MORS 430: Leadership in Organizations

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Section 61

Professor Brayden King
e-mail: b-king@kellogg.northwestern.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

Teaching Assistant
Geoff Stone: geoffrey.stone@northwestern.edu
Course Overview

The goal of this course is to help you develop a set of conceptual tools and skills that you can use to enhance your effectiveness as an organizational leader. The course draws on theories and empirical work from psychology, sociology, and organizational behavior relating to organizational dynamics, motivation, teams, power and culture that explain how managers can be more effective leaders. 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 commit to take action.

A key leadership task is to assemble the skills, talents, and resources of individuals and groups into combinations that best solve those organizational challenges. You must manage people, information, and processes to accomplish organizational goals; you must make things happen, often under conditions or timeframes that are not of your own choosing. You must also understand how to help people introduce their own skills and abilities into your teams. Successful leaders are 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.

This course will help you to achieve these objectives. The course provides fundamental concepts and tools from behavioral science that will improve your ability to analyze organizational dynamics and take robust action.

Course Format and Expectations

Each day we will focus on a particular set of leadership skills. Our goal will be to distinguish between effective and ineffective strategies. 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.

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. 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 should 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, think about how you can apply the principles and skills discussed in class in your job in the coming week. I have designed the course to be directly relevant in your current roles. If you actively apply the principles in class, you will be even better equipped to handle your critical duties and to expand your role as a leader in your organization.

Thus, an essential contribution we ask each of you to make to this course is to take seriously your interactions with your classmates. In particular, treat the exercises and games seriously. 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.

We expect that you will all act professionally in this class. Thus, I expect that you will attend each class, arrive on time, and notify us in advance if you must miss a class.
Other Expectations

We expect that you will attend each class, on time, and **notify us in advance** if you must miss a class. If you think of our meetings as work meetings, i.e., as if you were working full time and our meetings are an important part of your job, you’ll know what we expect.

The Honor Code

This course adheres to the guidelines established in the Kellogg Honor Code and the Kellogg Code of Classroom Etiquette. The complete text is available on the Honor Code website: [https://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/policies/honor-code.aspx](https://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/policies/honor-code.aspx)

The Honor Code is enforced at Kellogg and violations are subject to disciplinary sanctions. Honor Code issues seldom arise because of Kellogg’s culture. We truly hope that these kinds of issues will not arise in this class.

The discussion in this syllabus of the Honor Code may not cover all applications of the Honor Code. If you believe something is unclear or has been omitted, please let us know.

One of the highlights of the honor code is that all written assignments must be your original work. You may not use others’ materials containing solutions or partial solutions to any assignment (including solutions prepared by current and former Kellogg students). If your analysis contains information from outside sources, then you must properly cite the sources.

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 an honor code violation.** 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. In addition, exercises and their solutions are confidential per the Kellogg Honor Code. They are all copyrighted and cannot be circulated, blogged about, or posted in any form on social media. If you are unsure as to the application of these rules, please see us and ask.

Course Materials

The course packet contains many of the assigned readings. Additional readings not in the course packet can either be found on the Canvas website as part of Course Reserves or will be sent to you by the TA. Please reach out to me if you cannot find any of the assigned readings.
Course Requirements and Assignments

Your final grade is composed of:
1. Course Contribution and Quizzes  20%
2. Leadership Development Exercises  20%
3. Organizational Leadership Case Analysis  30%
4. Final Exam  30%

Course Contribution (20%)

The course contribution grade will be determined by your attendance and prompt arrival to class. **You may only miss one class**, and you should notify me or the TA if you are going to miss. We will do class exercises that require your participation, and absences will negatively affect the ability of the class to do those exercises. In addition, I expect you to be seated when the class starts at both the start of class and after a break. Please do not leave class, except during breaks.

All class sessions involve active discussion based on the readings, cases, and exercises, with an emphasis on both theoretical questions and practical implications. You should be prepared to share your ideas and to listen to and interpret the issues that your classmates present.

One of your jobs in this course is to carefully review the readings and/or case for every class session. Most participation in discussions will be voluntary; however, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be involved, I will occasionally “cold call.”

Quality contributions possess one or more of the following attributes:

- Offer a relevant perspective on the issue.
- Provide careful analysis.
- Apply the theory and concepts offered in the readings and lectures.
- Move the discussion forward by building on previous contributions with new insights - do not repeat points already made by others.

