Leading People

EW MBA 205 * Fall A 2015

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Class Meetings:
205_1A
Wednesdays 6-9:30PM
Room: Koret (F320)

205_2A
Thursdays 6-9:30PM
Room: Koret (F320)

Course Overview

Leadership is about coordinating the skills, talents, and resources of individuals and groups in combinations that best realize the organization’s opportunities. You must make things happen, often under conditions or schedules that are not of your own choosing. Innovative leadership requires managers to be able to diagnose problems, make effective decisions, influence and motivate others, manage their personal contacts, bring out the best in their colleagues, optimize cross-functional teams, and drive organizational change.

In this course, you will learn how to maximize human potential – both your own and those that you will work with. There has been an increasing recognition by those who found, manage, and work in organizations of the importance of human capital in an organization’s success. A critical source of competitive advantage often comes not from having the most ingenious product design, the best marketing strategy, or the most efficient production system, but rather from having the ability to effectively obtain, mobilize, and manage an organization's human assets. Organizational leaders estimate that they can spend up to of 30% of their time focusing on interpersonal issues.

This course focuses on helping you better understand the nature and dynamics of social behavior as they relate to performance in real-world business settings, and draws heavily on the fields of psychology, social psychology, and sociology. We will focus on improving your ability to analyze organizational dynamics, innovate, and lead effectively. Beyond intelligence and technical skills, what separates effective leaders from average managers is a set of social skills and awareness. This course identifies these critical leadership skills and will provide you with tools and ideas for improving them. Our goal is to help you think about your leadership behaviors – and other people’s perceptions of your behaviors – and then leverage this awareness to improve in areas that matter to you.
Course Format

We will be using a mix of exercises, cases, and videos to illustrate the topics. Exercises illustrate particular concepts through experiential learning. Case studies help us better understand particular industries as well as act as vehicles for detailed in-class discussions. Finally, videos are a straightforward medium to convey particular settings and experiments.

Exercises, cases, and videos give us a context to discuss broader issues pertinent to the management of people. To this end, you should come to class prepared to actively participate in the exercises and case discussions, as this will allow you to benefit the most from the class.

The general pedagogical strategy for the class will be to use the exercises, videos, and cases to illustrate a fundamental question related to the management of people. During the course of the case discussion or exercise, you will likely grapple with the key decision points, as you and your classmates present various views on the issues and questions at hand. This process allows you to become aware of the different perspectives, which will help inform your opinion on the matter in the future. As wrap up, I will present the key findings from social science research that inform the decision under question, as well as structured frameworks which will allow you to be better prepared to face similar dilemmas in the future.

Finally, after you have grappled with the exercise or case, readings will be used as a source of more detailed exposition regarding the topics that were introduced in the preceding class. My experience has been that learning occurs not when answers are given to you, but rather when difficult questions are posed first. Only after these difficult have been fully examined are ‘answers’ in the form of readings useful and welcome.

Consideration for Classmates

A large class requires more attention to fairness and respect for one another. Therefore, I propose a simple code of conduct:

- Laptops, tablets, cellphones and other electronic devices may not be used during class. Students themselves have overwhelmingly voted to ban them from class, as they are distracting and disrespectful of those wishing to engage in the class. In short, their disadvantages far outweigh their benefits.

- Attend class on time. It enhances the value of the class not only for you but for everyone when you are present and you participate. If you have an unavoidable conflict, please do not disturb your classmates by arriving late, leaving early, or asking to have information you missed repeated during the class.
• If you are familiar with a case or an exercise introduced in class, please do not discuss your prior knowledge with other students as this can ruin the learning experience for them. If you are concerned that your prior experience with a case might be an issue, please let me know before class.

Assignments and Grading

20% Midterm exam  
25% Final exam  
25% Organizational experiment  
25% Class participation  
5% Survey assignments

Exams (45%)

The exams will assess how well you have learned the material by asking you to apply concepts, think critically, and analyze cases. Exam questions will cover material from lectures, videos, cases, and class discussion. The exams will be open notes, and will be taken on a computer. They will consist of a combination of short answer and multiple-choice questions.

• Midterm (20%) The midterm will test your mastery of material covered in the first half of the course. It is scheduled to be taken in class at our 5th meeting on Wednesday September 2nd, and, respectively, Thursday September 3rd.

• Final (25%) The final exam will be cumulative, in the sense that it could include questions on anything we have covered in the course. It will be taken during the exam period on Wednesday October 7th, or Thursday October 8th.

Organizational Experiment (25%)

The real value of this class will be determined by the degree to which you can put its lessons to use. This assignment is designed to bring the knowledge you gain in class to bear on real issues in real organizations. Working in your study teams, you must design an experiment useful for testing the effectiveness of some organizational intervention. It forces you to apply lessons on experimentation, problem framing, and opportunity recognition.

