MGT 3201 – Leadership in Action

Fall 2016
Tuesday and Thursday, 12:45-2:00pm
Duques 353

Professor:
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Office Hours: Tentatively Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2-3pm

Course Background and Objectives:
Leadership is an extremely broad topic and courses in leadership may take on many, many different forms. This course rests on two foundations. First, leadership is about YOU and your personal development. Second, leaders work at both a macro and micro level, simultaneously setting direction and structure for the organization while interacting directly with organization members to mobilize action.

With this in mind, the overall objective of this course is to engage YOU in exploring and examining leadership issues -- both macro and micro -- that you have encountered or likely will encounter in your future endeavors. To accomplish this, we will marry the best thinking in the academic and scholarly world with your actual experience and insights derived from a field project in this course and other experiences you have had. This approach implicitly assumes, as many do, that leadership is fundamentally intertwined with our own personal skill and career development and that leadership is inherently a journey. The objective of this course is to have you take a series of focused looks at the journey you are on—where you’ve been, where you are, and where you are going.

At the same time, leadership, I argue, is both a macro and micro phenomenon. By macro I mean that leaders occupy positions atop organizations or have influence over organizational level issues and are responsible for making decisions and leading change that affects their entire organization. In this view, leaders are tasked with setting strategy, vision, culture, and organization structure. By micro, I mean that leadership is often played out as a series of relationships between leaders and specific followers. Leaders, then, bring a set of interpersonal skills to the table in pursuit of mobilizing action among their followers. This course, then, will examine issues in leadership that span this spectrum. In this manner, it will build upon and leverage concepts in Organizational Behavior, Strategic Management, Human Resource Management and Organizational Change, among others. Our mission, though, is not to relearn that material, but rather to zoom in on the leadership actions and decisions that this range of
issues surfaces. At each juncture, our objective is to examine the skills and behaviors necessary for leadership effectiveness.

Finally, many observers now see leadership as something that may exist in everyone in the organization. Thus our course on leadership must account, not just for formal leaders, whose roles are vested with authority and power, but those people who lead informally, utilizing influence and persuasion to mobilize action and change.

The essential objective of the course, then, is to have you grow your view of your own leadership capabilities in ways that you can bring to your real life organizations, projects, and organizations in short order.

Course approach:
How are we going to go about this? There are two essential tools for the course. First, much of our time will be spent in discussion, debate, and group problem solving. Although I am capable of lecturing, lecturing on leadership can be deadly dull. And, more importantly, it avoids two key premises that I hold about the topic. First, there are few absolutely right answers in leadership. Rather, it is inherently a topic that depends on the situation and people involved. So, rather than simply bring answers and facts, I bring frameworks and questions and ask us to work through them together. Second, we all bring something to the discussion of leadership—something about ourselves and something about our perceptions of others. So, an effective course in leadership draws heavily upon the perspectives and experiences of those in the room.

To that end, our time together will be spent in discussion—sometimes as a large group, sometimes in groups of four or five and sometimes in pairs, depending on the topic at hand. Our material will come from readings—book chapters and articles—case studies, self-assessments, outside speakers, movie clips, and in class exercises.

The second thrust of the course will involve a field project. The field project will be your major “assignment,” which you will work on outside of class, and it will consume a significant portion of time in class. The essence of the field project is for you to lead a project—of your choosing and hopefully of your creation—in the community. This may be in the GWU community, the Foggy Bottom community or the greater DC environs. The objective is for you to have a real, live experience to draw upon and learn from as we move through the course material. To be clear, your success in the project is about engagement and learning, and less from the actual successful output of the project itself (though success is very rewarding in its own right). See Appendix 1 for more about the field project.

My hope is that this approach makes the course very hands on and very relevant to you. At the same time, it places a premium on you, in three ways. First, our class, and your colleagues, depends upon your being prepared for class: doing the reading and considering the discussion questions before hand. We can only have a rich discussion if you’ve got the material roaming around in your head. Second, the success of the course, and the value your classmates derive, depends upon your participating in class. I ask you to commit to preparation and participation. Third, I will ask you to participate in learning teams, groups of 4-5 students in the class who
assist each other in prepping your projects and digesting the material. So, your presence and participation in learning teams is required as well.

**Required Texts and Readings:**
The bulk of the readings for the course will be in a coursepack available through Harvard Business School Press. Please see the Appendix 2 for ordering and printing instructions. Note that you will need to use a personal credit card for purchase as this coursepack is NOT provided through the bookstore. This is purely a move to save you money. As a general rule, we will have about 2 readings per week. Sometimes this will be two articles, sometimes an article and a case that we will discuss in class. There are a few sessions for which I am still working through readings or material and may very likely post additional readings to Blackboard.

