



RUTGERS

Managing Rewards Systems

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Fall 2026

Monday, 7:20 – 10:00 pm

Room 107C, Janice Levin Building

[Syllabus as of August 4, 2026]

Instructor Jim Terez
Office Levin Building, [217-A]
Email jim.terez@rutgers.edu
Office Hours: by appointment – phone c 732-995-1737 or Zoom
Class Site : <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/>

In this advanced course we will work together to develop a strategic view on building and managing Total Rewards Systems within an environment of increasing business competition and increasing regulatory and stakeholder scrutiny. The course will cover legal and regulatory trends, and accounting, taxation, and securities issues, the main components of salary and incentive compensation programs (e.g., salary, short-term incentives, long-term incentives), and will focus as well on performance measurement, insurance benefits, and total rewards. The main objective of this course is to help you develop a set of analytical tools that will enable you to address compensation, incentive plan design, and total rewards issues effectively in your professional life. The course is oriented primarily toward the evaluation and design of compensation programs for publicly owned companies, but we will cover privately owned organization compensation issues as well.

Course Format

We will meet together in person, as scheduled, in room 107-C of the Janice Levin Building. We will use Canvas as our learning management system platform.

SMLR Course Learning Objectives (Summary)

This course helps you to 1.) Develop the communications skills required for HR management; 2.) Develop quantitative and qualitative analytical skills related to HRM; 3.) Understand the relevant theories and how to apply them given the background context of particular work situations; and 4.) Develop the ability to apply analytical skills to be effective in your work. Further detail on these SMLR Learning Objectives can be found at the end of this syllabus.

Text

Barry Gerhart, **Compensation**, Edition: 14th [14th edition is the newest. You could also use an earlier edition. Publisher: McGraw-Hill ISBN13: 9781264080908. Copyright: 2023. [Let's discuss book options during our first class session.]

Other References

Irving Becker and Kurt Groeninger, eds, *Understanding Executive Compensation and Governance*, World At Work Press, 4th edition, 2021 [This book is available through the WorldatWork.org bookstore. <https://worldatwork.org/resources/publications/understanding-executive-compensation-governance-4th-edition> . Becker and Groeninger's book on executive compensation is not required, but it is a useful guide to executive compensation for managers. I will cover some items from this book during our course. We will discuss book options on class day 1.

Other resources:

I will refer you to many other compensation, benefits, and total rewards resources.

It is ideal to have a laptop or tablet for class.

Assignments

Analysis Project #1 – Internal Alignment Project	20%
Analysis Project #2 – Pay for Performance Analysis	20%
Analysis Project #3 – Design or Redesign an Incentive Plan	20%
Final (Group) Project – Specific Company or Theme Focus	35%
Participation	5%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

A	90 – 100
B+	88 – 89
B	80 – 87
C+	78 – 79
C	70 – 77
F	60 – 69

Attendance and Participation

Your contributions to each class are valuable. Please plan on contributing actively to each session.

Analysis Project #1 – Internal Alignment Project

This case study provides you with a set of job positions information and some market data. Your objectives are to 1.) provide a recommended job hierarchy and salary range structure for the positions; and 2.) provide an alternative recommendation to #1, which focuses on organizing the work and redesigning the roles in a different way. [Due October 5]

Analysis Project #2 – Pay for Performance

This case study provides you with an employee data set and market data. Your objective is to create optimal salary increase and annual incentive compensation recommendations using the employees' pay history, market data, compensation budget guidelines, and performance review data for guidance. [Due October 26]

Analysis Project #3 – Redesign or design an incentive plan

Design or re-design an incentive plan for an actual organization. Public companies are required to publish information about their executive incentive plans. Select a company that interests you. Review the company's incentive plans. Select one or more of the plans, analyze it, and provide a recommended re-design. (An alternative approach would be to review and redesign one of your own company's incentive plans.). [Due November 16]

Final Group Project – In-depth company analysis and recommendations

Each Group should select an analytical theme that interests you and a company or companies on which to base your analysis. For example, a Group might focus on the evolution of executive compensation practices over the past 3 years and use Salesforce.com and a few of its peers as the focus companies. Or a Group might select 3 retail companies and explore the feasibility of redesigning some part of the pay structure. Or a Group might decide to focus on a future challenge for Total Rewards and project some recommendations to address that challenge. The emphasis of these projects should be to provide thoughtful business analysis and recommendations, as if you were working with the company's senior management or Board of Directors. The final report will consist of 2 components: 1.) an in-class presentation; and 2.) a ~10-page paper providing your analysis and recommendations. [Due December 7]

Grades will be based on the quality of the:

- I. Analysis
- II. Written Report
- III. Presentation

Schedule

Date	Session	Topic	Reading / Project
9/8/2026 Tuesday	1	Total Rewards Strategy: Professional Perspectives, Stakeholder Perspectives.	Ch 1 "The Pay Model"
9/14/2026	2	Total Rewards Strategy: In the context of HR and organization strategy. The Pay Model	Ch 2 "Strategy"
9/21/2026	3	Legal and Regulatory Foundations for Compensation and Benefits	Ch 17 "Government and Legal Issues"
9/28/2026	4	Internal Equity, Internal Organization Structures and Internal Pay Structures	Ch 3 "Internal Alignment" Ch 4 "Job Analysis" Ch 5 "Job-based structures and job evaluation" Ch 6 "Person-based structures"
10/5/2026	5	External Competitiveness: Multiple perspectives Project 1 due	Ch 7: "Defining Competitiveness"
10/12/2026	6	Job-based pay structures and Person- based pay structures	Ch 8: "Designing Pay Levels, Mix, and Pay"
10/19/2026	7	Performance Measurement	Ch 9 "Pay for Performance" Ch 11 "Performance Appraisals"
10/26/2026	8	Incentive Compensation: Sales Compensation, Executive Compensation. Annual and Long-Term Incentives Project 2 due	Ch 10 "Pay for Performance Plans"
11/2/2026	9	Equity Compensation	Ch 14 "Compensation of Special Groups"
11/9/2026	10	Employee Ownership	Ch 12 "The Benefit Determination Process" Ch 13 "Benefits Options"
11/16/2026	11	Benefits and other Total Rewards: The full range of options Project 3 due	Chs 12 and 13
11/23/2026	12	Benefits and other Total Rewards: Financing challenges, Product offering challenges	Chs 12 and 13
11/30/2026	13	Total Rewards and the future of HR	
12/7/2026	14	Wrap Up Final Project Presentations	
12/14/2026	15	Final Project Presentations	

SMLR Course Learning Objectives (Detail)

One goal for SMLR programs is to help you develop skills central to lifelong learning and participation in society and the workplace. Two particular areas are communications skills and analytical skills:

Written & Oral Communication – Communicate effectively at a level and in modes appropriate to an entry level professional.

- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights
- Produce quality research papers with proper convention of attribution/citation
- Produce high quality executive summaries
- Make an argument using contemporary and/or historical evidence
- Present ideas and arguments in a logical and effective way

Quantitative Skills – Apply appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods for research workplace issues.

- Formulate, evaluate, and communicate conclusions and inferences from quantitative information
- Apply quantitative methods to analyze data for HR decision making including cost-benefit analyses, ROI, etc. (HRM)
- Apply qualitative methods appropriately, alone and in combination with quantitative methods

Another goal for SMLR programs is to ensure that you learn the appropriate theoretical perspectives.

Theoretical Perspectives - Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the practical perspectives, theories and concepts in their field of study
- Evaluate and apply theories from social science disciplines to workplace issues

Another goal for SMLR programs is to help you learn the key theoretical and foundation areas of study in your domains and also give you opportunities to apply that knowledge to practice situations. I.e., this program should prepare you to complete your professional work effectively:

Application – Demonstrate an understanding of how to apply knowledge necessary for effective work performance

- Apply concepts and substantive institutional knowledge, to understanding contemporary developments related to work
- Understand the legal, regulatory and ethical issues related to their field
- Develop human resource management functional capabilities used to select, motivate, and develop workers (HRM)
- Understand the internal and external alignment and measurement of human resource practices (HRM)

Academic Integrity

The University's academic integrity policy is important to this class. Please pursue knowledge with integrity and abide by the Academic Integrity Policy. Please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy for more detail: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>

Generative AI Policy for this course

Understanding how generative AI works and its impact on our HR work is a timely and important objective. Effective AI use requires that you have the analytical abilities to be able to: deploy the technology strategically, critically assess its results, and uphold ethical obligations to the professional community. So, it is also important to develop your own analytical skills, by doing work yourself.

For each project in this course, I will define how AI can be used in that project. This will be explained clearly with each project assignment.

Your responsibility:

- For any given project, use AI only in the ways that the project defines.
- Be accountable for the accuracy, factual integrity, and the logic of results generated by AI.
- If you use AI, include an AI disclosure reference statement at the end of your project, citing which tool was used and how it was used.

I will try to create opportunities where you can develop a project solution both ways (non-AI and AI) and then compare results.

Students with a need for accommodations

If you need to request accommodation of any kind, please contact the Office of Disability Services. The ODS Coordinator will provide documentation to you. Upon review and approval, ODS will provide this documentation to you and to the instructor. Please refer to the Office of Disability Services for Students for more detail regarding this policy:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

I look forward to working with you this semester!