

# OrgStudy 201: Leadership and Collaboration

Fall, 2012: M, W 11:30-1:00. Chem 1400

**Professor:** Jason Owen-Smith

**Office:** 721 Dennison

**Office Hours:** Mondays, 3-4:30 or by appointment

**Contact:** [jdos@umich.edu](mailto:jdos@umich.edu), 647-9521

**GSI:** Pam Barclay, Jessi Streib, Malavika Tampi

**Offices:** Consult Section Syllabi

**Office Hours:** Consult Section Syllabi

**Contact:** [jessis@umich.edu](mailto:jessis@umich.edu),  
[maltampi@umich.edu](mailto:maltampi@umich.edu),  
[barclayp@umich.edu](mailto:barclayp@umich.edu)

**Course description.** Much of what has been written and said about leadership focuses on the activities of people with formal sources of authority and power such as successful politicians, military leaders, and corporate executives. Yet a long tradition of research and writing suggests that a more everyday form of pragmatic leadership that occurs in civic organizations, associations, and movements is the traditional linchpin of American civil society. Early analysts of colonial America, such as Alexis de Toqueville, highlighted the prevalence of such activities. More recently thinkers such as Robert Putnam have argued that the decline of such civic organizations is a key source of the social and political challenges facing American communities.

This class begins with idea that much important leadership takes place in situations that are neither highly visible nor characterized by the exercise of authority. Instead, understanding, evaluating, and exercising leadership requires attention to collaboration, social influence, and persuasion when potential leaders lack any ability to command the attention, respect, or effort of others. Such influence-based, collaborative processes are the primary mechanism for exercising leadership in civic, religious and voluntary organizations, mission-driven non-profit organizations, and among younger and entry level employees in multiple settings. Even powerful leaders in positions of significant authority face challenges that can only be met by the use of these collaborative leadership tactics. In other words, the ideas and practices this course seeks to develop have wide ranging potential uses.

We draw on a classical and contemporary social science to address three key questions about the process and practice of collaborative leadership. Those questions are:

- (1) What is good leadership?
- (2) Why do effective leaders often fail?
- (3) How can people and institutions improve the practice of leadership?

Readings and exercises grounded in organizational approaches to sociology and psychology are leavened with ideas from economics and political science. We will integrate a rigorous academic introduction to the features and implications of collaborative leadership with more pragmatic work that develops skills students can use as they pursue effective collaborations within and across multiple organizational settings.

This class is intended to be the first part of a two course series that will provide a year-long leadership learning experience to students under the rubric of LS&A's new "sophomore experience" program. Students who complete this lecture course will be eligible to enroll in a subsequent practicum that will focus on implementing projects developed during this semester.

## Readings.

Required Book:

Frank, Milo. 1986. *How to Get Your Point Across in 30 Seconds or Less*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Additional readings including academic articles, media profiles, and selections from larger texts will be available in electronic format on the course CTOOLS site.

## Assignments & Evaluation.

This class aims to accomplish several goals. Students who successfully complete this course should be able to:

- (1) Understand core concepts pertaining to situational, collaborative leadership;
- (2) Apply those ideas to explain the outcomes of historical and contemporary cases;
- (3) Develop proposals that use these ideas to make headway on practical problems facing their campus and communities.
- (4) Learn from their experiences in order to improve their own collaborative leadership skills.

With these goals in mind, classroom performance will be evaluated on three dimensions using a mix of individual and group assignments.

Dimension 1: Understanding and applying conceptual knowledge (25% of your final grade). Your understanding of and ability to apply concepts from class will be tested in a mid-term exam featuring a mix of multiple choice and short answer essay questions (15% of final grade).

In addition to the exam individual students will be required to complete a short (750 word) description of a problem situation on campus that includes an analysis of how the application of concepts and skills from class might help address the challenge (10% of final grade).

Dimension 2: Developing proposals to address campus challenges (30% of your final grade). The primary academic output of this class will be a group project proposal that uses ideas and techniques from class to propose a concrete solution to a problem you identify on campus or in the community. A detailed description of the assignment will be handed out and discussed in class, but the final project will have two general components.

*The Pitch.* Your group will develop and practice and one member will present a 3 minute long idea pitch in lecture over the last days of the semester. Your pitch should be a complete and compelling summary of the problem your group seeks to address, your plan for addressing it, and the reasons why others should support your efforts. The text of your pitch as well as copies of any support materials (slides, video, audio etc.) will be due the week your group is scheduled to present. The contents and style of the pitch as well as its presentation will account for 10% of your final grade and every member of the group will receive the same score.

