

BUS INST 303-0: Leadership in Organizations

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Course Overview

The goal of this course is to help you understand what an organizational leader does and to help you develop skills to be an effective leader. The course draws on theories and empirical work from psychology, sociology, and organizational behavior relating to organizational dynamics, motivation, teams, power and culture. The course is based around the idea that a leader does not need formal power or authority to lead. Rather, leadership arises from the ability to mobilize people around a particular challenge and commitment to take action.

In addition to developing skills, as students of the world, we want to have a lens that helps us evaluate the contributions and consequences of leaders. Sadly, not all leaders are effective, and given the wrong motivations or circumstances, leaders can be quite destructive. Thus, as we go through our weekly readings, I will often ask you to reflect on particular leaders and assess what they did well or not so well. Leaders assemble the skills, talents, and resources of individuals and groups into combinations that best solve those organizational challenges. Effective leaders are able to solve these challenges, improve their teams, cultivate new leaders, accomplish organizational goals, and (hopefully) improve society in the process. In order to accomplish so many things, they must be able to diagnose problems, make effective decisions, influence and motivate others, manage diversity, tap into and motivate the human and social capital of organizational members, optimize cross-functional teams, and drive organizational change.

Course Format and Expectations

Each day we will focus on a particular leadership theme. Our goal will be to distinguish between effective and ineffective strategies used by leaders. We will accomplish this by discussing key theoretical concepts and analyzing related cases. In each class session, we will use a case analysis or exercise to motivate our discussion.

The format of the class is discussion-based and interactive. Even though the class is virtual, it will be highly interactive and requires your participation in class. I will provide mini-lectures each day, but I also want you to be involved in the class by sharing your own experiences and thoughts on the day's readings and topic. We learn more effectively when we're actively engaged with the class objectives. Much of the work that we do will be in small group interactions, and some of it will be as part of a larger class conversation. You will participate in a number of group exercises that are designed to help you learn about leadership challenges and to develop the skills needed to overcome those challenges.

We will hold the class remotely, but the learning process will still be synchronous and interactive. Engaging in class discussions and participating in group exercises in a virtual setting can be challenging – as you’ve likely experienced in your own workplace over the past year – but I’ve tailored the class to get the most out of the remote experience. I expect everyone to participate in class in real time.

This course reflects a dual focus on practical and conceptual training. The articles in the course packet and course reserve introduce key concepts and useful ways of thinking about common situations in complex organizations. Some of the articles are written for a general audience and have a practical orientation. I often pair them with scholarly articles, so that you can get a sense of the original research. These articles are more heavily-laden with academic jargon, but I hope you’ll find the insights to be interesting. Case studies and class exercises provide opportunities to view and assess your thinking about leadership challenges and give you a chance to apply the concepts and tools that we will discuss.

You should come to class prepared to engage the topics as listed in the syllabus for each day. You should also come to class prepared to summarize key points from the day’s readings and to contribute to our analytical debriefs of the day’s exercises. *We will have daily quizzes that test your knowledge of the readings.* As you complete each reading, ask yourself:

- What is the basic argument the author makes?
- What are the key concepts/principles?
- So what? How does this matter for an organization?
- What are the implications for the kinds of challenges I might face as a leader?
- How can I apply this to my career preparation and leadership development?

This course will provide you with the skills and intuition necessary to lead a variety of teams in a variety of organizations. We would like to accentuate this in the course. To do this, we need to teach you about leadership *and* about how to lead. Both parts will be emphasized. Thus, we will engage in a series of leadership challenges and we will read and discuss theory and research on leadership.

To emphasize the professional nature of the class, we would like all of you to assume that you are working full time and your organization has sent you for additional training. Part of your training is this course. Your company has hired us to direct your leadership training. Your task is to learn as much as you can so that you will be even better equipped to handle all of your normal, critical duties.

