit the [Common Syllabus Information webpage](#) to find important and valuable resources about counseling services, transitory/minor medical issues, supplemental instruction, tutoring services, academic success coaching, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, accommodations for pregnant students, campus safety and emergency preparedness, and the Roadrunner Creed.
- For technical requirements, support, and resources, visit [Academic Innovation's Student Technical Support](#) page.
- UT San Antonio provides reasonable accommodations to students via [Student Disability Services](#). For more details on eligibility, policies, and requirements, please visit [Applying for Accommodations](#) or call (210) 458-4157.
- Your well-being is important. In addition to academic growth, life as a student can include many emotional experiences and opportunities. Being mindful of your own needs and available support can provide you with the tools to successfully navigate these experiences. Student support for well-being, including [24/7 mental health services](#), can be accessed from the [Well-being at UT San Antonio](#) site for students. If needed, we can schedule a meeting, and I can connect you to resources. You are not alone; I am available to help you find resources that might best meet your needs.
- [Student Assistance Services \(SAS\)](#) is available to help you navigate academic and personal challenges. Campus Advocates in SAS are a central point of contact for students seeking clarity on university processes and policies. They also provide a direct connection to helpful resources and advocacy rooted in care. Campus Advocates offer confidential support and personalized guidance to help students succeed.
- The [Roadrunner Pantry](#) is here to help UT San Antonio students stay healthy and focused by providing free access to groceries, toiletries, and other essentials. With locations at the Main and Downtown campuses, the pantry is organized like a small store and offers items such as

canned goods, snacks, and hygiene products. Students with a valid UTSA ID can visit the pantry to pick up what they need. Our goal is to ensure every Roadrunner feels supported and has the resources to succeed. If you're ever short on food or supplies, the Roadrunner Pantry is a welcoming space you can count on.

- Students at UT San Antonio are responsible for ensuring their work is consistent with UT San Antonio's standards for academic integrity. Students should review [Section 203 of the UT San Antonio Student Code of Conduct](#) for appropriate standards of academic integrity.
- UT San Antonio provides numerous services for students from counseling to tutoring to a food pantry. Visit [Student Affairs Programs and Services](#) and [Student Success](#) for more information.
- Visit the [UT San Antonio Libraries and Museums](#) site for access to journals, research tutorials, and tech gear you can borrow and to find your department's librarian.
- Enroll in the [Roadrunner Success Playbook](#), an open-enrollment, self-paced, online hub in Canvas tailored to ensure you have the resources you need to excel at UT San Antonio.
- Follow [Digital Learning Netiquette](#) standards for your online communication activities.