*The Plan.* Your group will develop and author a project plan document of no more than 3000 words that includes the following components.

- (1) Goals and objectives. This section describes the challenge your group seeks to address. You must also present both your group's vision for the project, which can be very ambitious and abstract, and at least three concrete and specific objectives you hope to accomplish that would move you toward your ultimate goal. This section should be no more than 500 words and can use text from your group's pitch or from individual group members' problem situation memo.
- (2) Implementation plan. This section must lay out the concrete details of how you propose to accomplish the specific objectives you lay out in 1. It must include discussions of (a) the tangible and intangible resources you need and your plans to secure them; (b) the roles and responsibilities of individual group members and the organization of the project team; and (c) a detailed summary of the 'who, what, when, where, and why' of your implementation plan for each of your objectives. This section should justify your choices about how you plan to accomplish your goals by appeal to ideas and concepts from the class. This section should be around 2000 words long.
- (3) Evaluation plan. This section should lay out your plans for evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed project. It should describe how you will determine whether your efforts accomplish your specific objectives and how you will know what effects your efforts have had. Ask yourself questions such as "How will we know if/when our objectives have been achieved?" "Who will benefit from our work and how will we determine whether they have?" "How will we determine whether accomplishing our objectives brings us closer to our grand vision for the project?" This section should be no more than 500 words long.

Your plan will account for 20% of your final grade. All group members will receive the same score.

Dimension 3: Learning through active reflection (30% of your final grade). The group project you will develop for this class is a means to evaluate your collective ability to apply concepts and ideas from the course to a pragmatic problem. It is also a challenging exercise in collaboration where no member of the group has formal authority over others. As such, the group project itself presents an opportunity for learning about the process and practice of collaborative leadership. The exercises described here present opportunities for students to apply the skills of active reflection to identify the most important leadership lessons they might learn from participation in the group project.

- (1) Collaborative leadership journal. Using prompts and exercises that will be presented in class, each student will be responsible for writing a set of 6 private journal entries that reflect on their experiences with the group project. Entries will be no less than 250 word pieces that will account for 10% of your final grade. Journal entries may take the form of blog posts or the aggregation of shorter "twitter style" comments on project activities. These journals are intended to capture reactions to the project in "real time" in order to provide the raw material for more focused analytic reflection exercises at the end of class. While they will be turned in to your GSI, they will not be graded.
- (2) Individual reflection. Drawing on journal entries from the entire semester, each student will distill their experiences with collaboration in the class into a set of "key lessons" that should be linked to concepts from the class. This 500-750 word document will be shared with other members of your project team and the class. It will account for 10% of your final grade.
- (3) Team reflection. Drawing on individual reflection papers and an in class "action review" exercise, each project team will produce a collective analysis of their work together that focuses on both opportunities for improvement and on lessons learned. These final documents of no more than

1000 words will account for 10% of your final grade. All members of the group will receive the same score.

Class and section participation: Your attendance and participation in lectures and sections is essential to this class. 10% of your final grade will be determined by section attendance and participation. This portion of your grade will be wholly within the discretion of your GSI. 5% of your final grade, likewise, will be determined by attendance at lecture. I do not intend to take attendance every day. Instead, there will be a series of random attendance checks at different points during the semester.

### **Grading Summary**

<i>Section Attendance/Participation</i>	15%
<i>Exam</i>	15%
<i>Individual Problem Memo (750 words)</i>	10%
<i>Group Pitch</i>	10%
<i>Group Plan (~3000 words)</i>	20%
<i>Individual Reflection Journal (&gt;1500 words)</i>	10%
<i>Individual Reflection Paper (500-750 words)</i>	10%
<i>Group Reflection Document (&lt;1000 words)</i>	10%

### **Class Policies**

- Lecture begins at 11:40. If you must arrive late do so quietly, students who disrupt class by arriving late to lecture will be asked to leave.
- Cell phones may not be used in class.
- We will make every reasonable allowance to allow you to carry out your religious observances without academic penalty. It is your responsibility to inform your GSI and instructor of any conflict with class activities before they arise.
- Late assignments will be accepted but a penalty equivalent to 10% of the assignment's total value will be deducted for each day it is late.
- Students are expected to adhere to LS&A standards of academic integrity. Incidents of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the relevant assignment or exam. For more information please consult <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity>
- We will make every effort to respond to appropriate e-mail correspondence within 24 hours. All e-mails regarding this class must have the course number ("OS 201") in the subject heading. E-mails that lack this subject heading may not receive a response.
- Please take advantage of office hours. You should, however, raise your questions with GSIs before bringing them to me.