Thus, an **essential** contribution we ask each of you to make to this course is to be professional in your actions in the class and your interactions with your instructors and your classmates. In particular, ***treat the case analyses and exercises seriously***. Sometimes I will assign you to specific roles, and I encourage you to get into the roles you’ll be assigned. You should try to do well and accomplish the objective given to you. You should think about your strategies and work hard to make sure they are appropriate and effective. You should consider the consequences of your actions within the framework of the exercise and what they might be in other situations.

One more thing about our classroom sessions: in our debriefs, we will discuss what happened and why. We'll discuss strategies that worked and strategies that didn't. If you should use a strategy that didn't work, I may ask you about it and expect you to be open and willing to discuss it. These exercises will probably be new to everyone. Thus, people may not choose the best strategy or approach in all of the exercises. That's totally fine! I don't expect you to always succeed. By delving into the thinking that led to a particular strategy, we learn about how to handle future leadership challenges. So I am not picking on you when we ask you about your strategies. To learn as much as we can in this class, we need to discuss not just what happened but why. These discussions will show how important post mortems are to future leadership strategies; they also provide us with an opportunity to not only learn a lot about leadership but also about ourselves.

Course Requirements and Assignments
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Your final grade is composed of:

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| 1. Course Contribution and Quizzes | 20% |
| 2. Leadership Development Exercises | 20% |
| 3. Organizational Leadership Case Analysis | 30% |
| 4. Final Exam | 30% |

Course Contribution (20%)

This portion of the grade will be based on your regular attendance of class, showing up on time during breaks, and completing the daily quizzes. We expect you to attend every class on time and to stay for the entire class session. Always let the instructor and our TA know **at least 24 hours in advance** if you will miss a class so that we can make arrangements for any in-class exercises to be certain that your classmates do not suffer from your absence. **Absences that are not notified ahead of time will automatically result in a grade penalty.** Students who are absent for two or more sessions will likewise experience an automatic grade penalty. Each class will have a 15 minute break. **It is critical to show up on time** at the start of class and after the break, as we will often initiate an exercise right away, and we will need everyone in attendance to help make the exercise go smoothly.

Finally, I expect you to be engaged in the classroom experience. Even though you'll be remote, I expect you to be focused on the class and not browsing the Web or looking at social media. We will take a couple of breaks each class to give everyone time to stretch their legs and refocus.

As part of your contribution we will have in-class quizzes that will test your knowledge of the readings. You can only do the quiz if you're in class. The quiz is multiple-choice and will focus on core ideas and takeaways from the day's assigned reading.

Leadership Development Exercises (LDEs) (20%)

A key part of the learning process in this course is to take the lessons you are learning and apply them to real business situations. To facilitate this, you will be asked to complete two Leadership Development Exercises, each focusing on one or two tools that a leader can use to achieve success. The first exercise is a group exercise. You'll be assigned to a Study Group, and this group will be collectively held responsible for this assignment. The second exercise is an individual assignment, but the format of the exercise is the same. In the exercises, you will use the concepts presented in the course to analyze a specific leadership challenge. An added benefit of these assignments is that they will help you prepare for the final exam.

These are relatively brief written assignments – a 1- or 2-page, double-spaced report with 12-point font and 1" margins all around. They are due at the start of class, as noted below. Please submit all assignments on Canvas:

Exercise I:	Influence	Week 4	(Group Assignment)
Exercise II:	Motivation-Culture	Week 7	(Individual Assignment)

Organizational Leadership Case Analysis (30%)

The analysis consists of a group presentation/slide show of approximately ten minutes, one memo describing candidates for the final analysis, and a final memo that describes details of your analysis and sources used. The first memo is due week 5 and the slide show for the group presentation and the final memo are due week 9. The purpose of the organizational leadership case analysis is for your group to analyze how a leader handled a leadership challenge and to make recommendations based on that analysis.

Each member of your group will be required to identify a potential leader who you would be interested in studying and assessing how they handled a leadership challenge. Leaders can come from your personal network or you can choose you to analyze a historical leader. Remember, leaders do not have to be someone who has a formal position of authority. Anyone who is trying to mobilize other people to collaborate in pursuit of a common goal is a leader. Leaders can come from the world of business, nonprofits, politics, and even higher education. A fellow student could be a leader!

