

MO 620: Leading a Good Life

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Faculty: | Professor Dave Mayer (please call me Dave) Office: R4334 Phone: 734-936-1262 (office) Email: dmmayer@umich.edu (best way to reach me) |
| Course Website: | https://canvas.umich.edu/ |
| Meeting Time: | Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:40-1:50 PM |
| Meeting Room: | Virtual (https://umich.zoom.us/j/96686193595) |
| Office Hours: | You can schedule office hours using this link: dmmayer.youcanbook.me (https://umich.zoom.us/j/95039010130) |

COURSE OVERVIEW

Leading a Good Life (MO 620) provides a roadmap for living the best life possible. This course is about leading oneself in a positive and purposeful manner. The course is divided into three key components of leading a good life:

1. **Being Good:** In order to achieve one's goal of living a meaningful life one needs to understand the science of habit formation and self-regulation to create sustained change.
2. **Feeling Good:** It is critical that we have a positive emotional state to help us endure through inevitable life challenges and this can be improved by learning about and applying the science of confidence and happiness.
3. **Doing Good:** Given a good life means an ethical existence aimed at living in line with one's values and making a positive contribution, we examine the science of behavioral ethics to learn how ethical biases can derail us and how moral courage is difficult but needed to live with meaning and purpose.

The course invites you on a journey of personal exploration, understanding and development—with the explicit goal of leading you on a path to living a good life. Although this topic can feel lofty and amorphous, all learnings will be grounded in the extensive body of scientific research aimed at addressing this topic.

The specific learning objectives for this course are:

- Increase your understanding of the science of a good life
- Discover important insights about yourself and gain clarity about what things are working and what needs to change
- Create habits of goodness to help you and to contribute to 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, and team projects to enhance your learning. 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.

COURSE DELIVERABLES & EVALUATION

Your overall course grade is a function of individual and team-based work. This method of evaluation simulates performance evaluation and feedback systems in “real world” organizations and reinforces the notion that living one’s best life comes from one’s own hard work and also collaborating with others. 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. Applications | Individual | 11/19 | 20% |
| III. Personal Good Life Habit Assignment | Individual | 12/08 | 30% |
| IV. Team Contribution Assignment | Team | 12/08 | 30% |

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 35% may receive an Excellent; at most 75% may receive a Good or above; at most 100% may receive a Pass or above, remaining students (if any) will receive a low Pass or Fail.

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. 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. That being said, you can e-mail me recent articles, news stories, videos, and/or personal insights and revelations related to class material and I will take it into account when evaluating your class participation.

II. Applications (20%)

A theme of the class is that we only get better if we try out the material. In that vein, you will receive several prompts each week to run a personal experiment by applying the content. One goal of these applications is to create a mindset and routines around trying things that help you lead a good life. This class is about learning, listening, and thinking; but it is also about doing. Over the course of the term you will need to make at least **4 two-page entries** detailing your application, why you chose it, what you did, what happened, and how it relates to class concepts. More information about the specifics of the assignment will be provided. The assignment is due no later than November 19th.

III. Personal Good Life Habit Assignment (30%)

In addition to the weekly applications, you will utilize what you learn about habit formation to develop an intervention to help you lead a good life. The intervention can relate to any of the key concepts in the class such as time and attention management, confidence, happiness, self-compassion, or ethical decision making. The hope is that by spending several weeks creating a habit that you will make a lasting change and develop the efficacy to create other life changes in

the future. More information about the specifics of the assignment will be provided. The individual assignment is due no later than December 8th.

IV. Team Contribution Assignment (30%)

This course is not value neutral when it comes to living a good life. One key component is positively contributing to the world. Your team will think of an initiative to create a positive change in the world. You could focus on something at Michigan Ross, at the University of Michigan, or in broader society. The key is that the initiative is aimed at making a positive difference in the world. You will be required to draw on class content to develop your contribution plan. Your team will write a paper based on the experience and present what you did and what happened. More information about the specifics of the assignment will be provided. This team assignment is due no later than December 8th.