## Schedule of Topics and Readings

### Week 1. Logistics and Syllabus

Wednesday 09/05/12 – Logistics and Overview: “Michigan’s Way of Leadership”

READ:

- (1) Mr. Y. “A National Strategic Narrative”
- (2) Dwyer, Jim. “A National Security Strategy That Doesn’t Focus on Threats.” *New York Times*. May 3, 2011.

### Week 2. Setting the stage

Monday 09/10/12 – Why study leadership?

READ:

- (1) de Toqueville, Alexis. “On the uses which the Americans make of public associations.” From *Democracy in America*. Pp. 595-600.
- (2) Putnam, Robert. “Thinking about Social Change in America.” From *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Pp. 1-15.

OPTIONAL:

- (1) Gregorian, Vartan. 2012. “Individualism and Civility.”  
<http://www.theglobalist.com/storyid.aspx?storyid=9635>

Wednesday 09/12/12 .

READ:

- (1) Merton, Robert K. 1969. “The Social Nature of Leadership.” *American Journal of Nursing*, 69(12): 2614-2618
- (2) Machiavelli, Nicolo. 1513. “On Generosity vrs. Parsimony.” Ch. 16 in *The Prince*.
- (3) Becker, Tracy et. al. 1997. “Traditional American Indian Leadership” and “Traditional American Indian Leadership Compared to US Governance.”  
<http://americanindianpolicycenter.org/research/tradlead.html>

### Week 3. What is (Good) leadership?

Monday 09/17/12

READ:

- (1) Maeda, John & Rebecca J. Bermot. 2011. *Redesigning Leadership*. Pp. 1-26.
- (2) Heifetz, Ronald. 1994. “Values in Leadership.” Pp. 13-27 in *Leadership Without Easy Answers*.

Wednesday 09/19/12 CASE DISCUSSION: What kind of leader does our country need?

READ:

- (1) Lizza, Ryan. "The Obama Memos: The Making of a Post-Partisan President." *New Yorker*. 01/20/2012
- (2) Lizza, Ryan. "The Mission: Mitt Romney's Strategies for Success." *New Yorker*. 10/29/2007
- (3) Dickerson, John. "Leading Bystander." *Slate.com*. 09/28/2011

#### **Week 4.**

Monday 09/24/12

- (1) READ: Deresiewicz, William. 2009. "Solitude and Leadership." <http://theamericanscholar.org/solitude-and-leadership/>
- (2) Hackman, J. Richard. 2010. "What is this thing called leadership?" Pp. 107-118 in *The Handbook of Leadership Theory & Practice*.

Wednesday 09/26/12. CASE Discussion: Gender and Leadership.

READ:

- (1) Slaughter, Ann-Marie. 2012. "Why Women Still Can't Have it All." *Atlantic*. July/August 2012.
- (2) Sandberg, Sheryl. 2011. Commencement Speech at Barnard University. <http://barnard.edu/headlines/transcript-and-video-speech-sheryl-sandberg-chief-operating-officer-facebook>
- (3) Giridharadas, Anand. "Questioning Alpha Leadership." *New York Times*. June 28, 2012.

#### **Week 5. Situational Leadership, Big Problems and Small Wins**

Monday 10/01/12

READ:

- (1) Kellerman, Barbara. 2004. "Ch. 3: Making Meaning of Being Bad." Pp. 29-50 in *Bad Leadership*

Wednesday 10/03/12

READ:

- (1) Weick, Karl. 1984. "Small Wins: Redefining the scale of social problems." *American Psychologist* 39(1): 40-49.
- (2) Mintzberg, Henry. 1987. "Crafting Strategy." *Harvard Business Review*. July/August: 66-75.

#### **Week 6. Creativity: Where do good ideas come from?**

Monday 10/08/12

READ

- (1) March, James G. 1991. "Exploration and Exploitation in Organizational Learning." *Organization Science*. 2(1): 71-87. **Read pp 71-73.**
- (2) Sharp, Twyla. 2003. "Scratching." Pp. 94-103 in *The Creative Habit*.

- (3) Denning, Peter J. & Robert Dunham. 2006. "Innovation as language action." *Communications of the ACM*. 49(5): 47-52.