The first memo, which is due week 5, will have a list of candidates for the analysis and summaries describing each candidate, what sort of challenge they faced, and what would make them an interesting subject of the analysis. The final memo and slide show, which focus on a single leader and the challenge they faced, are due in week 9.

Detailed information on this assignment is included on page 12 of the syllabus.

Final Exam (30%)

The final exam will consist of a series of multiple choice and short essay questions. As part of the exam, you will use the Sandra Brown case study. The essay questions will reflect your knowledge of the case, as well as your ability to apply concepts from class.

Because the exam will be taken remotely, it is open book. You will have three hours to complete the exam.

Consideration for Classmates

A class of 60+ students requires careful attention to fairness and mutual respect for one another. I expect you to attend every class on time and to stay for the entire class session. Each class will have two 15 minute breaks. **It is critical to be in class on time** and to return promptly after the breaks, as we will often initiate an exercise right away, and we will need everyone in attendance to help make the exercise go smoothly. Always let me and the TA know **at least 24 hours in advance** if you will miss a class so that we can make arrangements for any in-class exercises to be certain that your classmates do not suffer from your absence.

Previous Knowledge of Cases

If you are familiar with a case or a class exercise, please **do not** discuss your prior knowledge with other students as this can ruin their learning experience. **Telling other students (in any section) about your experience with cases and exercises is against class rules.** If you are concerned that your prior experience with a case will be an issue, please let us know before class.

Recordings, Postings, Blogging, Tweets, Social Media, etc.

No audio or visual recordings can be made of the class without permission of the instructor (and in many cases) the students in the class. Any information about the exercises and their solutions are confidential. They are all copyrighted and cannot be circulated or posted online in any form. If you are unsure as to the application of these rules, please see me and ask.

Academic Integrity

Suspected violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Dean's Office. For more information on Northwestern's academic integrity policies, see <http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/handbook/integrity/index.html>

Accessibility

Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with AccessibleNU (accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All information will remain confidential.

Course Materials

The course packet contains many of the assigned readings and some can be found on course reserves. If the reading is not in the course packet, assume that it can be accessed via course reserves on Canvas. Please complete the readings before class.

You **MUST** pay for the course packet in order to participate in the class. The exercises are not free and require being purchased.

Class Schedule

See detailed plan for each class session for information on reading assignments and other activities to be done before class.

	Topic
Week 1	Leadership Challenges
Week 2	Group Decision-making
Week 3	Influence
Week 4	Negotiations
Week 5	Culture and Motivation
Week 6	Strategic Social Networks
Week 7	Understanding and Influencing Change
Week 8	Leading Organizations Ethically
Week 9	Group presentations

Topics, Readings, and Assignment Schedule

Week 1: Leadership Challenges

Objectives:

- Introduction to the course
- Identify common challenges that leaders face
- Understand three basic leadership skills

Reading (before class):

- Sandra Brown (A)

Week 2: Group decision-making

Objectives:

- Evaluate aspects of good/bad group decision-making
- Learn about cognitive biases that shape decision-making
- Understand method to improve group decisions

Readings:

- Kahneman, Daniel, Dan Lovallo, and Olivier Sibony. 2011. "Before you make that big decision." *Harvard Business Review* 89: 50-60.
- Surowiecki, James. 2004. Pp. 1-65 in *The Wisdom of Crowds*. New York: Anchor Books.

Week 3: Influence

Objectives:

- Learning the science of persuasion
- Enhancing your discernment of attempts to influence you
- Interpersonal and procedural tactics of influence

Readings:

- Cialdini, Robert B. 2001. "Harnessing the science of persuasion." *Harvard Business Review* 79:72-81.

- Muscanell, Nicole L, Rosanna E Guadagno, and Shannon Murphy. 2014. "Weapons of influence misused: A social influence analysis of why people fall prey to internet scams." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 8:388-396.