Also, please obtain a copy of the movie 12 Angry Men, 1957. You can buy the DVD or rent/buy a digital download, it is up to you.

**Grades and assignments:**
I want to be clear about something right at the outset. This course is an elective that you should take because you are interested in rolling up your sleeves and digging into your own approach to leadership. My assumption is that you are primarily motivated to be here because you have a strong genuine interest in the material and topic. As such, the course and the instructor truly stand in service to you in accelerating your development as a leader. And, as such, I structure “assignments” or requirements in order to facilitate your learning and not to evaluate it. Only you, members of your organizations and time will be able to evaluate whether you have successfully developed. And, my evaluation of your engagement is just that: do I assess that you have deeply engaged with the material and your own situation. If so, you should get an A in the course. And, I am perfectly happy with everyone getting an A.

The course, then, has four core requirements, described as follows:

1. *Class participation (30% of your grade).* Our class will be propelled by discussion, debate, etc. The quality of this discussion is dependent upon you and your participation. And, the quality of your learning is dependent upon your leaning in and getting in the mix. High quality participation means bringing useful perspectives to bear on the class, drawn from the readings or your own personal experience. Given that we will break out into small groups, it means actively engaging in those groups. And, it means being an empathic and supportive team member. In order to do this, you need to come to class prepared. You must do the readings and consider/prepare the discussion questions as provided.

   Related to this, periodically, there will be some pre-work beyond the reading. For example, in anticipation of our first meeting, I would like you to write two “stories” and bring copies of them to class. Both stories are about you. The first story I want you to write is a story about you as a successful or effective leader. The second story is about a leader you have personally experienced who provides some possible role modelling for you.
2. **Field project interim steps/milestones (10% of your grade).** Periodically, during the semester, I will ask you to complete an “assignment” that moves your project along. These will be easy and essentially ungraded. I simply want to confirm that you are doing it and moving the project forward.

3. **Learning summaries (30% of your grade).** Every three weeks (which is to say four times), you will summarize your personal learnings in 2-3 double spaced pages (600-900 words). These summaries should be focused on what you personally have learned, from the readings, from the discussion, from your peers, from your work on your projects, and from actions that you may have put in place as function of the course. A high quality summary will both reference the course materials in a meaningful way AND explore your own personal experience on your evolving project. This, in my opinion, is a rich method for self-reflection and personal growth. A great summary (for you) will involve your making commitments (to yourself) for future action. Learning summaries are due on the following dates by 11:59 pm:

   - September 21
   - October 12
   - November 2
   - November 28

   You will upload your summaries to a blog on blackboard.

4. **Final essay (30% of your grade).** The final essay is your opportunity to summarize your stand on leadership as it has evolved through the course and your field project. I will provide more structure for this assignment as we get further into the semester, but the essence will be for you to use course concepts to describe how your project went (or is going). You will cover strengths and weaknesses, challenges you encountered, learnings you have from this project, etc. This essay should draw upon course concepts, but, more importantly, be a thoughtful, rigorous assessment of your leadership on the project. I will provide more detail on the substance and structure of the essay as the course progresses. The essay should be between 12 and 15 pages double spaced.

   Please plan to email these essays to me by Tuesday, Dec 13.

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**The social contract**

**Class Format & Preparation**

As already noted, this course will rely heavily on in-class participation and classroom discussion. Therefore, I will expect that you will come to class ready to share your opinions, comments, and ideas. In addition, be respectful during class discussion – one person speaks at a time and make your criticisms of others’ ideas constructive and helpful. Class will begin on time and end on time (do not be habitually late or constantly leave early).

**Laptop/Iphone/Electronic Gadgets**

I do not mind if you use your laptop to help you take notes. However, I do mind if you are surfing the web, checking email or phone messages, sending text messages, or working on other class or work assignments. Please be respectful of me and your fellow classmates and use your
laptops and other electronics judiciously. *Research indicates that there are negative performance outcomes for students who engage in non-course related electronic activities, as well as negative performance outcomes for those who sit nearby and behind students who are engaged in non-course related electronic activities.*

**Academic Integrity**

*Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.* All work must be completed in accordance with The George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity. For any questions regarding the Code, please refer to [http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/](http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/). Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, falsifying University documents, and facilitating academic dishonesty are among the behaviors that constitute violations of the Code of Academic Integrity. Any alleged violations of the Code will be brought to the attention of the Office of Academic Integrity and the recommended sanction may include, but is not limited to, a zero on the assignment or a failing grade in the course.