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 the completion of 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 8 | (Individual Assignment) |

Organizational Leadership Case Analysis (30%)

Your leadership success will depend at least in part on how effectively you manage your professional relationships. These relationships will give you access to information, skills, and expertise and will determine your power and your opportunities. This project provides an opportunity to spend some time reaching a deeper understanding of how to develop, manage, and execute social relationships to get things done.

Each member of your Study Group will be required to identify a potential business leader who you would be interested in interviewing and conducting a case analysis. Leaders can come from family, social contacts, or your professional network. In some cases, you may want to cold-call a local leader from the Chicago area, but you will likely have greater success if it’s someone from your social network. If you have a hard time finding leaders in your personal networks, you may ask the instructor for help in identifying one. Once you have identified a list of leaders, you will write short summaries, describing their successes and what makes them a potentially interesting subject of a case study. You will then meet as a group to choose to interview and do an in-depth case analysis on one of these leaders.

Anticipate having to interview the leader at least once to gain an understanding of their situation, the nature of their network, how they manage their network, and how they use their network to tackle the organizational challenges discussed in class. Following the interview, your group will write an analysis of your leader’s network and the tactics that he or she uses to address challenges. You can ground the entire analysis, if you’d like, in a particularly difficult situation the leader has experienced. You should be very specific in describing the nature of those challenges and write in detail about how the relationships and the tactics the leader used were helpful. Your case analysis will be kept strictly confidential; you may want to use an alias when discussing your persons in your analysis.

Detailed information on this assignment is included on page 12 of the syllabus. The 10-page analysis is due by 6pm on the Friday before finals. As a part of this group assignment, you will be asked to evaluate the performance of all of the members of your group, including yourself.

Final Exam (30%)
The final exam will be a closed-book exam that 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.

You may bring with you to the exam a single, one-sided piece of paper with handwritten notes. The exam will take place during finals week at the assigned time.

**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:*

- Practice decision-making as a group
- Learn about cognitive biases that shape decision-making
- Understand method to improve group decisions

*Readings:*


- Speed Ventures (Case)

Please read *Speed Ventures* and prepare a written memo (<1 page in length) that includes (1) an explicit recommendation to race or not race and (2) a rationale for your decision. Do not discuss the case or your recommendation with anyone. (*NOTE: if you are familiar with the case, please inform me by email before class*).
Week 3: Influence

Objectives:

- Learning the science of persuasion
- Interpersonal and procedural tactics of influence

Readings:


Week 4: Negotiations

Objectives:

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

Readings:

- Internship negotiations exercise (role to be assigned)

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

Week 5: Teams

Objectives:

- Learn about strategies for building and leading high impact teams

Readings:


Assignment:
Before class, take the following online quiz:

- [https://businesschemistry.deloitte.com/#/landing](https://businesschemistry.deloitte.com/#/landing)
- First, take the quiz for how you imagine people think of you as a leader. Then, do the quiz for someone else who you know.

### Week 6: Culture

**Objectives:**

- Learn how strong organizational cultures can be inconspicuous but savvy management tools for creating competitive advantage
- Strategies for building a strong and effective culture

**Readings:**

- HubSpot culture slide deck (on Canvas)

**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.

**Assignment:**

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

### Week 7: Emotions and Motivation

**Objective:**

- Understand the five dimensions of emotional intelligence
- Learn skills for recognizing and regulating your own emotions in motivating others
- Understand what motivates people to change their behavior
Readings:


Week 8: Strategic Social Networks

Objectives:

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

Readings:


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

Week 9: Understanding and Influencing Change

Objectives:

- Gauge your performance in a simulated change program

Readings:

  - https://fs.blog/2017/07/critical-mass/

In-class exercise:

- EIS Simulation
Week 10: Leading Organizations and Coalitions

Objectives:

- Learn the basics of coalition-building as a leadership approach
- Bringing it all together in (re)designing firms: decision-making, influence, teams, networks, culture, change and strategy

Reading:

  - [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/10_things_you_need_to_build_clever_coalitions#](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/10_things_you_need_to_build_clever_coalitions#)

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?
Organizational Leadership Case Analysis

Your own career success depends in part on the effectiveness of your professional network. This project provides an opportunity to spend some time developing a sophisticated understanding of how successful leaders initiate, develop, and manage their ties to accomplish their objectives. Your task is to analyze the social network of a leader using the concepts discussed in the course. You will interview a leader to gain an understanding of their situation, the nature of their network, and the way in which it is managed.

