

MO 321: Leadership in Organizations

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Course Website:	https://ctools.umich.edu/
Meeting Time:	Tuesdays & Thursdays from 10:00-11:30 AM
Meeting Room:	R1230
Office Hours:	By appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

Leadership in Organizations (MO 321) invites you on a journey of personal exploration, understanding and development—with the explicit goal of making demonstrable progress towards becoming a more effective leader. To achieve this goal, the course offers an extensive examination of leadership in organizations and provides you with a set of experiences that are designed to enhance your self-awareness and capacity for effective leadership.

The specific learning objectives for this course are:

- Increase your conceptual understanding of leadership in organizations
- Discover important insights into yourself as a leader and develop a self-awareness regarding your strengths and opportunities for personal growth
- Enhance the skills and competencies that enable you to become an effective leader in today's highly dynamic, diverse, and adaptive organizations
- Realize that leading is about bettering yourself **and** others

To achieve these specific learning objectives, this course uses an experiential, action learning approach that focuses directly on you—the student—as the “live case” by which learning takes place. In particular, the course uses a combination of lecture, case studies, film, experiential exercises, self-assessment techniques, peer feedback, and team projects to enhance your learning and development as a leader. The role of the instructor in this course is not to provide the answer, but rather to create an environment where you can systematically and collectively explore, examine, and experiment with your own ideas.

The learning in this course will be highly personal and significant. You will increase your personal awareness of who you are as a leader by examining your personal history, traits, values, beliefs and core assumptions about leadership. You will be asked to take risks to enhance your personal learning and to aid in the development of others. You will maximize your learning from this course if you come with an openness to learning and a willingness to devote time, energy, and personal attention to reflection, consideration, and feedback.

Finally, on a personal note, I hope this class will help you grow as a person and a leader and that this development will benefit you in your career and aid the world we all live in.

COURSE DELIVERABLES & EVALUATION

Your overall course grade is a function of individual and group-based work. This method of evaluation simulates performance evaluation and feedback systems in “real world” organizations and reinforces the notion that leadership is not simply an individual act but rather a social process that transcends any single individual. Although there will be assignments throughout the course that are not graded, your course grade is based on the following components:

Component	Individual / Team Grade	Due Date	Grade Value
I. Class Contribution	Individual	N/A	20%
II. Learning Circle Assignment	Team	February 26 th	20%
III. Lessons Learned Presentation	Team	April 14 th and 16 th	20%
IV. Leadership Development Plan	Individual	April 21 st	40%

Final grades for this course will adhere to the grading policy approved by the Ross School of Business. For elective courses, this policy is: at most 60% may receive an A- or above; at most 90% may receive a B or above; at least 10% will receive a B- or below.

I. Class Contribution (20%)

This course is structured in such a way that will guide you and your peers along a journey of personal learning and development. To ensure a high quality learning experience for you and others, it is critical that you approach this course with a high level of openness and commitment. Many of the class sessions and course assignments will be experiential in nature, involving real-time exercises, role-plays, cases, and film studies. To facilitate your development, you will be asked to meaningfully contribute during and outside of class. Your overall contribution to class will be assessed based on my own opinion and input from your peers.

Classroom time will be devoted to extensions, connections, and discussions of prepared materials. Please come ready to actively participate and contribute to class discussions. These discussions provide you the opportunity to practice speaking, persuasion, and listening skills –

all three of which are important leadership skills. Effective class comments may address questions raised by others, integrate material from this and other courses, draw on real-world experiences and observations, or pose new questions to the class. Class contribution also involves knowing when to speak and when to listen. Comments that are vague, repetitive, unrelated to the current topic, disrespectful of others, or without sufficient foundation are discouraged and will be evaluated negatively.

Although there is no formal attendance policy, I strongly encourage you to attend every class to ensure that you get the most out of it. Also, given that you cannot participate if you are not in class, it will ultimately hurt your course grade if you do not attend class.

Finally, for those of you who are less comfortable speaking in class, I encourage you to challenge yourself and speak up. Alternatively, if you e-mail me recent articles or news stories about topics related to class material I will take that into account when evaluating your class participation.

II. Learning Circle Assignment (20%)

Given the emphasis on personal development in this course, a structure that creates a “safe space” for every student to explore new concepts and issues is required. Although some students may find this space in the class as a whole, you will also be arranged into “learning circles” for the term. You will work with your learning circle team to develop your personal leadership agenda, to apply the lessons learned in class to your specific work and personal situations, and to further your understanding of leadership.

Specifically, your learning circle will be required to complete any one of the activities listed in the Appendix. These activities will be completed outside of class. I am available to help with materials and guidance on these activities. Each learning circle should do whatever its members feel will best facilitate member learning and development. **The assignment is due no later than February 26th.** Late assignments will not be accepted.

III. Lessons Learned Presentation (20%)

Your learning circle will prepare a presentation for the last days of class that celebrates the lessons you and your team learned during the course. This presentation should last about 10 minutes and be informative, creative and inspiring. More details about the requirements for this assignment will be provided later this term.

IV. Leadership Development Plan (40%)

The primary goal of this course is to facilitate your development as a leader, and the leadership development plan is an essential part of achieving that goal. This assignment asks you to document the developmental “journey” that you have taken in this course and will take as you move forward in your career. In creating your leadership development plan, you will:

- Answer the central question for the course: What is leadership?

- Identify what it is about yourself and your surrounding environment that really drives your effectiveness as a leader
- Identify key drivers of and barriers to improving your leadership effectiveness
- Establish meaningful and measureable objectives for behavioral change that will enhance your leadership effectiveness
- Develop an action plan that specifies how you will implement those key behavioral changes to better yourself and the people around you

The Leadership Development Plan is due no later than Tuesday, April 21st. More details about the requirements for this assignment will be provided later this term.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

Personal integrity and professionalism are fundamental values of the Ross Business School community. This course will be conducted in strict conformity with the Academic Honor Code. The Code and related procedures can be found at www.bus.umich.edu/Academics/Resources/communityvalues.htm. The site also contains comprehensive information on how to be sure that you have not plagiarized the work of others. Claimed ignorance of the Code and related information appearing on the site will be viewed as irrelevant should a violation take place. Non-Ross Business School students taking the course should also familiarize themselves with the Code as they will be subject to the Code while in this course.

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no textbook required for this course. All assigned materials have been included in the course packet. You are expected to complete the readings by the start of class the day they are listed below.

CLASS SCHEDULE & ASSIGNMENTS

- Week 1** **January 13th (Tuesday) & 15th (Thursday)**
Topic: *What Do We Think We Know about Leadership?*
Reading: Teaching smart people to learn (Argyris)
 Why executives derail (Van Velsor & Leslie)
Exercise: Getting to know one another exercise
Assessment: Leadership beliefs
- Week 2** **January 20th (Tuesday) & 22nd (Thursday)**
Topic: *A Model of Leadership*
Reading: The five practices of exemplary leadership (Kouzes & Posner)
 What leaders really do (Kotter)
Exercise: Tribute to you exercise
Assessment: Leadership styles
- Week 3** **January 27th (Tuesday) & 29th (Thursday)**
Topic: *Leading from Within: The Importance of Knowing Who You are*
Reading: Managing oneself (Drucker)
 Do your commitments match your convictions (Sull & Houlder)
Video: Bill Gates
Exercise: Building shared values exercise
Assessment: Values
- Week 4** **February 3rd (Tuesday) & 5th (Thursday)**
Topic: *Inspiring Others: The Role of Vision*
Reading: Inspiring others: The language of leadership (Conger)
 Building your company's vision (Collins & Porras)
Videos: Tim Tebow
 Barack Obama
 Steve Jobs
 Dead Poets Society
- Week 5** **February 10th (Tuesday) & 12th (Thursday)**
Topic: *Developing and Communicating a Vision*
Reading: Why visions die prematurely (Senge)
 Personal vision (Senge)
Exercise: Locker room talks exercise
- Week 6** **February 17th (Tuesday) & 19th (Thursday)**
Topic: *Leadership is a Team Effort*
Reading: Foster collaboration (Kouzes & Posner)
- Week 7** **February 24th (Tuesday) & 26th (Thursday; Open Class)**
Topic: *Leadership is a Team Effort (Ctd.)*
Case: Army crew team
Due: Learning Circle Assignment (due on 2/26)

- Week 8** **March 3rd (Tuesday) & 5th (Thursday)**
 Topic: *No Class—Spring Break*
- Week 9** **March 10th (Tuesday) & 12th (Thursday)**
 Topic: *Leading Past Conflict*
 Reading: The ladder of inference (Senge et al.)
 Balancing inquiry and advocacy (Senge et al.)
 Video: Michael Scott
 Ken Thomas
 Ray Jorgenson
 Exercise: Left-hand column exercise
- Week 10** **March 17th (Tuesday) & 19th (Thursday)**
 Topic: *Developing and Coaching Others*
 Reading: Strengthen others (Kouzes & Posner)
 Becoming an effective mentor: And a receptive protégé (HBS)
 Videos: Beverly Kaye
 Paul Tesluk
 Marshall Goldsmith
 Exercise: Coaching exercise
- Week 11** **March 24th (Tuesday) & 26th (Thursday)**
 Topic: *Leading to a Decision*
 Reading: Get on the balcony (Heifetz & Linsky)
 The art of seeing the forest *and* the trees (Senge)
 Video: Dan Ariely
 Jeff Pfeffer and Bob Sutton
 Exercise: Decision making biases exercise
 Case: Columbia's Final Mission
- Week 12** **March 31st (Tuesday) & April 2nd (Thursday)**
 Topic: *Ethical Leadership*
 Reading: Leadership run amok (Spreier et al.)
 Leadership warts and all (Kellerman)
 Videos: Jon Stewart
 Trolley car problem
 Cases: Sara Strong
 MBA Hackers
- Week 13** **April 7th (Tuesday) & 9th (Thursday; Open Class)**
 Topic: *Putting it All Together!*
 Case: Tim Keller at Katzenbach Partners
- Week 14** **April 14th (Tuesday) & 16th (Thursday)**
 Topic: *Lessons Learned Presentations*
- Week 15** **April 21st (Tuesday)**
 Topic: *Open Class (Celebration?)*
 Due: Leadership development plans

APPENDIX

Suggestions for learning circle assignments:

- Tell your leadership story. Have each member explore a troublesome leadership event and obtain feedback. Have each team member describe their situation and what s/he learned from this event. After telling the story, have team members brainstorm alternative ways to make sense of the situation and alternative ways to deal with the situation. Follow the same process for each story in your group.
- Have each member of the team interview an admired leader using concepts from the class to guide the questions. Report back to the team and look for commonalities and differences across leaders. How does this analysis influence your personal model of leadership?
- Have each member of the team come up with one idea about how to use his/her leadership skills to help others (e.g., volunteering, etc.). Develop a plan and execute it. Provide information about how the activity went.
- Choose a leadership role-play and videotape your team performing the role-play. View the video as a team and provide feedback to members.
- Have each team member be observed by other team members during a leadership activity (e.g., chairing a club meeting). Provide feedback to each team member.
- Have all team members view a movie or read a book with leadership as a theme. Discuss how lessons from the film or book mesh with topics in the class and your own leadership experiences. Feel free to email me for movie suggestions.
- Choose a change effort to which all team members are committed (e.g., getting all class members to contribute their sign-on bonuses to charity, join a club or come to a particular event) and try to implement the change.
- Have each team member do something outside of his or her comfort zone (e.g., give a speech, speak up in class several times, engage in a conflict, get a massage – the point is that it should be something that is truly uncomfortable for the team member). The goal is to practice a learning orientation. Report back to the group what was learned by taking this action. What implications does this experience have to each person in a leadership role?
- Propose an activity of your choice, as long as it relates to the course and makes the learning more tangible and relevant for all members of the group. Email me for approval before you consider this as one of your three required activities.