**Accommodation for Disability**

Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation as a result of a disability should contact me during the first day of class to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Disability Support Services office at (202) 994-8250 to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodation. For additional information you may refer to [http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/](http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/).

**Excused Absences**

Attendance in all course meetings is required and will shape your participation grade. However, religious observances, documented illnesses and participation in varsity sporting events are considered excused absences.

Any student requesting an accommodation for a religious holiday or varsity athletic event should speak with me at the end of the first day of class to let me know of your intention to be absent for any sessions. This would include the final exam. You should know what these conflicts are already.

In the event of an illness, please submit a note from health services documenting your illness so that we can consider your absence excused.

**Late assignments**

Late assignments that are turned in within 24 hours of the due date/time may earn up to 50% of the original credit for the assignment.

**Grade Appeals**

Disagreements regarding grading may arise and these disputes will be handled in the following manner: Within 72 hours of receiving the graded assignment, you should submit a typed (no more than one page) explanation to the instructor detailing reasons why the answer given is adequate or deserving of more points. I will review your written request and give you a written response within 72 hours. *The participation grade is exempt from this policy.*
### Course Schedule:

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Pre-read/assignment for class</th>
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| **August 30** | • Introduction to the course  
• What Is Leadership?  
• A brief overview of the field project | It would be great if you could read these three articles before class:  
• Kotter, *What Leaders Really Do*  
• Heifetz And Laurie, *The Work Of Leadership*  
• Oliver Wyman, *The Congruence Model (Posted On Blackboard)* |
| **September 1** | • Who are you as a leader?  
• Establishment of learning teams  
• Discussion of field project options | Pre-work: Write two leadership stories about yourself and bring them to class with you. See the brief description in the “class participation” section above |
| **September 6** | The Personal Side Of Leadership 1 | Read:  
• Collins, *Level 5 Leadership* |
| **September 8** | The Personal Side of Leadership 2 | Complete self-assessments online; Link to be provided on Blackboard at the beginning of the semester |
| **September 13** | Starting At The Top: Vision Setting | Read:  
• Tedlow, *What Titans Can Teach Us*  
• Issaacson, *The Real Leadership Lessons of Steve Jobs*  
• Kotter, *Developing A Vision And Strategy* |
| **September 15** | Hands on work on project choice and mission/vision articulation | TBD |
| **September 20** | Emotions and Leadership | Read:  
• Goleman, *What Makes A Leader* |
| **September 22** | Leadership Style And Story Telling | Read:  
• Ready, *How Story Telling Builds Next Generation Leaders*  
• McKee & Fryer, *Storytelling That Moves People*  
• Hattersley, *Managerial Art of Telling a Story*  
• TBD: watch leadership speeches on youtube |
| **September 27** | Guest speaker: Linda Livingstone, GWSB Dean | |
| **September 29** | Story telling practice | Assignment to be provided week prior |
| **October 4** | Mission/Vision stories | Completion of Mission and Vision Statements; Format to be provided |
| **October 6** | Leadership Style | Read:  
• Robbins and Judge, *Chapter 12: Leadership* |
<p>| <strong>October 11</strong> | Followers And | Read |</p>
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| Relationships |                                            | • Kellerman, *What Every Leader Needs To Know About Followers*  
|            |                                            | • Kelley, *In Praise Of Followers*                                                           |
| **October 13** | Guest speaker: Liza Wright                 |                                                                                            |
| **October 18** | Team Leadership                            | Reading  
|            |                                            | • *Where Leaders Matter*                                                                     |
| **October 20** | Learning team time                          | Pre-work: assessment of your project team  
|            |                                            | (format to be provided)                                                                     |
| **October 25** | *NO CLASS: Fall Break*                    |                                                                                            |
| **October 27** | Networks and Leadership                    | Read:  
|            |                                            | • Krackhardt And Hanson: *Informal Networks: The Company Behind The Chart*  
|            |                                            | • Ibarra: *Managerial Networks*                                                             |
|            |                                            | • Ibarra And Hunter: *How Leaders Create And Use Networks*                                 |
| **November 1** | Informal Leadership/Influence/Persuasion 1 | Read:  
|            |                                            | • Conger, *The Necessary Art Of Persuasion*                                                 |
|            |                                            | Watch:  
|            |                                            | • *12 Angry Men, 1957 version*                                                               |
| **November 3** | Informal Leadership 2                      |                                                                                            |
| **November 8** | Learning Team Time                         |                                                                                            |
| **November 10** | Ethical Leadership                         | Read:  
|            |                                            | • Kramer, *The Harder They Fall*                                                             |
|            |                                            | • Badaracco, *Right Vs. Right*                                                               |
|            |                                            | Prepare Case:  
|            |                                            | • *Playskool (posted on Blackboard)*                                                        |
| **November 15** | Leading Change                             | Read:  
|            |                                            | • Nadler And Tushman, *Beyond The Charismatic Leader*                                       |
|            |                                            | • Kotter, *Why Transformation Efforts Fail*                                                  |
| **November 17** | Guest Speaker: Rick Torres                 |                                                                                            |
| **November 22** | TBD                                       | TBD                                                                                        |
| **November 29** | Project “Presentations”                    | TBD                                                                                        |
| **December 1** | Project “Presentations”                    | TBD                                                                                        |
| **December 3** | You and your leadership brand              | TBD                                                                                        |
| **December 8** | Wrap Up Session – A return to you as a leader | Read:  
|            |                                            | • Heifetz And Linsky, *Manage Your Hungers*                                                  |
|            |                                            | • Heifetz And Linsky, *Anchor Yourself*                                                      |
Appendix 1: The Field Project