Your Study Group will be required to interview one business leader regarding their experiences. The choice of the leader is up to you. Try to choose someone who you believe will be candid, open, and insightful. Choose someone who might serve as a good contact in the future or someone you already admire in your professional network. The leader can be a friend or from companies or other organizations for which you’ve worked. To choose a leader, each member of the group will be asked to pick someone who they admire. You don’t have to know the person but it should be someone whom you could conceivably interview for the assignment. After generating a list, write short summaries about the successes of each person, what makes them interesting, etc., and then as a group decide on which of these people the case analysis will focus.

You will need to conduct at least one in-depth interview with the leader you choose. You may want to do additional analysis of the leader as well, talking to their colleagues or other people mentioned in the first interview. Following the interview(s), your group will write an analysis of the leader’s leadership approach and social network. In this analysis, you will examine how they used their network to meet the challenges they faced, apply concepts you have learned about social networks and power while also integrating the full range of other key concepts and frameworks from the class. Projects will be graded for their grasp of the class material, their insight into the leader's social situation, and clarity of their presentation.

Key Elements of the Assignment:

- Each Teammate must identify one leader and write a short summary of that leader’s career successes.
- Teammates will choose one leader on which to focus the analysis. They will interview the leader and may do additional follow-up interviews with key network contacts and colleagues.
- The team will produce a coherent analysis, including an analysis of the leader’s network, using the theoretical material we covered in class as a reference point for best practices.
- Produce a 10 double-spaced page report with 12-point font and 1” margins all around for 5-person teams. 6-person teams get 11 pages.
- Feel free to change names to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

The leadership analysis is due by 6pm on the Friday before finals week.

Key Elements of the Analysis

The paper should have a three-part structure:
1. An introduction to your analysis and the leader. What is your paper’s thesis? Who are the people you interviewed? This introduction should include a brief (1-2 paragraphs) description of the leader, and if applicable, the challenges leader has faced.

In an Appendix you should include a one paragraph description the leader that was interviewed, describing their responsibilities and creating a network map of his or her network.

2. Body of Analysis
You should organize and focus your analysis in terms of course concepts. You should compare and contrast the experiences of the leader you interviewed with other leaders/situations we talked about in class to draw general lessons about which strategies are most useful under which conditions. See potential questions below.

3. There should be a conclusion section titled: “Recommendations for Kellogg Students.” This section should be one to two pages and include concrete recommendations for building value and capital for Northwestern students. These suggestions should focus on what students could do tomorrow in their teams, during their career preparation, and immediately after graduation. For example, describe how what you learned can help students do better in finding internships; making contacts during their summer jobs; picking the right industry or career for them; preparing for the transition from student to employee; and other critical activities related to career advancement.

NOTE: The most informative analyses go beyond description (a story about or description of the leader’s networks) to an explanation of why something happened the way it did using the concepts from class. Well-organized papers 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.

Here are some questions to consider in developing your analysis

1. How is the leader positioned for action and getting things done? How are barriers to action overcome? You could ask about a recent example of this (this could provide a focal situation for the analysis): For example, ask how she or he leveraged contacts to respond to a situation and why it worked or did not work. Probe for how networks could be better structured, maintained or used, in light of the pattern of dependencies the person faces.

2. What are the kinds of contacts and exchanges that the leader uses for different purposes and in different contexts-for example, to make decisions, to get a specific task accomplished quickly, to gain influence, to get information, to seize an opportunity to advocate or implement change?

3. How has trust and commitment been developed with their network contacts? What kind of information is shared with different contacts and why? What role does reputation play? Does he/she form many ties or few ties? How much redundancy is there in the person’s network?
4. How does the leader’s network (size, number of structural holes, clique membership) match his or her objectives? How could it be improved? What is the strongest entrepreneurial opportunity (i.e., where can the most value be added)?

5. How is the leader positioned in terms of diversity of relationships? Where is the leader’s sponsorship or mentoring structure? How has this changed over his/her career? What was the person’s experience with “developmental” relationships—either as a protégé, mentor, sponsor, or combinations of these?

6. How does culture affect this leader? Has the leader had to adapt their network or their tactics of influence and persuasion?