Week 4: Negotiations

Objectives:

- Assess your skills at making interactive decisions
- Equip you with the core principles of negotiating tactics

Readings:

- Brett, Jeanne M. 2000. "Culture and Negotiation." *International Journal of Psychology* 35(2):97-104.
- Sebenius, James. (2001). "Six Habits of Merely Effective Negotiators." *Harvard Business Review*, 79: 87-95.
- Internship negotiations exercise (role to be assigned and distributed in class)

Assignment Due: Leadership Challenge Exercise #1 (group-based)

Week 5: Organizational culture

Objectives:

- Learn how strong organizational cultures can be a tool for creating competitive advantage
- Discuss the negative consequences of having a strong culture
- Strategies for building a strong and effective culture

Readings:

- Chatman, Jennifer A and Sandra Eunyoung Cha. 2003. "Leading by leveraging culture." *California Management Review* 45:20-34.
- Rivera, Lauren A. 2012. "Hiring as Cultural Matching the Case of Elite Professional Service Firms." *American Sociological Review* 77(6):999-1022.
- HubSpot culture slide deck (on Canvas)

Assignment due: Submit group memo with summaries of case analysis candidates and your final choice

Bring to class an artifact (an object that reflects the culture and values) of an organization to which you've belonged.

Discussion questions (please come to class prepared to discuss after reading the slide deck):

- Consider the culture of an organization with which you've had experience. How would you describe it? Is it a strong or weak culture?
- What makes a culture strong and how does it benefit companies? What problems might a strong culture create?
- What kind of business is HubSpot? What are its core competencies?
- What tools does HubSpot use to implement its culture?
- Characterize the culture of HubSpot via descriptions of artifacts, core values, and assumptions.

Week 6: Strategic Social Networks

Objectives:

- Assessment of your social capital
- Strategies for tapping the hidden resources in contacts
- Leading by using social capital

Readings:

- Baker, Wayne. (2000). "What is Social Capital and Why Should You Care About It?" Pp. 1-25 in *Achieving Success Through Social Capital*.
- Uzzi, Brian and Dunlap, Shannon. (2005) How to Build Your Network. *Harvard Business Review*. 83: 52-60.

Week 7: Understanding and Influencing Change

Objectives:

- Gauge your performance in a simulated change program

Readings:

- Farnam Street Blog. "Critical Mass and Tipping Points: How To Identify Inflection Points Before They Happen," (last accessed, December 7, 2019).
 - <https://fs.blog/2017/07/critical-mass/>

In-class exercise:

- EIS Simulation

Assignment Due: Leadership Challenge Exercise #2 (individual assignment)

Week 8: Leading Organizations Ethically

Objectives:

- Discuss the takeaways from the EIS simulation
- Understand a framework for ethical leadership

Reading:

- Bilton, Nick. 2016. “How Elizabeth Holmes’ House of Cards Came Tumbling Down.” *Vanity Fair*.
 - <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2016/09/elizabeth-holmes-theranos-exclusive>
- Kouchaki, Maryam and Isaac Smith. 2020. “Building an Ethical Career.” Harvard Business Review.
 - <https://hbr.org/2020/01/building-an-ethical-career>

Discussion Questions (reflect on your experience from the EIS simulation):

1. Which strategies were effective at securing adopters in EIS? Which were ineffective?
2. Who do you *target* with a change initiative?
3. How do you figure out what *tactics* work with what targets?
4. When should you time your tactics for motivating and achieving change?

Week 9: Presentations of Organizational Leadership Case Analysis

Assignment due: Submit slide show and final memo for the case analysis.

Organization Leader Case Analysis

Throughout the course we have discussed numerous functions of leadership that help them successfully handle the challenges that come their way. In this analysis, you will focus on a leader of your choosing and analyze what this person did to overcome a leadership challenge (see slides from Day 1).

To complete this assignment you will be assigned to a group. **The choice of the leader is up to your group.** Try to choose someone that faces a real dilemma in mobilizing people to collaborate for a common purpose. It could be a person who you know, or it could be a historical figure. Either way, you will need to be able to get enough information about this leader to create a compelling case study.

To choose a leader, you should meet as a group, and each member of the group should pick one person who they think would be a good fit as a focus of the analysis. After generating a list of all of the candidates, write short summaries (a paragraph or two for each summary) about each person, what makes them interesting, the sort of challenge they faced, etc., and then as a group decide on which of these people the case analysis will focus. Please submit a short memo that contains those summaries and an explanation for why you settled on the final group choice. **The memo is due week 5 before class.**

The final product for this assignment is a presentation that you will give in class in week 9 and a final memo that contains supporting evidence and a description of what you did in your analysis. The group presentation should last approximately ten minutes. The final memo should be at least two pages and should include sources used for the analysis and a more detailed description of the analysis. I will assess the presentation based on the level of detail you give to the analysis as well as your ability to **integrate key concepts and frameworks from the class.** The concepts and tools we discuss in class should be the guiding framework for your analysis (e.g., how did this person use their social network as a way to overcome the challenge they faced?). Projects will be graded for their grasp of the class material, their insight into the leader's situation, the appropriateness of recommendations made, and clarity of their presentation.

Key Features of the Assignment:

- Submission of a memo in week five in which each group member identifies one leader and writes a short summary of the challenge the leader faced. The memo should also describe why you chose to focus on the particular leader for your final analysis.
- A group slide show/presentation that includes the following:
 - Background information about the leader your group chose to analyze
 - A description and analysis of the challenge the leader faced
 - Remember, leadership challenges involve an obstacle the leader faces in mobilizing others to collaborate around a common goal
 - An assessment of the various choices the leader might take, skills they might use, or the tactics they could employ (e.g., negotiation is a kind of tactic)

- A critical evaluation of the why the leader's choices were appropriate or inappropriate
- A recommendations section that 1) suggests what the leader might have done differently to improve their ability to deal with the challenge and 2) offers recommendations for Northwestern students about how they can apply lessons from the case to their own experiences.
- A memo with supporting evidence and additional details that you were not able to fit into the presentation. The memo should include information about source material, including interviews conducted or articles or books used. The final memo should be at least 2 double-spaced pages with 12-point font and 1" margins.
- Feel free to change names to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

You will present the slide show in the week 9 class. Please submit the memo and the slide show on Canvas before class that day.

Key Elements of the Analysis

The slide show should have a three-part structure:

1. An introduction to your analysis and the leader.

What is your thesis? Who is the person at the center of your analysis and what makes them a leader? What sort of leadership challenge do they face?

In the final memo you should include a one paragraph description the leader, describing their responsibilities and background, and providing additional details about the leadership challenge.

2. Analysis

You should organize and focus your analysis in terms of course concepts. Compare and contrast the experiences of the leader with other leaders/situations we talked about in class to draw general lessons about which strategies are most useful under which conditions.

NOTE: The most informative analyses go beyond description to an explanation of why something happened the way it did using the concepts from class. Well-organized presentations that stress the most important factors rather than simply provide a data-dump of all the possible factors are evaluated more highly.

In all other respects, the project is yours to define. Be creative.

3. Recommendations for Leader and Northwestern students

This section should be one or two slides. Imagine that you are offering the leader suggestions in real time about how they might have handled the challenge and improve on their outcome. Put yourself in the mindset of a consultant. What advice might you give the leader? You should also offer a separate set of suggestions to your fellow Northwestern students about how they can apply the lessons from this situation to their own experiences. For example, you can highlight parallels between the leadership challenge faced by the person in your analysis and the kind of

challenges that a student might face now or in the future. Be sure to base your recommendations in the analysis itself. That is, the recommendations should follow logically from your analysis, rather than being a separate set of ad hoc suggestions about what to do or not to do. Make your recommendations as concrete and specific as possible.