The big objective
The objective of this project is to simultaneously deliver some value into the community (i.e. make a difference) AND to give you a live laboratory for exploring your own leadership.

What does it entail?
You’ll choose a stakeholder, a set of objectives or outcomes, and a team. You will lead (in whatever form you choose) the conceptualization, recruitment, and ultimate delivery of the project.

Who are the stakeholders? Who does it benefit?:
I am flexible about this. It can be just about any group or organization that you can access locally. This could be:
- A university based organization: e.g. a club or organization you are part of
- A local community organization whose mission is focused on development and improvement in the local DC area
- A business or corporate concern that has a need (and a real project possibility)
- A start up?
- Other?

What should the objectives of the project be?
Again, this is fairly flexible. You should have an outcome or output in mind that is valued by the stakeholders and could be delivered, more or less, in the 14 weeks of this course. Outcomes or objectives could include:
- Something physical – building, fixing, or cleaning up something (though don’t make this too simple or easy)
- Running an event, training or mentoring?
- Conducting a piece of analysis
- Other

What is the composition of your team?
- Minimum four people
- No more than 2 (including you) from this course
- No more than 2 who you know reasonably well
- At least 2 people who you really don’t know directly (a very loose acquaintance or a friend of a friend)

How do you get graded?
Grades on the project are about how you engage in the project, your demonstration of use of course concepts, experimentation, and reflection. In a nutshell, how engaged are you in the process of learning? You will not be graded (or not very much) on how well the project ultimately does…odd, I know!
There will be several interim assignments along the way. As described above, these will mostly be “check-off” assignments to ensure that you are on track. The final deliverable is an essay about your project and what you’ve learned about leadership through it. (see above)

**Small or big – It’s up to you!**
For the narrow purposes of the course and grading, your project can be quite modest (i.e. small). That’s fine with me. That said, I want to encourage you to think big, to stretch yourself, and to take risks. The grading will be on engagement with the project and the course material and NOT on the successful completion of the project (though that would be nice). So, take some risks and see how far you can go.
**Appendix 2: Instructions for purchasing and downloading the HBSP coursepack**

Accessing your HBSP coursepack requires three steps:

1. Register with Harvard Business School Press (HBSP)
2. Purchased the coursepack
3. Download one or more documents

Here is each step in detail:

1. Register with Harvard Business School Press (HPSP)
   a. Go to [http://cb hbsp harvard edu/cbmp/access/51342963](http://cb.hbsp.harvard.edu/cbmp/access/51342963) (this is the link for the specific HBSP coursepack)
   b. If you have not registered with HBSP before, you will need to do so
      i. When prompted, select a username and password, note these somewhere for future reference

2. Purchase the coursepack
   a. After registering, you will see a list of coursepacks available to you
   b. Select **Leadership in Action**
   c. Select purchase
   d. You will be prompted to provide a major credit card number with billing address

3. Download your coursepack
   a. Each of the articles/cases will be listed with a “view document” button.
   b. Click view document and a pdf will present
   c. You may select to print and/or save the pdf

Note that in the future you may return to the coursepack by clicking on the link above or by
Visit [hbsp.harvard.edu](http://hbsp.harvard.edu) and log in.
Click **My Coursepacks**, and then click Select Leadership in Action