This is an opportunity for you to explore an organizational issue in which you are interested, or may even be affecting your team today, drawing from our course topics that you find most relevant and applicable. Some topics you might want to cover include: issues of hiring and personnel selection, motivation and managing performance, decision-making, innovation and organizational change, and organizational culture. You should pick one issue or one intervention that you believe is most important and for which you think you can design an experiment that will produce a useful and informative assessment. It would be impressive if you actually ran your experiment and collected data, but that is not a requirement for this assignment. A hastily conducted experiment with many flaws is less valuable than a well-designed experiment that has not yet been conducted.

There is considerable flexibility about how you carry out this assignment. Feel free to ask me about unique topics or approaches you are considering taking if you are not sure about them. You must email me a brief (one to two paragraphs) description of your project plan by the start of the 6th class
meeting on September 9th or, respectively, September 10th. The six-page final written report is due by the start of the last day of class, on Wednesday September 30th, or, respectively, Thursday October 1st.

Note that I will ask you to evaluate all the individual members of your study team and tell me about their contributions. Your individual grade will be a function of both the group grade and the grades given to you by your fellow group members.

Class Participation (25%)

Class sessions will include active discussions based on the readings and the cases, with an emphasis both on theoretical questions and on practical implications. Attendance is mandatory and you are expected to be on-time and prepared for each class session. Please attend the section which you are assigned. Class participation grades will reflect your total contribution to the learning environment.

- Your participation will be judged not simply based on the frequency of your contributions in class but also their novelty and quality. Please also note that the professionalism of your conduct (attendance, punctuality, preparedness, and respect for others) will also contribute to my assessment.

- You will be asked to provide feedback of your fellow students’ contributions to the learning environment on a regular basis. This feedback will be part of your final grade. If asked, I am happy to provide you with feedback on your participation at any point during the course.

Survey Assignments (5%)

There will be several short survey assignments throughout the course. Because they will help you get more out of the class, I want to give you a strong incentive to actively engage with them, and I will penalize you if you fail to complete them on time. (Note: It is easy to achieve outstanding performance on this aspect of class simply by completing all of them on time.)

Grading Policies

School-wide guidelines dictate an average of grades which each core class has to adhere to. Specifically, the average GPA for a Core MBA class will be 3.45.

- The organizational experiment proposal and final paper must be submitted by the beginning of class on the date they are due. Survey assignments must be submitted by midnight the day before the class (e.g., 11:59PM on Tuesday for the Wednesday class).

- To appeal a grade, submit a typewritten request explaining your position (along with the original assignment) within 7 days of receiving your grade. Document your points with the appropriate course material. After reviewing your explanation I will either award you additional points or schedule a meeting with you to discuss the disputed issue(s). I reserve the right to re-grade the entire assignment when an appeal is submitted. This can result in a lower grade.

- Cheating in any form will be met with the fullest sanctions permitted by the University. The following Honor Code has been adopted by the student community at UC Berkeley – I expect all of us to adhere to it:
UC Berkeley Student Honor Code

• “As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others.” The hope and expectation is that you will adhere to this code.

• Collaboration and Independence: Reviewing lecture and reading materials and studying for exams can be enjoyable and enriching things to do with fellow students. This is recommended. However, unless otherwise instructed, homework assignments are to be completed independently and materials submitted as homework should be the result of one’s own independent work.

• Cheating: A good lifetime strategy is always to act in such a way that no one would ever imagine that you would even consider cheating. Anyone caught cheating on a quiz or exam in this course will receive a failing grade in the course and will also be reported to the University Center for Student Conduct. In order to guarantee that you are not suspected of cheating, please keep your eyes on your own materials and do not converse with others during the quizzes and exams.

• Plagiarism: To copy text or ideas from another source without appropriate reference is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade for your assignment and usually further disciplinary action. For additional information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, see, for example: http://gsi.berkeley.edu/teachingguide/misconduct/prevent-plag.html

• Academic Integrity and Ethics: Cheating on exams and plagiarism are two common examples of dishonest, unethical behavior. Honesty and integrity are of great importance in all facets of life. They help to build a sense of self-confidence, and are key to building trust within relationships, whether personal or professional. There is no tolerance for dishonesty in the academic world, for it undermines what we are dedicated to doing – furthering knowledge for the benefit of humanity.

• Your experience as a student at UC Berkeley is hopefully fueled by passion for learning and replete with fulfilling activities. And we also appreciate that being a student may be stressful. There may be times when there is temptation to engage in some kind of cheating in order to improve a grade or otherwise advance your career. This could be as blatant as having someone else sit for you in an exam, or submitting a written assignment that has been copied from another source. And it could be as subtle as glancing at a fellow student’s exam when you are unsure of an answer to a question and are looking for some confirmation. One might do any of these things and potentially not get caught. However, if you cheat, no matter how much you may have learned in this class, you have failed to learn perhaps the most important lesson of all.