COURSE MATERIALS

There is no required textbook and no required coursepack for this course. All assigned reading materials will be provided on Canvas. Unless told otherwise, you are expected to complete the readings (and/or watch the videos) by the start of class the day they are listed.

REQUIRED SYLLABUS CONTENT – COVID

*******IGNORE PARTS ABOUT IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION FOR THIS CLASS*******

Health and Safety- COVID-19

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in courses on an in-person basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the State of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#) and the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#). Your ability to participate in this course in-person as well as your grade may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#). If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis (if available) or to disenroll from the class. I also encourage you to review the [Statement of Students Rights and Responsibilities](#), which includes a COVID-related Statement Addendum.

Wellness and Mental Health

As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily

activities. University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus [here](#), including our campus' office of [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) ("CAPS"). You may also find helpful the [well-being resources for students](#) offered through the University's office of student life.

The Ross School of Business has a CAPS Embedded Counselor available to its students. Embedded Counselors are located in school/college buildings and services are tailored to the school's climate. For more information, please visit the [CAPS Embedded Model](#) site. caps.umich.edu/caps-embedded-model. To schedule, please email [Julie Kaplan](#), LMSW. Also, the services offered by CAPS have been adapted to the unique needs of our community during COVID. You can schedule a tele-health appointment remotely from their home page. You may also find helpful their resources directly addressing mental health and wellness during COVID [here](#). If you have an urgent matter when CAPS is closed, please call 734-764-8312 to connect with [CAPS After Hours](#).

Academic Integrity and Community Values

Personal integrity and professionalism are fundamental values of the Ross School community. You have a duty to be familiar with and understand the Ross School's Statement of Community Values, the Ross School Academic Honor Code, and the Ross School Code of Student Conduct including all campus public health policies. **In light of COVID our community has enhanced the Code of Student Conduct to include our commitment to each other and adherence to campus and School public health policies.** Each of these, including a Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities, may be found in the Ross School Impact on [Ross Community Values](#). In addition every student at the University of Michigan accepts the rights and responsibilities of membership in the University's academic and social community. These rights and responsibilities are clearly laid out in [The Statement](#). By enrolling in this course you confirm that you have read and understood these statements and policies, and further that you agree to abide by them. The Ross Community Values site contains valuable information and links on writing and how to check to make sure you have not plagiarized the work of others. Claimed ignorance of these codes and policies will be viewed as invalid should a violation take place. In all cases if you have questions please address them with the professor as far **in advance** as possible.

Any violation of the Ross School Academic Honor Code such as plagiarism, otherwise passing off anyone else's work as your own, unauthorized collaboration, use of materials generated for use during past offerings of this course, or any form of cheating will be referred to the Community Values Committee. Possible penalties include course failure with a permanent notation of an honor policy violation on your transcript and even expulsion. As a community we are all still adapting and learning how this applies to hybrid and remote learning environments, but the same principles of academic integrity apply.

Accommodations

The University of Michigan is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities. Students wishing to receive testing accommodations must

register with the University of Michigan [Services for Students with Disabilities \(SSD\)](#) office as soon as possible. Students must then submit their Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form online as early as possible, **but no later than two weeks prior to the first test or quiz for which accommodations are requested**. Accommodations arrangements are not guaranteed for students who submit their VISA form with less than two weeks' notice.

Requests must be sent using the [Ross Accommodations Request Form](#) and must include a scanned or photographed copy of the VISA form. This form only needs to be submitted once during your academic career with Ross unless your accommodations eligibility expires.

In rare cases, the need for an accommodation arises after the two-week deadline has passed (example: a broken wrist). In these cases, students should still contact SSD and the Ross Accommodations Coordinator. However, due to logistical constraints, we cannot guarantee that an accommodation can be made after the two-week deadline has passed.

Questions can be directed to the Ross Accommodations Coordinator at RossAccommodationsCoordinator@umich.edu.

Laptop/Electronic Device Use and Zoom Connectivity in Class

Laptop and electronic device use will be necessary for learning in Fall 2020 for both hybrid and remote courses. Naturally, for those attending courses remotely you will need an electronic device (e.g. desktop, laptop, tablet) with video camera (built in or external), audio device and a microphone to engage fully in the course. A stable and sufficient bandwidth connection will also be necessary. The same technology arrangement is required for all students attending hybrid courses in-person - it is essential that all course participants be able to fully engage with all classmates during the class.

For all students, regardless of whether attending in-person or remotely, you are to connect to the class site via the Zoom link provided by your professor. Additionally all students are to have their camera on during class. Use of your laptop should be for learning and discussion in class with the class material. Please contact your faculty member if you encounter challenges with laptops/electronic devices/internet connectivity/remote learning environment which may impede your ability to learn in the course.

Recordings

Faculty may choose to record some or all of the delivery of the course material. These recordings may be made available to other students in your assigned course section to support learning of those affected by illness or unforeseen circumstances. If you have questions about class recording policies, please contact the faculty the first week of class.

Students may not record or distribute any class activity without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. This applies to both the live recording of an actual class, as well as the duplication of any recordings shared by the faculty with the course participants. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

Class Conduct

For those attending class remotely you should expect to engage in the class as if you were physically present in the classroom. Accordingly, you are expected to:

- Attend the class in its entirety via the dedicated Zoom platform provided for the course
- Attend the class with your camera **on** and fully focus on the class just as if you were physically present in class. Keeping your camera on is required. Please contact your professor if you have any questions or concerns.
- Make eye contact with the camera - you are essentially looking into the eyes of each and every classmate, and the professor!
- Be present in appropriate attire that you would have worn to class
- “Arrive” early to get everything prepared so you do not feel rushed and are able to be ready when class begins.
- Use your first and last names in your Zoom name.
- Remember to mute your audio when not speaking, in order to minimize any unnecessary external noise. This will become second nature to you as you become familiar with muting and unmuting your audio. You can mute/unmute your audio by clicking on the microphone (if using computer audio) or telephone (if using phone audio) in the lower left corner of your Zoom screen
- Perhaps most importantly, remember that you are not invisible, and your professor and classmates are depending on your visual cues, such as smiling and nodding, for encouragement. Imagine how dull a conversation would be with someone who was expressionless and motionless.

Class Materials and Policy Related to their Use

To enhance health and safety, improve sustainability, and ensure equal learning access, all materials for Ross courses will be made available in electronic format only. Printed copies of coursepacks (“TextPaks”) are available in addition to the electronic version. Please see our course Canvas site and/or contact the [Kresge Library](#) for further information.

All materials generated for the course including slides, handouts, review materials and assignments, or any other materials prepared by you or the professor for this course are intended for use by current students in this class only, unless you have the permission of your instructor. You are not permitted to use materials related to the class that were generated by the professor or students in previous versions of this course. A violation of this policy may be a violation of the Ross Community Values Code and may result in disciplinary action.

CLASS SCHEDULE & TOPICS

INTRODUCTION

Session 1 **October 20th**
Topic: *Introduction to Leading a Good Life*

I. BEING GOOD

Session 2 **October 22nd** (*Asynchronous*)
Topic: *Habits I*

Session 3 **October 27th**
Topic: *Habits II*

Session 4 **October 29th**
Topic: *Time and Attention Management*

Session 5 **November 3rd** (*Asynchronous*) * *Election Day**
Topic: *Self-Regulation*

II. FEELING GOOD

Session 6 **November 5th**
Topic: *Confidence*

Session 7 **November 10th**
Topic: *Happiness I*

Session 8 **November 12th**
Topic: *Happiness II*

Session 9 **November 17th**
Topic: *Self-Compassion*

III. DOING GOOD

Session 10 **November 19th**
Topic: *Ethical Decision-Making*

Thanksgiving: No Class on November 24th and 26th

Session 11 **December 1st**
Topic: *Moral Courage*

Session 12 **December 3rd**
Topic: *Meaning*

Session 13 **December 8th**
Topic: *Wrap-Up*