Wednesday 10/10/12

READ

- (1) Johnson, Steven. 2010. "The Slow Hunch." Pp. 67-96 in *Where good ideas come from*. New York: Riverhead Books.
- (2) Zenasni, Franck et al. 2011. "Creativity and Tolerance of Ambiguity." *Journal of Creative Behavior*. 61-73. **Read pp 61-63 & 71. Skim remainder.**

OPTIONAL:

- (1) Fields, Jonathan. "Uncertainty, Innovation, and the Alchemy of Fear."

## **Week 7.**

Monday 10/15/12 – FALL BREAK

Wednesday 10/17/12 – CASE Discussion: What kinds of leadership are effective for activists?

READ:

- (1) Freeman, Jo. 1970. "The Tyranny of Structurelessness."
- (2) Watts, Duncan. 2011. "What Are Leaders Really For?"
- (3) Havel, Vaclav. 1978. "The Power of the Powerless." Sections XV-XVI, XVIII, XIX, XXI.

## **Week 8. Collaboration: Working with and through others.**

Monday 10/22/12

READ

- (1) Page, Scott E. 2007. *Diversity: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies*. Pp. 1-23.
- (2) Ancona, Deborah et al. 2002. "The Comparative Advantage of X-Teams." *Sloan Management Review*.

Wednesday 10/24/12

READ

- (1) Ury, William L., Roger Fisher, & Bruce M. Patton. 1992. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. "Separate the People from the Problem." & "Focus on Interests, Not Positions." Pp. 17-55

## **Week 9. Collaboration: Working with and through others**

Monday 10/29/12 – EXAM

Wednesday 10/31/12 --

READ:

- (1) Ganz, Marshall. 2010. "Leading Change: Leadership, Organization, and Social Movements." Pp. 527-569 in *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice*.
- (2) *How to get your point across in 30 seconds or less*. Ch 1-6.

### **Week 10. Collaboration: Working with and through others**

Monday 11/05/12 -- RETURN AND DISCUSS EXAM

Wednesday 11/07/12

READ:

- (1) Alinsky, Saul. 1971. "A word about words." Pp. 48-62 in *Rules for Radicals*.
- (3) *How to get your point across in 30 seconds or less*. Ch 7-12.

### **Week 11.**

Monday 11/12/12 CASE Discussion: Leadership at UVA.

READ:

- (1) Cohen, Michael D. & James G. March. 1974. *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President*. New York: McGraw Hill. Pp. 195-230
- (2) Statement by Dr. Teresa Sullivan
- (3) Statement by Rector Helen Dragas

OPTIONAL:

- (1) Fethke, Gary C. & Andrew J. Policano. "The Precarious Profession of University President." *Chronicle of Higher Education*. July 23, 2012.
- (2) Stripling, Jack. "UVA May Need a Narcissist at the Top." *Chronicle of Higher Education*. June 14, 2012.

Wednesday 11/14/12

READ:

- (1) Finkelstein, Sydney. 2003. *Why Smart Executives Fail*. New York: Portfolio Books. Pp. 213-240. "The Seven Habits of Spectacularly Unsuccessful People"
- (2) Brim, Gilbert. 2000. *Ambition: How We Manage Success and Failure Throughout Our Lives*. Pp. 53-64. "Thinking about Winning and Losing."

### **Week 12. Why do effective leaders fail?**

Monday 11/19/12. CASE Discussion: Was Steve Jobs a Good Leader?

READ:

- (1) Isaacson, Walter. 2011. *Steve Jobs*. Ch. 11 "The Reality Distortion Field."
- (2) Sutton, Bob. 2010. *The No Asshole Rule*. Pp. 153-176. "The Virtue of Assholes."



(3) Healy, Kieran. 2011. "A Sociology of Steve Jobs."

<http://kieranhealy.org/blog/archives/2011/10/10/a-sociology-of-steve-jobs/>

OPTIONAL:

(1) Austen, Ben. 2012. "The Story of Steve Jobs: An Inspiration or a Cautionary Tale?" *Wired*.  
07/23/12.

Wednesday 11/21/12 – THANKSGIVING BREAK

### **Week 13. Pitch Days**

Monday 11/26/12 – Pitch Day 1

Wednesday 11/28/12 – Pitch Day 2

### **Week 14**

Monday 12/3/12 – Pitch Day 3

Wednesday 12/5/12 – Group Reflection Exercise

### **Week 15**

Monday 12/10/12 – Class summary and wrap-up