Course Materials

• The course readings will be available through Study.net. There are more excellent readings than we can possibly cover in our nine short weeks together. If you want to know more about a topic, I would be happy to recommend supplementary materials.
### Class 1 – Wednesday August 5th / Thursday August 6th

**Readings:**

**Topic 1:**
- Course Introduction

**Topic 2:**
- Organizational Culture

### Class 2 – Wednesday August 12th / Thursday August 13th

**Optional Wrap-up Readings from Last Week:**

**Topic 1:**
- Motivating Performance

**Assignment:**
- Case: *Employee Recognition at Intuit.* Stanford GSB Case # HR-31

For this case, and all the ones to follow, I will provide questions for you to consider as you read the case. You should form answers to these questions, as they will drive the bulk of the in-class discussion.

**Study Questions:**
1. Is the Spotlight program strategic? What changes to the program would you recommend and why?
2. Is this program motivating the “correct” behaviors? Why or why not?
3. How would you address the issue of equity in award amounts? How can Intuit ensure consistency?
4. Some employees prefer cash - is this a good idea? How can a company best use recognition to create and sustain a desired culture?

**Topic 2:**
- Performance Appraisal

**Assignment:**
- Performance appraisal exercise [handout – to be emailed]
Class 3 – Wednesday August 19th / Thursday August 20th

Optional Wrap-up Readings from Last Week:


Topic 1:
Team Decision Making

Assignment:
- Carter Racing exercise [handout – to be emailed]

Topic 2:
Decision Making

Assignment:
- Decision making survey assignment [online – link to be emailed]

Class 4 – Wednesday August 26th / Thursday August 27th

Optional Wrap-up Readings from Last Week:


Topic 1:
Human Resource Decisions

Topic 2:
Diversity

Assignment:
- Diversity Survey: IAT [online]
  - Go to: [https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html)
  - Continue as a guest and take the “Race IAT.” Try others if you’re interested, too!
  - Come to class prepared to discuss your results – if you are comfortable with this
Class 5 – Wednesday September 2nd / Thursday September 3rd

Optional Wrap-up Readings from Last Week:

**Topic 1:**
Midterm exam

**Topic 2:**
Power and Influence

Class 6 – Wednesday September 9th / Thursday September 10th

Organizational Experiment proposal due by the beginning of class

Optional Wrap-up Readings from Last Week:

**Topic 1:**
Leading Teams

**Topic 2:**
Founders and Entrepreneurs
- Case: Leslie Brinkman Versutia Capital HBS Case #9-407-089

Study Questions:
1. What key decisions did Brinkman make in designing Versutia Capital? Why did she make these design choices? How would you describe Brinkman’s leadership style and philosophy?
2. How would you describe Versutia’s culture?
3. How effective is Versutia Capital? How effective is Brinkman? What should Brinkman do now?
Class 7 – Wednesday September 16th / Thursday September 17th

Optional Wrap-up Readings from Last Week:

Topic 1:
Negotiation and Conflict Resolution
- Negotiation exercise [handout – to be emailed]
- Emotional intelligence [online – link to be emailed]

Topic 2:
Founding Teams

Assignments:
- Case: Smartix: Swinging for the Fences HBS Case #9-808-116

Study Questions:
1. Imagine you are Vivek Khuller. Should you accept the offer from MSG?
2. Should Vivek have tried to start this venture without co-founders? Could he have been a solo founder?
3. Discuss the team members Vivek chose. Were they good choices?
4. Assess the equity split process that Vivek initiated, in particular, the timing, criteria, and the people involved in the decision.

Class 8 – Wednesday September 23rd / Thursday September 24th

Optional Wrap-up Readings from Last Week:

Topic 1:
Social Networks

Assignments:
- Social Network Survey Assignment [online – link to be emailed]
- Case: Hale and Dore (A) HBS Case #9-505-005

Study Questions:
1. What is the firm’s current sales strategy?
2. What role do relationships – among and between attorneys, clients, prospects, and others – play in this sales strategy?
3. Who has the best network? Are these networks just random luck or buildable and manageable?
4. What kinds of relationships are most valuable for finding new business? For implementing change in an organization?

**Topic 2:**
Ethics

**Assignment:**
- Ethics Scenarios Survey Assignment [Online – link to be emailed]

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**Class 9 – Wednesday September 30th / Thursday October 1st**

Organizational Experiment Final Paper due by the beginning of class

**Optional Wrap-up Readings from Last Week:**

**Topic 1:**
Managing Innovation

**Assignment:**
- Case: 3M: Profile of an innovating company. HBS Case #9-395-016.

  **Study Questions:**
  1. What elements of 3M made it such an innovative company?
  2. How do these practices conflict with the other objective of the company, which is to make money?
  3. Which strategy should 3M pursue and why? Is it possible to pursue both? How?

**Topic 2:**
Leadership + Course Wrap-up

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**Final Exam – Wednesday October 7th / Thursday October 8th**

**Time:** 6PM-9PM

**Location:** TBD
Optional Wrap-up Readings on Innovation and Leadership: